

1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

⁹ Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. ¹¹ And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Today is Father's Day. It is a national holiday that recognizes the importance of family. This day recognizes the importance of fathers and the role that they play in the lives of their children. As we collectively observe this special day pleasant generalities and humorous stereotypes about fathers are on display. As we browse through greeting cards and listen to fond stories shared about our fathers we quickly find out that fathers are known for such things as: fixing what is broken and saying things like, "Because I said so." Perhaps those of us who are fathers have to smile as we think about our fathers and how we have found ourselves saying and doing things just like they did.

And so on this day that we honor fathers; on this day when we have with these thoughts of our fathers running through our heads we consider our relationship with God the Father in these terms.

Honor Your Heavenly Father.**Respect his definition of right and wrong.****Know that in love he fixes what is broken.**

God has defined what is right and what is wrong. He has laid it out clearly before us in his word. And as his children we are to live under his rules and to respect his authority. He is our Father and we are his children. We follow his commands, we know what is right and wrong, we know what we are to do and what things we are to avoid, all because, well, God said so. However, like a rebellious teenager our culture today no longer respects the word of God and adheres to God's commands simply because he says so. It seems that this is no longer good enough for many. For many different reasons, including the sin of pride, we as a culture insist that we know better, even though God our Father gives us his word and his counsel and his warnings for our good. He knows best, but many ignore his holy word.

God warns his children of the dangers of living sexually immoral lives and his advice is neglected and ignored. Sexual activity before marriage is now expected; extramarital affairs are pursued sometimes without shame; marriages are broken and carelessly discarded. God clearly says that homosexuality is wrong and yet our culture continues to permit and embrace this sin as an acceptable lifestyle. {The translation of male prostitutes and homosexual offenders in the NIV is actually a poor translation of these

verses. God certainly forbids prostitution and sexual abuse, but these words in the Greek language also speak to both partners in any homosexual relationship}. What is clear in any language is that Paul includes in this list sexual sins that are forbidden by God. Unfortunately God's Word is ignored by many. His rules are not followed. God our Father is not honored.

With these words from 1 Corinthians God also commands us not to get drunk, gossip, and slander each other. He warns us of the dangers of covetousness and greed. We should avoid these sins too. We should also see these as wrong and dangerous as well, because our heavenly Father says so. But much to the Father's dismay his children continue to downplay these sins and try to sweep them under the rug. "It's no big deal," the children say.

With a heart that is grieved the Father watches as his children ignore his council, choose to live in sin, and bring harm upon themselves. God our Father wants to rule the hearts of his children but far too often his children deny him giving their hearts instead to the false gods of sex and money, popularity and power. These are the prevalent gods of modern day, but these have been around since the beginning and have enslaved the thoughts and minds of many, dragging both men and women into ruin and destruction.

No, these sins of sexuality are not problems that have suddenly dropped out of the sky or emerged in the state of Minnesota. The sins of greed and coveting, the sins of dishonest dealing and fraud and theft are not problems that are suddenly new to our culture today. God's children of every generation have dealt with these problems and none of the sins listed here will fade away anytime soon. From the Old Testaments Baals and Asherah poles and the detestable practices tied to these fertility gods, to the rampant sexual immorality and the fraud and the greed that plagued the ancient Greco-Roman culture in and surrounding Corinth there are sadly plenty of parallels to choose from when comparing the problems that we face today.

And so Paul writes these words to people in a moral climate that is sadly similar to ours. Corinth was filled with and surrounded by worldly thinking that not only condoned but promoted sexual immorality, greed, slander, and all sorts of loose morals. This of course was appealing to the Corinthian Christians, because it is appealing to the sinful human nature in general. And even though these believers now had a better knowledge of God's Word and God's will through Paul's teaching they were still failing to listen to God's commands. Even though they had become citizens of heaven through faith in Christ Jesus they too had been enticed into pursuing a dual citizenship of sorts. They wanted to live like those around them. Even though they had become children of God they wanted to live like the children of this world. Even though they were children of the light they wanted to live, at least a part of their life, in the darkness of sin. They had no problem calling themselves Christians, even though they were acting like drunkards, and slanderers, and swindlers, and those who were sexually immoral and greedy idolaters.

