

Get the Leaven Out

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Text: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

Introduction:

- I. Corrective church discipline is certainly one of the most emotionally charged subjects addressed by local congregations.
 - A. A true story:
 - 1. An elder of the local congregation announced at the beginning of a Sunday morning worship service that members of the congregation were being asked to withdraw themselves from an erring member.
 - 2. Following the call for congregational discipline, the song leader came to the pulpit, announced the first song to be song and then commented that he didn't think it was appropriate to "kick someone out of the church" at the beginning of the worship service.
 - 3. The elder came back to the pulpit to explain the erroneous thinking behind the comment.
 - 4. It was a tense worship service, to say the least!
 - B. Congregational withdrawal is a controversial topic; there exists much disagreement among Bible students about what exactly should be done, when it should be done and to whom it should be done.
 - C. The very nature of congregational withdrawal makes it a difficult step to take, but the Lord Himself noted that truth will separate people even in the most intimate relationships (Matthew 10:34-37).
- II. Corrective church discipline, as uncomfortable as it might be for a congregation in general, is absolutely crucial to the preservation of the moral purity and religious distinctiveness of the Lord's church.

Body:

- I. **THE GREATER CONTEXT**
 - A. It is clear that the first four chapters of 1 Corinthians constitute a unit, the common topic of which is division on the basis of preachers.
 - 1. Paul recognizes the existence of division in chapter one (specifically verses 10-13).
 - a. The Corinthians seem to have been divided on the basis of who had taught or baptized them, treating the gospel as though it were wisdom proprietary to the individual preachers; thus the apostle's relief that he had not baptized many of the Corinthians (1:14-17).
 - b. He argues that the gospel is not human wisdom, based on the nature of the message (1:18-25) and the character of those who responded to the message (1:26-31).
 - 2. Paul affirms the gospel is divine wisdom (chapter 2).
 - 3. He notes the proper role of preachers (chapter 3).

4. The apostle rebukes the attitude of the Corinthians (chapter 4).
- B. The repeated mention of the Corinthian “arrogance” may be a deliberate connection between chapters 1-4 and chapter 5.
1. Paul repeatedly identifies the Corinthians as arrogant or “puffed up” (4:6-7, 18-19; 5:2, 6; see also 1:28-29, 31).
 2. The Corinthian arrogance created an environment in which the problem of chapter five could exist. Simply put, the problem of chapter five (particularly the failure to discipline) was another symptom of their pride. [Morris 85-86]
 3. As the apostle gives the Corinthians the choice of how he will handle them (4:21), it may be that his thoughts were drawn to their tolerance of sexual immorality, as described in chapter five.
 4. Gordon Fee argues for the unity of 5:1-6:20 as “test cases of the crisis of authority and gospel.” He observes, “In fact what is most remarkable about 5:1-13 and 6:1-11 is how little time he devotes to the ‘sins’ (and ‘sinners’). He does threaten the latter with the grave consequences of their wrongdoing, but he is far more exercised in both cases with the church and its attitudes.” [194-5]
- C. It is also possible that the organization of the book is no more complicated than the successive address of problems within the Corinthian congregation.
1. Division is the first problem addressed; sexual immorality is the second.
 2. One weakness to this view might be the separation between the material in chapter five (dealing with sexual immorality) and the material in the latter half of chapter six (also dealing with sexual immorality, albeit of a different sort). Why separate these discussions?

II. EXEGESIS OF THE TEXT

- A. The proper response to sexual immorality committed by a member of the congregation (5:1-5)
1. Blatant sexual immorality (vs. 1)
 - a. Paul had learned (from Chloe’s household – 1:11?) that one of the members of the congregation was involved in sexual immorality (*porneia*).
 - b. Observations about the nature of the fornication:
 - 1) The designation “his father’s wife” probably indicates a step-mother, rather than the man’s own biological mother (cf. Leviticus 18:7-8). It is also almost certainly the case that the woman was not a Christian, in light of the absence of the mention of any discipline to be carried out against her.
 - 2) The verb “has” (vs. 1 - present active infinitive - *echein*) often refers to marriage in the context of interactions between men and women. It is argued that, married or not, this was an on-going relationship rather than the sin of a single occasion. [Willis 160; Fee 200]
 - a) Gordon Fee also describes the aorist (“has done”) of verse 2 as “constative,” meaning that it is of a summary nature [202, footnote #30].
 - b) See Dana and Mantey for a brief description of this use of the aorist tense. [196]

