

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

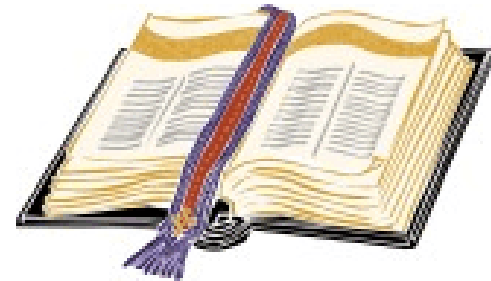
WORKBOOK 3

Church Discipline

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Lessons One

WHAT IS CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Introduction

1. Discipline — “That which is taught to pupils, training which corrects, molds, strengthens, perfects, chastisement, punishment” (Webster).
2. By definition our subject falls into two categories.
 - a. Instructive or preventive
 - b. Corrective
3. Preventive — elders are to:
 - a. Feed the flock (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:2, “feed the flock of God which is among you”)
 - b. Watch over (Heb. 13:17, “Obey them that have the rule over you”)
4. The need for corrective discipline in
 - a. The home (Prov. 13:24, “He that spareth his rod hateth his son”)
 - b. The nation (Rom. 13:1-4)
 - c. The church (II Thess. 3:6)
5. Sometimes people say “I can’t believe God is the type of God who would want us to discipline.”
 - a. Deut. 21:18-21 — stone stubborn and rebellious son
 - b. Lev. 10:1-2 — Nadab and Abihu killed with fire
 - c. Num. 15:32-36 — man gathered sticks — stoned
 - d. Acts 5 — Ananias and Sapphira killed
6. What is the purpose of church discipline?
 - a. To save souls (Heb. 12:5-11; I Cor. 5:5)

I. SOME REASONS GOD WANTS HIS CHURCH TO BE PURE AND HOLY

1. God wants His church to be pure and holy
 - a. I Cor. 5:7 — purge out old
 - b. Acts 5 — He set the example
 - c. Eph. 5:27, “without spot”
2. To have the right kind of influence on those without
 - a. Col. 4:5, “walk in wisdom”
 - b. Acts 5:14 — People were the more added to the Lord
 - c. The only way to do this is to follow God’s Word — practice discipline.
3. To put fear and respect in the hearts of all Christians
 - a. Acts 5:11 — “fear came on the people”

3. Titus 3:10 — heretic a factious man, one who creates strife and division
 - a. A man trying to tear up a congregation
 - b. A man trying to run off the preacher
4. Titus 1:10-11; I Tim. 6:3-5

IV. DISORDERLY — I Thess. 5:14; II Thess. 3:6

1. A military term designating those who break the rank or desert their post; those out of step
2. What about those who willfully forsake the assembling (Heb. 10:25)?
 - a. What sin is more public than this?
3. According to the Bible anyone who is living in sin and will not repent is to be withdrawn from (II Thess. 3:16)

V. HOW ARE WE TO TREAT THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN FROM?

1. II Thess. 3:15, “count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother”
2. Gal. 6:1-2 — in spirit of meekness
3. As erring brother
4. We are not to be mean or unkind to them
5. Cannot fellowship them — cannot eat with them (I Cor. 5:11)
6. II Cor. 2:6-10 — Forgive him when he repents; Many false ideas about discipline
 - a. Some say “they kicked him out, ran him away”
 - b. “Told him to leave”
 - c. “Won’t let him attend there anymore”
 - d. “Stand at the doors and tell him he can’t come in”
7. I Cor. 5:5 — Our purpose: to save his soul but we cannot fellowship him until he repents

VI. CONCLUSION

1. It is commanded
2. We talk about restoring New Testament Christianity
3. When will the church as a whole start practicing what God’s Word commands (II Thess 3:6)
4. God’s plan for the church cannot be improved upon
5. Who is to be withdrawn from? Christians who are in sin and have not repented — teach, admonish, rebuke
6. How should we treat them? As erring brethren love and encourage them to repent. Do not endorse his sin.

