

Subject: Recap: Sobering AND Loving Correction - 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

Dear Church Family,

As we concluded our series in 2 Thessalonians this past Sunday, we tackled one of the most challenging yet necessary topics in church life: biblical correction within the body of Christ. For a copy of the teaching notes and a number of discipleship materials, please go [[HERE](#)].

Summary: The sermon explored how God calls the entire church—not just leadership—to address unrepentant sin within the body through loving correction aimed at restoration. While this responsibility is uncomfortable and often avoided, it reflects our commitment to Christ's authority over His church and our love for one another. The passage in 2 Thessalonians 3:6-18 specifically addresses laziness and busybodies, but the underlying principles apply to any disruption that threatens the health and testimony of the church. Ultimately, biblical correction is not about punishment but about restoring believers to faithful fellowship with God and His people.

Takeaways:

1. The church belongs to Jesus and must function according to His standards and authority. When we address sin in the body, we do so under His direction and for His glory, not our own preferences or comfort.
2. Biblical correction follows a clear process outlined in Matthew 18:15-17, moving from private conversation to involving witnesses, and finally to the church body. Withdrawal from fellowship is a last resort meant to encourage repentance and restoration, not to punish or exclude permanently.
3. We must not grow weary in doing good, even when correction is difficult. Keeping our eyes on Jesus rather than our exhaustion or the offense itself enables us to pursue restoration with grace, forgiveness, and genuine love—treating the corrected person not as an enemy but as a brother or sister we long to see return.

As we move forward, may we embrace both the sobering responsibility and the loving heart behind biblical correction. Let us be a church that values holiness, pursues peace, and always keeps the door open for restoration.

In His grip, Pastor Jim

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

I. Introduction: Church Discipline is Biblical

- While sobering and uncomfortable, Jesus makes clear that one of the ways He prepares His bride, the church, is through church discipline.

II. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15: Obedience to God's Precepts Matters

- The church is not Man's achievement, but God's masterpiece...and for His glory, He has designed biblical correction into the fabric of His church.
- There are 8 precepts from God to leadership, the faithful church, and the disorderly busybody church, including:

Additional Scripture References: 1 Cor 5:1-6; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Tim 3:1-13, 17-22; 2 Tim 2:24-25; 1 Pet 5:1-4; Tit 1:5-9, Acts 20:28-31; Mt 18:15-17

III. 2 Thessalonians 16-18: Peace & Grace Are Found in Jesus

- Paul's words here are full of hope and meaning.

Additional Scripture References: Jn 16:33; Jn 15:4-5; Phil 6:6-9

IV. Closing: The Standard is Loving Obedience to Christ in All Things

A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

Slide 2

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

V. Introduction: Correction is Often Sobering & Uncomfortable

1. As we have chronicled during our time in both 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, the young church in Thessalonica was on fire for the Lord, under attack, and in need of correction. *The Apostle Paul, in our final study, digs into what is uncomfortable ground...* how the church is to deal with unrepentant sin in the body.
2. It's sobering and uncomfortable because:
 - A. few of us get up in the morning thinking, 'who can I get into conflict with';
 - B. *the unrepentant one is part of our 'family';*
 - C. we don't want to offend God;
 - D. *we know that we are sinners also;*
 - E. we wrestle with how to show compassion, mercy, and grace,
 - F. *we can worry about their families, the church functioning, and the church finances; and*
 - G. the world says a loving God would never confront someone, but simply love them into the kingdom of heaven,

these and a number of other thoughts may flash in our hearts and minds in often sleepless hours and days leading up to the moment of confrontation.
3. Yet, God's word is clear – and please don't tune me out when I say this. *The entire body of Christ (and not just the leadership) is to walk in His ways, including correction of those causing disruption and even division within the body of Christ.*
4. One more note before getting into our passage...*while the emphasis in our opening passage today is narrowly focused on*

laziness and 'busybodies', the underlying precepts apply broadly to biblical correction necessary for the health of the church body.