- 3) Paul notes Gentile antipathy toward this particular sin.
 - a) He certainly is not speaking of fornication in general; Greek and Roman society had no problem with fornication. Note these statements regarding the attitude of Gentiles toward fornication:
 - 1] “The prevailing type of marriage in Jewish, Greek, and Roman society was monogamous. Extramarital sexual relations, however, were readily available (at least in Greek and Roman circles), with prostitution and adultery common.” [Ferguson 69]
 - 2] “While mere *porneia* was excused – not to say approved – in heathen society, even by strict moralists, such foulness (incest, asd) was abominated. Of this crime the loose Catullus says (76. 4): ‘*Nam nihil est quidquam sceleris quo prodeat ultra*;...’ (Translation by Brendan Rau: “there isn’t any crime to which he could further proceed”). [Findlay 807]
 - b) Paul’s comment is harmonized with prevalent Gentile tolerance of fornication if we understand him to be referring to the specific sin of incest (a form of fornication).
 - c) Although incest was not unknown among the Greeks and Romans, it was not common. Paul’s comment (“not even named among the Gentiles”) is probably an example of hyperbole. [Butler 82]
 - d) “Cross-cultural studies of morality have typically remarked on the complexity and diversity of values to be found across time and space. One commentator has been led to conclude that ‘There is scarcely one norm or standard of good conduct that, in another time and place, does not serve to mark bad conduct.’ One possible exception to this conclusion is the universality of the incest taboo.” [Lickona, *Moral Development and Behavior*, p. 70; cited by Butler, 82]
2. The Corinthians, rather than mourning because of the sin committed, were “puffed up” (vs. 2), although it is uncertain whether their pride was the result of this specific situation [McGuigan 61; Fee 202] or just their attitude about themselves in general [Willis 161].
3. Paul instructs the Corinthians as to what should be done about the situation (vs. 3-5).
 - a. The apostle observes that, although he was not present at Corinth, he had already made a judgment concerning the man who was sinning (vs. 3).
 - b. As a collective unit (“when you are gathered together”), the church is to “deliver such a one to Satan” (vs. 5; cf. 1 Timothy 1:20). There are two common explanations for this expression:
 - 1) It is understood by many commentators to mean to hand the person over to Satan for the purpose of allowing him to be physically afflicted. Those who take this view would suggest that the “destruction of the flesh” (vs. 5a) refers to some actual physical illness or even death. [Hodge 85; Findlay 809; Morris 88-89; et. al.]
 - 2) Probably the correct explanation is that it means to “abandon” the person to Satan and his influence.

- a) “Delivering an immoral impenitent to Satan is really only an acknowledgement by the church of that which the sinner has already done to himself!” [Butler 86]
- b) “By his crime and his impenitence the man placed himself into Satan’s power. He merely deceived himself and others by thinking that he was still a Christian because he was being wrongfully allowed to continue his outward connection with the church. This wrongful outward connection now ceases. After this verdict has been rendered, he and all the Corinthians know the fact that the man is under Satan and not under Christ.” [Lenski 214]
- c. The purpose of the congregational action is ultimately for the salvation of the spirit (vs. 5b).
 - 1) As noted above, some commentators believe that the destruction of the flesh is the literal destroying of the physical body. It is more in line with 1 Timothy 1:20 to suggest that the action of delivering one to Satan is for the purpose of putting to death (metaphorically) the flesh, the fleshly lusts of man.
 - 2) This action was not to be taken because the church wanted the man to be lost, but because such action was necessary for him to be saved.
 - 3) This remedial purpose of the church’s action is, in my opinion, a strong argument against the view that the “destruction” contemplated is of the literal, physical body of the sinner. [Fee 210]

