

BIBLE CLASS STUDY GUIDE

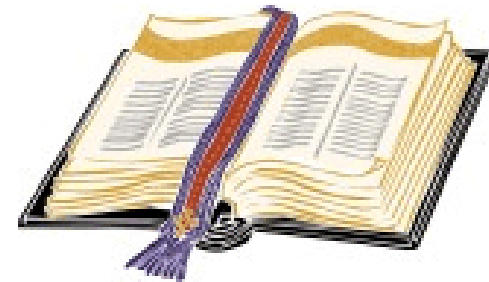
WORKBOOK 3

Church Discipline

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Lessons One

WHAT IS CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

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”
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)
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 — “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?
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Lesson Two

THE NEED FOR CHURCH DISCIPLINE

Introduction

- 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 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. 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)
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 (there are no such sins)
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
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)? 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, we love and encourage them to repent. Do not endorse his sin.

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.
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CHURCH DISCIPLINE (Withdrawal of Fellowship)

1. The plea of the churches of Christ is a return to the Bible in every way.
 - a. We desire to speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent. We do not "add to" nor "take from" what the Bible says.
 - b. We desire to restore N.T. Christianity in the world today.
2. To compare the church of Christ today with the church of the New Testament is to find they are identical.
 - a. **ORGANIZATION:** Elders (Acts 20:28); Deacons (1 Tim. 3:8); Evangelists (Acts 8:5); Members (1 Peter 5:2)
 - b. **WORSHIP:** Sing (Heb. 2:12); Pray (Acts 2:42); Teach (2 Tim. 4:2); Give (1 Cor. 16:2); Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7)
 - c. **PLAN OF SALVATION:** Faith (Heb. 11:6); Repentance (Acts 2:38); Confession of faith in Christ (Rom. 10:9-10); Baptism (Mark 16:16); Live faithful (1 Cor. 15:58)
3. One of the vital doctrines of the church of the N.T. is the teaching of **CHURCH DISCIPLINE**.
 - a. It is wholly inconsistent to insist upon following God's law of *admission* into the church found in Acts 2, and at the same time disregard his law of *exclusion* from church fellowship found in 1 Corinthians 5 & 2 Thessalonians 3.
 - b. A congregation that will not practice corrective discipline has no right to exist!
 - c. A congregation that "does not" and "will not" exercise corrective discipline is not a N.T. church!
 - d. We cannot teach the denominations that we are the true church when we have not restored the practice of corrective discipline.
4. **DISCIPLINE** is a way of life in any society, secular or religious.
 - a. No HOME can be strong without discipline.
 - b. No SCHOOL is able to teach when there is no discipline.
 - c. No COMMUNITY can survive without discipline.
 - d. No NATION will stand if its people flagrantly disregard discipline.
 - e. No CHURCH can properly function without it.

5. When a tree is pruned and kept in a healthy state it bears more fruit.
 - a. When a rotten apple is thrown away the others are saved.
 - b. When an infected part of the body is either restored or removed, the entire body functions properly.
 - c. When the church is kept pure by pruning, weeding out, withdrawing fellowship from the wayward, it will grow as we have never seen it grow before!
 - d. The N.T. church believed and practiced it — they grew and prospered.
6. The matter of discipline has been carelessly handled in many congregations.
 - a. That is not our intent.
 - b. We wish never to use it as a means to “get even” with someone.
 - c. It is not a club with which to cause undue hurt and harm.
7. We need to understand that God has never tolerated anyone treating his law recklessly.
 - a. Adam & Eve (Gen. 3:13-19)
 - b. Noah’s day (Gen. 6:5-8)
 - c. Nadab & Abihu (Lev. 10:1-2)
 - d. Korah, Dathan & Abiram (Num. 16)
 - e. Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5)

I. WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

- A. Discipline is:
 1. “Training which corrects, molds, strengthens, or perfects.” It is “punishment, chastisement.”
 2. “Control gained by enforcing obedience or order, orderly conduct; as troops noted for their discipline.”
 3. “Rule or system of rules affecting conduct or action”
 4. “To train in self-control or obedience to given standards.”
- B. There are two kinds of discipline.
 1. **PREVENTIVE**
 - a. This is done by instruction, teaching, encouraging, warning. 2 Peter 1:6 “temperance” – It involves self-discipline, self-control.
 - b. The elders see to it that this is done in every Bible class and sermon!

