

## Dealing With An Erring Brother

### I. INTRODUCTION

#### A. *The Place To Begin*

1. We have a difficult task ahead of us in this study. That task is to understand and then implement *corrective church discipline*.
2. And the right, the best place for us to begin is with the Word of God.
3. There are two passages that will frame our study tonight;
  - a. the first is 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

**<sup>18</sup>Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup>that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore *you* on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

- b. the second passage is 2 Thessalonians 3:6

**<sup>6</sup>But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.**

#### B. *The Tension*

1. These two passages create a *tension* that is not easily resolved.
2. On one hand, Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 5 that the ministry of reconciliation has been entrusted to us as the people of God.
  - a. reconciliation speaks of restoring a broken relationship
    - 1) it looks to unity
    - 2) and renewal to a place of harmonious relationship
  - b. but in writing to the church at Thessalonica, Paul tells them to end relationship with anyone who refuses to live the Christian life as it's spelled out in the Bible.
3. How do we respond to this tension?
  - a. how do we maintain our identity as reconcilers while shunning some?
  - b. how can we faithfully fulfill our call to serve up reconciliation when we are turning some away?

### II. Matthew 18:15-20

**<sup>15</sup>“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. <sup>16</sup>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.*’ <sup>17</sup>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.**

**<sup>18</sup>“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**

**<sup>19</sup>“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup>For where two or three are**

**gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”**

**A. Two Aims**

1. It's been well said, “To live above with saints we love – Oh that will be glory! But to dwell below with the ones we know – Well that's a different story.”
2. Jesus provides a practical action plan here for how we can “dwell below with the saints we know” who don't always act like saints.
3. And there are two great aims that guide what He says here; two points round which all of what He says here swing.
4. Note first of all, that the word “church” was used only *twice* in all the gospels or Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
  - a. this is the *second* of those times.
  - b. the first was in Matthew 16 where Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the church.
5. Here in Matthew 18, Jesus is looking into the future at that group of His followers who will come together as a new community of God's people.
6. As God's redeemed, covenant people, they were called to be *like Him*, a people of *holy love*.
  - a. so, on one hand, they were to be *holy*, as Peter makes clear in his first epistle -  
**1 Peter 1:15-16 • As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, “Be holy, for I am holy.”**
  - b. on the other hand, they were to be motivated by *love* in all they did. In John 13:34-35 Jesus said -  
**<sup>34</sup>A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup>By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”**
7. The chief marks of the covenant people of God are *holiness* and *love*.
8. It seems that much of the modern gospel has placed too great an emphasis on love at the *expense* of holiness.
  - a. yet as John MacArthur says, “to preach love apart from God's holiness is to teach something *other* than *God's* love.”<sup>[1]</sup>
  - b. it is true that the past has seen excesses in preaching what is commonly known as hell fire & damnation, but that is not the church's danger today.
  - c. there's been a drift away from clear preaching on the holiness of God and His demand for holiness among His people.
  - d. in many churches the emphasis in preaching has shifted almost exclusively to speaking on God's love, with little, if any reference to His hatred of sin and determination to ultimately pour out His wrath on all unrighteousness.
  - e. belief in a God who is all love and no wrath, all grace and no justice, all forgiveness and no condemnation is *idolatry*.
  - f. salvation becomes meaningless, because sin that God overlooks does not need to be forgiven.
  - g. Christ's sacrifice on the cross becomes a travesty because He gave His life for no redemptive purpose.
  - h. removing God's holy hatred of sin emasculates the gospel and hinders rather than helps evangelism.
  - i. J. Edwin Orr, probably the greatest expert on revival, remarked that no awakening or revival of the church has ever occurred apart from strong preaching of God's holiness and the corresponding call for believers to forsake sin and return to the Lord's standards of purity and righteousness.
  - j. no church that tolerates *known sin* in its membership will have spiritual growth or effective evangelism.
  - k. in spite of that truth, such tolerance is standard in the church today.

