

Scriptural Discipline

Mutual Responsibility

PALM SPRINGS BIBLE SCHOOL
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Major Themes Across the Seven Churches

- Try false teachers
- You will be tested
- Wake up!
- Endure patiently
- Lack of self examination (neither hot or cold)

Lord's Message to Ephesus



know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked people, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false. You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary. Yet I hold this against you: **you have forsaken the love you had at first.** Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place. But you have this in your favor: You hate the practices of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.”

Revelation 2:2-6 NIV

“Forsaken the Love You Had at First”

“that you have abandoned the love you had at first.” (RSV)

“But I have this against thee, that thou didst leave thy first love.” (ASV)

“But I hold this against you, that you do not love as you did at first.” (JBP)

A Pause Needed Here

Doing “right” in Ephesus included neglecting love

They became so “task focused” and so laser-like in rightly battling false doctrine that they forgot the very purpose for which they were called – to love one another

What do you suppose this was like in Ephesus? Had it become a place where the members no longer felt the love of God and man as they once did? Had members voiced this to the elders, who were too weary and engaged to hear it?

The measurement of all ecclesial work is, “did it manifest itself in love?” In Ephesus, a failure to return to love would lead Jesus to remove the lampstand from his place

Scriptural Discipline

- No matter how right the action, no matter how clear the Scriptural directive, all discipline is to be done with love as the motive
- When we correct and rebuke, it is an expression of our love – someone who doesn't love you as much as I do wouldn't take the time and be vulnerable enough to confront you
- When the discipline from an ecclesia includes withdrawing fellowship, the act of doing so expresses to all how much we love a brother that we could not disengage from and watch fall to ruin

Major Challenges to Our Ecclesias

- Persevere, labor, work hard to protect the ecclesia
- Do not tolerate wickedness and sin
- But **DO NOT FORSAKE LOVE** in pursuit of these things!

Responsibility to One's Brother

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some *have compassion, making a difference* (ESV: *“and have mercy on those who doubt”*): And others save with fear, *pulling them out of the fire*; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.”

Jude 20-23

chiton – a long garment worn under the cloak, next to the skin. Gives the sense of a garment stained by the flesh but able to be hidden from general view.

Judah as a Firebrand



“I have overthrown *some* of you, as
God overthrew Sodom and
Gomorrah, and ye were as a
firebrand plucked out of the
burning: yet have ye not returned
unto me, saith the LORD.”

Amos 4:11

This is a concept of one saving a burning stick from being consumed in the fire. It doesn't guarantee repentance, but it is the only hope of survival.

Making Sense of Jude 22-23

Not every situation same - not ONE way for dealing with sins

One brother is capable of repenting and removing himself from sin (e.g., temptation of inappropriate relationship at work) and it calls for compassion and mercy

One brother is incapable of removing himself from ongoing sin (e.g., addiction to illegal substances) and it may require you to directly intervene – pull the firebrand out of the fire!

What is Required?

Would you be willing to intervene with a brother that is filled with sin as repulsive as Legion?

Are you willing to devote the time and commitment to stand with your brother through long and difficult times?

Would you pull him out of the fire? Sit with him until he is sober? Bring him into your home if he has lost everything? Listen to him unload his heart to you until the wee hours when you work the next day?

And, after all is said and done, can you keep confidence?

Are We Willing to Hear and Help?



Matthew 18

8 may be es
two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to
ten to them, tell it to the church. And if h
refuses to listen even to the church, let him
to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Tr

Context of Matthew 18

Be converted and become as little children

Woe to him that causes offences

Remove foot, hands, eye if it offends you

Despise not one of these little ones

Searching for the lost sheep of the flock of 100

Forgive seventy times seven

The unrighteous servant and forgiving from the heart

your brother of his trespasses

The six verses dealing with sin fit into the context of
the rest of the chapter!

Principle of Family Governance

of your brother, the son of your mother, or your son or your daughter or the wife you embrace or your friend who is as your own soul entices you secretly, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which neither you nor your fathers have known, some of the gods of the peoples who are around you, whether near you or far off from you, from the one end of the earth to the other, you shall not yield to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him, nor shall you conceal him. But you shall kill him. Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. You shall stone him to death with stones, because he sought to draw you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Deuteronomy 13:6-10

Principle Of Family Governance

God established the principle of **governance** within families and formally within the nation

The role of all was to work together so that as a family, a tribe, a nation they would all be **holy** people unto their God

No member was to be an island, but **accountable** to the body

Discipline is best handled closest to the individual and as early as possible

Restoration Process – Matthew 18

Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then go with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

Matthew 18:15-17

Restoration Process – Matthew 18:15-17



Excerpt From John Thomas's Writings, *Published 1888*

Nothing tends more to the keeping or the restoring of peace than the observance of this law; and no law is more constantly broken. The universal impulse, when anything is supposed to be wrong, is to tell the matter to third persons. From them, it spreads with the result of causing much bad feeling which, perhaps, the original cause does not warrant, and would not have produced if the aggrieved person had taken the course prescribed by Christ, and laid the fault "between thee and him alone."