- c. It is certainly to be desired more so than corrective discipline. When we heed instruction, we need never fear of any other kind of discipline.
2. **CORRECTIVE**
 - a. It is needed when preventative discipline fails.
 - b. When discipline is exercised, one must suffer a great deal, but it is not primarily for the purpose of making one suffer.
 1. A doctor gives us medicine or a shot that may be bitter or hurt, but it is good for us.
 2. Sometime one’s leg or arm is cut off, not to make us suffer, but to save the body. This is done as a last resort just as withdrawal of fellowship is done as a last resort.
 3. A father disciplines his children to teach them the proper way to live, not to inflict pain!
 - c. There will be some in the church who insist on “walking disorderly” and must be corrected.
 1. This is when direct action is taken which is reformatory or punitive in nature.
 2. This is the last step taken in an effort to save their soul.
- C. Church discipline includes: instruction, training, admonition, correction, chastisement, and reformatory or penal action.
 1. It begins when the baby is in the cradle and continues through life.
 2. This is the way we help one another get to heaven.
- D. Paul gives us a clear picture of church discipline in I Corinthians 5.
 1. v2 “be taken away from among you”
v5 “to deliver such an one unto Satan”
v7 “purge out therefore the old leaven”
v9 “not to keep company with”
v12 “do not ye judge them that are within”
v13 “put away from among yourselves that wicked person”
 2. It is not a man-made ordinance or just an eldership policy.

II. CHURCH DISCIPLINE IS A COMMAND OF GOD!

- A. 1 Cor. 5:4-5 it is to be done “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”
1. “In the name of Jesus Christ” means: **by his authority!** (He has ALL authority, Matt. 28:18)
 2. We are to PREACH in the name of Christ (Luke 24:46-47)
 3. REPENT in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38)
 4. Be BAPTIZED in the name of Christ (Acts 10:48)
 5. WHATEVER WE DO IN WORD OR DEED is to be done in the name of Christ (Col. 3:17)
 6. DISCIPLINE too, is to be exercised by the authority of Christ.
- B. 2 Thess. 3:6 “Now we command you...in the name of the Lord...”
1. The word “command” signifies to “pass a military order along.” It is a command that comes from a superior officer.
 2. It is not a mere idea, suggestion, or something to consider.
 3. It is as much a command, as faith, repentance and water baptism!
 - a. We might as well try to decide whether or not we are going to practice baptism as to try to decide whether or not we are going to practice discipline.
 - b. We do not treat any other command of our Lord like we treat the command to practice discipline.
 - c. It’s not something we arbitrarily decide “we will do” or “we want do.”
- C. Church discipline is commanded in several places throughout the New Testament.
1. Matt. 18:15-17 “Moreover if thy brother trespass against thee...”
 2. John 15:2, 6 “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” v6 “If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”
 3. Rom. 16:17 “Now I beseech you brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”
 4. Gal. 6:1 “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
 5. 1 Thess. 5:14 “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly”
 6. 2 Thess. 3:14 “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”
 7. 1 Tim. 1:20 “Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”
 8. 1 Tim. 5:20 “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear”
 9. 1 Tim. 6:3-5 “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words...withdraw thyself”
 10. 2 Tim. 3:16 “All scripture is given...for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”
 11. Titus 1:10-11 “For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre’s sake”
 12. Heb. 12:5-11 God chasteneth his children
 13. James 5:19-20 “Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; 20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins”
 14. 2 John 9-11 “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. 10 He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 11 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds”
 15. Jude 22-23 “And of some have compassion, making a difference: 23 And others save with fear pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh”

16. Rev. 2:12-29 the church at Pergamos failed to practice discipline against those who held to the doctrine of Balaam and also against those who held to the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.
17. The church at Thyatira failed to withdraw fellowship from Jezebel

III. WHAT IS THE MEANING OF DISCIPLINE OR WITHDRAWAL OF FELLOWSHIP?

A. What it DOES mean:

1. It means to avoid or turn away from. Rom. 16:17
2. It means to refuse association or company. 1 Cor. 5:9-11
3. It means to give no encouragement or greeting. 2 John 9-11
4. It is evident that withdrawing means to “separate from, to retire from personally and privately, as well as by public announcement, and to turn away from.”
 - a. Actually, when we withdraw ourselves, the “withdrawal of fellowship” has already taken place (with God) by the disorderly brother’s actions. He has left the light of truth and is walking in darkness.
 - b. We are simply recognizing the fact that such a person has already removed from God! We are just cutting off a dead branch!
5. We are to have no social intercourse with them at all! Not even to eat a common meal or drink a cup of coffee. 1 Cor. 5:11

B. What it DOES NOT mean:

1. It does not mean we are “kicking” them out of the church.
2. It does not mean we are reaping vengeance toward this person — that belongs to God. Rom. 12:19
3. It is not an instrument of persecution. It must not become a vendetta through which personal feelings find expression against another.
4. It does not mean simply making an announcement before the congregation (though it is included).
5. It does not mean we are condemning them to hell. They are heading for that place already! This is a step taken to save them from hell, not to put them there!