VI. 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15: Obedience to God's Precepts Matters

1. It's one thing to circle the wagon when forces 'out there' are warring against Jesus and His bride. *It's quite another when some within the body of Christ are the cause of consternation and disruption.* Said differently, the territory we are covering today requires us all to come to Jesus, and each other, with humble hearts.
2. Let's take a minute to handle some definitions:
 - A. First, the Greek word for "withdraw" means to 'keep away, stand aloof from, repress, or avoid'.
 - B. Second, the Greek for "disorderly" means 'irregular', and in this case, 'laziness', *which together indicates those not walking in the will and purposes of God regarding their place in the body.*
 - C. Next, the word for "busybodies" refers to those that were 'intrusively meddling' in other people's business. *Busybodies generally puff up their self-importance and sow seeds of division through such things as evangelizing their opinions, offering unsolicited advice, using private information for personal gain, getting in the middle of disagreements having nothing to do with them, listening in on private conversations, spreading rumors, raising preferences to the level of requirements, and trying to control decisions rightly belonging to others.*
 - D. Finally, the church is NOT man's achievement but God's masterpiece...*it is both His gift to the world, and under the guiding, instructive presence of the Holy Spirit, His work in it.* The church was conceived in eternity past, bought with Jesus Christ's blood at Calvary, and built by His power and for His glory. (Mt 16:18; Acts 20:28; Eph 2:10; Eph 5:25-27)

What's more, in God's masterplan, He has given the church responsibility to uphold His standards for the benefit of the church and her testimony of Him to the world.

At the center of examining our passage today, keep in mind there are 3 groups (church leadership, the faithful church, and the disorderly busybodies) and 1 person (Jesus) in view.

3. There are 9 biblical precepts to consider, including:

Slide 6

A. First, the church is Jesus' and as such, it is to function for His purposes, by His standards, and under His authority. **Other examples of this precept are found in**

- i. **1 Corinthians 5:1-6** where Paul addresses handling of sexual immorality in the body of Christ with v4 saying "*In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus*"; and in
- ii. **Acts 5:1-11**, we have the first example of church discipline with the story of Ananias and Sapphira. **In lying to church leadership for their own glory, they had lied to God, who then revealed their lie AND issued correction directly from heaven in striking them dead.**

Seems as though the Lord is making it clear that He will care for His bride in a manner bringing her to holiness.

Slide 8

B. Second, with Paul, Silvanus', and Timothy's words here, we see church leadership is both given and expected to exercise Jesus' authority in the church. **In this passage, we see four ways this is exercised including through teaching, exhortation, encouragement, and modeling biblical precepts.**

- i. Before moving to our third precept, I think it helpful to remind us that leadership is not immune from the fallout of our sin nature as we too mess up. **Fortunately, Christ's blood at Calvary was for leaders also, as are God's precepts.** That, however, does not mean that Christ has not vested church leaders with His authority in doing their God-given part in making disciples, edifying the church, stewarding the church, and being part of His corrective processes.
- ii. With this in mind, I encourage us to biblically respect the roles, responsibilities, and authority of all in the body, including leadership. **In this, I am offering a warning in the clear light of real world contemporary experiences of many diminishing or even rejecting leadership in self-righteousness.** You see, just as with a leader, self-righteousness does not look good on anyone in the body.
- iii. For those wanting to dig a bit deeper into this leadership precept, I also want to offer you a brief and yet powerful outline of the various leadership dimensions found in **1 Tim 3:1-13, 17-22, 2 Tim 2:24-25, 1 Pet 5:1-4, Titus 1:5-9, and Acts 20:28-31.** **These passages speak of character traits with respect to spiritual, relational, familial, and personal conduct.**

