

INTRODUCTION – 1 CORINTHIANS CHAPTER FIVE

This chapter is apportioned with two (2) sections in the bible that reveal Paul's messages to the Corinthians for our study, understanding, obedience, blessings and edification.

1. Immorality defiles the Church: **1 Corinthians 5:1 – 8**
2. Immorality must be judged: **1 Corinthians 5:9 – 13**

Clearly it portrays Paul as the spiritual father to the Church of Corinth with interest and passion to the faith of the Corinthian Believers, Christian teachings and doctrines, spiritual growth and maturity.

The fifth chapter of his first epistle focused first on the extent of sexual corruption and damage to the holiness of the Church. Paul did not take kindly to the in – action and tolerance levels of Church leadership as well as the spirit of arrogance and pride by the sexual offender. Though Paul was absent from the Church physically, he reminded them of being with them spiritually; emphasizing on unity of faith and purpose. That is his thoughts, prayers, works and letters was meant to strengthen them in their Christian faith and edify them. Besides his interest in the affairs of the Church made him declare his disapproval of the reported sexual immorality in the Church. Hence his rebuke of glorying in the sin of sexual immorality and not in the Lord.

The second section focused on judgment against the sin of immorality in the Church to ensure holiness, avert widely acceptance, and corruption of our most holy faith. Hence it reveals how Paul used his spiritual and apostolic authority to institute disciplinary measures to remove that immoral brother from the Church. By this judgment, Paul's warning is to all disobedient and stubborn sinners, who reject the truth in Christ and the convictions of the Holy Spirit, to be expelled from the Church. It means to say that when all avenues for repentance, reconciliation and restoration have been exhausted with response, then the leadership of the Church has no choice but to remove the sexual offender and other non – repentant sinners from the Church assembly.

Also he clarified his judicial position by stating that the sexual immorality coupled with all sins in the Church must be judged for sanctification and cleansing purposes. Besides, he instructed that it is not the mandate of the Church to judge the world of unbelieving sinners but to preach Christ to them and win them for the Lord Jesus Christ.

To enable readers and the Churches and Body of Christ as a whole understand the fifth chapter of Paul's epistle, I have done my best with the grace of God upon my life and ministry to explain verse by verse or combination of verses in bringing out the quality of Paul's messages to the Corinthians.

Like a weaned child just weaned from milk and drawn from the breasts, the word of God is taught precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little, there a little **(Isaiah 28:9 &**

10). Jesus said that when the Holy Spirit comes, He shall guide us unto all truths **(John 16:13)**.

Connect to other writings of the Church and bible commentaries as the Holy Spirit enlightens your understanding because grace and truth emanated from our Lord Jesus Christ **(John 1:17)**. For this study, additional biblical information from the New King James Bible Commentary added fresh revelations to enhance understanding.

Study and know its relevance to your life first as a Christian before you apply it to other Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders. I trust God that you will be equipped with His knowledge and continuous belief in Christ's salvation work on the cross as tied to obedience, knowledge, spiritual wisdom, humility, spiritual growth and maturity. You are not alone because the Holy Spirit is Your Helper.

The focus here is your obedience to gain insight and understanding of Paul's messages unto spiritual growth and maturity in the Church. It is my prayer and hope that you shall be an instrument in the Lord's service to bring sound Christian teachings and practices to your local Church and Body of Christ. In Jesus' name. Amen. Hallelujah!

WHAT IS THE REPORT AND TESTIMONY ABOUT YOU AND YOUR CHURCH?

INSPIRATION

A report is a statement of fact or news or a written document about the activities of a person or people or situation. It can either be good (**Nehemiah 6:19**) or bad like Joseph's report about the activities of his brothers in the field (**Genesis 37:2**), sweet like that of the Queen of Sheba (**1 Kings 10:6, Proverbs 15:30**) or bitter (**Jeremiah 6:24**).

Likewise a testimony is the evidence of your faith in Christ and the power of God as the Holy Spirit leads you in life, ministry and the Church. The bible talks about how God anointed Jesus Christ with the Holy Spirit and power which made Him move from one place to the other, preaching and teaching the kingdom of God, doing good, healing the sick, and delivering all people who were oppressed by the devil (**Acts 10:38**).

In other words when the report about you becomes the testimony of God in your life, ministry and the Church, it affirms your Christian faith, honours and glorifies God. It is expected to be true like Jesus the Messiah in the scriptures as in

Isaiah 53:1 – "Who has believed our report? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?"

This is a rhetorical question that seemed not have the expected answer because of the unbelief of the people. The works of the Messiah was doubted by the religious leaders of his days and religious sects like the Pharisees and Sadducees to fulfill this Isaiah prophecy (**John 12:38 – 41**). But the bible says also that many of the rulers believed the works of Jesus the Messiah. Their only problem was that they feared to lose their religious identity and position in the synagogues and therefore they could not openly identify themselves with Jesus (**John 12:42 & 43**).

Again the bible says that not all Israelites have believed the gospel of Jesus Christ in fulfilled of the prophecy of Isaiah (**Romans 10:16**). This is also true of unbelieving sinners in all countries of the world because of self – righteousness, religious affiliations, traditions and cultures, and modernity through technological advancements, innovations and achievements.

Note that a report must be true and not false as in

Exodus 23:1 – "You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."

Note that a false testimony is meant to damage one's reputation and in the extreme case lead to a person's death as reported of the chief priests, the elders and the council against Jesus. We read

Matthew 26:59 – Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death.

With these revelations and understanding, let's study further.

1 Corinthians 5:1 – It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named[a] among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!

The bad report of sexual immorality in the Church had been received showing its corruption and backsliding nature. What a shock! This was not the expected results because his ministry investments should have produced a people who were spiritual and not carnal. Specifically a Church leadership who frowned, spoke against and rebuked sexual sins but this was not the case at all.

Truly, Apostle Paul in the preceding chapters proved himself to be a father to the Corinthian Church concerning their spiritual and physical wellbeing. For he had set a high standard of living a righteous and holy life in ministry. There is nowhere in the bible that Paul was said to have been involved in sexual offences.

On this premise, he rebuked the Church of Corinth for permitting, committing and tolerating sexual sins to the magnitude that even non – Christians will not do. It was so alarming that a son could sleep with the father's wife with pride without shame and repentance. They defiled themselves and the Church with works of the flesh that Christ had purchased with His blood.

This sin was so corruptible that it was not known to be committed by the heathen who were outside the Church. It means to say that Paul compared this sexual sin to the religions, traditions and cultures of nations which worshipped idols. He found out that they did not even permit the practice of sexual sins between a man and his father's wife. In other words, they accorded respect and honour to the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman. Yet the report about the abomination of sexual immorality in the Church of Corinth was true; a form of incest.

IF SOCIETY REJECTS CERTAIN ABOMINABLE PRACTICES SUCH AS SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH YOUR FATHER'S WIFE OR MOTHER'S HUSBAND, WHY SHOULD THE CHURCH TOLERATE IT? THIS IS OF THE SAME LEVEL OF AN INCEST AND GOD SAYS REPENT AND RECEIVE FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION. REMEMBER ALSO THAT IN THE CHURCH IT IS ABOUT THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND NOT THE LAWS OF THE STATE BY LEGISLATION.

The New King James Bible Commentary states that the sexual immorality of incest was forbidden by the Old Testament Law (**Leviticus 18:8, Deuteronomy 22:30**) and by the Roman law. Paul used the phrase his father's wife instead of his "mother" probably to indicate that the woman was the offender's step mother.

The omission of discipline for the woman implies that she was not a believer. The Church is responsible for disciplining only its members; not unbelievers.

This sin is similar to the defilement of Tamar by her half-brother Amnon. Amnon feigned sickness and requested king David to let her sister Tamar cook for him. Eventually, she was deceived and forced into sex by his brother in a very humiliating way. Despite her plea and word of counsel, Amnon defiled her virginity. To make matters worse, Amnon hated Tamar greatly and drove her out of his room and locked the door **(2 Samuel 13:1 – 20)**. Eventually Absalom took revenge by killing Amnon **(2 Samuel 13:21 – 31)**.

The import of this matter is that king David's royal family was corrupted with the sin of defilement by Amnon. Their image was at stake as the whole of Israel knew that the sexual laws had been broken and therefore they had sinned against God. But can we say that David's family struggled with sexual sins? For David himself had earlier committed adultery with Bathsheba the wife of Uriah and even married her. Besides, the bible reported that David was the brain behind Uriah's untimely death through the command to Joab where he was stationed at the battle front and killed by the sword of the Ammonites. God was so displeased with David that the Prophet Nathan revealed his sin through a parable and subsequent judgment. But David repented and was forgiven **(2 Samuel 11:1 – 27, 12:1 – 14)**. Clearly the unthinkable was done by David as a man after God's heart just as the report about a man sleeping with the father's wife in the Church of Corinth.

It is also of the same magnitude that John the Baptist rebuked Herod the tetrarch for taking his brother's Philip wife, Herodias, as wife **(Matthew 14:3 & 4, Mark 6:17 – 19, Luke 3:19)**. Indeed power tend to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely **(Lord John Dalberg – Acton – 1834 to 1902)**. Clearly, the gospel frowns against covetousness in marriage.

It is of the same magnitude that the Church of Corinth was hit by the sin of incest and sexual immorality defying family and Christian and moral values. This was not a good testimony of the Church in Corinth in a corrupted society of the Corinthians. It affected spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ as the power of God unto salvation for everyone who believed. It increased also the voice of those perishing in their sins because a brother in the Church had committed such a detestable sin in God's sight and among the people.

