
INTERNATIONAL TRAINING AND EQUIPPING MINISTRIES
Institute in the Foundations of Church Leadership
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HOW TO PRACTICE CHURCH DISCIPLINE
IFCL 9 (Advanced Lecture 6)

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Definition: Church discipline is the method God gives us for keeping sin out of the church. Every saved member of the church is to be involved. The goal is to restore the sinner to fellowship with God and the church, not punishment.
- B. The church is to be pure and holy. Not 95% holy or 95% pure, but 100% pure. On a test in school, 95% is very good, but in the church the standard is 100% purity, 100% holiness.
- C. The perfectly-holy nature of God (Matthew 5:48) sets the uncompromising standard for all of us who are the children of God.
- D. Illustrations of purity and holiness
 1. God's Word is pure. (Psalm 12:6, Psalm 119:140)
 2. A Christian is to have pure thoughts. (Philippians 4:8)
 3. God's people are to live pure lives. (1 Timothy 5:22, Matthew 5:48)
 4. Purity is a qualification of leadership for pastors. (1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 4:12)
 5. God's church is to be pure. (2 Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:27, Colossians 1:22)
 6. Holiness is God's standard. (1 Peter 1:14-16).

II. OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S STANDARD OF HOLINESS AND PURITY

- Question: How should one who is living a life of purity relate to one who is not? How should one who is not living in sin relate to one who is?
- Answer: We are to have fellowship with those who live a righteous life (Psalm 119:63; Proverbs 13:20) and stay away from those who do not. (Proverbs 14:7, 1 Corinthians 15:33, 2 Peter 3:17)

III. THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE REQUIRES US TO PRACTICE CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- A. Jesus said we are to make disciples, which includes teaching them to observe all that He commanded. (Matthew 28:19-20).
- B. Understanding how loving the sinner and obeying truth (the Bible) relate to each other will lead us to practice church discipline.
 1. God revealed His truth and put it in the Bible.
 2. We are to obey His commandments which are contained in the Bible (truth).
 3. One commandment is to love. (John 13:34; 15:12-17)
 - a. A wise Christian will love you for pointing out their sin. (Proverbs 9:8)
 - b. A loving father disciplines his son. (Proverbs 13:24)
 - c. God disciplines us because He loves us. (Hebrews 12:4-11)
- C. The relationship of love, obedience, and discipleship
 1. Obedience characterizes the life of a true disciple. (John 8:31)
 2. Love for one another characterizes the relationship between believers. (John 13:34)
 3. A Christian demonstrates that he is a disciple of Jesus Christ when his life produces

spiritual fruit. (John 15:8)

D. Summary

1. The church is to be pure.
2. The church's purity is determined from all of God's Word.
3. Love and church discipline cannot be separated. Both are commanded in the Word of God (Truth). Therefore, church discipline must be an act of love.

IV. THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- A. To glorify God by obeying His instructions (Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:20; 6:3; Titus 1:13; 2:15; 3:10; Revelation 2:2, 14-15, 20)
- B. To maintain the purity of the church and its worship (1 Corinthians 5:6-8)
- C. To defend the integrity and honor of Christ and Christianity by following His instructions (2 Corinthians 2:9, 17)
- D. To lead Christians who are living in sin to repent and be restored to fellowship with God and the church (Matthew 18:15; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1)
- E. To keep others from sin (1 Timothy 5:20)
- F. To keep God from setting Himself against a local church (Revelation 2:14-25)

V. RULES

- A. The following chart helps to visualize what the Bible says.