4. As long as the Lord's church exists, there will be the need for discipline
5. You have a responsibility to practice what the Word of God teaches (Mark 16:16; II Thess. 3:6)
6. The Bible tells us God's will. Men cannot improve on God's plan
7. Has there ever been a time when there is a greater need for the New Testament church to practice church discipline than now?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the purpose of church discipline?
2. How do some try to get around discipline?
3. Does the New Testament command church discipline? Where?
4. What are some of the reasons for withdrawing from a brother?
5. If a congregation refuses to practice church discipline, is it following the New Testament?
6. If we can choose not to follow the New Testament teaching on church discipline, why could we not refuse to follow the New Testament on other points?
7. What should a congregation that has not been practicing church discipline do?

Lesson Three

WHO IS TO BE WITHDRAWN FROM AND HOW ARE WE TO TREAT THEM?

Introduction

1. Which of the following are commands?
 - a. Repentance (Luke 13:3)
 - b. Baptism (Acts 10:48)
 - c. Love one another (John 15:17)
 - d. Church discipline (II Thess. 3:6)

3. Notice several different Scriptures on this topic
 - a. Matt. 18:15-17 — settling personal differences; if they neglect to hear, you take it to the church
 - b. Rom. 16:17 — “mark them”
 - c. I Cor. 5:7,11,13 — “purge out”
 - d. I Thess. 5:14 — “warn them”
 - e. II Thess. 3:6 — “we command you”
 - f. II Thess. 3:14-15 — note, “have no company with”
 - g. I Tim. 1:20 — deliver “unto Satan”
 - h. I Tim. 5:20 — “them that sin rebuke”
 - i. I Tim. 6:3-5 — “withdraw thyself”
 - j. II Tim. 3:16 — Word of God: doctrine, reproof, correction
 - k. Titus 1:10-11 — “mouths must be stopped”
 - l. Titus 3:10 — heretic reject
 - m. II John 9-11 — “receive him not into your house”

IV. CONCLUSION

1. A congregation can choose not to practice church discipline, but a congregation cannot be faithful to God and not practice church discipline
2. Preventive and corrective discipline are both essential
3. Why has the church stopped doing what God commands? Have we become wiser than God?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Define discipline.
2. What are the differences between instructive and corrective discipline?
3. Why should the church practice discipline?
4. Name some of the alternatives the church can do about erring members. Are these pleasing to God?
5. Is church discipline optional?
6. From whom is the church to withdraw?
7. Why has the church stopped practicing church discipline in so many congregations?

Lesson Two

THE NEED FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- I. What is the purpose of church discipline:
 1. Not to get rid of someone we dislike
 2. Not to say that one cannot be saved
 3. Maintain the purity of the church (Eph. 5:25-27)
 4. Save the church (I Cor. 5:6-7)
 5. Shame the sinner (II Thess. 3:14)
 6. To save the sinner (I Cor. 5:5; James 5:20, “converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death”)
 7. To teach that all Christians must live upright lives (Matt. 5:13-16; Titus 2:11-12; I Cor. 9:27)
 8. To save ourselves by doing our duty (I Tim. 4:16)
 9. To make the church grow (Acts 5:14)
- II. **HOW SOME TRY TO GET AROUND PRACTICING CHURCH DISCIPLINE:**
 1. By suggesting it is wrong to judge (Matt. 7:1-2)
 - a. John 7:24, “Judge righteous judgment”
 - b. I Cor. 5:12, “do not ye judge them that are within?”
 - c. I Tim. 5:20, “Them that sin rebuke before all”
 2. By implying it will do more harm than good
 - a. “It will split the church”
 - b. “It will hurt feelings”
 - c. “It will run people off”
 - d. To all this we say — God knows more about this than we do — He said do it
 - 1) Acts 5:14, “believers were the more added to the church”
 - 2) One gospel preacher tells of a church practicing church discipline and getting letters from denominations commending them.
 3. By suggesting that church discipline has been abused in the past.
 4. By saying we have not practiced it before, where would we start — how far do we go back?
 5. By misapplying the parable of the tares (Matt. 13:24-30; 36-43)
 - a. The contrast is wheat = Christians
 - b. Tares = non-Christians

6. By saying the Lord adds and we cannot take away
7. Bringing up the million dollar lawsuit against a church for practicing discipline
8. By saying that the individual has withdrawn himself from our presence