Slide 10

Slide 12

- C. Third and fourth, the body of Christ is to walk according to God's precepts AND if someone in the body is not doing so, another precept coming into view is the body 'withdrawing' from them. **Now, to be clear this is talking about those having been corrected still insist and persist in being 'disorderly'.** If you have your bibles, turn to Matthew 18:15-17 where Jesus offers explicit instruction on how the body is to handle correction within:

Slide 14

¹⁵ **“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.**
¹⁶ **But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth**

*of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell *it* to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.*

- Mt 18:15–17

- i. So, it’s NOT okay to leave, ignore, OR expect the pastor, elder, or other leader to do what God has charged you to do...no matter how uncomfortable. *We are to address our brothers and sisters in love and grace that they (and we) may remain in faithful, obedient relationship with Jesus.*
- ii. Being woven into a vibrant, loving, and growing-in-Christ church is an amazing blessing from God. *So, great a blessing that God wants us to see our church family as having immeasurable value.* Thus, when the body withdraws from someone, that person may well see our action as punishment – and in a sense it is. *Yet, that is not the right heart.* Instead, Jesus desires that we love one another enough to, *with grace and compassion,* correct and forgive one another in the hope of restoration – something that is hard on both sides of the correction.

We are being reminded that God’s great blessing of His church comes with responsibilities for us all to live in a Christlike manner in all things, including correction. *MY EXPERIENCE...Pastors & CC REGIONAL LEADERSHIP*

Slide 16

D. In v8-10, we see another precept of NO FREELOADING. *The believer is to look different than the non-believer.* We are to be orderly. *We are to be hard workers, not lazy.* We are to be sacrificial, kind, generous, humble, and responsible. *We are to care for the needs of those in great need...as contrasts with those that are just taking advantage of others kindness for their own gain.*

- i. It’s important to note that Paul is talking about those able to work who are instead taking advantage of others generosity, kindness, and hard work. *In short, if we can*

work, we have a responsibility to do so. If we can't work, it is good and right for the body of Christ to help as one gets his or her feet back on the ground.

Slide 18

E. This last category of people is who Paul is calling disorderly and busybodies. And in these we see 2 other precepts...stated in the negative, they are stop being disorderly (irregular, lazy) and stop being busybodies (or be intrusively meddling, also see 1 Tim 5:13, 1 Pet 4:15). Stated in the positive, ...be responsible to walk in godliness, including living a peaceful, quiet life, enjoying the fruit of your hands, that as we read in the book of Ecclesiastes, is itself a gift from God.

- i. Please note that walking in disorder and as busybodies carries the intent of laboring for one's own glory. While laboring for God's glory reflects (1) our trust in and dependence on Him, (2) our life as sold-out for Him, and (3) our contentment in Him.

Slide 20

F. In v13, we read the next of our precepts...'do not grow weary in doing good'.

- i. In context, to be weary means to be discouraged, lose heart, and to not walk in godliness (*emphasis on obedience*). We know that much wars against Jesus, His will, and His children. Furthermore, we are prone to exhaustion, despair, defeated hearts, and other challenges affecting our minds, bodies, and spirits. Paul is giving a much-needed reminder that so long as our eyes (and hearts) are on Jesus, we won't grow weary AND that if we come to the place where we are fixated on self and our problems, we will become weary.

Slide 22

G. In vs 14-15, we have the last precept of leaving the door open for the 'disorderly' to repent and return while also taking forceful action (withdraw and admonish) in love (not as an enemy) in the hope of restoration.

- i. It's this last part that often troubles us in practical terms. None of us (at least I hope none of us) would argue against forgiveness, love, and restoration. Yet, as joyous as the thought of restoration is...as much as we pray for the restoration of our prodigals, as thankful as we are for Christ having restored us...in restoration we are confronting or being confronted with something hurtful and sinful. A hard thing for sure!

For many, our memories are long and some of the wounds are deep beyond measure. May we, in the enduring, transforming power of Jesus, lay down our pride and love and forgive them in Christ. I don't know what this looks like in every circumstance, but Jesus does and He will guide you, if you will let Him.