A believer is to confront a so-called believer for the following reasons when the so-called believer will not repent of his sin:		A believer is to unconditionally separate from anyone for the following reasons:
A. When the so-called believer is teaching an unbiblical belief	Galatians 1:8 1 Timothy 6:3-5, 20-21 2 Timothy 2:24-26 Titus 1:9 Titus 3:10-11	Causes division (Romans 16:17-20; Titus 3:10-11) Any unbeliever (2 Corinthians 6:14-18) Those living in sin (Ephesians 5:11-12; 2 Thessalonians 3:6) Disobedience to the Word of God (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15; 2 John 9-11) Disobedience to the Word (2 John 9-11)
B. When the so-called believer is involved in unbiblical behavior	Matthew 18:15-17 Galatians 6:1-5 1 Corinthians 5:1-13	

- B. Believers are to separate themselves from other believers who knowingly and rebelliously continue in doctrinal error. (Galatians 1:8; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; 1 Timothy 6:20-21; 2 Timothy 2:24-26; Titus 1:9; Titus 3:10-11)
- C. Believers are to separate themselves from other believers whose behavior is knowingly and rebelliously wrong. (Matthew 18:15-17, Galatians 6:1-5, 1 Corinthians 5:1-13)
- D. Believers are to separate themselves from unbelievers by not partnering with them in a common business. (Romans 16:17-20, 2 Corinthians 6:14-18)

- E. Biblical examples
 1. Examples of the proper use of discipline by a believer toward a so-called believer in doctrinal error are found in Galatians 2:11-21, 1 Timothy 1:20, and 2 Timothy 2:17.
 2. Examples of the proper use of discipline by a believer toward a so-called believer in behavioral error are found in 2 Samuel 12:7, Acts 5:1-11, and 2 Corinthians 2:5-7.
 3. Examples of proper separation by a believer from an unbeliever are found in Revelation 2:2-3.

VI. INSIGHTS AND PROCEDURES

- A. What church discipline is NOT
 1. Going out of your way to try to find people who are living in sin
 2. A way to get even with someone who has offended you. Actually, all sin is against God. (Psalm 51:4)
 3. An investigation of a rumor to see if the rumor is true
- B. What church discipline IS
 1. It is the procedure you follow when someone sins against you personally (Matthew 18:15, 21)
 2. It is the procedure you follow when there is a sin that is known by you personally or by two or three witnesses (Deuteronomy 19:15; 2 Corinthians 13:1)
- C. The goal of church discipline
 1. To win your brother (Matthew 18:15)
 2. To restore the sinner (Galatians 6:1)
 3. To lead the sinner to repentance (2 Timothy 2:25)
 4. To avoid God's direct involvement which could lead to the sinner's death (1 John 5:13-20; 1 Corinthians 11:30)
- D. The attitude we demonstrate when involved in church discipline
 1. With gentleness (Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:25)
 2. With love
 - a. God disciplines us because of His love for us. (Hebrews 12)
 - b. A father disciplines his son because of love. (Proverbs 13:24)
 3. Without hypocrisy (Matthew 7:1-5)
 4. With patience (It takes four steps and each step takes time.)
- E. Unnecessary practices
 1. Public confession of sin is not necessary, but it is sometimes helpful.
 2. Details do not need to be made public.
 3. Punishment is not necessary.
- F. The steps we follow in the practice of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-20.
 - Note: Each step can be a long process.
 1. Private confrontation(v.15)
 - You are to keep going until you are certain that the sinner is not going to listen to you and repent.

- 2. Two or three witnesses (v.16)
 - Two or three of you keep going until you are certain that the sinner is not going to listen to you and repent.
- 3. The whole church (v.17)
 - The whole church keeps going until it becomes obvious that the sinner is not going to listen to them and repent.
- 4. Removal from the church (v.17)
 - a. Gentiles and tax gathers represented categories of those who were unsaved.
 - b. We are to treat them like an unbeliever because they have shown that they might not be saved. If they were truly saved, they usually would have repented before now.
 - 1. Not all church discipline leads to repentance and restoration.
 - 2. When repentance occurs and the elders are convinced that there is true fruit of repentance (Luke 3:8), an announcement should be made indicating that the individual is restored to fellowship.

NOTE: Scripture treats all who profess faith in Christ the same. So these actions are to be taken with anyone who identifies himself with the church.

CONCLUSION:

- A. Biblical history is filled with troublesome reminders that, in this world's system, evil normally overcomes good unless preventive measures are taken. God's remedy is discipline and separation, but never isolation.
- B. There are many in our churches caught in sin. May God give us grace to continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and to help others to grow spiritually as well.

Church Discipline Dealing with Sinning Christians

