

# 1 Corinthians 5:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.

## Analysis

**It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you** (ἀκούεται πορνεία ἐν ὑμῖν)–the Greek porneia (πορνεία) encompasses all sexual immorality, but here refers to incest. **Such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles**—even pagan Corinth, notorious for sexual licentiousness, condemned this sin. Roman law explicitly prohibited marriage to one's stepmother (Gaius, Institutes 1.63). The phrase **that one should have his father's wife** describes a man living with his stepmother, likely after his father's death.

Paul's shock is palpable—sexual immorality existed in the church that pagans rejected. The Corinthians' inflated spirituality (phusioo, "puffed up") had produced moral blindness. Their tolerance wasn't grace but compromise. The case was public knowledge ("reported commonly"), demanding immediate action. This verse introduces the chapter's theme: the church's responsibility to maintain purity through discipline, not to punish but to protect the body and restore the sinner.

## Historical Context

Corinth was a Roman colony rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 44 BC, notorious for sexual immorality associated with Aphrodite's temple. While the extent of temple prostitution is debated, sexual ethics were lax—concubinage, prostitution, and divorce were commonplace. Into this context, Paul planted a church calling believers to radical sexual purity as temples of the Holy Spirit (6:19).

## Related Passages

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**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. When does tolerance of sin become complicity? How do you balance grace with the call to holiness?
2. What 'reported commonly' sins might exist in your church that require loving confrontation?
3. How does understanding your body as a temple of the Holy Spirit shape your view of sexual ethics?

## Interlinear Text

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Όλως ἀκούεται ἐν ὑμῖν πορνεία καὶ τοιαύτη  
commonly It is reported among you fornication and such  
G3654 G191 G1722 G5213 G4202 G2532 G5108

πορνεία ἡτις οὐδὲ ἐν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν ὄνομάζεται,  
fornication as not so much among the Gentiles as named  
G4202 G3748 G3761 G1722 G3588 G1484 G3687

ὅστε γυναικά τινα τοῦ πατρὸς ἔχειν  
that wife one G3588 his father's should have  
G5620 G1135 G5100 G3962 G2192

## Additional Cross-References

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**Revelation 21:8** (Parallel theme): But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

**Revelation 2:21** (Parallel theme): And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

**Colossians 3:5** (Parallel theme): Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

**Ephesians 5:3** (Parallel theme): But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;

**Leviticus 18:8** (Parallel theme): The nakedness of thy father's wife shalt thou not uncover: it is thy father's nakedness.

**1 Corinthians 5:11** (Parallel theme): But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

**Galatians 5:19** (Parallel theme): Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

**Acts 15:20** (Parallel theme): But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood.

**Acts 15:29** (Parallel theme): That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

**Jeremiah 2:33** (Parallel theme): Why trimmest thou thy way to seek love? therefore hast thou also taught the wicked ones thy ways.