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Excerpt From John Thomas's Writings, *Published 1888*

continued:

good men, or those who consider themselves such would **adopt the rule of refusing to listen to an evil report privately conveyed** until it had been dealt with to the last stage according to the rule prescribed by Christ, much evil would be prevented. Disobedience is almost the universal rule in this matter. The results are serious now, in the generation of hatred instead of love. Much more serious will the result be to the offenders against this rule in the day when all matters will be measured and settled by the divine rule..."

Robert Roberts, 1895

For the present it will suffice to note that the sin or trespass that Christ alludes to is a palpable, obvious, fatal sin. When doubt exists on this point, let us not apply Matthew 18:15–17. “Some men’s sins are open beforehand”. Some are not, and therefore, we have to wait for later circumstances, or Christ’s fallible judgment, to disclose them.”

Sins unto death – use Matthew 18. All other sins, while appropriate to deal with in the spirit of Matthew 18, do not use the same process.

“Trespass Against Thee”

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee...”

challenge you to broaden your view of this passage

is not about someone who causes offence to you, but does put
your relationship with the Lord in jeopardy

is also when you become aware of a brother who is sinning aga
the Lord (a sin unto death) and has not repented

either case, it is incumbent on a brother to begin the restoratio
process

Robertson's Word Pictures

if thy brother sin against thee (*ean hamartēsēi adelphos sou*).
literally, **commit a sin** (ingressive aorist subjunctive of
hamartano). Aleph B Sahidic **do not have** “against thee” (*eis*
se). Sahidic is Egyptian Coptic. It is believed to date back to
the 200's AD and due to the climate in Egypt, most
manuscripts are intact. Recent translations have used Sahidic
texts frequently.



Modern Translations And Sahidic Texts

thy brother commits a sin, go and take the matter up with him
tt. 18:15 New English Bible

your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just
between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them
tt. 18:15 NIV

be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents,
forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times a day, and repents
to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him." *Luke 17:3-4*

Confirming Principle in the Law

Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly. Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbor's life. I am the LORD. Do not hate your fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt.

Leviticus 19:15-17 NIV

In KJV margin – “that thou bear not sin for him”

We Must Act!



“Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter. If you say, “Behold, we did not know this,” does not he who weighs the heart perceive it? Does not he who keeps watch over your soul know it, and will he not repay man according to his work?”

Proverbs 24:11-12 ESV

Foundations In The Prophets

Son of man, I have made thee a **watchman** unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them **warning** from me. Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumbling-block before him, he shall die: because thou hast not **given him warning**, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. **Nevertheless if thou warn** the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.”

Ezekiel 3:17,20-21

Matthew 18

Refuses to examine self

Refuses to hear rebuke of a faithful brother

Refuses to hear rebuke of faithful witnesses

Refuses to hear the rebuke of the ecclesia

REBELLION!

, Iniquity, Transgression – All the Same?

And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth, Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving **iniquity** and **transgression** and **sin**, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.”

Exodus 34:5-7

iniquity” – *avon* – perversity, evil (Isaiah 1:4 – a people “laden in iniquity”)
transgression” – *pescha* – revolt, rebellion (worshipping false gods, inciting rebellion)
sin” – *chattaah* – an offence

God Hates Rebellion!

For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the LORD; and how much more after my death?" *Deuteronomy 31:27*

That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the LORD."
Isaiah 30:9

son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, which have eyes to see, and see not; they have ears to hear, and hear not: for they *are* a rebellious house."
Ezekiel 12:2



The Object Of Ecclesial Discipline

Not Punishment,
but
Restoration!

The limiting factors are pride and
rebellion.

Robert Roberts, 1895

"thy brother shall trespass against thee." A serious sin implied, as already shown. Let us not forget that until this degree of perverseness is reached our duty is confined to exhortation and education, either by friendly visit, correspondence, or any way that may suggest itself to us as skillful, faithful servants of Christ. **Again, Christ's law is not for application in the case of one who has sinned, however dreadfully, if that sin is acknowledged and repented of..."**

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Robert Roberts, 1895

continued

...A brother may sin against another in manifold ways: slandering, maligning, defrauding, tyrannising, mutually illtreating. But, as previously pointed out, Christ's law extends also to any and every sin which the scriptures tell us will exclude from eternal life—sins not to be countenanced, and necessitating withdrawal from the habitual practisers of them.”