9. Now, to be fair, while the bulk of the modern church preaches an *unbalanced love*, there are occasional groups which err on the other side and forget the call to *love* in their pursuit of *holiness*.
  - a. these groups elevate rules of behavior; they say what the approved dress code is and what Christians can and cannot do.
  - b. their rules aren't the clear cut issues of Biblical morality,
  - c. so much as they're cultural expressions of what some select group *considers* holy.
    - 1) for instance, the Bible calls us to dress modestly and a Spirit-inspired conscience ought to tell a person what is and isn't appropriate.
    - 2) it's an altogether different thing when hem lengths are enforced, and make-up is forbidden.
  - d. such legalism is nothing but an attempt to replace walking in the Spirit with man-made rules.
  - e. where such legalism exists, the Spirit is grieved, and so the fruit of the Spirit is stunted; love languishes.
  - f. this was the error of the Pharisees; they mistook *legalism* for *holiness*.
10. God wants His people to be a community of holy love.
  - a. holiness is not the antagonist of love,
  - b. and love gives no threat to holiness.
11. The problem is, this side of heaven, because we are imperfect, still struggling with the effects of sin, there are going to be times when our call to holy love will be challenged.
12. Here in Matthew 18, Jesus gives the church an action plan for how to maintain her commitment to both holiness and love.

#### **B. One In Private – V. 15**

**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.**

1. “Your” & “you” here are *singular*; Jesus is not speaking to the entire group *as* a group; He’s speaking to individuals.
2. He means that as His followers, *each of us* has a responsibility to watch out for each other and to take concern for one another’s spiritual welfare.
3. This is a difficult thing for Christians in modern America because of the heavy emphasis we place on *individualism*.
  - a. in some cases, we’ve applied the idea of liberty a little too far.
  - b. the sense of community and mutual commitment which was such a strong evidence for the new life of the early church is almost wholly lacking in the American church.
  - c. add to that strong sense of individualism the value of *the right to privacy*, and we end up with a lot of Christians who adopt a sort of “*live and let live*” attitude toward others.
4. But Jesus says we cannot just let sin go on unchecked.
5. When we see it in another believer, we are to go to him/her *privately* and deal with it.
6. Now, what sins are we to confront in others?
  - a. Jesus said, “**If your brother sins against you.**”
  - b. He’s not referring to some off-hand, one-time offense;
  - c. this is referring to any offense, any sin which is on-going.
  - d. this is some fault a person has, some missing of the moral mark that is a habit or characteristic that needs to be changed because it’s clearly contrary to God’s will.
7. As we go through life, it’s going to happen that we’re going to say and do things that hurt others, but they aren’t habits, they aren’t reflective of our character.
  - a. they’re just off-hand remarks or mis-understandings
  - b. being the less than perfect people we are, there will be times when we give some unintentional slight.
  - c. the best way to handle these when we’re the one offended, is to blow it off.
  - d. remember, we are to walk in an attitude of forgiveness toward others, so when these little

- things occur, we just let them go.
8. But, when we see a repeated pattern of such offenses and realize it wasn't a one time thing, then for our brother's or sister's sake, we need to confront them.
  9. But notice – we do so privately!
    - a. we don't talk to others about it; we don't gossip.
    - b. we don't make it the subject of group prayer.
    - c. we go to him or her and we express our concern, pointing out specifically what it is that we see as the problem.
  10. Our motive is to see the one we're confronting admit the fault, repent of it, and reconciled, first to the Lord, and then to any who've been offended.
  11. Because Jesus says, "if your brother sins **against you**" we might think this refers *only* to personal hurts and offenses –
    - a. but since Jesus goes on to speak about such confrontation in the wider community of the church,
    - b. we understand that the sin here is *any* behavior that affects the Body of Christ in *any or all* of its parts.
    - c. Paul reinforces this understanding in Galatians 6:1 where we read –
 

**Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**
  12. It would be so much easier to just go to church once or twice a week, slip in just as the first song is being sung and then slip out with the final "Amen" and have the attitude that I will live my life, and you live yours and let's just all mind our own business.
  13. But Jesus and Paul remind us that to be a Christian means to mind *kingdom business* and the fact of the matter is, we belong to one another.
  14. The Christian life is a *community life* – and community means *commitment*.
    - a. I am to watch out for you, and you for me.
    - b. when I see you walking in a path that leads to danger, I am obligated to warn you – love demands it.
    - c. when you see me living in such a way that is incompatible with the life of Christ, then you are under a divine obligation to confront me.
  15. There's a large church in Southern California which has made a dramatic impact on its community.
    - a. a well-known lawyer was invited by one of the church members to visit one Sunday.
    - b. this lawyer asked what church it was, and when he heard the name, declined the invitation by saying, "I'd never go there. That's where the most crooked attorney in Los Angeles attends."<sup>[2]</sup>
  17. When one of us carries on in unrepentant sin, it ends up being an offense against the entire body of Christ because it defames the Lord and tarnishes the reputation of His people.
  18. When we see such sin in the life of another, we must go to them in private, and deal with it, sharing what we've seen and expressing our loving, tender concern.
    - a. and we must do it *quickly*, not putting it off, saying to ourselves,
    - b. "Well, it's none of my business. Who am I anyway; I'm not perfect."
    - c. no – you're not, and you *ought to expect* that one day YOU will be the one who someone comes to and confronts!
  19. You see, instead of such loving confrontation being the *exception*, it ought to be the *rule*.
    - a. what Jesus says here is something that ought to be a normal and expected part of our community life.
    - b. we often say, "No one's perfect," as we try to dodge criticism.
    - c. but that's exactly correct, no one *is* perfect, we all have areas and ways in which we come short of the perfection of Christ.
    - d. instead of *excusing* our faults and growing defensive when someone points one out,

- e. we ought to expect and rejoice that there are people who are concerned enough for us that they would help us grow into the image of the Lord.
  - f. but the way it is right now for most Christians, we admit we aren't perfect, but heaven help the fool who tells us specifically how and where we aren't perfect!
20. God change us! We need to come to the place where we expect and joyously receive the counsel of those who will love us enough to say, "Broh – I've seen something in you that you need to know is a kingdom bummer!"
21. Jesus says, **"If he hears you, you have gained your brother."**
- a. when you go to someone and reprove them, if she/he hears you and responds with confession & repentance,
  - b. you've just cemented an even stronger bond within the community of Christ.
22. The goal of reproof must be the "gaining of someone for the Lord."
- a. the purpose of corrective discipline is the spiritual restoration of fallen members –
  - b. first to the Lord, then to one another.
  - c. this goal of restoration is balanced against the priority of protecting the purity and holiness of the local church.
23. Let's be clear on this: The goal of discipline is not to throw people out of the church or to feed the self-righteous pride of those who administer the discipline.
- a. it is to bring the sinning **brother** back.
  - b. Proverbs 11:30 says, "He who is wise wins souls."
  - c. let's again look at Galatians 6:1 where Paul says –  
**Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.**
- d. in James 5:19-20 we find this -  
**Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.**
24. So the first step in corrective church discipline is something that really ought to be going on all of the time; it ought to be a *normal part* of the Christian life.
25. But what happens when the person we confront doesn't listen and refuses to confess & repent? That brings us to v. 16 . . .