6. It does not mean they become our enemy (2 Thess. 3:15), rather an “erring brother” that needs restoring.
 - a. God knows best how to restore the erring. This is his “infallible” way to do so!
 - b. Isa. 55:8-9 “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

C. The church will one day be presented to the Lord, pure and holy.

1. Eph. 5:27 “That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”
2. Rev. 21:27 “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”
3. 1 Cor. 5:7 “Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.”

IV. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE?

A. To SAVE THE SOUL OF THE ERRING.

1. This is what is desired above all else! It is a “soul-saving” effort!
2. 1 Cor. 5:5 “To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”
 - a. 1 Tim. 1:19-20 Paul delivered Hymenaeus and Alexander unto Satan “that they may learn not to blaspheme.”
 - b. This was done in an effort to restore them.
3. Gal. 6:1 “...restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”
4. 2 Thess. 3:14 the Thessalonians were to have no fellowship or company with the disorderly “that he may be ashamed”
 - a. “Ashamed” means: “to turn in, i.e., to turn in upon oneself so as to produce a feeling of shame, a wholesome change which involves a change of conduct.”

- b. It is hoped the loss of fellowship would make one ashamed and cause them to realize the enormity of their sin and be restored to a life of holiness.
- 5. Let us remember that disciplinary action is God's divine plan to save those who fall away in the church. However, even if they do not come back, it has still served God's purpose.
- B. To SAVE THE SOULS OF THE OTHER MEMBERS.
 - 1. A failure to "purge out" sin leads to a toleration of sin.
 - a. 1 Cor. 5:1-2 they were "puffed up"
 - b. 1 Cor. 5:6 "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump"
 - c. Eccl. 9:18 "one sinner destroys much good"
 - d. 1 Cor. 15:33 "be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners"
 - 2. Condemnation will be brought upon the whole church unless they discipline the disorderly.
 - a. The disorderly will be condemned if they do not repent, but also the congregation that tolerates the disorderly will not escape condemnation.
 - b. Rev. 2:14-16 The church at Pergamos was to blame for not correcting those who held to the doctrine of Balaam and the Nicolaitanes.
 - c. Rev. 2:20 Thyatira suffered Jezebel to seduce God's servants and went unpunished.
 - 3. When one is withdrawn from, it makes the rest "fear" and "examine themselves" — face reality.
 - a. 1 Tim. 5:20 "them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear"
 - b. Acts 5 when Ananias & Sapphira were struck dead for their sin, "great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."
 - c. It serves as an incentive to live so as to never become the object of church discipline.
- C. To MAINTAIN THE PURITY of the church.
 - 1. The church is a "pure, chaste virgin" that will one day be offered to Christ. Eph. 5:26-27
 - a. It will not be acceptable if it is blemished, spotted and contaminated with the disorderly.
 - b. 1 Peter 1:22 we have purified our souls in obeying the truth.

- c. Rev. 7:14 we have washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb
- 2. A congregation that will not rid itself of contamination (wayward souls in their midst) is not in fellowship with God and Christ.
 - a. 1 John 1:5-7 if we walk in the light of God's word, we have fellowship with God
 - b. If we do not obey his commands, we are not walking in the light and do not have fellowship with God.
- D. To SAVE THE SOULS OF THE WORLD.
 - 1. When the world sees the church of Christ demands godly living, they will respect us.
 - a. Phil. 2:15-16 "without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation...shine as lights"
 - b. Matt. 5:16 "let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works..."
 - 2. The truth can be "evil spoken of" which hurts the church and its influence.
 - 2 Peter 2:2 "and many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."
 - 3. When it is clearly understood that a godly life is expected and demanded and the disorderly will be disciplined, the world will respect us for it and bring glory to God.
 - Acts 5:11 "And great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things."
- E. It will SHOW THE CHURCH IS SUBJECT TO CHRIST.
 - 1. We must maintain the honor and authority of Christ.
 - 2 Cor. 2:9 "For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things."
 - 2. If we truly love the Lord, we will obey his commandments.
 - a. 1 John 5:3 "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments..."
 - b. Luke 6:46 "And why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - c. John 14:15 "If ye love me, keep my commandments"