It means to have a strong Church leadership with prayers, fastings, teachings and disciplinary measures to eliminate these sexual sins from the Church. Hence Paul's fatherly rebuke and intervention through his writing to the Church in Corinth.

We read

Galatians 5:19 – 21 "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just

as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God."

Therefore if these sins are found inside the Church just like outside the Church, then it confirms the lifestyle of the believers as unbelievers.

DO NOT HAVE SEX WITH YOUR FATHER'S WIFE, MOTHER'S HUSBAND, SISTER, BROTHER, FATHER AND MOTHER IN – LAW, SONS AND DAUGHTERS IN – LAW, FRIEND'S HUSBAND OR WIFE AND USE THE CHURCH AS A COVER UP. THEY ARE WORKS OF THE DEVIL AND NOT WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THE CHURCH IS NOT A HOUSE OF INCEST, FORNICATION, ADULTERY OR PROSTITUTION AND SEXUAL IMMORALITIES.

This bad report was too much for Apostle Paul; that the church he had established with prayers and the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, with pastors, elders and deacons would allow this sin to happen in their fold.

The response of Apostle Paul was to solve the problem and re – established holiness and order and Christian doctrines that would promote God's righteousness in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

We read

Galatians 5:22 – 24 "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires."

The message is simple here that if we are able to crucify the flesh with its passions and desires, we can have dominion over the works of the flesh. We will be led by the Holy Spirit and overcome every temptation that pops up like a cartoon against our lives, Christian faith, ministries and the Church.

Our prayers and obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ will give us the superior urge to overcome. If Joseph overcame the temptation by Mrs. Potiphar in Egypt, then believe that God's grace in Christ by the Holy Spirit is available to be holy and righteous always.

Yes flee from sexual immorality **(1 Corinthians 6:18)** because Samson was a strong man of God and yet was sexually overpowered by Delilah. Likewise David was a strong man of worship and yet was sexually entrapped by the beauty and nakedness of Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. Likewise Solomon had a strong mind and full of knowledge and wisdom of God and yet was sexually used by many women.

Make the Church a place of prayer where the spiritual atmosphere allows the Holy Spirit to do His works in the lives and ministries of the Believing Christians, and not a den of robbers with sexual immoralities and the practice of idolatry and other sins. Be wise

buddy (**Matthew 21:13, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46**). It is always righteous and better and rewarding to marry and enjoy sex than for fornication, adultery and sexual immoralities to be recorded in the Church. Repent and be saved.

WHEN PAUL HEARD ABOUT THE SIN OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY IN THE CHURCH OF CORINTH, HE WROTE TO THEM SHOWING HIS DISAPPROVAL AND SHOCK AT THE MAGNITUDE OF SIN THAT COULD NOT BE NAMED EVEN AMONG THE RELIGION, TRADITION AND CULTURE OF THE GENTILE NATIONS.

WHEN CHURCH LEADERSHIP SPEAK AGAINST, REBUKE AND OPENLY DISAPPROVE OF SEXUAL SINS IN THE CHURCHES, IT SETS THE STAGE FOR CONVICTION, REPENTANCE, FORGIVENESS AND RESTORATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS.

PRAYER

Almighty God, we pray for Ministers and Church leaderships to speak against, rebuke and openly disapprove of sexual sins in the Churches.

Help us O God to overcome sexual temptations because the Holy Spirit is in us as children of God whose faith is in Your Son Jesus Christ.

We pray that Your Holy Spirit will lead us and strengthen us to make the Churches places of righteousness and holiness because of obedience to your word.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

CHURCH LEADERS ARE TO EXERCISE THEIR SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY TO LIVE AND PROMOTE HOLINESS AS A CHECK AGAINST SEXUAL ABOMINATIONS IN THE CHURCH. FOR NO CHURCH IS ANOINTED AND PLEASSED IN GOD'S SIGHT WHEN THE MEMBERS PRACTICE ANY FORM OF SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND THE MINISTERS AND CHURCH LEADERS TOLERATE IT. NANA KWAKU DUODU

CHURCH MEMBERS ARE TO MARRY AND MANAGE THEIR HUSBANDS OR WIVES WELL AND ENJOY SEX IN A LOVING AND BEAUTIFUL WAY; FOR THE CHURCH IS THE HOLY SANCTUARY OF GOD. NANA KWAKU DUODU

REBUKE SEXUAL SINS IN THE CHURCH

INSPIRATION

In life, the good is commended but the bad is rebuked so that society will produce a kind of people whose works are worthy of emulation. Hence the importance and necessity of the gospel of Jesus Christ as the word of God to humanity. The bible says in

Ecclesiastes 7:29 – Truly, this only have I found: That God made man upright, But they have sought out many schemes.

What you find in life, ministry and the Church must be good or bad in comparison with the word of God. The truth is that Solomon realized that the works of God in creation was good and beautiful but sinful man has evolved to become a schemer with a life of self – righteousness. In other words, God is holy and righteous but man has been associated with sin, evil and wickedness when his fallen nature was first realized in the Garden of Eden (**Genesis chapter 3**).

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, even though God made everything beautiful (**Ecclesiastes 3:11**), and made human beings upright (**Genesis 1:31**), Solomon's search for the "sum" had failed. Yet human kind's search for wicked devices and intrigues had succeeded wrongfully. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 5:2 – "And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you."

Apostle Paul continued his strong message of rebuke to the Church in Corinth about the reported sin of sexual immorality. He noted in his message that arrogance and pride had pervaded the Church and the exposed culprits. Their disposition did not show repentance and mourning for the sin of "sugar mommy" in the Church. Rather they were puffed up as they saw nothing wrong with the sexual relationship.

It means to say that this sin of sexual immorality was before the eyes of the Church and Church leadership and Ministers. It means to say also that this sin was known by the whole Church and yet nothing was done to stop it. For they brushed it aside as if it was nothing sinful and evil in their eyes. Clearly their tolerance of this sin was high like unbelieving sinners in the world.

Their attitude was a sharp deviation from the gospel of Jesus Christ that encouraged repentance and assurance of forgiveness of sins (**Proverbs 17:10**). It revealed the likes and taste of worldly lifestyles in replacement of holiness and righteousness (**Proverbs 15:31**). No wonder the Greek term "korinthiazomai" was coined and it meant "to live immorally like a Corinthian".

The New King James Bible Commentary states that the Corinthians had a twisted view of grace that caused them to be proud of their tolerance of the sexual offender. They believed that because God's grace is limitless, the freedom that every Christian enjoys is also limitless.

As a check against the arrogance spirit in the Church of Corinth, Paul rebuked leadership for their high tolerance of sin. Their in – action against the sexual offender had serious effects on other Church members. Its negative influence necessitated Paul to state that leadership should have removed the unrepentant sexual offender from among them. Why because his action did not edify the Church but corrupted them and the holiness of the Church.

Apostle Paul's message to the Corinthian Church is just like that to the Roman Believers **(Romans 6:1 & 2)**. Grace is not an excuse for sin and promotion of sin in our lives and in the Church; even the corruption of the Church where Ministers and Church leadership tolerate all manner of sexual immoralities in the Church as evident in the Church in Corinth. Hence Paul's rebuke of the Church leadership and members.

GRACE IS GIVEN FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND MATURITY AND NOT AN EXCUSE FOR SIN.

In building Christ's Church, Paul's position on the carnality and spirituality with regards to the works of the flesh and works by the Holy Spirit respectively. Even in chapter six of his first epistle to the Corinthians, he stated clearly that all things are lawful for him but not of them are helpful. Besides he would not be brought under the controlling power of things that are carnal, worldly and satisfy only the flesh such as foods. Knowing that God will destroy carnality, Paul stated that the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord and the Lord is the body **(1 Corinthians 6:12 & 13)**.

Apostle Paul stated that freedom in Christ is not the power and license to do anything you desire in life and in the Church. This is abuse of freedom if we think that we can behave anyhow without obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. This emphasis shows the power of the Holy Spirit in his ministry to establish God's righteousness in Christ in the church. Desires and needs are to be beneficial and righteous and eternal, and not for lust and bodily satisfaction. Therefore, the body is not for sexual immorality but for the Lord in holiness and righteousness.

According to the New King James Bible Commentary, "all things are lawful for me" was a term coined by the Corinthians to justify their immoral behaviour. He reminded the Corinthians that freedom from the ceremonial laws did not give them the license to sin or indulge in self – righteousness. This will only enslave them in the sin which Christ had set them free. It is explained further that the body should not be dominated by sin any longer in Christ but the Holy Spirit.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST IS TO ENABLE US ENJOY FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AND BE SPIRITUAL, MANIFEST SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND FRUITS LIKE

SELF CONTROL. IT IS NOT CARNAL AND NOT ABUSE OF SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY TO SIN AND PROMOTE SIN.

Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians combines beautifully with his first epistle to emphasize on his divine messages. In this context, Paul emphasized on sin, conviction, remorse and repentance. We read

2 Corinthians 7:8 – 10 "For even if I made you sorry with my letter, I do not regret it; though I did regret it. For I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though only for a while. Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death."

Apostle Paul's message was to solve problems in the Church as a concerned spiritual father. He had regret for the level of corruption in the Church but no regret for his strong letters in revealing God's righteousness in Christ. Through his strong message of rebuke, godly sorrow was achieved and led to repentance which was better than the sorrow of this world which produces death.

