

Biblical Accountability

Text : **Matt. 18: 12-18** and **I Cor. 5: 1-13**

A. The founding principle upon which the Christian faith is built is Love.

S#1.
S#2.

1. It is the most important commandment in the scripture – the Rosetta Stone of bible.
Matt. 22: 37–40 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your Soul, and with all your mind. **38** This is the great and foremost commandment. **39** The second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself' **40** On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.”
2. Living these commands to love, especially with each other, distinguishes Christians.
John 13: 34–35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. **35** By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (*Love is the most evangelist thing we do.*)
3. Love is the seed from which grows the symbiotic relationship between Christians.

S#5.

B. The resulting symbiotic relationship melds the church together into one “body.”

1. Being part of one body necessitates a close interactive relationship.
Rom. 12: 4 – For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, **5** so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. **10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor; **13** contributing to the needs of the saints, practicing hospitality. **15** Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. **16** Be of the same mind toward one another;
2. This relationship requires an enormous amount of surrendering to each other.
Phil. 2: 1-4 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, **2** make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. **3** Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; **4** do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

S#6.

S#7.

C. This loving interaction requires that Christians be concerned about each other’s spiritual health. (*You can’t love someone and just watch them go to Hell.*)

S#8.

1. It requires us to patiently help each other grow in Christ. (cf - **Eph. 4: 11-16**)
I Thes. 5: 14 – We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.

S#9.

2. Love requires us to be forgiving of each other's faults, offenses against us and sins.
 - a. **Eph. 4: 32** – Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.
 - b. **I Pet. 4: 8** – Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins. (**Prov. 10: 12**)
3. Though it can be embarrassing, we are required to confront each other about sin.
 - a. **Gal. 6: 1** – Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are **S#10.** spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.
 - b. “Caught” (*prolambano*) means : To take before, to anticipate, to forestall
 - c. When we see a brother or sister about to be overtaken by sin, we must reach out.
 - d. We all sin daily so this cannot include every sin we commit.

We are required to hold each other accountable, but for what and how ? S#11.

I. There is often confusion as to the nature of church discipline ? S#12.

A. There are two kinds of discipline. S#13.

1. Corrective discipline : Action taken to bring one who is out of step into conformity
 - a. Most immediately think only of corrective discipline.
 - b. Corrective discipline is unpleasant for all parties concerned. (*strains love bond*)
2. Formative discipline : The which trains one in the correct way .. teaches conformity.
 - a. Athletes are disciplined by practicing fundamentals - *create an instinctive response*
 - b. Like a winning team, a health church can coach each other in spiritual matters.
Rom. 15: 14 – And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced **S#14.** that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another. (*admonish = formative discp*)

B. The purpose of all corrective discipline is to secure souls for God .. Heaven. S#15.

1. **Matt. 18: 12-14** ... Parable of lost sheep. *Leave the secure and seek lost.*
2. The one who strays is approached in private to make repentance easier. **S#16.**
Matt. 18: 15 – Show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.
3. Even excommunication has the objective of restoration. **S#17.**
I Cor 5:5 – I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

** Sometimes it takes sorrow to save ... II Cor. 7*

II. When is corrective discipline appropriate ?**S#18.****A. When personal differences affect relationships and disrupt the church. S#19.**

1. **Phil. 4: 2-3** I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. **S#20.**
³ Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel,
2. The KJV translates **Matt. 18: 15** .. : “If your brother sins (against you,) go”

B. If an able-bodied brother refuses to work he must be corrected. S#21.

1. This clearly does not refer to one who is unable to work. **We must help. Tit 3:14**
2. **I Tim. 5: 8** – But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. **S#22.**
3. The church must take action when a man is clearly just too lazy to work. **S#23.**
II Thes. 3: 10-12 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either. ¹¹ For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies. ¹² Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

C. Those who advocate doctrinal error must be isolated from the church. S#24.

1. **Rom. 14 / I Cor. 8** ... There is great latitude for differences of opinion.
2. We all must conform to the clear teachings of scripture, esp. matters of faith.
 - a. **II Tim. 1: 13-14** Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard **S#25.**
 from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.
¹⁴ Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you. (*I know but ...*)
 - b. **Rom. 16: 17-18** Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who **S#26.**
 cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. ¹⁸ For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting. (*Protect those unskilled in ..*)
3. The Apostles took corrective action against erring / false teachers.
 - a. **I Tim 1:18-20** This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in **S#27.**
 accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight, ¹⁹ keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. ²⁰ Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

- b. **II John 10-11** If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, **S#28.**
do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting;
11 for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.

D. The divisive person must be corrected or removed. S#29.

1. We must avoid controversial topics which will not be resolved.
Tit. 3: 9 – But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and
disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. **S#30.**
2. If a person presses controversy to the point of divisiveness, he must be rejected.
Tit. 3: 10-11 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,
11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning,
being self-condemned.

E. Those who are practicing open sin must be brought to repentance. S#31.

1. Notice our texts aren't dealing with opinions or suspicions – observed sin.
2. We deal only with observed sin. (*No opinions, no rumors, no suspicions*)
 - a. **Matt. 18: 15** – If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private ... **S#32.**
 - b. **I Cor. 5: 1** – It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, ...