V. WHO IS TO BE DISCIPLINED?

- A. Broadly speaking, ALL WHO WALK DISORDERLY. 2 Thess. 3:6
1. To walk disorderly means: “to deviate from the prescribed order or rule”
 - a. The word is “a military term denoting not keeping rank, insubordinate.”
 - b. “It has reference to the soldier who does not keep the ranks. Then it refers to the people who refuse to obey the civil laws, and thus it gets its meaning, ‘disorderly.’ It points to members in the early church, who, by their lives, became a reproach to the gospel of Christ.”
 2. Any SIN over which one can lose their soul, is a sin over which one can be withdrawn from.
 - a. Some have tried to say that only certain sins warrant withdrawal of fellowship while others do not.
 - b. This is NOT TRUE! Any sin, every sin, causes one to lose their soul.
- B. There are many specific sins mentioned in the Bible.
1. 1 Cor. 5:11 “...not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a *fornicator*, or *covetous*, or an *idolater*, or a *railer*, or a *drunkard*, or an extortioner..”
 - a. FORNICATOR — “every kind of illicit sexual relationship, whether married or unmarried”
 - b. COVETOUS — “one who wishes to have more of a thing than he ought to have; one who is greedy of money, or of sensual pleasure. One inordinately desirous of something belonging to another.”
 - c. IDOLATER — “a worshipper of a false god.” Then, they were physical, today they are mental
 - d. RAILER — one who abusively uses his tongue, one who uses vile and reproachful language.
 - e. DRUNKARD — “intoxicated, overcome with alcoholic liquor” one given to alcohol.
 - f. EXTORTIONER — one who takes another’s goods by fraud or by force
 2. One who SINS AGAINST A BROTHER and will not repent.

Matt. 18:15-17 “Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee...”

3. Those who are IMMORAL in their conduct.
 - a. *Adultery* (Matt. 19:9), *Liars* (Rev. 21:8), *Sex perverts* (Rom. 1:24-31),
 - b. *Immodesty* (1 Tim. 2:9), *Dancing* (Gal. 5:19-21; *lasciviousness*)
4. Those who CAUSE DIVISION and SOW DISCORD. Rom. 16:17 “Mark them that cause division...”
5. Those who TEACH A DIFFERENT DOCTRINE.
 - a. 2 John 9-11 “Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not...”
 - b. 1 Tim. 6:3-5 “If any man teach otherwise...withdraw thyself...”
6. A HERETIC. Titus 3:10-11 “A man that is a heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself.”
7. BUSYBODIES, TATTLERS, BACKBITERS, GOSSIPERS & SLANDERERS.
 - a. Perhaps most of these people mean well and really intend no harm.
 - b. They do not realize how harmful loose talk can be!
 - c. 1 Tim. 5:11-13 “...learn to be idle...tattlers...busybodies...speaking things...ought not...”
 - d. 2 Thess. 3:11 “For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.”
8. Those who FORSAKE THE ASSEMBLIES of the church.
 - a. Heb. 10:23-31 “hold fast...without wavering...not forsaking the assembling...for if we sin wilfully...”
 - b. Is this verse a commandment of God or is it idle conversation?
9. Those who WILL NOT WORK. 2 Thess. 3:10-14 “we commanded and exhort you...”

VI. HOW DO WE GO ABOUT WITHDRAWING FROM THE UNRULY AND DISORDERLY?

- A. TEACH THE CHURCH (which includes every member of the church) what the Bible says and demands on the subject.

1. That is what we are doing in this lesson.
 2. Everyone must be “in the know” regarding this vital doctrine.
- B. The CERTAINTY OF GUILT must be ascertained (proven).
1. 1 Tim. 5:19 “Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses.”
 2. Though this is directed to elders, the principle applies to all.
- C. PRAYER should be made in their behalf.
- 1 John 5:16 “If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death...”
- D. A WARNING is to be given to the unruly and disorderly and told of their fault.
- 1 Thess. 5:14 “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly...”
- E. EVERY EFFORT must be made TO RESTORE the brother and turn him from the error of his way.
1. Matt. 18:15-17 though this is concerning a personal offense, it seems reasonable the action taken here would also be good to use on others occasions.
 2. If one does not repent after discussing the problem with them, take one or two more.
 3. If they still do not repent, tell it to the church where everyone can make an effort to restore the wayward.
 4. If they still refuse to repent, withdrawal of fellowship is the final step in an effort to lead them to repentance.
 - a. Remember, these steps taken are in the best interest of restoring this erring one.
 - b. By the time it becomes necessary to withdraw from this person, we are simply cutting off a dead branch that no longer bears fruit.
 - c. It may very well result in them coming to their senses and repenting, but if not, we have removed the contaminating leaven from the body.