His joy was that God's word was proven to be potent by the Holy Spirit to convict, and produce sorrow, repentance and salvation in the Church. He used his spiritual authority to make them like Christ to profit the Church and kingdom of God, and not make their ministries bring them loss. His revelation meant that true freedom is in Christ and not under the bondages of sin, devil and the lusts of the world.

Church, beware of false teachings and doctrines that promote sinful habits such as sexual sins because of money, riches, so called connections and opportunities. Don't fall for it because God's word does not change with regard to our eternal salvation, life of righteousness by faith and obedience. Don't tolerate and accept "**small sins**" and "**big sins**" because a little yeast in the flour affects everything (**Matthew 16:6 – 12**). Be wise in Christ by the Holy Spirit to be holy and righteous, and not to be labeled "**korinthiazomai**" because of your open or secret life of sexual immorality.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS THAT OF REBUKE TO STOP THE PRIDE AND ARROGANCE OF THE SEXUAL OFFENDER. BESIDES, IT EXPOSED THE WEAKNESS OF IN – ACTION BY THE CHURCH LEADERSHIP. BUT PAUL EMPOWERED THEM TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST HIM TO RESTORE THE DIGNITY AND HOLINESS OF THE CHURCH.

IT MEANS TO SAY THAT CHURCH LEADERSHIP MUST HAVE STRONG DISCIPLINARY POLICIES TO CORRECT IDENTIFIED SINS IN THE CHURCH SUCH AS SEXUAL IMMORALITY AND PRIDE. ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF PAUL, THOSE WHO REPENT MUST BE ACCEPTED AS BRETHREN BUT THOSE WHO

HARDEN THEIR HEARTS IN SIN MUST BE REJECTED AND REMOVED FROM THE COMPANY OF THE CHURCH.

PRAYER

We pray in the name of Jesus that the Church will always have strong leadership to promote the gospel of Jesus Christ and shape the moral and marital values of the members.

Help us to rebuke all manner of sexual sins but encourage marriages and holiness in the Church. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE PUFF UP SPIRIT ENTRENCHES SIN IN THE CHURCH BUT THE HOLY SPIRIT CONVICTS AND MAKES REMORSE AND REPENTANCE ACHIEVABLE WHENEVER THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IS PREACHED AND TAUGHT IN AND OUTSIDE THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BREAKS THROUGH YOUR EGO AND NATURAL REASONING TO MAKE YOU ACCEPT GOD'S WORD TO BE A BETTER CHRISTIAN WITH SOUND CHRISTIAN PRINCIPLES. KNOW THAT GODLY SORROW PRODUCES SALVATION BUT WORLDLY SORROW PRODUCES DEATH. SUGAR DADDIES AND SUGAR MOMMIES (SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS) ARE NOT NEEDED AND ACCEPTED IN THE CHURCH BUT THEY MUST REPENT THROUGH THE CONVICTION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO BE ACCEPTED AS MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

WHENEVER CHURCH LEADERSHIP NOTICES PERPETUATED SEXUAL SINS IN THE CHURCH WHETHER SMALL OR BIG, IT IS RIGHTEOUS TO MAKE RIGHTEOUS INTERVENTIONS THROUGH PREACHING, TEACHINGS, COUNSELS AND REBUKES AS OPPORTUNITIES FOR REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS OR REMOVE THEM FROM THE CHURCH BECAUSE OF HARDENED HEARTS TO AVERT THE LEAVEN OF SEXUAL IMMORALITIES. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

AUTHORITY TO JUDGE FROM ANYWHERE

INSPIRATION

Absence from the Church is just physical absence but not in heart and mind. It is like the love between a man and a woman that transcends geographical boundaries and face to face talk. The bible says that the eyes of the LORD are everywhere beholding the evil and the good (**Proverbs 15:3**).

The bible says that the eyes of the Lord move to and fro on the earth to show himself strong on behalf of those whose hearts are loyal to him (**2 Chronicles 16:9**).

It is this nature of God received in Christ does makes Holy Spirit filled Ministers, Church leaders know the state of the Churches even when they are far away or distanced from them. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 5:3 – For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed.

The reports of sinful acts in the Corinthian Church to Apostle Paul were received with mixed feelings. On one side, he was not there to confirm the reports but on the other side, he believed it because of level of accuracy and discernment, and confirmation by the Holy Spirit. Also he prayed for the Church of Corinth as a spiritual father concerned about the spiritual wellbeing and physical wellbeing. Besides his thoughts for the Church was good and righteous having stated that his utmost interest was to see Christ crucified and formed in them (**1 Corinthians 2:2**).

Paul revealed his spiritual authority to judge the Church even when he was absent from them. It means that Paul judged the abomination of the man who was having sexual affairs with his father's wife. Why because the gospel of Jesus Christ was the standard of judgment concerning the state of their lives, ministries and the Church. It means to say that Paul's location was no really the most important thing but the power and the word. Earlier he stated that the kingdom of God is not in word but the power (**1 Corinthians 4:20**). Again he proved his critics wrong of his so called absence from the Church and abandonment of the brethren (**1 Corinthians 4:18 & 19**).

Having heard the bad report in the Church about the pompous sexual offender, he made his judgment to remove him because of his non – repentant attitude and parading himself as somebody but nobody in God's sight. For his sexual offences rather corrupted the members and did not edify the Church in any way.

Indeed being used by God in Christ by the Holy Spirit to have a sound and holy Church with righteous works is equaled to reigning with Christ. This was Paul's desire and plan for the Church in Corinth (**1 Corinthians 4:8**).

Confidently, reported sexual offences in the Church such as lesbianism, masturbation, sodomy, same sex marriages, and sex change from male to female and vice versa are not to be encouraged at all by Church leaderships. They are clearly contrary to the gospel of Jesus Christ as the final word of God to the Church and the nations. These sins cannot be perpetuated in the name human rights when they corrupt societies and damage morality among the people; youth and adults and the aged alike. Indeed the Church cannot be the entertainment centre of the world because Christ is the Head **(Ephesians 5:23, Colossians 1:18)**, and the Holy Spirit's presence is evidence of the power and glory of God. And Church leaderships must remove all such persons from the Churches if they fail to repent and obey the word of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

It is just like the prophetic statement of Elisha to Gehazi about his spirit being with him when he collected the rejected items from Naaman **(2 Kings 5:20 – 27)**. It is also prophetically inclined with Jesus' words to his two disciples, Peter and Judas Iscariot, and also to the other disciples **(betrayal and abandonment) (Matthew 26:14 & 15, John 13:18 Mt 26: 31 – 35 & 47 – 56)** was confirmed.

A prayerful pastor or church member who manifests in the gifts of the Holy Spirit can easily know the change of spiritual direction of the church even when far away from it. God is Sovereign and can also use Church members and even other concerned people, and even enemies and the devil to make such reports known to the pastors in the will of God. Sometimes, Church members see it as gossip and poking your nose into church affairs but can be the will of God for timely interventions as information given and show of the fruit of the Spirit by the pastors to solve these Church problems.

The things of the Spirit can only be revealed by the Spirit as Apostle Paul wrote in

1 Corinthians 2:11 & 12 – “For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things that have been freely given to us by God.”

It is important to note that information about the state of the Church and members are also the things that God makes us know by His Spirit as Christians; gift of word of knowledge and gift of word of wisdom as well as the gift of prophecy.

Clearly the Church makes judgments to enforce God's word in righteousness in the power of the Holy Spirit. This is what Apostle Paul sought to do and did with the Church of Corinth. That immoral brother was removed from the Church because he was a bad yeast among the brethren **(1 Corinthians 5:2)**.

This is also equaled to Peter's inspired words by the Holy Spirit to judge Ananias and his wife Sapphira for their dishonesty in the sale of lands to the Apostles. For lying against the Holy Spirit, they died and were thus removed from the early Church **(Acts**

5:1 – 16). Beware when the Holy Spirit is involved in your transactions with the Church and Believing Christians, Christian and Church leaders and Ministers.

It is important that we don't abuse our authority in Christ to judge and make righteous decisions for the Church to be healthy, grow spiritually unto maturity (**Matthew 7:1 & 2, 12:36, John 7:24, 8:16, 9:39**).

On this note, let us work in our salvation righteously in the power of the Holy Spirit even when we are absent from the Ministers, Christian and Church leaders, and from the Church premises (**Philippians 2:12**). Be Christian wherever you are to have a good testimony of yourself and works and help to enforce the will of God on earth (**Matthew 6:10**).

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CORINTHIANS BELIEVERS REVEALED HIS SPIRITUAL AUTHORITY AND COVERING OVER THEM AS SPIRITUAL FATHER. HIS ABILITY TO JUDGE THE SEXUAL OFFENDER IN ABSENCE WAS OF THE SAME MAGNITUDE OF JUDGING IN PRESENCE BEFORE THEM.

IT MEANS TO SAY TO BE MINDFUL OF SPIRITUAL FATHERS AND MOTHERS AS MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERS AND CHRISTIAN LEADERS WHOSE COVERING AND AUTHORITY PROTECT AND PRESERVE YOU IN CHRIST. THEIR DECISIONS OF BLESSINGS AND CURSES ARE RESPECTED BY GOD IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST AND LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

PRAYER

Help us O God to use our spiritual authority in Christ to make righteous decisions also to clean the Church of sexual sins when we are present or absent in the Church.

May your Holy Spirit give us a heart of love and joy for the spiritual growth and maturity of the Church by helping Believing Christians, Christian and Church leaders and Ministers to live by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Help us to enforce the will of God on earth as Jesus prayed. Amen.