### **C. If He Will Not Hear – Vs. 16-17**

**<sup>16</sup>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.'** <sup>17</sup>**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.**

- 1. You've gone and confronted someone privately, and they blown you off. What's the next step?
- 2. You quietly go to one or two others whom you regard as being spiritually mature and objective.
  - a. you tell them of your concern for the sinning brother and the outcome of your initial encounter with her/him.
  - b. you listen to their perspective and if they agree with your conclusion that reproof is necessary, then you go together to once more confront the erring man/woman.
- 3. Jesus quotes Deut. 19:15 about how many witnesses are needed to establish evidence as fact in court.
  - a. the testimony of one wasn't enough, it required two, and preferably three witnesses to establish proof.
  - b. Jesus is lifting a practice out of the local synagogue here and applying it to the local church.
  - c. in the synagogue, before anyone could be excommunicated, there had to be a minimum of two witnesses who would say that a person had done something worth of their exclusion.
- 4. He's laying the groundwork for that ultimate step of corrective discipline here.
- 5. The goal of all discipline must be the restoration of the erring brother or sister to the Lord and the

- Lord's people, but the fact of the matter is, there will be those, who for whatever reason refuse to be reconciled.
6. There must be some fixture, some means by which they can be justly dealt with and Jesus is describing that here.
  7. So, if step one doesn't work, then you raise the stakes by taking one or two more with you.
  8. Hopefully this added sense of seriousness and more voices who are all in agreement will cause the erring person to come to their sense and repent.
  9. But if they remain obstinate, then Jesus says they are to take the matter to the "church."
    - a. now, here is where it gets a little sticky in our interpretation.
    - b. just what does Jesus mean by "the church."
    - c. does He mean "The Church" the entire universal Body of Christ, or just the local fellowship where the erring person attends?
    - d. and does He mean the entire congregation, or just the elders, the leadership?
    - e. determining what Jesus means here is as simple as observing the progression in disclosure He uses.
      - 1) the first reproof is private,
      - 2) the second is semi-private,
      - 3) that means the third is public.
    - f. but let's not forget the goal, the aim of corrective discipline – the repentance of the erring person and their restoration to the Lord and His people while at the same time guarding the purity and holiness of the community of Christ.
    - g. therefore, it makes sense that "telling the church" would be to inform the pastors & elders, the spiritual leaders in the church and turning the matter over to them for them to deal with in a manner they deem best aims at the goal of corrective discipline.
    - h. if such discipline *wasn't* turned over to the leaders, then the result would be the people in the congregation standing up and charging others with unrepentant sin.
      - 1) right in the middle of service, someone would say, "Hey, listen up, so and so is a cheater!"
      - 2) or they would notify the body via little flyers on the windshields of our vehicles.
      - 3) or maybe we'd have to set up an accusation corner and people would climb onto a chair and level their charges.
    - i. no, this isn't the way to go about corrective church discipline.
  10. The right and wise way to go about it is for those who've done steps one and two and found the erring brother or sister resistant, to take it to the elders, to those who are charged by God with the spiritual oversight and protection of the flock.
    - a. they then confront the erring man/woman.
    - b. such spiritual authority ought to cause the erring person to realize the grave seriousness of his/her sin.
    - c. to oppose the spiritual authorities of a local church is a serious thing and anyone who does it better make sure he's standing on solid biblical ground or he's simply "out to lunch."
  11. If he/she rejects the reproof of the elders, and refuses to live by the guidelines they establish as being the appropriate means for demonstrating genuine repentance and a heart to be reconciled to the Lord and His people, then Jesus says they are to be treated by *all* as a heathen and a tax-collector.
  12. Jesus is again drawing an allusion to the local synagogue.
    - a. Gentiles who had shown faith in the God of Israel but were not full-fledged converts to Judaism, could attend the synagogue.
    - b. they weren't called Gentiles; they were called "God-fearers."
    - c. there were two classes of people who were barred from attending the synagogue – the rank pagans, and those Jews who had proven themselves morally and spiritually bankrupt – the publicans, tax-collectors.
  13. Now, what's interesting is that Jesus tells His followers they are to treat the unrepentant like those shunned from the covenant community.

