

Series - Be Wise (6 of 22)

Date/s - 30 June 2019

Topic - The Elephant In The Room (1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

Speaker/s - Pastor Ernie Song

## Welcome [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[www.thesource4ym.com/games/](http://www.thesource4ym.com/games/)

[www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/smallgroups/articles/icebreakersbeyond.html) < go to LEAD, click on ICEBREAKERS >

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## Worship [15 min]

You may select songs like “*O Praise The Name (Anástasis)*”, “*Be Enthroned*”, “*I Just Want You*”, “*Here I Bow*” or “*Worthy Of It All*”.

## Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the cell discussion, cell members will:

1. Not ignore or tolerate sinful behaviours in themselves or in others
2. Commit to speak the truth in love with the goal towards conviction, repentance and restoration.
3. Adopt the right posture when receiving rebuke or discipline by the church.

## Word [45 min]

Preaching from 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, Pastor Ernie used the idiom ‘the elephant in the room’ to refer to an enormous and obvious problem in the church which we choose to ignore because it is uncomfortable to deal with. The young church in Corinth was such a church. Made up of believers from diverse backgrounds, it was rife with sin and immorality. Paul had to address these issues head-on:

- Incest between a man and his mother (v 1)
- Arrogance and unrepentance of this man and factions in the church (vv 2, 6)
- Tolerance of the church towards sin (vv 2, 5, 9-13).

### What were Paul’s instructions to the church on these matters?

He commanded the church “to deliver him to Satan for the destruction of the flesh so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord” (v 5). This ‘deliverance to Satan’ is similar to a judicial sentence for punishment. The goal of his expulsion or dis-fellowship is not to condemn but to provoke repentance. (See Luke 15:12-20, 1 Timothy 1:20, Exodus 9:12, Joshua 11:20, and Psalm 81:12.)

Addressing the boasting and tolerance towards blatant sin in the church, Paul warned that, “a little leaven leavens the whole lump” (v 6). Using a modern analogy, Ps Ernie compared this to a cancer in the body, where if it is not treated early, will spread to the rest of the body.

### What are the implications for RiverLife today?

- a. Tolerance of sin is like cancer in the Body of Christ. Our response must be speaking the truth in love, not tolerating in silence and pretending all is well.
- b. Church discipline is needed. Why?

- i. It vindicates God's holiness.
  - ii. It restores the purity of the church and deters others from sinning.
  - iii. It draws a line between the Church and the world.
  - iv. It conveys Biblical love and seeks to restore the sinner.
- c. Having the right posture in receiving discipline propels us towards the God-designed potential in our relationships with each other.

Using Matthew 18:15-20 as a precept, Ps Ernie laid out the RiverLife protocol in addressing members who are unrepentant in their sin and behaviour.

1. Private conversation
2. Discussion in the presence of a few witnesses
3. Public confrontation
4. Treat as a pagan (by expulsion or dis-fellowship)

Ps Ernie ended the sermon with an encouraging note by quoting Robert Mulholland in his book, *Invitation To A Journey*:

"Everything that God has done, is doing and ever will do in our lives to conform us to the image of Christ (which is the image of our wholeness) is not so that we may someday be set in a display case in heaven as trophies of grace. All of God's work to conform us to the image of Christ has as its sole purpose that we might become what God created us to be in relationship with God and with others."

### **Discussion Questions**

1. **Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13. Try to go back in time and put yourself in the context of the Corinthian church with the things that were going on in this passage. As a member in this church and seeing all that is happening around you, what goes through your mind?** [15 min]
  
2. **The instructions Paul gave to the church regarding the man who sinned appear to be harsh and unloving. The language he used is some of the strongest in the New Testament: 'hand him over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh' (v 5); 'cleanse out [this man]' (v 7); 'not even to eat with such a one' (v 11); and 'purge the evil person' (v 13). How can we pass judgment like this on others? Didn't Jesus tell us not to judge so that we would not be judged (Matt 7:1)? Isn't the most loving thing to do is to keep warning them to repent but to maintain the relationship? Aren't we supposed to 'love the sinner, hate the sin'? Discuss.** [15 min]

3. In his sermon, Ps Ernie said, “If you truly love someone, you will not become tolerant when they sin. If you don’t confront them with the goal towards repentance, this shows that you don’t really love them.” How can this practically happen in your cell? Can we start by sharing some behaviours we observe in the cell that may not be healthy? [15 min]

**Works** [10 min]

Let’s pray:

1. Every RiverLifer will not compromise on sin, whether it is in us or in others.

**Announcements**

**1. Joining The Family**

Sat, 27 Jul | 10am-1pm | Faith Chapel

This course is a pre-requisite for Associate Membership.

Sign up at online at [bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily](http://bit.ly/rlcjoiningthefamily) by Sun, 21 Jul. For more information, please contact Karen Koh at 65114139, or email her at [karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg](mailto:karenkoh@riverlife.org.sg).

**2. We Belong**

RiverLife Conference

23- 24 Aug 2019

Sign up online at [www.riverlife.org.sg/webelong](http://www.riverlife.org.sg/webelong) by Sun, 4 Aug

**Church Vision:**

“A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations.”

**Mission:**

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.