B. The danger and incongruity of leaven (5:6-8)

- 1. Paul reminds the Corinthians of the effect of leaven, perhaps citing a common proverb (vs. 6; cf. Galatians 5:9; Matthew 16:6-12).
 - a. Leaven is an influencing agent which causes fermentation in that with which it comes into contact. The leaven commonly used was probably not fresh yeast, but a small lump of dough already fermented.
 - 1) In this context, leaven is a symbol used to represent the influencing power of evil.
 - 2) There is some question about whether by “leaven” Paul means the sinner himself [McGuigan 63; Fee 216], the sin he committed [Findlay 809] or sin in general. Although the command to “purge out the old leaven” sounds parallel to the instruction to “put away from yourselves the evil person” (vs. 13), Paul’s use of the expression “leaven of malice and wickedness” (vs. 8) may well support the idea of “sin in general.”
 - 3) Willis [168] argues that the leaven in verse six is the disposition to tolerate evil; later he observes that the “old leaven” of verse seven would include “any and all evil.” Lipscomb [76] first associates the leaven with “all sin voluntarily tolerated by the individual or the church,” but finally concludes that “the leaven that was infecting the Corinthian church was a vitiated public opinion.”
 - b. The form and content of the question (“Do you not know...”) implies a rebuke. The Corinthians were surely aware of the effect of leaven, but they were acting as though they were not.

2. The mention of leaven suggests the Old Testament practice of removing all leaven from the house in preparation for the Passover/Feast of Unleavened Bread (Exodus 12:1-18).
 - a. Paul's argument seems to be based on the fact that the removal of all leaven in the house preceded the sacrifice of the paschal lamb in the Old Testament ritual.
 - b. The Feast of Unleavened Bread followed the Passover and was celebrated in the complete absence of leaven. Paul's line of thought is that our Passover lamb, Jesus Christ, has already been slain (vs. 7b; cf. 1 Peter 1:19); thus it is past time for the leaven to be removed. If this is the correct understanding of the text, the apostle's argument is based on chronology.
 - c. Applying the regulation in a figurative way to the Corinthians, they needed to make sure that all leaven was removed. I favor this view of the text.
 - d. The figure is a little mixed; the Corinthians are "a new lump," but they are also the ones who should be keeping the feast "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."
 - e. The "feast" of verse eight, in this line of thinking, is then a reference to the entire life of the Christian rather than to the observance of the Lord's Supper.
 - 1) Note the meanings of "malice" and "wickedness":
 - a) *kakia*: "badness, faultiness...in the moral sense – depravity, wickedness, vice gener. opposed to virtue" [Arndt & Gingrich 397]
 - b) *poneria*: "wickedness, baseness, maliciousness, sinfulness" [Arndt & Gingrich 690]
 - 2) The broad meanings of these two words would seem to support a broad view of the "feast" of vs. 8a, i.e., the entire life of the Christian.
3. A slightly different way of looking at Paul's argument would suggest that the Corinthians are "unleavened" because the paschal lamb was sacrificed for them.
 - a. "This emphasis on the sacrifice of Christ as the basis of their transfer from the old to the new is the point Paul will elaborate in v. 8, in the final application of the metaphor." [Fee 218]
 - b. Although understanding the "feast" to be a broad metaphor representing the life of the Christian, Fee writes, "It is just possible, however, that this further reference to celebrating the feast also includes an allusion to their sitting at the Table of the Lord. There is no way to tell for sure, although an allusion to the Table in the context of expelling a brother would certainly be fitting, especially in light of the command in v. 11 that they not even eat with him." [218]

C. Clearing up a misunderstanding (5:9-13)

1. Paul notes a possible misunderstanding regarding his instructions (vs. 9-10).
 - a. There is disagreement among Bible students about Paul's comment: "I wrote to you in my epistle..."
 - 1) Some argue that Paul is referring to an epistle written prior to 1 Corinthians, one in which he gave this instruction regarding sexually immoral people. According to this view, the Corinthians may have misunderstood Paul's instruction and he seeks to clarify the context of withdrawal.