- a. yet, in Jesus' life, we see Him hanging out with the very ones who'd been shunned by the synagogues of His day.
  - b. how do we reconcile this?
14. It's important to note that the shunned ones Jesus hung out with were the very ones who WANTED TO REPENT & BE RECONCILED to God and His covenant people, but who were still being shunned by the religious people!
- a. Jesus didn't hang out with sinners who justified their sin or were content in their spiritual darkness.
  - b. He came with the message of forgiveness & reconciliation to the ones who ached for it, but who had been permanently shunned from the synagogue!
15. This gives us the right perspective in understanding *why* the final step of corrective church discipline is necessary.
- a. if a person remains unrepentant through the first, second and third steps of reproof,
  - b. it means they're in danger of being outside the community of the redeemed.
  - c. it isn't an issue of some sin that's hindering their walk and stalling their spiritual growth anymore;
  - d. it's now the danger that they aren't numbered among the repentant, the reconciled, the saved.
16. We do **NOT** know what's in a person's heart, whether they are saved or not – that is between them and God.
- a. but you and I are not to relate to one another based only on our profession,
  - b. we relate to one another based on the fruit of our lives.
  - c. remember, Jesus said, that it is by our fruit that we will know one another. [Matthew 7:20]
17. If a person repents, there *will be* the fruit of repentance.
18. Where there is no fruit, guess what? – there is no repentance, and thus, our relationship with them is altered from fellowshiping with them as a brother or sister in the family of God to an *outsider*.
19. And how do we relate to outsiders?
- a. with love and concern that they come to repentance.
  - b. our relationship with them is *a relationship with purpose* – to see them repent.
  - c. so to shun someone doesn't mean to ignore, hate, or abuse them.
  - d. it means to live before them in such a way that we work for their repentance and reconciliation to the Lord and His people.
  - e. I'll have more to say about that a bit later.

#### **D. Taking The Final Step – 1 Cor. 5**

1. In 1 Corinthians 5, we have the story of how the church was instructed to take the final step of corrective discipline and it gives us much insight in how to deal with those who refuse to repent.
2. Let me set the scene, then we are going to read the entire chapter –
  - a. there was a man in the church at Corinth who was having an incestuous affair with his step mother.
  - b. the Corinthians, instead of following the practice Jesus outlined in Matthew 18, had accepted this guy within their fellowship.
  - c. here's what Paul says to them when he found out –

**<sup>1</sup>It is actually reported *that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife!* <sup>2</sup>And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.**

3. Paul understands that determined unrepentance is a cause for being removed from the fellowship.
4. And He rebukes the Corinthian church for their failure to exercise such discipline with this guy.
5. Now he tells them what they need to do -

**<sup>3</sup>For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. <sup>4</sup>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, 5deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.**

6. Paul tells them that together as a church, they need to engage in a specific spiritual event of formally withdrawing their spiritual covering over the unrepentant one.
7. They are to revoke his participation in the covenant community.
8. The idea is this: if he is genuinely saved, then being spiritually unprotected and the object of satanic attack will bring him to his senses.
9. If he isn't saved, then hopefully the removal of any spiritual protection he's enjoyed by virtue of Christian fellowship will also serve to remove the blinders from his eyes!
10. What Paul is talking about here in vs. 3-5 is a profoundly spiritual event and it's based on what Jesus said in Matthew 18:18-20 -

**18“Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.**

**19“Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. 20For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”**

11. These verses are tied directly to the process of corrective church discipline Jesus outlined above.
12. Put these words together with what Paul says in vs. 3-5 and you realize that there is a profound measure of spiritual authority God gives to the local church – and **ALL OF IT** is aimed at securing the ministry of holiness and reconciliation that is committed to God's people.
13. Paul goes on in 1 Cor. 5 -

**6Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?**

14. Unchecked, unrepentant sin will spread.
15. If the church does not practice corrective discipline, then it will lose its distinctive holiness.

**7Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.**

16. To say it another way – those who have been born again will live a new life.

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17. Now, having told them to shun, ostracize, excommunicate, dis-fellowship, however we chose to label it, this guy who was living in incest, Paul clarifies what it means by shunning sinners.