Slide 24

VII. 2 Thessalonians 3:16-18: Peace & Grace Are Found in Jesus

Paul's words here are full of hope and meaning.

1. First, we note the Lord of peace doesn't simply send peace, but He gives His church peace...in all circumstances, in all ways that we would ever need peace. Consider the implications of this with me as we read a couple of passages. First up is John 16:33:

Slide 26

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. - Jn 16:33

- A. To have His peace means we are abiding in Him and He in us as we read in **John 15:4-5**. Turn with me to Philippians 6:6-9:

Slide 28

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; ⁷ and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. ⁹ The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you. - Philippians 4:6–9

As children of God, we are truly blessed beyond measure with a Heavenly Father that cares for us!

2. Second up, Paul prays for them to receive the grace of the Lord. *The grace that saves.* The grace that sanctifies. *The grace that brings us into His presence.* The grace offering freedom, contentment, joy, hope, wisdom, and so much more.

Slide 30

VIII. Closing: The Standard is Loving Obedience to Christ in All Things

1. Most of us shy away from conflict. *Yet, the bible teaches us, with hearts of restoration, to actively engage in correction for the health of the church.* Simply put, it's a God thing we are all called to walk in.

With that in mind, I want to suggest that if someone comes to you with questions and possibly a correction, please be reminded (that unless they are out to get you) how difficult this is for them. *Show kindness, gentleness, and grace as they show you biblical love in one of the most difficult ways possible...*through saying hard things in obedience to Christ.

2. Look folks, there is no perfect church. *Find one that has solid biblical teaching, where the Spirit is active, discipleship is occurring, evangelism is central to their ministry, and work through the rest together in the unity of the Spirit.*

[Prayer]

5-Day Devotional

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

Day 1: The Peace That Guards Our Hearts

Reading: Phil 4:6-9

Devotional: In a world filled with anxiety and uncertainty, God offers something extraordinary—His peace that surpasses understanding. This isn't merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of Christ Himself dwelling within us. When we bring our concerns to God through prayer with thanksgiving, we position our hearts to receive divine peace that guards our minds. Notice the connection: peace comes as we fix our thoughts on what is true, noble, just, and pure.

Today, examine what occupies your mind. Are you dwelling on worries or on God's character? The Lord of peace doesn't just send peace from a distance—He gives it personally, intimately, in every circumstance you face. What anxieties do I need to surrender to God today to experience His guarding peace?

Day 2: Abiding for Lasting Fruit

Reading: Jn 15:1-11

Devotional: Jesus invites us into a relationship so intimate that He describes it as abiding—remaining, dwelling, staying connected. Apart from Christ, we can do nothing of eternal value, but abiding in Him produces fruit that glorifies the Father. This abiding isn't passive; it requires intentional connection through prayer, obedience, and surrender. Just as a branch receives life from the vine, we receive everything we need from Christ. The result? His joy becomes our joy, full and complete.

Consider your spiritual life today. Are you merely attending church, or are you truly abiding in Christ? The difference transforms everything—your peace, purpose, and productivity for God's kingdom. What practices help me remain connected to Jesus throughout my day?

Day 3: The Ministry of Restoration

Reading: Mt 18:15-20

Devotional: Love sometimes requires difficult conversations. Jesus provides a clear pathway for addressing sin within the church—not to condemn, but to restore. This process begins privately, with humility and grace, always aiming for reconciliation. The goal is never punishment but the restoration of fellowship with God and His people. When we avoid these conversations, we allow sin to fester and relationships to fracture. Yet when we obey Christ's instructions with genuine love, we participate in His redemptive work.

If someone approaches you with correction, receive it as an act of love. If you must approach another, do so prayerfully, remembering your own need for grace. The church thrives when we value truth and relationship equally. Is there a relationship where I need to pursue reconciliation or offer loving correction?

