

Loving Discipline

Offences will come!

Luke 17:1 – “Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe [unto him], through whom they come!”

Acts 20:29-30 – “For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”

1 Cor. 11:19 – “For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.”

Problems will come. Heresies will arrive. Satan will attempt to scatter the flock. God has not left us without defense against the wiles of Satan.

Following the heart of Christ

Matt. 18:11-14 – “For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that [sheep], than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.”

John 17:12 – “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.”

If you want to be where Jesus is, you will seek to save that which is lost. Lost in the sense of those that are falling away from the flock of God! He does not want ANY to fall by the wayside.

Read 1 Corinthians 5:1-13, a primer from the Apostle Paul on the purpose and practice of church discipline.

Why must we discipline?

1. To be Obedient to Christ - **Matt 18:17-18**
2. To create and maintain the spiritual reputation of the church - **1 Cor. 5:1**
3. To maintain the proper attitude towards sin in the body - **1 Cor. 5:2**
4. To purify the body in the present and in the future - **1 Cor. 5:6-8**
5. To allow the Lord to complete His chastening work and draw them back to Him - **1 Cor. 5:5, 12-13**
When we fail to exercise loving discipline, we are keeping them from the full chastisement of God. We are preventing the exercise of His fatherly love.

When must we discipline?

Gal. 6:1 – “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Matthew 18:15-17 – “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear [thee, then] take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell [it] unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

We all sin. To pretend we do not is to call God a liar (1 John 1:10). Through Christ, we can find forgiveness of our sins through the application of His blood. It is when we fail to repent and remain in a cycle of sin (overtaken by a fault) that we can become a candidate for church discipline. There are several different lists throughout the

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New Testament that teach when discipline should be exercised in the body. We will address these lists generally and then discuss the specific items named individually.

1 Cor. 5:9-11 – A list of offences that are cause for exclusion from the body.

1 Cor. 6:9-11 – A list of offences for which people will not inherit the kingdom of God

Gal. 5:19-21 – A list of “works of the flesh”. Those that do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God

Eph. 5:1-7 – A list of offences that should not be named among us, nor will those that repeatedly commit them inherit the kingdom of God.

Titus 3:9-11 – Specific instructions for dealing with heresy and a heretic

A List of Specific Sins that are Excludable Offenses

1. Those which cause offences (occasions of stumbling) – **Matthew 18:7-10**
 - It means to cause others to sin – to do that which is contrary to God’s will
2. Those who commit adultery – **Gal. 5:19, 1 Cor. 6:9**
 - One who is unfaithful to his or her spouse
3. Those who commit fornication – **Gal. 5:19, 1 Cor. 5:11, 6:9, Eph. 5:3**
 - Sexual intercourse outside the bounds of marriage
4. Those who are unclean – **Gal. 5:19, Eph. 5:3**
 - Those who have illicit lustful acts or addictions
5. Those who behave lasciviously – **Gal. 5:19**
 - Indecent bodily movements, petting, immodest dressing
6. Those who practice idolatry – **Gal. 5:20, 1 Cor. 6:9**
 - The worship of false gods
7. Those who practice witchcraft – **Gal. 5:20**
 - Involvement in the occult and the use of drugs
8. Those who harbor hatred – **Gal. 5:20**
 - The bitter attitude of feelings against an enemy
9. Those who cause variances – **Gal. 5:20**
 - One who is argumentative and likes to cause problems
10. Those who cause emulations – **Gal. 5:20**
 - A manifestation of jealousy or rivalry
11. Those who are wrathful – **Gal. 5:20**
 - impulses and outbursts of anger (one who cannot control their temper)
12. Those who cause strife – **Gal. 5:20**
 - One who is a politician, trying to create division and pull others to their side
13. Those who cause seditions – **Gal. 5:20**
 - One who causes division, sometimes by using fair speeches and flattery to deceive weaker Christians

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14. Those who are envious – **Gal. 5:21**
 - A jealous or envious spirit
15. Those who are murderers – **Gal. 5:21**
 - Those who commit murder
16. Those who are drunkards – **Gal. 5:21, I Cor. 6:10**
 - Those who are given to intoxicating drink – drunk
17. Those who are involved in revellings – **Gal. 5:21, I Cor. 6:10**
 - One who is given to partying
18. Those who are effeminate – **I Cor. 6:9**
 - One who has homosexual tendencies
19. Those who are abusers of themselves with mankind – **I Cor. 6:9**
 - A homosexual – in practice
20. Those who are thieves – **I Cor. 6:10, Eph. 5:3**
 - One who is eager to have more, especially that which belongs to others
21. Those who are covetous – **I Cor. 6:10**
 - An embezzler
22. Those who are extortioners – **I Cor. 6:10**
 - A thief or an extortioner
23. Those who are heretics – **Titus 3:9-11**
 - One who causes division through false teaching that contradicts the important teachings of Scripture
 - Sometimes these brethren can simply be deceived. They should be given the opportunity to see the truth through the carefully expounded Word of God. If they do not hear you after one or two admonitions, they should be taken through the disciplinary process
24. Those who practice filthiness – **Eph. 5:4**
 - Obscenity – Dirty language or stories
25. Those who practice foolish talking – **Eph. 5:4**
 - Literally “fool-talk,” silly speech, coarse vulgarity, evil-minded chatter, idle gossip
26. Those who engage in jesting – **Eph. 5:4**
 - quick witted cynicism that is often obscene and hurtful in nature

How must we discipline?

In the proper spirit

Gal. 6:1 – “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

I Cor. 5:2 – “And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.”

In EVERY circumstance, no matter how horrible the sin or how personally offended we are, the goal is repentance and restoration of fellowship with God and one another. If we lose sight of this, we are the hypocrite with a log in our own eye while trying to remove the splinter from their eye.

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By gathering all the facts

Prov. 18:13 – “He that answereth a matter before he heareth [it], it [is] folly and shame unto him.”

First as individuals

Matt. 18:15 – “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.”

Then as 2 or 3

Matt. 18:16 – “But if he will not hear [thee, then] take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.”

Finally as a body

Matt. 18:17 – “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell [it] unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

One item that is too often neglected in church discipline is the necessary work of the church after the member is excluded. At that point, fellowship as we have known it ceases. We are to act toward them as if they are lost. The idea being that we should have a remarkable and sweet fellowship within the body that is something desirable to this world. When a member is excluded, they lose that fellowship. See the passage below.

2 Cor. 2:5-8 – “But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part: that I may not overcharge you all. Sufficient to such a man [is] this punishment, which [was inflicted] of many. So that contrariwise ye [ought] rather to forgive [him], and comfort [him], lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm [your] love toward him.”

Yes we still love them. Yes we still pray for them. Yes we still speak to them, but things are not the same. They are now outside the body and all of our contact should be solely focused on winning them back to Christ. They should not be treated as a member. When our fellowship is what it should be, losing that blessing will devastate those who are truly of the Lord and that godly sorrow will bring them to repentance, forgiveness, and restoration.