THE SPIRITUAL AUTHORITIES OF PASTORS WHO PRESIDE OVER THEIR CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANS TRANSCENDS GEOGRAPHICAL BOUNDARIES TO ISSUE GODLY INSTRUCTIONS, CORRECT SINS AND CHANGE DOCTRINAL ERRORS. NANA KWAKU DUODU

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE WINDOW OF GOD TO KNOW AND SEE ALL THAT GOD HAS FREELY GIVEN TO US IN CHRIST. ONE OF THEM IS TO MAKE JUDICIAL DECISIONS TO REMOVE ALL DEMONIC PEOPLE AND DESTROY DEMONIC STRUCTURES TO MAINTAIN HOLINESS IN THE CHURCH. NANA KWAKU DUODU

ABSENCE IN PERSON BUT PRESENT IN SPIRIT; THE ANOINTING AND JUDICIAL DECISIONS

INSPIRATION

If you must have a say in Church affairs, qualify to be in God's presence as a Christian with given authority by the enforcement of the Holy Spirit. Due to stubbornness, disciplinary measures have become an acceptable norm to straighten crooked ways and ensure obedience to the complete gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Truly, disciplinary measures against an identifiable culprit should not be one sided but the right to fair hearing by the offender should be set in motion **(Proverbs 18:17)**. Then the committee of Judges should make their decisions based on the gospel of Jesus Christ and leading of the Holy Spirit prayerfully in the context of the Church.

Jesus assured the disciples that where two or three Believers are gathered in His name, there He is in their midst **(Matthew 18:20)**. Though Jesus is seated at the right hand side of the Father in heaven, His Spirit is always with us especially we gather as a Church or a group of Believing Christians. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 5:4 & 5 – In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

The Apostle Paul continued his message of being present with the Corinthians Believers in the spirit though absent in person. By this truth, he enforced on the unity of the Church to make righteous decisions that ensures dignity and holiness. He gave a righteous instruction that the reported sexually immoral person with his abominable practice in the Corinthian Church should be excommunicated as a decision of the church initiated by him as their spiritual father.

By this decision, Paul wanted a tormenting punishment for the sexual and immoral offender and therefore stated that he should be delivered to Satan. As we all know, the works of Satan hurts us physically, emotionally, family and friends relationships, financially, health, and reputation like Job **(Job 1:6 – 12, 13 – 19)**. This reveals a four tier strategy to humiliate Job and make him loose his faith in God.

We know from the scriptures also that Job's wife told him to curse God and die **(Job 2:9)**. She wanted to end his sufferings through what I call spiritual euthanasia; curse God and die. For euthanasia is the practice of intentionally ending life to eliminate pain and suffering. Though she looked at the temporary and earthly **(sufferings)**, Job looked at the permanent and eternal **(relationship with God)** **(Job 2:10, 19:23 – 26, 32:1 – 5)**. Again, Job's many friends deserted and abandoned him and even labeled him as a sinner who needed to be at peace with God. They believed that his sins had brought

him this sufferings on him **(Job 8:1 – 6, 11:1 – 20, 12:1 – 4, 15:1 – 9, 16:1 – 3, 18:1 & 2, 19:1 – 3, 13 - 21)**.

Besides, he revealed that the composition and gathering of the Church involves both Believing Christians, Christian and Church leaders and Ministers present and absent. In other words, they were to be mindful that coming together as Christians with the mind of Christ, his heart and soul was with them to promote God's righteousness and holiness in the Church. Even in absence of person, his soul and spirit was with them to make executive, legislative and judicial decisions in conformity with the gospel of Jesus Christ and leading of the Holy Spirit.

Truly, the spirit of Elisha was with Gehazi when he secretly went for the rejected things from Naaman the Assyrian commander **(2 Kings 5:20 – 27)**. It means to say that God can reveal to you things about people involved in secret sins. Yes God reveals the hearts of people to us by His Spirit **(1 Corinthians 2:10)** evidenced with the story of Ananias and his wife Sapphira **(Acts 5:1 – 11)**.

Paul's ultimate and righteous goal by was to save the soul of the person through suffering and thus make him return to his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the Church before he dies. It meant that Paul's success with the Church was to get rid of the traditional and cultural practices of the past associated with sexual immoralities and demons.

Therefore when a Believing Christian, Christian and Church leader and Minister backslide without repentance and remorse, such a person can be made to undergo suffering that will not kill him but save his soul for heaven. It means that such a backsliding person will go to hell if left alone without judgment by the Church. Like a child being beaten with the cane to remove foolishness from him when necessary and become a responsible adult is necessary and righteous **(Proverbs 22:15)**. With prayers and observation, God will make it a reality in Jesus' name.

Your prayers and works for the Church as a Christian would determine spiritual location and placement. Distance and time are not barriers. You can be outside the physical structure of the Church but with the church in heart and thoughts; in God's presence. For the Holy Spirit is at work in us to reveal Christ always.

You may be a busy Christian highly engaged in secular work but is your spirit with the Church and the Kingdom of God? Do you assist in the decision making process by your prayers, faith talk, provision of money for Church projects, offerings and tithes, and destruction of satanic activities? Being in God's presence and having His favour and approval is enough authority to promote righteousness and holiness as the righteous standard in the Church and in the lives of people. Have the mind of Christ.

Yes learn from Jesus who endured the cross and its shame by not cursing the Father but prayed for forgiveness of the sins of His enemies **(Luke 23:34)**, and also committed Himself to Him **(Luke 23:46)**. It means to say that be led by the Holy Spirit before you

deliver a judicial decision to cast a backsliding Christian to Satan for punishment. Be in God's perfect will and not in the spirit of hatred. The anointing is discerning.

New King James Bible Commentary: Destruction of the flesh may refer to God turning the sexual offender to Satan for physical affliction or even physical death. After being separated from the spiritual protection of the Church, ideally the offender will recognize his sin, repent and return to the Church. All Church discipline has restoration as the ultimate goal.

WHAT AN AMAZING PERSONALITY PAUL WAS TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH AND TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH? ON ONE HAND, HE EXPRESSED HIS SUPPORT TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH THROUGH BEING WITH THEM IN SPIRIT WHEN ABSENT FROM THEM IN PERSON. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE RECOMMENDED STRONGLY THAT THE SEXUALLY OFFENDED PERSON IN THE CHURCH SHOULD BE EXCOMMUNICATED TO THE DEVIL AND BE DISCIPLINED SINCE HE REJECTED CHURCH COUNSEL AND DISCIPLINE TO REPENT.

IT MEANS TO SAY THAT WHENEVER A BACKSLIDING BELIEVER REJECTS CHURCH COUNSEL AND DISCIPLINE, THERE IS NO CHRIST'S SPIRITUAL COVERING OVER HIM AND BECOMES SUBJECT TO THE PUNISHMENT OF THE DEVIL WHICH GOD USES TO CORRECT HIM UNTIL THERE IS REPENTANCE AND FORGIVENESS OF SINS, AND RESTORATION TO CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.

PRAYER

O LORD our God, we pray for wisdom to make judicial decisions to ensure holiness and righteousness in the Church and Your people.

May we be led by Your Holy Spirit to deliver a backsliding Christian to Satan for punishment with the righteous intent to experience affliction and make him repent and receive forgiveness, and return to Christ and the Church.

Help us to use our authority in the Church wisely to fulfill Your purposes and not abusively for selfish desires and ambitions.

Help us to pray for backsliding people, like the sexually immoral in the Churches, to be restored even through their sufferings for the salvation of their souls. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WHEN THE HOLY SPIRIT IS INVOLVED, CHRIST JESUS IS GLORIFIED ABOVE ALL PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS IN YOU AS BEING PRESENT OR ABSENT FROM THE CHURCH. THE ANOINTING MAKES THE GREAT DIFFERENCE. DON'T BE QUICK AS A CHURCH TO DELIVER THE BACKSLIDING TO SATAN WHEN YOU HAVE NOT PRAYED AND COUNSELED THEM IN CHRIST. BUT IF THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADS AND INSPIRES YOU, DO IT BECAUSE HIS OR SOUL CAN BE SAVED ETERNALLY. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**AVOID GLORIFYING IN THE FLESH;
CHRIST IS OUR PASSOVER; OUR HOLY SACRIFICE**

INSPIRATION

There is purity and holiness which makes the presence of God active by the Holy Spirit in Christ. Likewise there is impurity and sin which makes the presence and spirit of the devil active. Whichever way, you are responsible for life's choices and decisions to have God's presence or the devil's presence.

The maxim “**integri procedamus**” is a Latin word with the English meaning of “**proceed with integrity**” that portrays the correct way and manner of doing things to get the right results. It is the motto of the University of Ghana established in the year 1948. Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 5:6 – 8 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

Paul made this strong statement to the Corinthians to rebuke them for their state of glorying in things of the flesh that are not meaningful to God. The sin of sexual immorality, incest, of a son with the father's wife was nothing good to be proud and confident in it. Yet they made their boasts as if their intelligence and wisdom was superior to other Believing Christians who had kept their holiness uncorrupted to God.

Again Paul made it clear to the Corinthians that a little yeast grows to shape the whole bread as leavened bread. Since they had been made as unleavened bread in Christ, they were to remove the old leaven in order to become a new lump of bread in righteousness. All negative influences of unleavened bread was to be a thing of the past in order to bear fruits of the Spirit in Christ's righteousness as the unleavened bread. Therefore every celebration of the Christian and the Church must be connected to things of righteousness and holiness to God and not to the world.