Day 4: Working as Unto the Lord

Reading: 2 Thes 3:6-13; Col 3:23-24

Devotional: God calls His children to live responsibly, working diligently as an act of worship. Laziness and meddling in others' affairs dishonor Christ and burden the community. Paul's instruction to work quietly and earn our own living reflects God's design for human dignity and interdependence. Our labor isn't merely for survival—it's an opportunity to reflect God's creative nature and provide for genuine needs around us.

Whether in employment, home, or ministry, approach your tasks as service to Christ Himself. This perspective transforms mundane duties into sacred offerings. Meanwhile, resist the temptation to become a busybody, intruding where you're not called. Focus your energy on your God-given responsibilities, trusting Him with everything else. How can I view my daily work as an act of worship today?

Day 5: Do Not Grow Weary in Doing Good

Reading: Gal 6:7-10; 2 Thes 3:13-18

Devotional: Faithfulness can be exhausting. The battles are long, results often delayed, and discouragement lurks constantly. Yet Paul's encouragement rings through the centuries: "Do not grow weary in doing good." Our weariness often comes from fixing our eyes on circumstances rather than Christ. When we focus on ourselves—our efforts, our disappointments, our limitations—exhaustion follows. But when our gaze remains on Jesus, His strength sustains us. Remember, you're sowing seeds for an eternal harvest. Every act of obedience, every moment of faithfulness, every choice to love when it's difficult—none of it is wasted.

The Lord of peace walks with you, providing grace for each step. Keep doing good, knowing that in due season, you will reap if you don't give up. Where am I tempted to quit, and how can I refocus on Christ's strength rather than my own?

Small Group Study Guide

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

Opening Prayer: Pray that the Lord would open your eyes to see and understand His word as you discuss the sermon.

Key Takeaways: Query the group for takeaways first...you may stay with one or more of those.

1. Jesus - The church belongs to Him and functions under His authority
2. Church Leadership - Given authority to teach, exhort, encourage, and model biblical precepts
3. The Faithful Church - Called to walk in obedience and participate in biblical correction
4. The Disorderly - Those needing correction with the hope of restoration

Discussion Questions: Did the Holy Spirit prompt any questions with you? Start with those.

1. Why is church discipline so uncomfortable for most believers? Which of the reasons mentioned in the sermon resonates most with you?
2. What is the difference between correction and punishment according to this passage? How does understanding this distinction change our approach?
3. The sermon defines "disorderly" and "busybodies." Can you identify modern examples of these behaviors in church contexts today?
4. Read Matthew 18:15-17 again. Have you ever followed this biblical process? What was the outcome? If you haven't, what has prevented you from doing so?
5. Paul says in verse 13, "Do not grow weary in doing good." In what areas of your spiritual life do you find yourself growing weary? What does it look like to keep your eyes on Jesus in those moments?
6. The sermon mentions that church discipline applies to all believers, not just leadership. How does this challenge your understanding of your role in the body of Christ?

7. Is there someone in your life right now who needs loving correction? What is the first step you need to take according to Matthew 18:15?
8. How can we balance showing grace and mercy while also upholding God's standards? What does this look like practically?
9. The passage addresses laziness and freeloading (verses 8-10). How can we as a group encourage one another toward responsibility and diligence without judgment?
10. Restoration is the goal of discipline. How can we prepare our hearts now to receive back those who have been corrected and repented? What barriers might prevent us from truly forgiving and restoring?

Practical Applications: Query the group for applications first...you may explore one or more of those.

1. Self-Examination: Prayerfully ask God to reveal any areas where you might be "disorderly" or a "busybody." Confess and repent where needed. Share your commitment to change with an accountability partner.
2. Difficult Conversation: If the Holy Spirit is prompting you to address a situation with a fellow believer, take the first step this week. Follow Matthew 18:15—go to them privately, in love, with a heart for restoration. Pray beforehand and possibly ask someone to pray for you during the conversation.
3. Support Someone in Leadership: Reach out to a pastor, elder, or ministry leader and ask how you can pray for them. Thank them for their faithfulness in shepherding God's flock. Commit to biblically respecting their God-given authority.
4. Preparation for Restoration: Identify someone who has hurt you or the church body. Spend time in prayer asking God to soften your heart toward them. Journal about what forgiveness and restoration might look like practically.