And so Paul's words to the Corinthians are as timely as ever when he speaks this warning to us. ***⁹Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor***

male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders ¹⁰ nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

Do not be deceived. God our Father does not tolerate such blatant disobedience of his commands. A life of sin, a life of impenitence, severs the relationship between God the Father and his children. ***{Isaiah 59:2.} ² But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.*** God cannot and will not give the blessed inheritance of forgiveness and eternal life to those who do not repent. There is a rift that cannot be ignored. God cannot cover the sins of the impenitent with the blood of Jesus if they deny what they are doing is a sin.

It does us no good to pretend we aren't broken and sinful, but that is what society today has done and we can easily get caught up in this. Many people, some even claiming to be Christians, go on their merry way ignoring God's warnings. Many try to redefine what sin is and sin isn't while continually searching for ways to justify their actions. Even though God clearly tells us what is sin his council is ignored; and suddenly not only is sin tolerated it is defended. It is accepted. It is promoted as alternative lifestyle or defended by the claim that this is just how people are now.

Now you and I may not have jumped on the bandwagon of accepting homosexuality as an acceptable lifestyle or being in favor of gay "marriage", but what about the rest of these sins listed here. Do we see these as serious threats to our relationship with God or do we say with the children of this world, "*It's no big deal.*" Do we in our daily lives dismiss words of slander as just how people talk? Do we find no problem with getting drunk because well I'm not really hurting anyone; and I am just having a good time? Do we excuse taking of advantage of someone through dishonest dealings as just doing what is best for me and my bottom line? We may not openly steal or commit open adultery and idolatry, but we covet, we lust, we fail to fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The law condemns us all. We have all fallen into these sins. Not one of us has sinned little. We have all sinned much. Not one of us can say that they have never felt a surge of greed. Not one of us can say that we have been perfectly pure in our thoughts and words and deeds. Not one of us can say that we have had an undivided heart and loved God with our entire heart and soul, mind and strength. In our weakness we will fall into these and many other sins. The key for as God's children is that out of love for God, out of thanks for his sacrifice, and out of honor and respect for our Heavenly Father we struggle against such temptation. We recognize what is right and wrong according to God's standards. And then when we fall short of His standards we confess. We confess our sins to God and ask for his forgiveness. The apostle John explains how necessary it is to recognize our guilt before God ***⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives. {1 John 1:5-10}***

God in his law helps us to see that we are truly broken. We don't deserve to be called his children. We don't deserve to be receiving his heavenly inheritance. We need his forgiveness. We need him to fix us; and he does. By nature we were joined to death

and the detestable things of this world and yet God has intervened to save. After Paul makes a list of all these prevalent sins and warns the Corinthians of the danger of living in such immoral ways he says, ¹¹***And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*** God our Father has fixed what was broken. He fixed that broken relationship between God and man by sending his Son. Through the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God he has rescued us. Through the gospel he cleanses us from sin. The blood that Jesus shed for you and me makes you pure and holy. He cleansed you through baptism and has dedicated you in service to him. That is what it means that he has sanctified us. He has set us apart to be his own. He has dedicated our bodies to be his temple. We who were daily defiled by sin, he has cleansed us so that he may dwell in us. He has made us instruments to worship him and glorify him. For in Christ Jesus he has justified us. We, who were once guilty, covered with the filth of sin, have now been made so pure that when God looks at us, it is just as if we had kept the whole law perfectly. Because of faith that holds to Christ and his atoning work when God looks at us it is just as if we had never sinned. Christ covers us. We need his forgiveness! And by the precious miracle of faith and by the Spirit of our God we have his forgiveness!

And therefore we honor him. He has forgiven us our huge debt of sin. Christ in love he has canceled the debt of our many sins, he has paid for them all with his precious blood, and therefore we live to honor him. In love and thanksgiving and trust we love him and we love much for he has forgiven us much. It is this love for our God that moves to respect and honor what he says about what is right and what is wrong. It is love for our Heavenly Father that leads us to strive to obey his commands. Let us honor and respect our Heavenly Father for he fixes what is broken. Let us honor and respect our Heavenly Father for the precious inheritance that he pours upon us, his children, through our Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Let us love him much for our many sins have been forgiven. Amen.