Process (1)

remember your own weakness and need – critical starting
point!

forgive (aphiemi) and give the resolution of this matter
to the Lord

prayer

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Process (2)

Private conversation

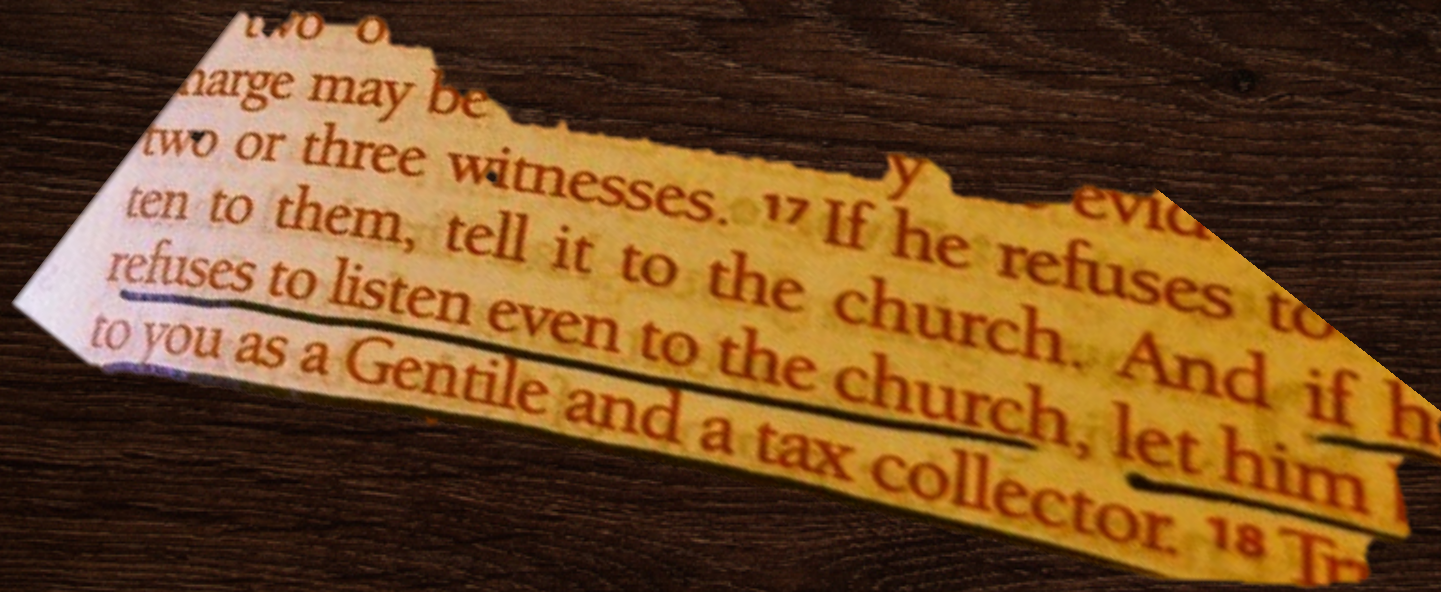
- Make an appointment, select an appropriate time/place
- Begin with affirmation of your love (I have been praying for you, concerned)
- Ask permission to share your concern
- Share (behaviorally) your concern – this is what I have observed
- Listen
- Use Scripture to govern standards
- Promise to continue praying
- Follow-up or if not successful, describe proposed next step

Process (3)

Private corroboration (2-3 witnesses)

Ecclesial exposure and confrontation

Public condemnation and censure (*delivered unto Satan for destruction of the flesh*)



charge may be
two or three witnesses. 17 If he refuses to
listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he
refuses to listen even to the church, let him be
to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Tr

What Not to Do!

Assume anything before speaking to brother

Let this issue at hand change your existing relationship with him

Gossip to others

Procrastinate

Witnesses Under The Law

If there be found among you, ... that hath wrought wickedness,..... **And it be told thee, and thou hast heard it, and enquired diligently, and, behold, it be true, and be the thing certain,** Then shalt thou bring forth that man or that woman.....and shalt stone them with stones until they die. At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death.... **The hands of the witnesses shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterward the hands of all the people.** So thou shalt put the evil away from among you.”

Deuteronomy 17:2-7

Deuteronomy 19:15-19

One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, nor for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established. If a false witness rise up against any man to testify against him that which is wrong; Then both the men, between whom the controversy is, shall stand before the LORD, before the priests and the judges, which shall be in those days; And the judges shall make diligent inquisition: And, behold, if the witness be a false witness, and hath testified falsely against his brother; Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother: so shalt thou put the evil away from among you.”