Closing Prayer Points:

- Pray for wisdom and courage to address sin biblically when needed
- Pray for soft hearts toward those who need correction
- Pray for those who have wandered from the faith—for their restoration
- Pray for church leadership as they shepherd God's flock
- Pray for the peace of Christ to guard our hearts and minds
- Pray for grace to not grow weary in doing good

Discussion Questions
2 Thessalonians 3:6-18
A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

1. How can we balance showing compassion and grace to fellow believers while still upholding biblical standards of accountability within the church?
2. In what ways might we be tempted to avoid confronting sin in the church because of fear of conflict or concern about offending others, and how does this compare to God's design for church discipline?
3. What is the difference between withdrawing from someone in punishment versus withdrawing in hope of restoration, and how does this distinction shape our approach to correction?
4. How does the Matthew 18:15-17 process of correction protect both the individual being corrected and the unity of the church body?
5. In what ways might laziness and being a busybody both stem from similar spiritual issues such as pride or lack of trust in God's provision?
6. How does the concept that the church belongs to Jesus rather than to us change our perspective on handling difficult situations and relationships within the body?
7. What does it mean practically to not grow weary in doing good when we face repeated disappointments or when correction seems to yield no fruit?
8. How can we discern whether someone is genuinely unable to work and needs support versus taking advantage of the generosity of others?
9. In what ways does having our eyes fixed on Jesus rather than on our problems or the failures of others prevent us from becoming weary and discouraged?
10. How should we prepare our hearts to receive correction from fellow believers, recognizing that confrontation is often as difficult for them as it is uncomfortable for us?

Dinner Conversation Starters

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

1. Correction vs. Condemnation

How can we tell the difference between lovingly correcting someone (like Paul describes) and just being critical or judgmental? Can you think of a time when someone corrected you in a way that actually helped you grow?

2. Our Responsibility to One Another

The sermon said correction isn't just for pastors and leaders, but for the whole church family. What do you think it would look like for us, as a family, to gently help each other when we see someone drifting or making unwise choices?

3. Work, Laziness, and Helping Others

Paul warned against laziness and "busybodies," but also encouraged helping those truly in need. How can we tell the difference between someone who needs help and someone who is just taking advantage? How should that affect how we give our time, money, or help?

4. Handling Conflict and Restoration

When someone hurts us or the church, the goal is supposed to be restoration, not payback. Why is forgiveness and restoration so hard sometimes? What is one practical way we could show a restored relationship if someone truly repents?

5. Not Growing Weary in Doing Good

The sermon said, "Do not grow weary in doing good." What are some things that make you feel weary or discouraged in doing the right thing? What helps you keep going and keep your eyes on Jesus in those moments?

Family Conversation Guide for Children & Early Teens

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

AGES 5-7: SIMPLIFYING THE MESSAGE APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Learning to Say “I’m Sorry” and “I Forgive You”**: When we hurt someone in our family (with words, hands, or attitudes), we practice saying, “I’m sorry,” and we also practice saying, “I forgive you,” because God wants us to be restored, not stay mad.

Discussion Questions:

- a. When someone takes your toy, how do you usually feel?
 - b. What could you say that follows Jesus: “You’re mean!” or “That hurt my feelings. Can we share?”
 - c. If you are the one who took the toy, how can you fix it and make peace?
2. **Being a Helper, Not a “Busybody”**: Instead of getting into other people’s business and tattling to feel important, we ask, “How can I help?” or “Is this for me to be part of?”