The feast is a figure of speech for Christ. As Israel was to remove all leaven from the celebration of the Passover, so the Corinthians Believers were not to contaminate their relationship with Christ with any malice or wickedness. Holiness was set as the standard for righteousness. Indeed believing in the Lord Jesus Christ meant disbelieving in any form of malice or wickedness to be righteous to God.

Christ is our Passover; feast of righteousness and must be celebrated by His standard and not our standard. The Apostle Paul's emphasis is the proof of Christ's righteousness and holiness demonstrated by His death and resurrection to save the

world of sin. Therefore Christians were to maintain righteousness and holiness by not fulfilling the old conditions and influences of sin (old leaven).

More dangerous and devastating is the openness and shameless perpetuation of sin to commit incest like sleeping with your father's wife (leaven of malice and wickedness). Do not commit sexual immorality and have children secretly or openly with peoples' spouses; It is sinful and wickedness.

Rather Christians are to be sincere and true to reflect the purity of righteousness and holiness in Christ (unleavened bread of sincerity and truth). For the Passover was celebrated in faith with sprinkling of blood to be protected from God's judgment of killing the firstborns of humans and animals (**Hebrews 11:28**). This denotes a thorough examination to prove one's innocence and righteousness in matters of Christian principles and works. It reveals given grace to have the mind of Christ and live Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

The New King James Bible Commentary states the backdrop for this message to be the Passover in Exodus 12 when the Israelites removed yeast from their homes in preparation for the feast. The removal of leaven was a reminder of the Israelites quick departure from Egypt. They did not have time to wait for leavened bread to rise. The point here us that a little leaven has tremendous impact or influence on whatever it is in. The Corinthian Church was tolerating sexual sin. This leaven of sin, though small in size, was dangerous, because it could stead through the Church. Like cancer, sin demands drastic surgery.

It is also good to note verse by verse commentary for our enhanced understanding.

Verse 6 – Like a tiny pinch of leaven spreading through a loaf of bread, unchallenged sin can soon contaminate the whole Church. The sexual offender was guilty of sin, but the whole congregation was also guilty of ignoring the man's disobedience and failing to hold him accountable. Left unchecked, this sin could have caused many new believers to commit sexual immorality.

Verse 7 – Jewish people were required to sweep all leaven out of their houses in preparation for the Passover (Exodus 12:15). The leaven here symbolizes the powerful influence of sin.

Verse 8 – The feast is a figure of speech for Christ. As Israel was to remove all leaven from the celebration of the Passover, so the Corinthians were not to contaminate their relationship with Christ with any malice of wickedness.

If Christ is our Passover, then God's word must be true in every Christian's life as in 2 Corinthians 5:17,

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new."

This reveals a changed heart in Christ, and having the mind of Christ to think and speak like Him and God by the Holy Spirit. That is to live in God's righteousness and do His works as a Christian in the power of the Holy Spirit. Know that Jesus is the unleavened bread of life and God's righteousness and holiness and all who believe in Him must eschew defiling the body as temple of the Holy Spirit **(John 6:35 & 48)**. Indeed Jesus is our Passover sacrifice where we have passed over from death to life. Are you a new creation or an old fox buddy?

Hence we are to be dead to sin but alive to God **(Romans 6:11)**. When you are crucified with Christ, and now lives your life by faith in the he Son of God who loved me and gave Himself for me **(Galatians 2:20)**. On this truth, I counsel you to offer your body parts as instruments of righteousness and not instruments of sin to prove that you are alive from the dead **(Romans 6:13)**. That is why sexual immorality such as fornication, adultery, rape, defilement, prostitution, oral sex, lesbianism, homosexuality, sucking the penis and clitoris, and romancing the breasts, cool and hot sex are all sinful to God. Be wise buddy to marry and enjoy the unleavened sex with your spouse in Jesus' name. Amen.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS TO COMPARE THEIR MODUS OPERANDI OF EXPRESSING THEIR FAITH IN CHRIST AND WORSHIPING GOD TO THE PASSOVER CELEBRATION WHERE CHRIST IS THE PASSOVER LAMB AND THE NEW LEAVENED BREAD. HENCE GLORYING IN SIN IS NOT TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH THE CHURCH BUT GLORYING IN GOD.

IN OTHER WORDS, HE EMPHASIZED ON HOLINESS AS THE UNLEAVENED BREAD OF SINCERITY AND TRUTH AND DOING AWAY WITH THE LEAVEN OF SEXUAL IMMORALITIES SUCH AS THE MAN WHO HAD COMMITTED INCEST BY HAVING SEXUAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER'S WIFE. HE ADVOCATED FOR THE NEW LEAVEN TO REPLACE THE OLD LEAVEN OF DOING THINGS IN THE CHURCH.

IT MEANS TO SAY THAT A CHURCH THAT OBEYS THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST SHOULD BE IDENTIFIED AND ASSOCIATED WITH THE NEW LEAVEN OF CHRIST AND HOLINESS TO LIVEN UP THE WHOLE LUMP OF THE CHURCH. BUT IF THE CHURCH IS IDENTIFIED AND ASSOCIATED WITH THE OLD LEAVEN OF CORRUPTION SUCH AS SEXUAL IMMORALITIES AS OF THE INCEST TYPE, THEN IT DESERVES TO BE REBUKED, CORRECTED AND STRAIGHTENED.

PRAYER

We thank You O God for the gift of Your Son Jesus Christ as the Passover Lamb that redeemed us from all forms of sin, evil and wickedness.

We as a Church have therefore escaped the corruption of this world to live in Christ's righteousness to God.

Therefore let Your Holy Spirit work in us to remove the old leavened bread of bad and evil influences in our Christian lives, ministries and the Church.

Help us to be the model of the new leavened bread of purity and holiness and be acceptable to You in Christ.

Help us to glory in Christ and not in sin and evil. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

SINCE CHRIST OUR PASSOVER LAMB IS GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOLINESS TO US AS A CHURCH, WE ARE TO PRACTICALLY DEMONSTRATE FAITH IN WORD AND WORKS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. WE MUST MUNCH THE UNLEAVENED BREAD OF HOLINESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IN ORDER TO AVERT MUNCHING THE LEAVENED BREAD OF IMPURITY AND CORRUPTION OF THIS WORLD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

**MAKE RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENTS WITH CLARITY;
AVOID SEXUALLY IMMORAL PEOPLE IN THE CHURCH**

INSPIRATION

Every preacher and teacher has a message by the Holy Spirit and every message has an audience. This must fit perfectly into the mission and vision of our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed an explained message with understanding has the promise of profitability more than an unexplained message that is turned upside down. Therefore preach, or teach or counsel or pray again by the Holy Spirit for your congregation and audience to get understanding of God's word in Christ.

The bible says in Psalms 62:11 – God has spoken once, Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God.

Get this revelation: God speaks once and He believes His word without any shadow of doubt. It is purposed driven to accomplish His will on earth and in the lives of His Church and people. The bible says that when God sends forth His word, it never returns to Him void until it has accomplished the purpose for which it was sent **(Isaiah 55:10 & 11)**. When man hears the word of God, it is either believable or unbelievable. In most cases, God's word is heard again as is usually paraphrased the word of God came to me a second time to enforce its meaning, purpose and commitment to the agenda in question. This usually makes it believable in the life of the recipient.

New King James Bible Commentary: Once, Twice: It is a convention of wisdom literature to use a number and raise it up by one (Proverbs 30:11 – 33). The point here is that David had heard the same message with certainty.

Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 5:9 & 10 – I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

Paul reechoed his position on judgment not to keep company with the sexually immoral people. Hence his further clarity that stated categorically non – repentant sinners in the Church of Corinth. Apostle Paul discerned that his epistle to the Corinthian Christians was likely to be abused if not clarified and made precise. Already, they were used to judging people of everything under the sun. Though God speaks concerning all peoples and all situations, the message of rebuke against sexual immorality was to the Church and not sinners outside the Church.

To the sexually immoral brother, the decision was to remove him from the Church to avert bad influence on the members especially the new converts who were still fragile

like eggs **(1 Corinthians 5:2)**. To the Church in Corinth, Paul had rebuked them for their in – action that misconstrued sin as acceptance and permissible. Earlier, Paul had warned them to be holy because their bodies were temples of God and the Spirit of God dwelt in them **(1 Corinthians 3:16)**. If any man defile the holy temple of God, he would also be destroyed by God **(1 Corinthians 3:17)**. Again he stated that their bodies were temples of the Holy Spirit because they were now Believing Christians. For they had been purchased by Christ to God through His death and resurrection. Hence they were to live for Christ and not to themselves; not their own but Christ **(1 Corinthians 6:19)**.

In this regard, Paul restated his position on this matter to justify his earlier ruling and decision. His targeted audience was the Church and not the sinners. Not the sinners outside the Church such as the sexually immoral, covetous, extortionists, and idolaters but the Church of Ministers, Christian and Church leaders and workers, and Believing Christians. They were his righteous concern because his motive was to see Christ crucified in them and nothing else **(1 Corinthians 2:2)**.

Besides, Paul gave the reason for his focus on Believers in the Church as fulfilling the divine mandate to go out to the world and preach the gospel of salvation. That is if they judged unbelievers and sinners and condemned them, they could not go to them with the message of Christ; fulfilling the Great Commission. Therefore his focus was not to judge the world but a spiritually prepared Church to preach to the world.

It is important to note that Paul's defense of his apostolic ministry before King Agrippa and Governor Festus was used as a divine opportunity to reveal Christ to them in Capernaum. For his words invoked their consciences to truth without judging them: Paul's desire was that King Agrippa, Governor Festus, all nobles, Judges and people (Jews and Gentiles) present would be Christians **(Acts 26:24 – 29)**.