Witnesses And Repentance

John 8:3-11



These witnesses are all about establishing guilt. Today, witnesses are about restoration of the one fallen in sin.

Lessons From This Incident- John 8:3-11

witnesses had borne an accurate witness – no denial of the charge (what of the man involved?)

Jesus saw this as opportunity to teach a valuable lesson – that even this convicted woman, if she repented, could go and sin no more

The purpose of the Lord's rebuke was to bring repentance beginning at eldest, they had their conscience convicted and they walked away (why this detail?)

Only by the grace of God are we not in the position of this accused woman – we too are compassed by infirmity!

Selection Of Witnesses

Have they too been witnesses of the alleged sin?

If the object is to restore, how would this impact your selection of witnesses?

Are they apt to teach, strong in the Word?

Should they be known to the offending brother and perhaps have experience with him?

Do they understand their role as witnesses?

Will they keep this confidential?

Will their testimony to the ecclesia be acceptable?

Selection Of Witnesses

The ideal witness is one who cares deeply about the brother and the brother knows that the motivation of that witness can only be for his wellbeing.

Corinthians 13:1-8 (JBP) – Accusation of Paul

is third time I am really coming to you in person. Remember the ancient law: 'the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established'. My previous warning, given on my second visit, still stands and, though absent, I repeat it now as though I were present—my coming will not mean leniency for those who had sinned before that visit and those who have sinned since. It will in fact be **proof that I speak by the power of Christ**. The Christ you have to deal with is not a weak person outside you, but a tremendous power inside you. He was "weak" enough to be crucified, yes, but he lives now by the power of God. I am weak as he is weak, but I am strong enough to deal with you for I share his life by the power of God. You should be looking at yourselves to make sure that you are really Christ's. It is yourselves that you should be testing, not me. You ought to know by this time that Christ is in you, unless you are not real Christians at all. **And when I have applied your test, I am confident that you will soon find that I myself am a genuine Christian**. I pray God that you may find the right answer to your test, not because I have any need of your approval, but because I earnestly want you to find the right answer, even if that should make me no real Christian. For, after all, we can make no progress against the truth; we can only work for the truth."

What Was Happening?

Of all ecclesias, Corinth was where Paul lived the longest – 18 months - returning to his trade. He was “familiar” to them.

Perhaps for years, some were accusing Paul of not speaking for Christ, not being a genuine teacher

This must have had a significant impact of the application of Paul's admonition about how the ecclesia was to handle sin

But, there had been no application of the law of the witnesses, just – the matter was festering, with no resolve and an ongoing undermining of Paul and his letters

Paul encouraged them to perform their test

Role of the Witnesses

KJV – “established” is *histemi* – to stand or abide

“...every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” NIV

“...that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses” RSV

“...that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses” ESV

“...so that everything that is said may have the support of two or three witnesses.” JBP

Bro. J.M. Lovett, A Brother Offended, The Christadelphian, 1939

No report should be made to the church or the
arranging brethren in any case until this course
(confidential meeting with witnesses) has been
adopted and if this course is not adopted the matter
should be dropped.”

Importance to Restorative Process

Confront as a brother in full confidence

Take witnesses with you if he will not hear you

Meet with brother and the witnesses – AT THIS POINT, THE
AB'S AND ECCLESIA SHOULD BE UNAWARE OF THE
ISSUE

The witnesses establish every word and must prayerfully
determine if repentance is realized, or if the issue finally
should come to the ecclesia. They make the judgment on
restoration

The point here is to keep the number involved small, intimate
and confidential – the optimum condition for likely repentance

Collision With Our Practices?

Often, the AB's (or a designated committee) are first in line to be confronted with these issues, bypassing one on one and witnesses

When we do this, we subdue the power of the Lord's instruction

There has been a breach in the intimate family of the ecclesia

Trust has been violated

Matthew 18 tells us that most issues are handled between two brethren – the following steps are rarely needed if step one is done well

Understanding Matthew 18

So, what does it mean to treat a rebellious brother (one who will not hear a loving brother, witnesses or the ecclesia) as a pagan or tax collector?

What happens when no human intervention has had an impact on the unrepentant brother?

Is this the end of the restorative process?

How do we blend this with Paul's words, "Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

What If No Expression Of Repentance?

“If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Matthew 18:17 NIV

What, then, is the role of the ecclesia and what is meant by treating an unrepentant sinner as a pagan or tax collector?

Tomorrow's Class, Lord Willing

Rebuke, Correction, Withdrawal