

WHY CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS BIBLICAL AND NECESSARY

1 Corinthians 5:1-13

CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS NECESSARY TO HOPEFULLY RESTORE A BROTHER/SISTER IN CHRIST WHO IS SINNING DEFIANTLY

- *“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and the kind of sexual immorality that is not even tolerated among the Gentiles—a man is sleeping with his father’s wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Shouldn’t you be filled with grief and remove from your congregation the one who did this? 3 Even though I am absent in the body, I am present in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who has been doing such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of our Lord Jesus, and I am with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 hand that one over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”* (1 Corinthians 5:1-5)
- **The goal of biblical church discipline is never punitive, but always with a heart to see restoration of the defiant brother or sister in Christ.**
- **Our hearts should be grieved when we see our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ continue in sin without remorse.**

CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS NECESSARY TO PROTECT THE UNITY AND SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH

- *“Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little leaven leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new unleavened batch, as indeed you are. For Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us observe the feast, not with old leaven or with the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.”* (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)
- **Allowing those who sin defiantly to continue without biblical church discipline destroys the unity of the church, potentially draws others into their sinful behavior, and breeds a callous and casual attitude regarding the severity of sin.**

CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS NECESSARY BECAUSE WE LOVE OUR FELLOW BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

- *“I wrote to you in a letter not to associate with sexually immoral people. 10 I did not mean the immoral people of this world or the greedy and swindlers or idolaters; otherwise you would have to leave the world. 11 But actually, I wrote you not to associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister and is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or verbally abusive, a drunkard or a*

swindler. Do not even eat with such a person. 12 For what business is it of mine to judge outsiders? Don’t you judge those who are inside? 13 God judges outsiders. Remove the evil person from among you.” (1 Corinthians 5:9-13)

- **While biblical church discipline appears harsh to those who have not been taught about it, if we truly love our fellow believers we will embrace the responsibility to discipline them out of love for their soul.**
- **Judging our fellow believers for their sinful behavior is not forbidden in Scripture, as evidenced here and in Matthew 18; However, judging fellow believers to the point of denying they are Christian is the judgement that is forbidden in Scripture and reserved only for God.**

CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION

Observation:

- According to verses 1–2, what sinful situation existed in the Corinthian church, and how were the believers responding to it?
- What does Paul instruct the church to do when they assemble in verses 4–5, and what is the intended purpose of that action?
- In verses 9–13, who does Paul tell the Corinthians not to associate with, and whom does he say the church is responsible to judge?

Understanding:

- Why is restoration — not punishment — the biblical goal of church discipline? How does this passage reveal the heart of God?
- When have you seen someone drifting spiritually and wished someone would step in? What made you hesitate or feel unsure?
- What does Paul mean by “a little leaven leavens the whole batch”? How does unaddressed sin affect the entire church?
- What is one way you can actively promote purity, unity, and accountability in your church family this week?
- How is judging the behavior of believers different from judging their salvation? Why is the former commanded and the latter forbidden?
- Why do you think many Christians view confrontation as unloving when the Bible frames it as love? How does your heart tend to respond to correction?
- How can you cultivate the kind of relational depth where biblical correction is possible, welcomed, and done in love?

Loving Outward:

- Who do you need to share the gospel with this week?
- Who do you need to follow-up with regarding the gospel?
- Who are you bringing to church next Sunday?