- 2) Others believe that no previous epistle is implied by Paul's comment.
- The verb translated "I wrote" (*egegrapsa*) is aorist indicative. There is a use of the aorist tense known as "epistolary aorist" in which "a Greek writer would sometimes place himself at the viewpoint of his reader or readers, and use an aorist indicative in stating an act or event which was present or future to him." [Dana & Mantey 198]
 - It is thus argued that Paul's comment in verse 9 is actually a reference to his exhortations of verses 2-5.
- 3) Although I favor the view that Paul refers to a previous epistle, there doesn't seem to be any significant doctrinal implications to either view.
- One might wonder why Paul chose to list the sins that he did in verse 10.
 - The sexually immoral sin against their own bodies (1 Corinthians 6:18), the covetous and extortioners sin against society and the idolater sins against God. [Butler 92] Certainly this list would have described nearly everyone the Corinthian Christians would have encountered in Corinth and thus legitimized Paul's conclusion: "you would need to go out of the world."
 - It is also suggested that the sins listed relate to matters which Paul will address later in the epistle (6:1-11; chapters 8-10).
 - Paul explains that his instruction regarding withdrawal was not intended to apply to people "of this world," noting the impracticality of such an application (vs. 10).
 - Note the distinction Paul makes between association with people of the world and unfaithful Christians. Although the apostle himself suggests some restrictions upon association with those "outside" the church elsewhere in his writings (e.g., 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1), he never contemplates "going out of the world" as a viable possibility, yet this is the goal of the monastic lifestyle.
2. Paul clarifies those instructions (vs. 11-13).
- He restricts the scope of disassociation to any immoral individual who is "named a brother" (vs. 11). The "naming" appears to refer to how the individual is viewed by others rather than his opinion of himself (contrary to the translation of the New Living Translation – "anyone who claims to be a Christian"). This distinction has significance for one of the questions commonly posed regarding discipline: "Should we withdraw from the withdrawn?"
 - The inclusion of other sins beyond fornication serves to identify Paul's instruction as a general principle rather than a specific instruction dealing only with the Corinthians' specific situation or the specific sin of fornication. [Lenski 227; Lenski's comment is made with reference to verse 10, but I believe that it also explains Paul's broader list in verse 11, asd]
 - Verses 9 and 11 seem to be parallel in terms of Paul's instructions.
 - Both verses use the expression (same verb in the Greek - *sunanamignusthai* - present middle infinitive) "keep company with."
 - sunanamignum*

1] "mix up together, pass. mingle or associate with" [Ardnt and Gingrich 784]

- 2] “*to mix up together...reflex. and metaph. tini to keep company with, be intimate with, one*” [Thayer 601]
- b) This same verb is also used in 2 Thessalonians 3:14.
- 2) Verse 11 appears to expand on the implication of the prohibition, i.e., “not even to eat with.”
- a) Some view this prohibition as referring primarily to the Lord’s Supper [e.g. Fee 226]
 - b) Eating together socially carried certain connotations in the ancient world.
 - 1] The implication(s) of eating together is evident in such passages as Matthew 9:10-11; 11:19; Luke 15:2; 19:7; Acts 10:28; 11:1-3.
 - 2] “Being a guest for dinner in another person’s home was considered in the ancient world to be a sign that the host was intimately associated with the guest and that he agreed with his philosophical stand and his life-style. The Pharisees were shocked that Jesus would eat with publicans and sinners (cf. Matt. 9:10-11; 11:19; Luke 19:7).” [Butler 92]
 - 3] “‘Not to associate with’ = ‘not even to eat with,’ i.e., in the real sense to avoid ‘entirely.’” [Lenski 229]
 - c) Paul indicates he did not intend this prohibition to be applied to those in the world. The consequence of such an application would be that the Corinthians “would need to go out of the world” (vs. 10). If Paul has in mind only the Lord’s Supper or even just exclusion from the community of Christians as it gathered for worship and instruction [Fee 226], why would the Corinthians need to go out of the world? His comment makes no sense if the association, and eating in particular, had to do primarily with activities within the assembly.
 - d) It seems to me that Hodge misses the point completely. He writes, “It is not the act of eating with such persons that is forbidden. Our Lord eat [sic] with publicans and sinners, but he did not thereby recognize them as his followers. So we may eat with such persons as are here described, provided we do not thereby recognize their Christian character. This is not a command to enforce the sentence of excommunication pronounced by the church, by a denial of all social intercourse with the excommunicated. The command is simply that we are not, in any way, to recognize openly wicked men as Christians.” [91]
 - 1] Actually, it IS a prohibition against eating with the sinner disciplined by the church. Although I suspect Hodge views Paul’s comments in some generic or figurative way, his comment is a prime example of one who interprets a passage to not be saying exactly what it says!
 - d. Paul’s comments about “judging” in verses 12-13 are probably a continuation of his clarification of his previous instructions on the subject of withdrawal.
 - 1) The Corinthians had misunderstood the apostle to mean that association with those of the world was also unacceptable (vs. 10). By means of a

rhetorical question, Paul affirms that judging those in the world is not his responsibility (vs. 12a). God will judge those who are “outside” (vs. 13a).