Let us examine briefly these identifiable sinners we come into contact in our day to day activities as a church **(Ephesians 5:3)**. Though we must not be like them, we cannot escape their meetings and acquaintances in life as Paul mentioned to the Church of Corinth.

a// Sexually immoral – These are people who defile the bodies through fornication, adultery, (lesbianism, masturbation, gays/homosexuals, same sex marriages – **(Leviticus 18:22)**, sodomy and all other forms of immorality like incest of sleeping with your father's wife **(Leviticus 18:6 – 18)**, or wife's husband or son or daughter and close relatives like brother or sister. Or sleeping with animals like sheep, goats, dogs, horses and donkeys **(Leviticus 18:23 – 25)**.

b// Covetous – Having a great desire to possess something that belongs to another person **(Psalms 119:36, Proverbs 28:16, Luke 12:15, 1 Timothy 3:3)**. It is synonymous with envy.

c// Extortionists – These are people who why try to obtain something through force or violence. Its legal definition is the use of force or the threat of force to obtain money or

another item of value from another person. Many jurisdictions classify extortion as crime against property or a theft related offense. But the threat of harm to a person is an essential element of the offense. Blackmailing somebody to get money is a form of extortion. That is threatening to bring out a secret of a person and using payment of money or promotion, favour, or any other benefit as a form of extortion **(Luke 18:11, 1 Corinthians 6:10)**.

In the bible tax collectors were noted for being extortioners and this explains why the Israelites considered them as sinners. This explains also why Zacchaeus restored fourfold monies forcefully taken from the people when he encountered Jesus and was convicted, repented and believed Him as Saviour and Lord **(Luke 19:1 – 10)**.

d// Idolaters – These are people who worship idols made by human hands through tradition, culture and religion or have idols in their hearts exalted above God and His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It involves fetishism, heresy, occult, sacrilege, and all forms of ungodliness through strange religions and cults **(Leviticus 19:4, 2 Kings 17:15, Psalms 97:7, 106:36, 115:4, Jeremiah 2:5, Ezekiel 14:3 – 7, 1 Corinthians 6:9)**.

For the scripture tells us that God has made man upright but the people sought their own schemes **(Ecclesiastics 7:29)**. In this context, this scripture is applicable to the unleavened nature and conditions of the Church which was corrupted by the leavened nature of the desires and taste of the Church members.

The New King James Bible Commentary states that under this context, Paul corrects a misunderstanding arising from his previous letter **(verse 9)**. He had commanded the Corinthians to withdraw themselves from sexually immoral people. In this letter, Paul explains that he was not speaking of the pagan culture around them. If they withdrew totally, they would be unable to function in the world. Instead, he was talking about themselves while still reaching out to the lost in Corinth.

Specifically the New King James Bible Commentary states in **verse 9**: My epistle refers to an earlier letter from Paul to the Corinthians that no longer survives

In **verse 20**, the New King James Bible Commentary states: out of the world – Christians are called to influence the world, not run away from it **(Matthew 5:13 – 16)**. They are agents of God to carry the light of Jesus Christ into a dark world **(Philippians 2:14 – 16, 1 Peter 2:11 & 12)**.

It was targeted at removing corruption and carnality from the pure and spiritual state of the church and therefore the command in the form of a letter of urgency. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ made the Church holy from sin and the Holy Spirit is in Christians to maintain this standard.

As Apostle Paul postulated, there must be in – house cleaning for the church to be a light to the world. Other sins of covetousness, cheaters and idol worshipers and peoples and things we hold in high esteem than our Lord Jesus Christ are frequent occurrences in the world. These sins are under the control of the devil just as the Holy Spirit is in control of Christians and their righteous works in and outside the Churches.

Idols in our hearts like husband, wife, children, family, lovers, money and allowances, job, professions, titles, positions, cars, motor bikes, houses and properties dominate the lives of worldly people. But Christians are chosen by God to deliver and direct them in Christ's righteousness and power of the Holy Spirit.

According to gospel of Paul, we cannot judge sinners outside the Church and apply disciplinary measures against them. We cannot excommunicate them from our lives because the Lord Jesus Christ mandates us a His Church to go out into the world and preach the gospel of salvation to them. It means to say that we are to preach salvation to them and trusts God for conviction and repentance and obedience. But the brethren **(males and females in the Church)** who stubbornly refuse to adhere to warnings, teachings, preaching, counsels and rebukes must undergo disciplinary measures instituted by the Church or be sent out of the Church into the world where Satan's afflictions would make them remember the love and goodness of God and return to Christ and the Church in repentance and re-dedication.

Therefore we agree with Apostle Peter's gospel that our suffering should not be because we are suffering from specific sins like murder, thief, evil doer, gossips but because of our faith in Christ that is resisted and hated by enemies of righteousness. We are to glorify God in our sufferings **(1 Peter 4:15 & 16)**. Besides, Peter revealed that it is time for judgment to begin at the house of God with Believing Christians, Church workers, Church leaders, Ministers and Christian leaders to purge us of any corruption, dishonesty and uncleanness. This is purposed driven through the processes of sanctification and perfection as disciplinary measures meted to us whenever we go astray from the will of God. But for the world of unbelieving sinners, the gospel of Apostle Peter is that God's punishment of them is inevitable when they die in their sins or Christ returns **(1 Peter 4:17)**.

It means to say that the Church is being judged now to be sanctified and holy with righteous works by the word of God and Holy Spirit. Bitter as it is, we accept it as good for spiritual growth unto maturity. It means also that the Church would not be judged by the Lord on Judgment Day unlike unbelieving sinners of the world. Therefore if you refuse to be judged by the Church like that immoral brother in the Church of Corinth, then be informed that you cannot escape the Lord's judgment in eternity and be cast to hell fire. A word to the wise and discerning person is a blessing on earth and in eternity.

PAUL'S MESSAGE TO THE CHURCH OF CORINTH WAS THAT STRONG DISCIPLINARY MEASURES CAN ONLY BE METED TO THE CHURCH INSIDERS OF BELIEVING CHRISTIANS AND NOT OUTSIDERS OF UNBELIEVING SINNERS. HENCE HIS MESSAGE OF CLARITY TO THE LEADERSHIP OF THE CHURCH TO

CONCENTRATE APPLICATION OF DISCIPLINARY MEASURES COMMANDED AGAINST NON – REPENTANT SINNERS LIKE THAT IMMORAL BROTHER.

IT MEANS TO SAY THAT WE MUST BE KNOWLEDGEABLE TO APPLY WISDOM IN JUDICIAL DECISIONS OF THE CHURCH BY THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. WE MUST REMEMBER ALWAYS OUR SCOPE OF JURISDICTION IN CHURCH JUDGMENTS AND NOT TO CROSS THE LINE AND ABUSE OUR POWER AND AUTHORITY.

FOR THOUGH JUDGMENT OF UNBELIEVING SINNERS IN THE WORLD IS THE PREROGATIVE OF GOD, WE HAVE OUR CHRISTIAN MANDATE TO FULFILL BY PREACHING CHRIST FOR THEIR BELIEF AND SALVATION AS WELL AS WARNING THEM OF ETERNAL AND EARTHLY CONSEQUENCES OF GOD’S JUDGMENT.

PRAYER

O what a wise God You are. Help us to make judicial decisions to clean the Church of sin so that we can confidently and boldly preach Christ to the world. For the Church is Your Holy grounds but the world your harvest field.

Help Church leaderships to focus on disciplinary measures against stubborn sinners in the Church.

Help us to endure suffering from disciplinary measures of the Church and hatred from the world to sanctify and perfect us in Christ and leading of the Holy Spirit.

May Your Holy Spirit be our Guide to make us the Church holy and fulfill the mission and vision of our Lord Jesus Christ, and be in God’s perfect will.

In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

WE HAVE KNOWN THE TRUTH THAT THE CHURCH MUST BE HOLY TO PERFORM RIGHTEOUS WORKS IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. THEREFORE JUDGMENT OF SINFUL WORKS IN THE CHURCH IS ALLOWED BUT NOT TO THE WORLD OF UNBELIEVING SINNERS BECAUSE OF OUR DIVINE MANDATE TO PREACH CHRIST TO THEM. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE CHURCH IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD BECAUSE JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. THEREFORE DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AGAINST NON REPENTANT SINNERS IN CHURCH IS RIGHTEOUS BUT NOT AGAINST UNBELIEVING SINNERS IN THE WORLD. WHATEVER, THE LORD’S COMMAND TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION STILL IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT STANDS SURE AS LIGHT OF THE WORLD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

AVOID THE COMPANY OF NON – REPENTANT SINNERS IN THE CHURCH

INSPIRATION

The use of the name “brother” is generic in the sense that it is used for both males and females. Hence its application in the Church is to purge and clean, sanctify and made holy for the power of God to be at work and confirm Christ’s death and resurrection from the dead.

Paul used the name “brother” extensively in all his epistles to signify the role of ministry partners and ministry helpers. He called Tychicus a beloved brother and faithful minister who was to inform the Church of Ephesus of all his ways even though in chains (**Ephesians 6:21**). Epaphroditus was also called a brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier and fellow helper (**Philippians 2:25**). Hence a brother who dabbles in sin and becomes stubborn with disobedience and pride must be made to undergo disciplinary measures instituted by the Church.

The bible says that the judgments of the Lord are right and true. Let’s study further.

