

1 Corinthians 5:10

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world.

Analysis

Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world—Paul clarifies he didn't mean total separation from immoral unbelievers. *Pantos* (πάντως, "altogether, entirely") emphasizes this would be impossible without leaving the world (*kosmos*). Christians live in, engage with, and witness to a fallen world; we cannot create isolated communes. **Or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters**—Paul expands the list beyond sexual sin to greed (*pleonektes*, one who always wants more), swindlers (*harpax*, rapacious, grasping), and idolaters.

For then must ye needs go out of the world—complete separation from sinners would require leaving planet Earth. The church's mission demands engagement with sinful culture (John 17:15-18). The distinction isn't between pure Christians and sinful pagans but between those who claim Christ yet live in unrepentant sin (v. 11) versus those who make no such claim. The church holds members accountable to professed standards but extends grace to those making no claim to follow Christ. This prevents both self-righteous isolation and compromised witness.

Historical Context

First-century Corinth was thoroughly pagan—business, social life, and civic duties were permeated with idolatry. Complete separation would have meant economic and social suicide. Early Christians maintained witness by participating in daily life

while refusing to compromise core convictions (e.g., eating marketplace meat but not attending temple feasts, 1 Cor 10:25-28).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How do you engage your culture redemptively without compromising your convictions?
2. Do you show more grace to unbelievers than to struggling Christians, or vice versa?
3. What practical boundaries help you live 'in the world but not of it' in your work, neighborhood, or family?

Interlinear Text

καὶ	οὐ	πάντως	τοῖς	πόρνοις	τοῦ	κόσμου	τούτου
Yet	not	altogether	G3588	with the fornicators	G3588	the world	of this
G2532	G3756	G3843		G4205		G2889	G5127
ἢ	τοῖς	πλεονέκταις	ἢ	ἄρπαξιν	ἢ	εἰδωλολάτραις	
or	G3588	with the covetous	or	extortioners	or	with idolaters	
G2228		G4123	G2228	G727	G2228	G1496	
ἐπεὶ	ὀφείλετε	ἄρα	ἐκ	τοῦ	κόσμου	ἐξελεθεῖν	
for	must ye needs	then	out of	G3588	the world	go	
G1893	G3784	G686	G1537		G2889	G1831	

Additional Cross-References

1 Corinthians 10:27 (Parallel theme): If any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go; whatsoever is set before you, eat, asking no question for conscience sake.

Revelation 12:9 (Parallel theme): And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

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