Discussion Questions:

- a. If you hear other kids talking privately, should you try to listen and tell others? Why or why not?
 - b. What’s the difference between tattling to get someone in trouble and telling an adult to get someone help?
 - c. How can you be a helper instead of a “busybody” at school or at church?
3. **Working Hard at Little Jobs**: God wants us to work hard at the jobs we can do—like cleaning up toys, helping set the table, or doing homework—without always complaining.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How do you feel when you are asked to clean up or help at home?
- b. Why do you think God cares about how we do our small jobs?
- c. What is one way you can show you love Jesus while you do chores or homework?

AGES 8-12: BUILDING UNDERSTANDING APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Calling Out Wrong in a Loving Way**: When a friend or sibling is clearly doing something wrong (lying, being cruel online, cheating at school), we don’t join them or ignore it—we gently speak up, and if needed, ask a trusted adult for help.

Discussion Questions:

- a. If your friends are making fun of someone in a group chat, what are some different ways you could respond?
 - b. What would it look like to be loving and honest, instead of just staying silent or laughing along?
 - c. When is it time to involve a parent, teacher, or leader, and when is it something you can handle with your words?
2. **Knowing When to Step Back from Bad Influences:** If someone keeps doing wrong and doesn't want to change—even after being spoken to kindly—we may need to spend less time with them or step out of that group for a while, like “withdrawing” in the sermon, to protect our heart and walk with Jesus.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What have you tried so far when a friend keeps talking or acting in a bad way?
 - b. How can you stay kind to them while also protecting your own heart and choices?
 - c. What might it look like to “take a break” from that friend or game without being cruel or gossiping about them?
3. **Using Technology to Build Up, Not Tear Down:** Online comments, texts, and posts should match how Jesus wants us to talk in real life—encouraging others, not spreading rumors, and not joining in on drama.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How can you tell the difference between sharing news and spreading gossip?
- b. If you're not sure something is true, what should you do before you pass it on?
- c. What is one practical rule we could make as a family about posting or forwarding things online?

AGES 11-15: DEEPENING THE CONNECTION APPLICATION POINTS

1. **Practicing Biblical Confrontation in Friendships:** Instead of blasting someone online, talking behind their back, or ghosting them, we follow Jesus' pattern: talk to them privately first, then maybe with a trusted friend/leader, and only then consider bigger steps if they refuse to listen.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What would it look like to apply Matthew 18 in this situation (talking to them one-on-one first, then maybe with others)?
- b. What's the difference between “judging” someone and lovingly confronting them for their good?
- c. How can you prepare your heart (prayer, humility, checking your own motives) before confronting a friend?

2. **Setting Boundaries in Toxic Digital Spaces**: When group chats, social platforms, or Discord/online gaming spaces are full of bullying, sexual content, gossip, or constant drama, it may be right to leave, mute, or set strict boundaries—even if it feels like “withdrawing” and you’re afraid of missing out.

Discussion Questions:

- a. What are warning signs that a digital space is hurting your walk with Jesus or your mental/emotional health?
 - b. What options do you have (muting, leaving, unfollowing, setting time limits, speaking up)?
 - c. How can you balance loving your friends with honoring God’s standards for your mind, words, and eyes?
3. **Working Hard vs. “Freeloading” in Real Life and Online**: In school, at church, on group projects, and even on team games, we honor God by not being lazy or expecting others to do everything—whether that’s homework, chores, or team responsibilities.

Discussion Questions:

- a. How do you feel when others “freeload” off your effort—in school, clubs, or games?
- b. How can you speak up respectfully and set expectations, without being rude or starting drama?
- c. In what ways could you personally be tempted to “freeload” (school, chores, spiritual life), and what might repentance and change look like?

Tips for Parents

- Be patient and listen: Give your child time to think and respond.
- Relate to everyday life: Use real-life examples and stories familiar to your child to make abstract concepts more tangible.
- Encourage questions: Let your son or daughter know it’s okay to ask questions, even if things don’t make sense right away.
- Share personal insights: Tell a personal story about a time you experienced these themes, adapting as needed for age appropriateness.