1 Corinthians 5:11 – But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

The command to do away with sin as an urgent measure by Apostle Paul’s hand of letter to the church again emphasizes on the purity of Christ’s church and aversion of pollution, contamination and corruption. These six (6) sins written are the sexually immoral, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, and an extortioner that are sometimes seen in the churches.

Spiritual authority and judgment used in the churches will correct and prevent all these sins to make the churches pure and holy.

It may look like a harsh decision but it agrees with Jesus’ message and picture of a brother in **Matthew 12:46 – 50**.

This message is in two (2) folds

1// Do know not keep company with sinners who are known Christians.

This is in accordance with

Proverbs 13:20 – “He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be destroyed.”

This scripture confirms the message of Apostle Paul to avoid them because they can influence and corrupt your Christ like character by association.

TELL ME IF SINS COMMITTED WERE NOT BY ASSOCIATION WITH THE WRONG PERSON OR PERSONS.

2// Do not eat even with them – To dine with somebody (Sinners in the church) for evangelistic or as a result of prophetic direction is righteous but to eat with sinners in the church as brothers signifies an endorsement of their sins and inaction to caution and rebuke them to repent of their sinful ways.

Let us examine briefly these identifiable sinners in the Church with the same behavioural traits as those in the world (**Ephesians 5:3**). The gospel of Paul commands and gives us the power to make judgments not to have fellowship with them as Church. In other words, we are not approve and give consent to their sinful lives in any way whether they make valuable contributions and give big monies to the Church or sponsor Church programs or manifests in the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

a// Sexually immoral – These are people who defile the bodies through fornication, adultery, (lesbianism, masturbation, gays/homosexuals, same sex marriages – (**Leviticus 18:22**), sodomy and all other forms of immorality like incest of sleeping with your father's wife (**Leviticus 18:6 – 18**), or wife's husband or son or daughter and close relatives like brother or sister. Or sleeping with animals like sheep, goats, dogs, horses and donkeys (**Leviticus 18:23 – 25**).

The bible says that the wrath of God is revealed against forms of unrighteousness. Among them included all forms of sexual immorality because they rejected the knowledge of God and given a reprobate mind. Hence they experienced same sex sins of lesbians, homosexuals, masturbation beyond fornication and adultery and other sins (**Romans 1:18 – 31**).

b// Covetous – Having a great desire to possess something that belongs to another person (**Psalms 119:36, Proverbs 28:16, Luke 12:15, 1 Timothy 3:3**). It is synonymous with envy.

c// Reviler – Someone who speaks abusively or contemptuously to or of another person or thing. It means to attack with evil words. It has synonyms of dislike and hatred. Truly a reviler is a person who uses words to damage, control, or insult someone's character or reputation. Today we call a reviler verbal abuse. We don't need revilers in the Church because they disrespect authority and dignitaries and look down on others. They cannot be led by the Holy Spirit and the word of God but subject to their selfish interests and goals; whims and caprices (**Matthew 5:11, Psalms 35:1, 15**)

d// Drunkard – Someone who is habitually drunk. It means that the bottle of alcohol never departs from the table of a drunkard. Truly, the words and works of a drunkard are sinful and evil in all respects because the mind is subject to the controlling power of

alcohol. The bible talks about our past lives as unbelieving sinners with drunkenness among other sins associated with us **(1 Peter 4:3)**. Don't backslide. Hence they cannot speak righteous words and do the works inspired by the Holy Spirit. They are prone to manipulations by the devil just like mad people.

This is why the mother of King Lemuel told the son that it is not good for kings to be drunk with alcohol and forget the law and pervert justice for the defenseless, marginalized and the poor and all the afflicted **(Proverbs 31:4 & 5)**. The bible commands us not to be drunk with wine in which there is excess but be filled with the Holy Spirit **(Ephesians 5:18)**.

e// Idolaters – These are people who worship idols made by human hands through tradition, culture and religion or have idols in their hearts exalted above God and His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. It involves fetishism, heresy, occult, sacrilege, and all forms of ungodliness through strange religions and cults **(Leviticus 19:4, 2 Kings 17:15, Psalms 97:7, 106:36, 115:4, Jeremiah 2:5, Ezekiel 14:3 – 7, 1 Corinthians 6:9)**.

f// Extortionists – These are people who try to obtain something through force or violence. Its legal definition is the use of force or the threat of force to obtain money or another item of value from another person. Many jurisdictions classify extortion as crime against property or a theft related offense. But the threat of harm to a person is an essential element of the offense. Blackmailing somebody to get money is a form of extortion. That is threatening to bring out a secret of a person and using payment of money or promotion, favour, or any other benefit is a form of extortion **(Luke 18:11, 1 Corinthians 6:10)**.

In the bible tax collectors were noted for being extortioners and this explains why the Israelites considered them as sinners. This explains also why Zacchaeus restored fourfold monies forcefully taken from the people when he encountered Jesus and was convicted, repented and believed Him as Saviour and Lord **(Luke 19:1 – 10)**.

For the scripture tells us that God has made man upright but the people sought their own schemes **(Ecclesiastics 7:29)**. In this context, this scripture is applicable to the unleavened nature and conditions of the Church which was corrupted by the leavened nature of the desires and taste of the Church members.

Brothers dine with the mind of Christ to talk and discuss matters pertaining to the preaching, teaching of the gospel, Holy Spirit works and fruits, church growth and planting, spiritual interventions like prayers, counsels and teaching God's word for spiritual growth and maturity and destruction of the works of the devil in the churches.

This is the New King James Bible Commentary: not even to eat with such a person – Eating together is a key part of fellowship and closeness with others. The Corinthians were not to have fellowship with those who claimed to be Christians but whose lives were dominated by sin.

This explains the importance of

Proverbs 12:26 – “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.” Your best friends cannot be sinners in the churches or even sinners in leadership positions in the churches.

A Christian brother is someone

1. Who has accepted Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour?
2. Who has been baptized in a Christian church?
3. Who goes to a church every Sunday?
4. Who believes in the Trinity?
5. Who confesses Jesus as Christ having appeared as man?
6. Who believes in Jesus' death and resurrection?
7. Who speaks in tongues?

All is good. Jesus Christ gives an early picture of a brother in the call of his mother and brothers on him during preaching. We read

Mathew 12:46 – 50 While He was still talking to the multitudes, behold, His mother and brothers stood outside, seeking to speak with Him. Then one said to Him, “Look, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, seeking to speak with You.” But He answered and said to the one who told Him, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother.”

Did Jesus love His biological family more than His spiritual family? Truly He loved them just as He loved the disciples because they believed in Him as the Messiah and the Christ. What He did not allow was His biological family to control and manipulate Him against the will of the Father.

In God's Kingdom, a brother is a Christian ready and willing to learn, schooled as a disciple, attain spiritual growth and maturity in the power of the Holy Spirit, and fellowships in the Church. If you do the will of God in heaven as a Believing Christian, and not the will of the devil as an enemy of the cross, you are Jesus' brother, sister and mother. This means that in every Church, all Christians must attain to this level of brotherhood in love towards one another just as Christ loved the Church and gave His life as a ransom for all.

Again, Jesus re – echoes Godly nature and works from the works of the flesh as obedient to the will of God or not to be qualified as a brother in

Matthew 7:15 – 20 He uses words like: **“You will know them by their fruits.”**

Your actions define your habits; Your habits define your character; Your character define your personality; Your personality define your faith in Christ or not; Your faith

makes you one of the brethren; Being one of the brethren means that the Holy Spirit lives in you; Having the Holy Spirit makes you a member of the Church; Christ's Church.

We read

Matthew 7:21 – 23 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

Jesus continued to reveal Believers who are recognized by God in obedience or not in regards to disobedience. Only those who obey the will of God have the promise of entering into the kingdom of heaven unlike the stubborn and disobedient. You have to be a brother with faith in Christ to be accepted. Again Jesus revealed that it is not the mention of His name or doing works or performing wonders in His name that matters but doing the will of the Father. For He preferred God's righteousness to self – righteousness.

In other words, Jesus emphasized on relationship and fellowship beyond works and duty. For this would be the basis of acceptance or rejection on the Judgment Day. No lawlessness; that is any contrary thought, opinion, word, work or decision or judgment against the words and works of Jesus Christ would be accepted on the Judgment Day.

Hear the word of God and receive instruction and revelation. We read

2 Timothy 2:19 – Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”

This is the New King James Bible Commentary: In spite of the unfaithful actions of some, the solid foundation of God stands sure. The tense of the verb indicates that Paul saw God's truth as standing not only in the past but in the present. **Isaiah 40:8** reveals that God's word will also stand firmly in the future, since it is eternal. The Lord knows those who are His: This is an experiential knowledge that can only be obtained in a relationship. Depart from iniquity: Our sure relationship with our Father in heaven should motivate us to a life of purity.

PAUL'S MESSAGE HERE IS THAT DESPITE THE BACKSLIDING AND UNFAITHFULNESS OF SOME CHRISTIANS, GOD'S FAITHFULNESS IS UNQUESTIONABLE AND SUPREME, AND HE KNOWS THOSE WHO BELONG TO HIM IN CHRIST. HENCE THERE IS THE NEED TO DEPART FROM SIN AND EMBRACE HOLINESS IN OUR WORSHIP OF GOD AND TO HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT.

BROTHERS ARE LOVING CHRISTIANS LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT. BROTHERS ARE NOT SINNERS BUT CHRISTIANS WHO ARE RIGHTEOUS. THEY ARE WILLING TO REPENT OF SINFUL WAYS AND CHANGE IN THE CHURCH. BROTHERS IN THE CHURCH WHO ENJOY SINNING WITH NO REPENTANCE SPIRIT HAVE BROKEN THE LAW OF CHRIST'S LIBERTY TO BE RIGHTEOUS.