**9I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.**

18. In a previous letter, Paul had told them not to associate with the immoral.
  - a. the Corinthians had taken that to mean they were to withdraw from all contact with the world.
  - b. Paul says that isn't what he meant.
  - c. what he meant was those who professed to be Christians but who were living in sin.

**11But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.**

19. In that time and culture, eating a meal with someone was one of the most basic ways you showed your acceptance of a person.
  - a. it was fellowship in the most intimate sense.
  - b. Paul is saying here that we cannot carry on fellowship with those who claim to be saved but whose spiritual fruit is bitter and sour.
20. With such folk, the relationship is limited to the call to repent and be reconciled to God and His people.

**12**For what *have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside?* **13**But those who are outside God judges.

21. Then he quotes Deut. 17:7 -

**Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”**

22. Now, don't miss this because it's crucial and must be heard loud and clear –

- a. God will judge unbelievers!
  - b. but you and I are called to exercise a level of judgment among one another in the body of Christ!
  - c. the criteria for judgment is what Jesus gives us in Matthew 18.
23. When we see a significant departure from Christ in someone's life, we need to go to them and reprove them privately, quickly, tenderly, challenging them in such a way that they will confess, repent, and be restored to the Lord and His people.
24. If our reproof is rejected, then we take one or two others of proven spiritual maturity and insight with us.
25. If we are again rejected, we take it to the church leaders, the pastors and elders, having the witnesses who've gone with us give testimony to the process that's been followed to that point.
26. Then the elders reprove the erring brother/sister, giving specific grounds for proven repentance and if their challenge is ignored, then the entire congregation is to shun them.
- a. which means in a formal act of spiritual withdrawal, they remove the protective influence of their spiritual community
  - b. but – and understand this clearly – the aim of even this last step is their repentance and reconciliation!
  - c. at no point is there any room for unkind or harsh words.
  - d. at no point is there any room for threats or treatment of the erring one that places a barrier on the path to their repentance!
27. We have recently had to exercise the last step of corrective discipline toward two of our members.
- a. they are ***no longer*** members because we have shunned them.
  - b. the elders have formally removed our spiritual covering over them.
  - c. our earnest hope is their sincere repentance.
  - d. I will have more to say about that in just a moment, but right now I have to say this -
  - e. it has come to my attention that hateful, accusing, & even threatening anonymous phone calls have been made to the two we've shunned, apparently by people in this church. **SHAME ON YOU**, whoever you are!
  - f. in the Lord's eyes, your sin is every bit as great as those we've had to shun because while His heart lies with their repentance and reconciliation, you are putting obstacles in His path!
  - g. you are closing, barring, and nailing shut the door of forgiveness to them.
  - h. God wants them to repent and be reconciled to Him and to us, but you are saying you don't want to be reconciled to them!
  - i. your heart, your agenda, and God's do not match – and I say to you, beware, because you may very well be outside the community of those who are called to the ministry of reconciliation!
28. You see, after Paul wrote to the Corinthians to shun this guy in ch. 5, in his next letter, he told them to restore him after he'd demonstrated genuine repentance.
29. In 2 Corinthians 2:6-8 Paul tells them to stop with-holding fellowship from the poor guy, but rather to re-affirm their love for and acceptance of him.

### III. CONCLUSION

#### A. ***The Need For Corrective Church Discipline***

1. As I said earlier, corrective church discipline is something that ought to be ***normal fare*** in the Body of Christ.
2. The first level of it, when one of us reproves another, ought to be understood as simply a part of

- our commitment to the Lord and one another.
3. Being challenged ought to be seen as a sign of love and care.
  4. I was recently reproved by a friend who came to me privately and tenderly, yet firmly.
    - a. he informed me that sometimes I don't respond to opposition and constructive criticism in a Christ-like manner.
    - b. sometimes I appear to get angry and it registers in my response and body language.
    - c. he gave me a few examples of times when he'd seen such, and there was no denying what he said.
    - d. I was rightly reprov'd, and as he sat there sharing his concern with me, I realized what a massive risk he had taken, because he was giving me constructive criticism; the very thing I had shown a tendency to not take well.
    - e. I was overwhelmed with his love for the Lord and for me to take the risk of challenging me right where I needed to be challenged!
    - f. it deepened my love and appreciation for him immensely.
    - g. and I hope that I now bring forth the fruit of repentance in the face of his reproof.
  5. As the Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend."
  6. Proverbs 27:6 – "Faithful are the wounds of a friend."
  7. Proverbs 3:11-12, which is quoted in Hebrews, is another passage which speaks of discipline as part of the normal Christian life,
 