III. THE NEED FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1. Christians living in sin are lost (James 5:19)
 - a. II Peter 2:20-21 — his condition is worse than the beginning
 - b. Should he die in this condition — eternal separation
2. There is a need for spiritual individuals to be concerned (Gal. 6:1-2)
3. There is a need for the church to practice the commands of God (II Thess. 3:6)
4. There is a need for the church to have the right example before the world.
 - a. God said practice discipline
 - b. When we fail to do so, we are saying we will practice the commands of God that we choose
 - 1) That’s what those in denominationalism do (baptism, Lord’s Supper, elders)
5. Liberalism and false teachers are destroying the faith of many
6. Sinful lives of members causing shame and reproach
 - a. Members living in adultery
 - b. Open fornication
 - c. Homosexuality
 - d. Drinking members
 - e. Members in the Masonic Lodge
 - f. Members arrested for crimes
 - g. Members openly sowing discord

IV. CONCLUSION

1. The Lord’s church is to be pure (Eph. 5:27)
2. God’s plan must be practiced
 - a. Plan of salvation
 - b. Plan for worship
 - c. Church government — elders, deacons
 - d. Christian living
 - e. Dealing with disorderly
3. Some try to get around church discipline

4. To save souls — church only withdraws from the lost!
 - a. I Cor. 5:5
 - b. A man living in sin is lost
 - c. Not only souls of lost, but ours also
 - 1) Jesus commanded baptism (Mark 16:16) — apostles did also (Acts 10:48)
 - a) One cannot go to heaven if he fails to obey the commands of Christ and the apostles — John 12:48, “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words...”
 - b) Jesus and the apostles commanded church discipline — II Thess. 3:6
 - 2) If the church fails to keep the teachings of Christ, they also will be lost.

II. AT LEAST FOUR ALTERNATIVES THE CHURCH CAN DO ABOUT ERRING MEMBERS

1. Ignore the sin
 - a. Joshua 7 — sin in the camp
 - b. This is what the church at Corinth was doing (I Cor. 5:2, 4-5)
 - c. Romans 3:23, “wages of sin is death”
2. Partial fellowship
 - a. Just do not use him publicly
 - b. This is often done — the sinner is not rebuked
 - c. Partial fellowship is not taught in the Bible
3. Wait and hope the sinner withdraws himself or stops coming to services
 - a. This is not following the Bible pattern
4. God’s plan
 - a. Gal. 6:1-2 — spiritual people — restore the person
 - b. Try to get all to encourage him to return
 - 1) I Thess. 5:14, “warn them that are unruly”
 - 2) Rom. 16:17, “mark them that cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them”
 - 3) As a final step, withdraw (II Thess. 3:6)

III. WHAT IS CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

1. Not just withdrawing of fellowship
2. It is teaching the members how to act (I Tim. 3:15)

2. Which of the above can the church set aside and not do and God be pleased?
3. Why don’t churches practice this command?
 - a. Weak preachers won’t preach it
 - b. Weak leadership won’t practice it
 - c. Unconverted members won’t believe it
 - d. Lack of concern for the lost
4. Abuses should not stop us from practicing the will of God.
5. Who is to be withdrawn from?
 - a. II Thess. 3:6, “every brother that walks disorderly” — that is one out of step with God’s Word
 - b. All sin unrepented of, unless there are some sins that people can continue to commit and live in that will not condemn their souls
6. Let us consider some that are to be withdrawn from

I. THOSE WHO ARE GUILTY OF OFFENDING OR WRONGING A BROTHER

1. Matt. 18:15-18
2. This brother will not repent

II. I CORINTHIANS 5 — PAUL HAS A LIST

1. Fornicator — unlawful relations whether married or not; would also include homosexuality
2. Covetous — greed of gain — also called idolator (Col. 3:5). *What would you call a man who chooses not to attend church services so he can make more money?*
3. Idolater worship of false gods
4. Railer abusive, reviler
5. Drunkard — *methuo* — to become softened by alcohol
6. Extortioner — swindler, robber
7. Gal. 5:19-21 — and the such like
8. Not limited to this list

III. FALSE TEACHERS ROMANS 16:17

1. Involves those who make or relax God’s laws
2. What to do?
 - a. Admonish
 - b. Mark
 - c. Reject

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. List some sins that if unrepented of, the church should withdraw from those committing such sins.
2. Which is worse, moral error or doctrinal error?
3. How are we to treat those who have been withdrawn from?
4. What if those withdrawn from are my good friends?
5. What if someone says, "I will still eat with the withdrawn from because they are my good friends?"
6. Why should you honor a scriptural withdrawal?
7. Is there such a thing as an unscriptural withdrawal? Give some examples.