This affirmed Paul's message that the Church should dissociate herself from the practices of the sexually immoral, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, and extortioner— not even to eat with such a person. How far are you obeying the word of the Lord in your local Church? Indeed sinners can come into the Church but must be warned and counseled to repent or face disciplinary measures with dismissal from the Churches as a last resort.

PRAYER

Our Holy God, we pray that our Churches would be holy through obedience to Your of salvation, and leading of Your Holy Spirit.

We pray for grace to implement righteous disciplinary measures where the sexually immoral, covetous, idolater, reviler, drunkard, and extortioner would be removed from the Church as a last resort.

We pray also for grace not to have fellowship and even eat with such persons as Your command of rebuke and judgment against stubborn sinners who have been disobedient to the voice and word in the Church.

Finally we pray also that the spirit of brotherhood would ensure having one voice and message and making the confession in Christ by the leading of the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR MINISTERS, CHURCH LEADERSHIP AND CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TO LIFT THE BANNER OF JESUS HIGH AND SAY NO TO ALL MANNER OF SINS IN THE CHURCHES. FOR EVERY PRACTICING SIN CORRUPTS THE BELIEVING CHRISTIAN IRRESPECTIVE OF ANOINTING AND GRACE. HENCE THE SEXUALLY IMMORAL, COVETOUS, IDOLATER, REVILER, DRUNKARD, EXTORTIONER HAS NO PLACE IN THE CHURCH AND CAN NO LONGER BE CALLED A BROTHER. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

THE BEAUTY OF FELLOWSHIP BY THE CHURCH CAN BE MARRED BY PRACTICING SINS AND THE COMMAND IS TO BREAK ASSOCIATION AD ENCOURAGEMENT TO SIN OF ANY BROTHER IN THE CHURCH. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

JUDGMENT OF SINNERS IN THE CHURCH; REPENT OR BE A CAST AWAY FROM THE CHURCH

INSPIRATION

Every human Judge and court has its jurisdiction with authority to make judgments. In the bible rulers such as kings, queens, and governors and religious councils, Sanhedrin, had judicial powers besides executive and legislative powers. Jesus' trial involved the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod and back to Pilate who signed for His crucifixion on the cross (Luke 22:66 – 71, 23:1 – 6, 7 – 13, 14 – 21). Let's study further.

1 Corinthians 5:12 & 13 – For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

In the conclusion of Apostle Paul's fifth chapter of his first letter to the Corinthian Church, he reiterated his Christ like position in maintaining a holy Church than judging the world of sin. His spiritual focus was the Church where the Holy Spirit is actively working to separate ourselves from worldly pollution and be pure in worshiping God and doing His works in Christ.

WHEN THE CHURCH IS HOLY, THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WILL MOVE TO CHANGE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.

Besides, Church leaders must make righteous decisions to cast out every evil person like a demon as the last resort when delight in sin and resisting the Holy Spirit are evident. The common trend these days as a result of proliferation of many churches is that dismissed sinful Christians from a church easily relocate to other Churches unknown to some Pastors and Church leaders.

PASTORS AND CHURCH LEADERS MUST FIND OUT THE BACKGROUND OF NEW PEOPLE IN THEIR CHURCHES. IF THERE IS SIN IN THEIR LIVES, THEY MUST DEAL WITH THEM BEFORE MAKING THEM FULL MEMBERS TO ENSURE PURITY AND NOT CORRUPTION OF CHRIST LIKE CHARACTERS. AMEN.

Outside the Church are people whose works are to be judged by God. You don't have the authority to discipline them because they don't have the mind of Christ and the Holy Spirit. But God knows how to warn and judge unbelieving sinners with experiences such as challenges and difficulties, pain of curses, diseases and sicknesses, natural disasters, accidents and the wickedness of the devil.

The bible talks about Galileans whose blood Pilate mixed with their sacrifices and the collapse of the tower in Siloam on the eighteen people which killed them. The question of Jesus to the people was this: “Do you suppose that these Galileans were worse

sinner than all other Galileans, because they suffered such things? Yes Jesus' core message was that unless they repented, they shall likewise perish **(Luke 13:1 – 5)**.

Again the bible talks about the hatred and rejection of the Jews against Jesus despite his words of eternal life and works of righteousness with healings and miracles. In their state of unbelief in Him as the Son of God, the Christ, Saviour and Lord, Jesus told them that they will die in their sins **(John 8:24)**. This was a warning to them and all unbelieving sinners in the world because of their hatred and rejection of the Son of God **(John 3:17 – 21)**.

DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME JUDGING PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE CHURCH BUT REBUKE, COUNSEL AND CORRECT THEM IN LOVE IF YOU HAVE THE POWER TO DO IT. PRAY FOR THEIR CONVICTION, REPENTANCE, REVELATION, UNDERSTANDING AND BELIEF IN THE MESSAGE OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST IN TOTALITY. WARN THEM OF ETERNAL DAMNATION IN HELL FIRE IF THEY REMAIN AND DIE IN THEIR UNBELIEF AND SINS.

Inside the Church are Christians whose spiritual heads are to judge and discipline them by the leading of the Holy Spirit. This means that God expects His ministers to correct all doctrinal errors and deal with sinful works in the Churches to reflect Jesus' birth, ministry, death and resurrection, ascension and second coming. Yes use your authority in Christ to judge and clean the Church of corruption and maintain holiness.

WHEN YOU ARE FILLED AND LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, YOUR HATRED FOR SIN AND LOVE TO CORRECT AND CHANGE BACKSLIDING CHRISTIANS IN THE CHURCH BECOMES A DIVINE MANDATE.

The bible says in

1 Peter 4:17 – For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

Apostle Peter revealed in this scripture that the Church would go through suffering and judgment in her bid to maintain God's standard in Christ through a righteous and holy living in the power of the Holy Spirit. Indeed all the negativity recorded in the Corinthian Church that Apostle intervened and corrected are evidence of judgment in the Church and the will of God.

He reveals also that judgment of the world of sin would be bigger and severer as a result of disobedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. Truly, the Church must preach to the world to believe in Jesus Christ before God's judgment is meted to all disobedient people.

The bible says that it is appointed unto man to die once and after that the judgment **(Hebrews 9:27)**. It means to say that people would be judged of works on earth based

on their belief in Jesus Christ or not. For the Church, the bible says the works of Believing Christians shall follow them even in death rest from their labours **(Revelations 14:13)**. It means to say also that we can only rest in the Lord only when we have laboured in Him.

On these gospel truths and revelations, Paul did not want the Corinthians Believers to waste their precious time condemning and judging people outside the domain of the Church. Rather, he advocated for disciplinary measures against sinners in the Church to avert contamination and pollution. This involves prayers and fasting, rebuke, counseling, instruction in righteousness and dismissal as the last resort when disobedience, arrogance, pride and speaking against Ministers, Church leadership and the Church, Body of Christ, and denial of the gospel of Jesus Christ to save eternally and works of the Holy Spirit have reached its highest peak. Even in this last resort, Paul did not advocate for violence or denial of right to live, family, work, prosperity, protection but the utmost desire for them to return to Christ and the Church. Like the prodigal son, the Father is ready to extend a hand of welcome and acceptance to backsliding Christians when they repent. Even unbelieving sinners who come to Christ despite their sins, evils and wickedness would be accepted and not rejected **(Luke 15:11 – 32)**.

For Paul who in his former life named Saul is symbolic of God's forgiving grace and mercy to every repentant soul. Besides, Paul's ministry works as an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ is also symbolic of an obedient Believing Christian to the heavenly call **(1 Timothy 1:12 – 16)**. For out of the eater came something to eat, And out of the strong came something sweet **(Judges 14:14 – 18)**. For those who are led by the Holy Spirit are the children of God **(Romans 8:14)**. Be spiritual and not carnal.

New King James Bible Commentary: Do not judge ... God judges – The Church's responsibility is to discipline its members whilst trusting the Lord to judge the world (see Matthew 13:30).

PRAYER

We thank You O Lord for the given wisdom to judge the Church with good and righteous disciplinary measures in love to correct all ills, maintain holiness and avert pollution of our most holy faith.

We pray for wisdom not to judge the world of unbelieving sinners but to preach and teach against all forms of sin, and warn them of eternal judgment and damnation without repentance.

Help us O Lord to make righteous decisions by Your Holy Spirit and the gospel of Jesus Christ to make Your Church holy.

We pray also that You help us to accept Your righteous judgments in Jesus' name. Amen.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO PAUL TEACHES US TO INSTITUTE STRICT CHURCH DISCIPLINARY MEASURES IN LOVE AGAINST DISOBEDIENT, STUBBORN AND PROUD BACKSLIDING SINNERS. BUT FOR THE WORLD OF UNBELIEVING SINNERS, JUDGMENT IS RESERVED FOR GOD WHO SHALL JUDGE ALL SINNERS AT THE END OF THEIR LIVES ON EARTH. YET THE MANDATE OF THE CHURCH IS TO SPEAK AGAINST ALL FORMS OF SINS AS THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**

IF YOUR CHURCH IS HOLY OR CORRUPT, CHURCH LEADERS AND MEMBERS ARE TO BE COMMENDED OR BLAMED. FOR IT IS EVIDENCE THAT YOU REIGN IN CHRIST'S AUTHORITY OR NOT. **NANA KWAKU DUODU**



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