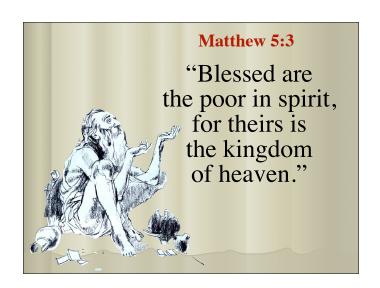
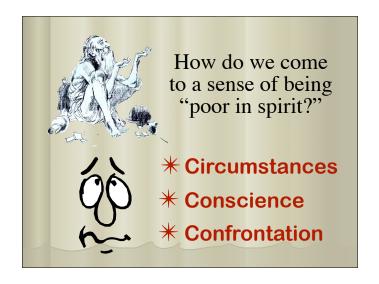
2 Corinthians 7:13-16 The Prodigal's welcome











Paul had harsh rebukes for the Corinthian Christians.

1 Corinthians 3

"1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?"

Confronting spiritual rebels - Matthew 18:15-17

Step #1 Personal reproof in private

"15 And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."

Step #2 Include one or two more in bringing private reproof

"16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed."

Step #3 Expose the issue to the entire church

"17 And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;"

Step #4 Let the person be regarded as an unbeliever

"and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer."

#2

Consolation is needed for penitent sinners.

2 Corinthians 2

Restoration builder #1 Depersonalize the offenses.

"5 But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree - in order not to say too much - to all of you."

Restoration builder #2 Discontinue the discipline.

"6 Sufficient for such a one is this punishment (reproof) which was inflicted by the majority,"

Restoration builder #3 Dramatize the love.

"7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, lest somehow such a one be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him."

Restoration builder #4 Disarm the enemy.

", For to this end also I wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things. 10 But whom you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ, 11 in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes."

2 Corinthians 7

"13 . . . And besides our comfort, we rejoiced even much more for the joy of Titus, because his spirit has been refreshed by you all. 14 For if in anything I have boasted to him about you, I was not put to shame; but as we spoke all things to you in truth, so also our boasting before Titus proved to be the truth. 15 And his affection abounds all the more toward you, as he remembers the obedience of you all, how you received him with fear and trembling. 16 I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you."

How Paul talks about them

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How Paul talks to them

"16 I rejoice that in everything I have confidence in you."

How do I heal a "shamed spirit"?

Become a "father" type.

- **✓** Don't personalize the offense.
- **√** Wait for genuine repentance.
- √ Take the initiative to welcome, affirm, restore, and celebrate those who return.
- **✓** Respond with the same passion shown by the penitent.
- **✓ Call off the older brothers.**

"shamed spirit"?

Become an "older brother" type.

- **✓** A score-keeping spirit. Make sure that penance and probation never end.
- ✓ A separatist spirit. Kill the wounded. Ignore, or marginalize those who fail.
- ✓ A superficial spirit. Magnify and personalize the offenses of others but never look inside yourself.

Why don't we get this?

When repentance is only confession we never get home.

When grace is only a doctrine we never recover or restore.

When the issue is only about us we kill our wounded.