- 2) Paul’s question in vs. 12b (“Do you not judge those who are inside?”) is not seeking information about the Corinthians’ practice (and, in fact, they were negligent!), but rather to affirm their responsibility.
- 3) Paul’s quotes from the Old Testament in verse 13b. The phrase quoted can be found, nearly identical in the LXX, in Deuteronomy 17:7; 19:9; 21:21; 22:21, 24 and 24:7.
- 4) “The Pauline principle is simple: Free association outside the church, precisely because God, not the church, judges those on the outside; but strict discipline within the church, because in its free association with the world it may not take on the character of the world in which it freely lives.” [Fee 227]
- 5) As an aside, note the parallelism in verses 12-13 between the two ideas of “outside” and “inside.”

III. FURTHER OBSERVATIONS FROM THE TEXT

- A. The text of 1 Corinthians 5 suggests several characteristics of effective collective discipline.
 1. Christians must have the proper attitude toward sin, recognizing its seriousness.
 - a. As Paul notes, the Corinthians should have mourned because of the sin of their erring brother (1 Corinthians 5:2).
 - b. [Speaking of withdrawal] “There are always some who see this action as harsh and unloving; but such criticism comes from those who do not appreciate the biblical view of God’s holiness, and the deep revulsion to sin that that holiness entails. When Isaiah sees the exalted Lord, and hears the trisagion ‘Holy, holy, holy’ (Isa. 6), he bows in deep personal and national repentance; and in such moments the removal of sin is the natural consequence.” [Fee 203]
 - c. The Lord was critical of the church at Thyatira because the members tolerated the teaching and behavior of “Jezebel” (Revelation 2:20).
 2. It must be recognized that the action of withdrawal is taken by the Lord’s authority.
 - a. Observe the substance of 1 Corinthians 5:4. Paul clearly emphasizes the Lord’s authority is behind the instruction he gives.
 - b. Note the connection between Matthew 18:18-20 with the previous verses dealing with discipline (vs. 15-17).
 - c. See also 2 Thessalonians 3:6.
 3. The purpose of collective discipline must be clear in the minds of the members of the congregation.
 - a. Its immediate aim is the “destruction of the flesh” and its ultimate goal is the salvation of the spirit (1 Corinthians 5:5; see also Hebrews 12:11).
 - 1) Even withdrawal is intended to be instructive. The same phrase used in 1 Corinthians 5:5 (“deliver...to Satan”) is also found in 1 Timothy 1:20 with the stated purpose of instruction (“that they may learn not to blaspheme”).
 - 2) The means of “destroying the flesh” (1 Corinthians 5:5) is through shame (2 Thessalonians 3:14).

- b. Withdrawal also serves the purpose of protecting the rest of the church from the influence of evil (1 Corinthians 5:6; 1 Timothy 5:19-20).
- 4. Those participating in the commanded withdrawal must understand what is involved.
 - a. The Scriptures do not use the expression “withdraw fellowship.” The unrepentant sinner has already broken fellowship with both God and his brethren (1 John 1:5-7; 2:19). The action of the church merely publicly recognizes the reality of the sinner’s condition.
 - b. The verb “withdraw” is not found in 1 Corinthians 5 (although the concept is!), but is taken from 2 Thessalonians 3:6.
 - c. Note these descriptions of the ostracism of the unrepentant sinner:
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 5:9: “not to keep company with”
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 5:11: “not to keep company with...not even to eat with such a person”
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 5:13: “put away from yourselves the evil person”
 - 4) Matthew 18:17: “let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector”
 - 5) 2 Thessalonians 3:6: “withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly”
 - 6) 2 Thessalonians 3:14: “note...and do not keep company with”
 - 7) Romans 16:17: “avoid”
 - 8) Titus 3:10: “reject”
 - d. Is this ostracism to be only outside of the assembly? Only inside the assembly?
 - e. As already noted, withdrawal is designed to cause shame (2 Thessalonians 3:14).
 - f. The disciplined brother is not to be treated as an enemy (2 Thessalonians 3:15).
- 5. Collective discipline must be carried out in a timely manner.
 - a. In light of the redemptive purpose of withdrawal, discipline should be carried out while it still may have some effect on the heart of the sinner (2 Thessalonians 3:14).
 - b. In light of the protective purpose of withdrawal, discipline should be carried out before the influence of sin has the opportunity to corrupt the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6).
 - c. “When such a case demands attention by the congregation and its leadership, it must be done with firmness, without partiality and as quickly as love allows.” [Butler 88]
- 6. The disciplinary action should be carried out in a united fashion, as a group effort.
 - a. Note that at least some of the church’s responsibility is to be carried out “when you are gathered together” (1 Corinthians 5:4-5).
 - 1) Observe the expressions which suggest the removal of the sinner from the group.
 - a) “Deliver such a one to Satan”

