

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **1Corinthians 5:1-13**.
- B. Tonight's question: "Is the word discipline an extinct word,... or are we to rationalize any and all situations to excuse the action?"
- C. Tonight's lesson is on church discipline.

I. DISCIPLINE COMES FROM GOD.

- A. The character of God demands discipline because He is holy (1Pet. 1:14-16).
*As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, **15** but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; **16** because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."*
- B. God practices discipline:
 - 1. Adam and Eve lost their paradise home and access to the tree of life (Gen. 3:23-24).
*therefore the LORD God sent him out from the garden of Eden, to cultivate the ground from which he was taken. **24** So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every direction, to guard the way to the tree of life.*
 - 2. The people of Noah's day (1Pet. 3:20).
who once were disobedient, when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the water.
 - 3. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24-29).
 - 4. Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10:1,2).
*Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. **2** And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.*
 - 5. Annanias and Sapphira (see Ac. 5:1-11).
- C. In the church, God demands discipline (2Th. 3:6).
Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.
- D. Strictly speaking, discipline in the church is much broader than disfellowship. It is:
 - 1. Preventative (warnings against evil help to keep us away from danger).
 - 2. Instructive (instruction in righteousness helps us discipline ourselves).
 - 3. Corrective (when these two fail, corrective discipline--disfellowship--is necessary).

II. THE TEXT.

- A. In Corinth a male member of the church was living with his father's wife. Paul declared it fornication (*porneia*), illicit sexual conduct.
- B. It was a sin of such magnitude that the Gentiles w/o divine law did not generally condone it, and the Jews under the Law of Moses were directed to punish fornicators by stoning them (see Lev. 18:8; 20:11; Deut. 22:30).
- C. This sin in Corinth was a blight upon the purity of the bride of Christ (the church). And to make matters worse, the church in Corinth was not in favor of correcting the sinner.
- D. Although Paul was not in Corinth when he heard about the man's sin, he made an inspired judgment and directed the church as to its immediate action. This action is expressed in five different phrases in 1Cor. 5:
 - 1. "taken away from among you" (5:2).
 - 2. "deliver... unto Satan" (5:5).
 - 3. "purge out therefore the old leaven" (5:7).
 - 4. "not to company with" (5:9).
 - 5. "not even to eat with such a one" (5:11).

- E. The message is in harmony with numerous other passages.
See Mt. 18:15-17; Rom. 16:17-18; Eph. 5:11-12; 2Th. 3:6, 14-15; Titus 3:10.

III. THE PURPOSE.

- A. The design of church discipline or disfellowship is four-fold.
- B. **First, it recognizes a condition that already exists--a soul is separated from God** (1Cor. 5:1).
It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.
- C. **Second, the aim of discipline is to save a soul** (1Cor. 5:5).
I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.
1. The "flesh" stands for the desires of the flesh to which he had succumbed as evidenced in his life (Rom. 6:6).
knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin;
 2. By a public acknowledgment of the man's in by the church and its subsequent action toward him, perhaps he would be led to renounce his fleshly conduct and return to the Lord.
 3. The aim of disfellowship is that the disobedient one "may be ashamed." It is hoped that this shame will lead to repentance (2Th. 3:14).
And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame.
- D. **Third, discipline spiritually strengthens the church and helps keep it pure** (1Cor. 5:7).
Clean out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.
When Paul said that a little leaven leavens the whole lump, he was warning about the contagious effect of un-reproved sin (1Tim. 5:20).
Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also may be fearful of sinning.
- E. **Fourth, people outside the church have a just view of the kind of life God expects.**
1. Some will criticize and condemn the church for its stand, but so be it.
 2. If 2Cor. 2 refers to 1Cor. 5 (and I believe it does), then we have a brief view of the desired outcome and value of this action.
 3. Text: 2Cor. 2:4, 6-7.
For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears; not so that you would be made sorrowful, but that you might know the love which I have especially for you. 6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, 7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow.
 - a. The man was brought to a condition of shame and repentance.
 - b. The church was instructed to forgive, confront, and confirm their love for him.
 4. Text: 2Th. 3:14-15.
If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. 15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.
 - a. The one to whom fellowship was withdrawn is not to be counted as an enemy, but admonished as a brother.
 - b. When he repents, he is to be received back with open arms into the warm atmosphere of the church and Xian homes.

IV. THE PROCEDURE.

- A. **First, guilt is to be determined.**
1. The sin of this individual was evident to the church and community.
 2. Paul had heard reliable testimony (maybe 1Cor. 1:11).
 3. God's people should never act upon hearsay (Deut. 13:12-15).
 4. The congregation also must discreetly determine the actual circumstances of the transgressor

before disfellowship is initiated.

5. The sinner should be exhorted to repent with warnings in the spirit of love and humility (1Th.5:14; Titus 3:10; Gal. 6:1; Jas. 5:19-20).

(1Th 5:14) And we urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all men.

(Ti 3:10) Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

(Gal 6:1) Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

(Jas 5:19-20) My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, **20** let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.

- B. **Second, the whole church takes public action** (1Cor. 5:4).

In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

1. The phrase “gathered together” suggests an assembly, either a regular assembly or a special assembly, called for the express purpose of withdrawing fellowship.
3. Disfellowshipping is the action taken by the congregation, not the elders, the preacher, or some of the members. Even Paul did not remove this authority from the church in Corinth.
4. It would be necessary for someone such as an elder to take the lead, but it must be the action of the body.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. Matthew 18:1-5 still needs to be followed. It is the greatest help for damaged relationships and the greatest deterrent to having to go through the painful process of church discipline.
- B. The purpose of exercising discipline should be:
 1. To preserve the righteous honor or glory of God through the church (see Eph. 3:21).
 2. To maintain the purity of the church (see 1Cor. 5:7).
 3. To restore to God’s saving grace the one offending His purity (see Gal. 6:1).
- C. Discipline promotes self-discipline.
- D. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.