

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

2 Thessalonians 3:6

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep aloof from every brother who **leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.**”

Tolerance is often called for.



When should I forebear?



When should I confront?

Three things that I should forebear.

1. **Circumstances** - that I may not like but cannot or should not change
2. **Differences of taste** - style, temperament, etc.
3. **Minor transgressions** - lesser sins

Three things that I should confront.

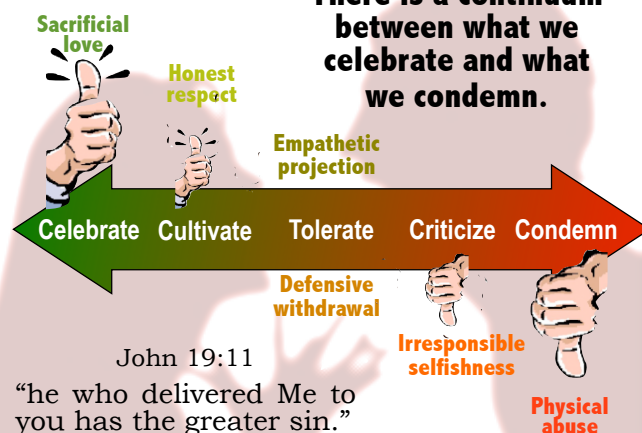
1. **Satanic obstacles** - false hope & faith
2. **Differences of taste** - when they become exclusive of others.
3. **Major transgressions** - sins that are destructive to individuals and the church

1 Corinthians 5

“9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters; for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he should be **an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler** - not even to eat with such a one. 12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church? 13 But those who are outside, God judges. *Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.*”

- ✓ The church is not to judge **those outside the church but forebear with much of the world.**
- ✓ The church is to discipline its **members** for a variety of transgressions.
- ✓ Issues that call for discipline fall into two categories:
 1. **Idolatry** - disrespect for God.
 2. **Immorality** - disrespect for God's creation.
- ✓ Discipline responds to **outward behavior.**
- ✓ Discipline can involve **social isolation.**

There is a continuum between what we celebrate and what we condemn.



How did Paul address sinning Christians?

- ✓ **Most of Paul's correction is in the form of instruction**
 - confrontation, exhortation, or encouragement
- ✓ **Many sins do not call for official discipline.** - Corinth,
 - secondary doctrine like prophecy,
 - pride & selfish behavior,
 - marginalization of gifts,
 - lawsuits,
 - divorce,
 - eating food offered to idols,
 - misuse of spiritual gifts
- ✓ **Some transgressions call for official sanction** -
 - issues that effect the community or the faith.



What constitutes a discretion that warrants church discipline?



Some issues that call for church discipline

- ✓ **2 Jn.9-11 Going beyond Christ** - adding to so as to discount the Gospel.
- ✓ **1 Tim.1:19-20 Blasphemy** - open disrespect for things holy (shipwrecked faith).
- ✓ **1 Cor.5:1-13 Open moral autonomy** - sexual immorality.
- ✓ **2 Thess.3:6,11,14-15 Free loading** - refusing to work and living off of others.
- ✓ **Gal.1:8-9 Preaching another gospel** - denying the grace of God in Christ.
- ✓ **Rom.16:17-18, Titus 3:9-11 Trouble making** - sowing discord among the brethren.



What constitutes a discretion that warrants church discipline?

How should discipline among believers take place?

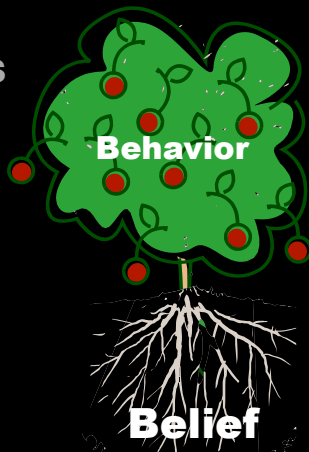


Discipline must address

Outward conduct

as well as

Inner rebellion

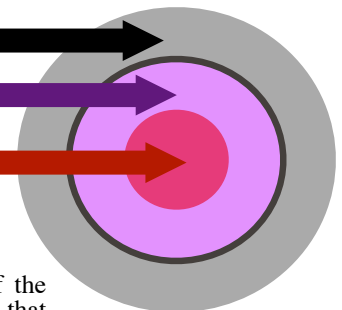


Three levels of transgression

1. Tolerable sins

2. Outward sins (behaviors)

3. Inner sins (belief systems)



Matthew 23:26

“first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.”

Galatians 6

Who? those who are not operating from the flesh
What? bringing back - a process which needs time

“¹ Brethren, even if a man is caught (**trapped**) in any trespass, you who are **spiritual**, restore (**bring back**) such a one

How? gentleness, empathy, humility

in a spirit of **gentleness**; each one **looking to yourself**, lest you too be tempted. ² **Bear one another's burdens**, and thus **fulfill the law of Christ**. ³ For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. ⁵ For each one shall bear his own load.”

Qualifications for a correcting ministry (for non-prophets)

1. **Experience** - Understanding the dynamics of the spiritual life.
2. **Relationship** - A trusted connection with the one being corrected.
3. **Listening** - Sensitivity to address the roots of personal failure.
4. **Wisdom** - Knowing how to wisely confront, correct, and restore.

Matthew 18

1. Privacy is respected.

“¹⁵ If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, **just between the two of you**. **If** he listens to you, you have won your brother over.

2. Pressure is applied proportionately.

¹⁶ But **if** he will not listen, take one or two others along, **so that every matter may be established** by the testimony of two or three witnesses.

3. Public exposure is a last resort.

¹⁷ **If** he refuses to listen to them, **tell it to the church**;

4. Putting out of fellowship is the final option.

and **if** he refuses to listen even to the church, **treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.**”

2 Thessalonians 3

“¹⁴ And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame. ¹⁵ And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

1. Discipline does not mean **loss of salvation**.
2. Discipline does not mean **business as usual**.
3. Discipline does not mean **withdrawal of love**.

God disciplines His people at several levels.

✓ **Toleration of preferences** - things that are not sin but stress and stretch us.

Denying the inerrancy of the Bible
 “R” rated movies
 Pro choice
 Divorce / remarriage
 Rock music in worship
 Drinking wine
 “7 day” creation

✓ **Criticism of foolishness** - sins that reflect immature, worldliness.

Universal salvation
 Sexist attitudes
 Racist attitudes
 Living together outside marriage
 Neglecting the poor
 Habitual lying
 Cruelty to animals

✓ **Condemnation of destructive ways** - sins that threaten to destroy us.

Denying the resurrection
 Emotional abuse of a child
 Justification by human merit
 Sexual promiscuity
 Drug addiction
 Gambling away family money