- b) "Purge out the old leaven"
 - c) "Put away from yourselves the evil person"
- 2) Both 1 Corinthians and 2 Thessalonians use terms which suggest the removal of the members of the church from the sinner.
- a) "not to keep company with"
 - b) "not even to eat with"
 - c) "withdraw from"
- b. As noted in the exegesis of the text, the responsibility of the congregation is not limited to its assembly; the disassociation commanded has a much wider scope.
- c. It should probably be noted that the pronoun ("you") in Matthew 18:17 is singular. Although collective action would be implied, the emphasis is on the ostracism of the sinner by the individual.
- B. Several other texts dealing with corrective discipline suggest other characteristics of effective collective discipline.
1. The foundation of corrective discipline must be a love for the sinner which manifests itself in concern for eternal destiny.
 - a. Love should be the motivation for corrective discipline (Hebrews 12:5-6).
 - b. How much love for the soul of an erring brother is manifested when he is allowed to slip back into the world with little or no effort to rescue him (Revelation 3:19)?
 2. Although experience suggests that negligence is often the greater problem, patience should characterize corrective discipline.
 - a. Even "Jezebel" (sexually immoral false teacher at Thyatira) was given time to repent (Revelation 2:21).
 - b. Paul commanded Timothy to interact with others with all "longsuffering" (2 Timothy 4:2).
 3. There must be some intimacy in the relationships between brethren.
 - a. The methodology of withdrawal (create shame in the sinner) depends to some extent upon the strength/intimacy of relationships within the local group.
 - b. When the unrepentant sinner has become emotionally distant from the group or when his relationship with others was never very intimate in the first place, withdrawal basically loses its redemptive power.
 4. There must be a willingness to forgive the sinner who wishes to restore fellowship (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).
 5. Discipline must be carried out without partiality (1 Timothy 5:21).

IV. TROUBLESONE QUESTIONS

- A. It seems that the subject of corrective discipline produces a multitude of questions regarding specific circumstances, much as divorce and remarriage does.
- B. Some commonly discussed questions include:
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1. Is withdrawal always to be a congregational action? Can an individual Christian withdraw from an unrepentant brother whom the local congregation has not disciplined?
 2. How exactly should we treat the disciplined? Can we greet them? Can we eat with them under any circumstances?
 3. Should a congregation withdraw from the brother who has ceased to frequent the assemblies of the church? Can we “withdraw from the withdrawn”?
 4. Should withdrawal be limited in application to only the sins listed by Paul in the various passages which deal specifically with corrective discipline?
 5. How do family members deal with disciplined spouses, parents or children? Should children who are minors be treated differently than those who are not?
 6. Must all corrective discipline follow the “pattern” of Matthew 18:15-17? Are there circumstances in which this process would not be followed?
- C. Many questions involving specific circumstances can be answered by remembering both the meaning and purposes of withdrawal.

Conclusion:

- I. The importance of discipline, both instructional and corrective, can be seen in the history of the church during the early centuries of its existence.
 - A. The Roman empire was unable to “stamp out” the Lord’s church through physical persecution.
 - B. After Christianity became a “legal” religion in the 4th century, it became both socially and politically advantageous to become a “member.” The “membership” of the church was flooded with people who were not truly converted, bringing their worldly ideas with them.
- II. As those “in” the church become more like those “outside” of the church, the church loses its distinctiveness.

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