Family Conversation Guide for Gen Z

2 Thessalonians 3:6-18

A Healthy Church Includes Biblical Correction

1. Handling Sin in Your Friend Group

Bible Reference: Matthew 18:15–17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14–15

Application: When a friend is clearly living in open sin (bullying, sexual sin, cruelty online, lies) and won't listen, you're called to address it lovingly, not ignore it. Start privately. If they refuse to listen, bring a mature believer. If they still refuse, you may need to create distance—not to cancel them, but to protect your walk and leave room for repentance and restoration.

Scenario: Your close friend keeps posting sexually suggestive content and mocking anyone who objects. You DM them privately, saying you're concerned and why you believe it's not honoring to Jesus. They dismiss you and keep going. You then talk to a trusted leader and, with their support, gently confront your friend again. They still refuse to listen and start making fun of "judgy Christians." You decide to mute/unfollow and step back from hanging out as often, while still being kind when you see them.

Discussion: Where is the line between "staying loyal to your friends" and obeying Jesus in refusing to normalize or support open sin in your circle?

2. Leaving Toxic Group Chats and Online Spaces

Bible Reference: Psalm 1:1–2; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 15:33

Application: God calls you to avoid constant exposure to ungodly conversation and behavior. If a group chat, Discord server, or TikTok/IG feed is full of gossip, bullying, sexual content, or constant drama, withdrawing may be a form of obedience. You can still love people without staying in every space they create.

Scenario: Your main group chat is where your friends drop nudes, send harsh memes about other students, and trash parents and teachers. You've tried changing the mood, but it always drifts back. You start by muting the chat, then eventually leave with a brief, kind message: "Hey, I'm trying to guard what I see and say online, so I'm stepping out of this chat. No hate, just need to do this for my walk with God."

Discussion: What fears (FOMO, losing friends, looking "extra") keep you from leaving a toxic digital space, even when you know it's hurting your walk with Jesus?

3. Not Being a “Busybody” Online

Bible Reference: 1 Peter 4:15; 2 Thessalonians 3:11; Proverbs 26:20

Application: Being a “busybody” includes inserting yourself into drama that’s not yours, stalking people’s lives, and spreading or consuming gossip. God calls you to step away from nosiness and use your online presence to build others up, not to feed your curiosity or your need to feel “in the know.”

Scenario: You see a vague post: “Some people are so fake.” Everyone in the comments is guessing who it’s about, checking people’s Stories, and sending DMs like, “Is this about you?” You’re tempted to join in. Instead, you scroll past, don’t engage, and decide your account will be a no-drama zone. If you message anything, it’s to ask the poster if they’re okay—not to pry about who they’re mad at.

Discussion: How can you tell the difference between genuinely caring for someone and just wanting to be involved in their drama?

4. Working Hard, Not “Freeloading”

Bible Reference: 2 Thessalonians 3:10–12; Colossians 3:23–24

Application: Being a follower of Jesus means you don’t freeload: you don’t expect others to carry you in group projects, ministries, chores, or content creation while you take all the credit. You honor God by doing your part with a willing heart—even when there’s no spotlight or instant payoff.

Scenario: You’re on a group project where everyone assumes you’ll do the slides, research, and presentation because you “care about grades.” You calmly tell the group you’re not going to carry the entire project and ask everyone to take specific roles. You also check your own life: are there spaces (home, church, club, youth group) where you’ve been coasting and expecting others to make it all happen?

Discussion: In what areas of your life (offline or online) are you most tempted to do the bare minimum while expecting maximum benefits—and what would repentance look like there?

These points aim to empower Gen Z to live out their faith genuinely and courageously in various aspects of their daily lives, reflecting Biblical integrity, compassion, and steadfastness.