VII. WHO DOES THE WITHDRAWING?

- A. Not the ELDERS, per se.
1. They certainly take the lead in the action.
 - a. Heb. 13:17 “Obey them that have the rule over

- you...they watch for your souls...”
- b. 1 Peter 5:2 “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof...”
 - c. Titus 1:9-11 elders are to “hold fast the faithful word” that he may be able to stop the mouths of the unruly and gainsayers.
2. Nothing is mentioned about the elders of the church in Corinth doing the withdrawing (1 Cor. 5).
- B. The ENTIRE CHURCH membership does the withdrawing.
1. The command of God to withdraw from the man who “had his father’s wife” was to the whole church.
 2. The entire membership must participate in this action or it will not be effective.
- C. What if some of the members hold back and refuse to go along with the withdrawal?
1. Imagine some saying: “They’ve done you dirty,” “don’t pay any attention to them.” The lost will probably continue in their sin and remain lost.
 2. The Bible also gives instruction regarding those who refuse to accept the withdrawal of fellowship.
 - a. 2 Thess. 3:14 “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.”
 - b. God has very plainly covered all the bases, there is no way to get around what he has said!

VIII. WHAT SHOULD BE OUR TREATMENT OF THE BROTHER FROM WHOM WE HAVE WITHDRAWN?

- A. The Bible is very clear as to how we should act toward the one withdrawn from.
1. Matt. 18:17 “let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican” (Gentile)
 2. Rom. 16:17 “mark them...and avoid them”
 3. 1 Cor. 5:2 “be taken away from among you” (v5) “deliver ...unto Satan” (vs9,11) “not to company” (v9) “not to eat” (v13) “put away from among you”
 4. 2 Thess. 3:6 “withdraw yourselves” (v14) “note that man, have no company with him”
 5. 2 John 10 “receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed”

- B. Though we are to have no social intercourse with this person, we are still admonished not to be mean or ugly and treat them as an enemy.
 - 1. 2 Thess. 3:15 “Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish (warn) him as a brother”
 - 2. The only social communication we have with them is to encourage them to repent and come home.
- C. Remember, this is God’s plan to restore the erring, not man’s!

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Will we do what God has commanded or will we trust we have a better way than God?
 - a. God’s way is right and cannot be wrong.
 - b. When we do what GOD says, we can’t go wrong.
 - 2. **Withdrawal of fellowship from Christians who will not repent, works 100% of the time** (when practiced as the Bible tells us to do).
 - a. If the wayward Christian repents and comes back to faithfulness, it worked! The soul was saved.
 - b. If the wayward Christian does not repent and come back to faithfulness, it still worked! The flock as been spared from their ungodly influence.
- 1 Cor. 5:6,13 *“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump ... 13 Therefore put away from among you that wicked person”*

THE PLAN OF SALVATION IN ACTS

TEXT	TEACH	BELIEVE	CONFESS	REPENT	BAPTIZED
Acts 2:38	YES	Implied	Implied	YES	YES
Acts 8:12	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 8:13	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 8:37-38	YES	YES	YES	Implied	YES
Acts 9:1-18	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 10:1-48	YES	YES	Implied	YES	YES
Acts 16:14-15	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 16:25-34	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 17:32-34	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	Implied
Acts 18:8	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES
Acts 19:1-5	YES	YES	Implied	Implied	YES

When all the accounts of conversion are examined together, we learn that everyone did exactly the same thing to be saved. Water baptism is essential, but by itself it does not save. One must first **Hear** the word (John 6:46-47; Rom. 10:17). One must **Believe** that Jesus is the Son of God (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6). One must **Repent** of their sins (Luke 13:3,5; Acts 17:30). One must **Confess** faith that Jesus is the Son of God (Matt. 10:32-33; Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9-10). One must be **Baptized** (Acts 2:38). **Water Baptism** is the step that takes one who is “out” of Christ and puts him/her “into” Christ (Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27). Each one **heard, believed, repented, confessed** and were **baptized** in water for the forgiveness of their sins. In water baptism, one contacts the blood of Christ that washes sins away (Rev. 1:5; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 3:21). Jesus said, “He that **believeth** and is **baptized** shall be **saved**” (Mark 16:16). He also said, “Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say” (Luke 6:46)? Will you fight against Christ and his inspired word or will you humbly and sincerely submit in full obedience to his Word? Don’t go to judgment fighting against the Lord. Why not obey the Gospel today and you will be added to, and be a member of, the church of Christ (Acts 2:41,47)? You then must live **Faithful** to the Lord the rest of your life (1 Cor. 15:58; Rev. 2:10; James 1:12-16).