

# **Dangers on the Safe Side (Part 2): Expanding Fellowship**

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Text: 1 Corinthians 5:1-13

This is the second lesson in a series about dangers that exist “on the safe side.” This phrase means “avoiding danger, with a margin for error.” Sometimes this is fine or even wise, but there is a difference between wisdom and safety. Sometimes they overlap, but not always. At times, staying “on the safe side” is actually dangerous. Erring on the side of caution can cause us to err when it leads to fear and compromise or results from a lack of faith. Faithfulness often requires us to venture out of safety. We must do God’s will regardless of the danger.

## **The “Safe Side” – Expanding Fellowship**

- Paul addressed the problem of sin in the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 5:1-2) – immorality that was unheard of among the Gentiles; they were arrogant about their “tolerance”; yet this one needed to be delivered to Satan in order to try to save his soul (1 Corinthians 5:5)
- Paul warned them that their boasting was not good (1 Corinthians 5:6) – this would spread among the church; they were to hold their brethren to a higher standard than the world (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)
- Why this would be seen as “safe” – it kept the peace in the church and avoided the discomfort of confronting sin

## **Why This Is Tempting**

- We want to maintain relationships – we are social beings (cf. Genesis 2:18); unity is pleasant (Psalm 133:1)
- We want others to look up to us – we could be seen as an example of “tolerance” (cf. Ephesians 4:2)
- It is difficult to confront sin – we have to guard ourselves (Galatians 6:1) and prepare for attacks (1 Kings 18:17)

## **Why This Is Dangerous**

- Sin will spread – evil company corrupts (1 Corinthians 15:33); the influence spreads like leaven (1 Corinthians 5:6)
- The one in sin will be encouraged to remain in sin – he needs to be turned from sin instead (James 5:19-20)
- We will lose our fellowship with God – this could cause us to lose our reward from God (2 John 8-11)

## **What to Do Instead**

- Rather than allowing sin to spread – we need to expose it (Ephesians 5:11) and warn others about it (1 Timothy 5:20)
- Rather than encouraging one to remain in sin – we need to admonish them to repent (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)
- Rather than losing our fellowship with God – we need to hold fast to what His word teaches (2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2:15)

## **Conclusion**

- It is tempting to ignore the Biblical rules of fellowship – but God has revealed these rules for us
- We must not try to be more accepting than God – instead, follow the Lord and work with those who do the same