S#33.

III. When corrective discipline must be administered, how should we go about it ?

A. First, let us review some of the facts we should have gleaned so far. S#34.

1. The members of the church must maintain a loving symbiotic relationship.
2. Christian should be teaching and admonishing each other on a regular basis.
3. Corrective discipline will seldom be needed if formative discipline is practiced.
4. The goal of all discipline is the salvation of souls, not punishment.

B. Our text clearly sets forth a three step process. S#35.

1. This process is commanded, not suggested. All of the verbs are imperative. **S#36.**
2. **Matt. 18: 15** – If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private ... **S#37.**
 - a. It cannot be announced as a prayer request, discussed with a friend, etc.
 - b. It is not judging; it's an attempt to win your brother for God.
3. **Matt 18:16** – But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, **S#38.**
so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may
be confirmed. (**Deut. 19: 15** .. *multiple witnesses required*)
 - a. These “**witnesses**” may also participate in persuading the sinner to repent.
 - b. The “**witnesses**” must be selected wisely ... spiritual, discreet, and knowledgeable.

- c. If he repents, it must go no further and not be made more public than the sin.
- 4. If the sinner refuses to repent, the matter must be taken before the assembly. **S#39.**
Matt 18:17 – If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;

C. What happens when the issue of sin is presented to the church ? **S#40.**

- 1. **I Cor. 5: 4** ... Telling a confirmed issue to the church requires an assembly.
- 2. However, the presentation to the church does not end the process.
- 3. The membership of the church is required to participate in the appeal for repentance.
 - a. **Matt 18:17b – tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church,** **S#41.**
 - b. Listening to the church requires speaking by the church, i.e., **all** the members.
- 4. The discipline is administered by the majority.
 - a. **II Cor 2:6-7** **Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, 7 so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. (*He will only sorrow if he values the fellowship.*)** **S#42.**
 - b. **All** of the members are required to hold the sinner accountable and persuade him.
- 5. If the sinning brother will not repent he must be disfellowshipped, excommunicated.
 - a. **Matt 18:17 – ... if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.** **S#43.** (**I Cor. 5: 5 .. delivered to Satan**)
 - b. Gentile refers to one who is not a member of your nations, thus as a non-member.

IV. How is the goal of excommunication accomplished after the act is done ? **S#44.**

A. The symbiotic Christian fellowship is prerequisite to successful discipline. **S#45.**

- 1. One who has little or no relationship with the congregation will just go elsewhere.
- 2. The only power of excommunication is the desire for communication. (**decision**)
- 3. Therefore, discipline will only be effective with active members.
** Thus, the first step in church discipline is developing strong relationships.*

B. The process must be done in such a way as to maintain a loving relationship. **#46.**

- 1. Just sending a letter is not at all acceptable.
 - a. The whole process is **going to** the one who is caught up in the transgression.
 - b. It's best to have him / her in the midst of the brethren ... weep together.
- 2. The one being disfellowshipped must realize that he is breaking the church's heart.
- 3. It must be clearly communicated that you want him back if he will repent.

S#47.

C. The one disfellowshipped must **not** be treated as an enemy, but as a prospect.

1. To be disfellowshipped is to no longer be considered a member of the church.

a. **I Cor. 5: 5** – I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction **S#48.**
(cf- **Heb. 12: 5-11**) of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

b. **I Tim. 1: 20** – Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

c. Cast out of the church : The domain of Satan is the world ... NOT in the church.

2. Do not associate with him .. Don't have commonness with him. (*no social contact*)

II Thes. 3: 14-15 – If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take **S#49.**
(*Not PC the process should* special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that *make him uncomfortable*)->he will be put to shame. **15** Yet do not regard him as an enemy,
but admonish him as a brother.

a. Continue to admonish him ... urging him to repent and return.

b. Do not do anything to make him your adversary, **but keep urging his return.**

3. We have contact with him who is disfellowshipped, but we do not have fellowship.

I Cor 5:11-13 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called **S#50.**
brother if he is 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. ... **13** ... Remove the **wicked man** from among yourselves.

CONCLUSION :

S#51.

A. Christians are commanded to hold each other accountable for sanctification.

B. We can only hold each other accountable if we have a close relationship. **S#52.**

C. Corrective discipline is an act of love. **S#53.**

Heb. 12: 6 – For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines and
He scourges every son whom he receives. (**Prov. 3: 12**)

D. Corrective discipline must be administered by God's three step method. **S#54.**

E. Corrective discipline will seldom be required if practiced faithfully and .. **S#55.**
S#56.

F. Corrective discipline is only successful if the sinner is brought to repentance.

James 5: 19-20 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns **#57**
him back, **20** let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of
his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.
S#58.

INVITATION :

(*Final communion slid optional* ... **S# S#59.**)

Lesson Text : (NASV)**Matthew 18: 12-18**

12 "What do you think? If any man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go and search for the one that is straying? **13** "If it turns out that he finds it, truly I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine which have not gone astray. **14** "So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish.

15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. **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. **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** "Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

I Corinthians 5: 1-13

1 It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. **2** You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.

3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. **4** In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, **5** I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? **7** Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. **8** Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

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 is 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.