**"My son, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor detest His correction; For whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son *in whom he delights.*"**

    - a. while the Lord can correct and discipline His children His any way He chooses,
    - b. one of those ways is by reproof between His own.
  8. When such mutual reproof is missing, the result is the need for God to intervene with His own forms of discipline, as we read about in 1 Cor. 11,
    - a. where the church had adopted a total live and let live attitude toward reprov'g one another.
    - b. and because of that, there was gross sin polluting the church, as we read about earlier in ch. 5 with the case of incest.
    - c. but Paul says the effects of un-reprov'd sin were causing other problems as well.
    - d. in vs. 30-32 he writes -
 

**For this reason many *are* weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.**

### ***B. The Application of Corrective Church Discipline***

**1 Timothy 5:20** • Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence of all, that the rest also may fear.

1. The leadership of this fellowship recently had to exercise the ***final step*** of discipline with two members.
2. When their sin was exposed, there was an initial confession of wrong-doing on their part. The elders then developed a set of expectations as guidelines for them to demonstrate genuine repentance. These guidelines were not followed.
3. The guidelines the elders developed and implemented were neither heavy nor punitive; they were the kind of behaviors one would ***reasonably*** expect from those showing ***genuine repentance***.
4. Since they were violated, we understood this to mean that those being disciplined were not listening to us and were not interested in following the path of repentance we'd proscribed.
5. Therefore, we had no alternative but to shun them and withdraw our spiritual covering over them. [In the original message, the names of the two were given at this point so that the people of Calvary Chapel could be aware and follow through on the following steps of corrective church discipline.]
6. What is our ***current posture*** toward these two?

7. Simple – we hope and pray for their genuine repentance and reconciliation to God and to God’s people, *meaning* us, here at Calvary Chapel of Oxnard.
8. Our contact with them is to be limited to affirming our love for them and concern for their repentance.
9. Repentance means of course that they will live within the guidelines we’ve already given to them.
10. Because there’s already been a violation of these guidelines, this means they will need to demonstrate this repentance *over a period of time*, until it is deemed appropriate by the elders that the terms for *demonstrating repentance* have been fulfilled.
  - a. it’s not appropriate for me to give any details on what these expectations are.
  - b. that is a matter to be kept within the circle of those to whom it matters.
11. While we hope, pray, and wait for this repentance to be forthcoming, we must guard diligently against gossip and anything that would put an unnecessary block in the way of those who have been shunned from being restored to fellowship.

### **C. To Those Shunned**

1. This message is being recorded and will be given to those who’ve been shunned.
2. So I want to end with a word to them –
  - a. on behalf of the pastors and elders of Calvary Chapel of Oxnard I want you to know that we do love you and care for you.
  - b. it is our abiding hope that you will repent and consistently bear the fruit of repentance.
  - c. we feel deeply the loss of your presence and what you contribute to our fellowship.
  - d. we long for your reconciliation to the Lord and to us.
3. Please know that as the leaders of this church, we will do our best to keep the path of reconciliation open to you, and will reprove any we discover are hindering that reconciliation.
4. We love you – please come home soon.

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[1] Here and through (k. ) MacArthur, John, *MacArthur’s New Testament Commentary: Matthew 16-23* Copyright © 1988 by The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago Electronic Edition STEP Files Copyright © 1997, Parsons Technology, Inc., PO Box 100, Hiawatha, Iowa.

[2] Ibid