

## FELLOWSHIP AND "CHURCH DISCIPLINE"

2Cor 2:1-11

### INTRODUCTION:

- A. Fellowship and its relationship to discipline is probably one of the most neglected subjects of our day.
- B. God's plan includes a plan of salvation for the erring Christian as well as the alien sinner. Gal 6:1; Jas 5:19,20
- C. Why should we stress one and not the other? Note: Lk 6:46

### DISCUSSION:

#### I. WHAT IS DISCIPLINE?

- A. Webster: "1. A branch of knowledge or learning. 2. training that develops self-control, character, or orderliness and efficiency; 3. The result of such training; self-control; orderly conduct. 4. Acceptance of our submission to authority and control. 5. A system of rules or methods, as for the conduct of members of a monastic order. 6. Treatment that corrects or punishes. . . . 1. To subject to discipline; train; control. 2. to punish." Under synonyms Webster suggest that punish carries the idea of retribution and discipline suggest punishment that is meant to control or establish habits of self-control.
- B. The English word is used one time in the King James Version, in Job 36:10, but the idea is found often in the Bible.
  - 1. The Hebrew expression is (Musar from Vasar) which means chastisement or instruction
    - a. It suggests the action of parent to child Prov 3:11,12; 13:24; 22:15; 23:13,14
    - b. Also suggest the action of God to his people Job 5:17; Psa 94:12
  - 2. The Greek equivalent is PAIDEIA which means "1. the whole training and education of children (which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose commands and admonitions, reproof and punishment): 2. whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions; hence (a) instruction which aim at the increase of virtue: 2Tim 3:16. b) according to Biblical usage chastisement, chastening (of the evils with which God visits men for their amendment); Heb 12:5-11" Thayer
- C. Until we understand that discipline is more than just punishment, we will never accomplish much in the process. We must understand that it is also for the purpose of instruction and correction, It comes from the same root in our language as the word "Disciple", and involves the whole of the training and education of a Christian.

#### II. THERE IS LOGIC IN THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE

- A. There is no respect for law or the lawgiver if no penalty is required or imposed. The entire nation is an illustration of this fact right now and even the modern home, although I think I see a turn around in this area as well as in the nation. Schools realize the need, but have destroyed effective possibility. Government sees the need, as illustrated by laws, trials, "punishment", etc., but are in the process of destroying any effective possibility.
  - B. Homes and churches throughout the land are in trouble because of the lack of discipline
  - C. There are many illustrations in the scriptures that show God's intention for discipline to be exercised, that it is his will that it be carried out.
    - 1. In the beginning with Adam and Eve God disciplined Gen 2,3
    - 2. During the days of Noah, God disciplined Gen 6
    - 3. Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu were punished for their iniquity Lev 10:1,2
  - D. We must understand the logic of discipline, or we will never begin to practice it as we ought.
  - E. Discipline is just as binding as Acts 2:38 or Lk 22:19 - We obey it or we rebel Lk 6:46
- #### III. DISCIPLINE IS A COMMAND OF GOD IT IS NOT AN OPTION
- A. There are at least six authorized actions of discipline in the Lord's church
    - 1. Public instruction Heb 10:25; 1Cor 14:26; Acts 20:20,27; 2Tim 2:2 consider the purpose of our singing Col 3:16
    - 2. Private instruction Acts 20:20; 18:26; 1Thess 5:14
    - 3. Private rebuke and persuasion Lk 17:3; Matt 18:15-17
    - 4. Public rebuke and persuasion 1Tim 5:19,20; Gal 2:11-14; 2Tim 2:16-18; 4:10; 1Tim 1:18-20; 3Jhn 9
    - 5. Refusal of fellowship in the gospel 2Jhn 9-11; 1Tim 5:22; Acts 9:26; 2Thess 3:6,ff
    - 6. Social ostracism & exclusion 2Thess 3:14; 1Cor 5:9-13; 2Jhn 9-11; Tit 3:10; Rom 16:17
  - B. How many of these do we really pursue as we ought, even when we get to the matter of withdrawing from an individual?
  - C. There are at least five purposes of discipline in the Lord's church (they can also be applied to the home)
    - 1. To honor the authority of the Lord - He has taught it in His word by His authority Matt 28:19,20; Eph 1:22,23; Col 1:18 and remember Lk 6:46
    - 2. To maintain the purity of the Lord's church 1Tim 5:22; 1Cor 5:6,7; 2Cor 6:14-18
    - 3. To maintain world's respect (outsiders) Acts 5:1-11; Rom 2:17-29 (esp. 24)
    - 4. To maintain the respect of brethren Acts 5:11; 1Tim 5:20
    - 5. To save the erring brother Jas 5:19,20; Gal 6:1; 1Cor 5:5

- D. God's plan will work. We might as well question the effectiveness of faith, repentance, confession and baptism as a plan to save the alien as to question the effectiveness of this as a plan to accomplish its purposes. Do not condemn the plan; it hasn't been tried very often at least in all its actions.

#### IV. WHAT IS THE MANNER OF THE ACTION INVOLVED?

- A. We must remember ultimate aim is to regain a brother Matt 18:15
  - 1. Strong teaching may be needed - He must be converted from error Jas 5:19,20
  - 2. It must be in gentleness (meekness) Gal 6:1
- B. A spirit of kindness and love must prevail Rom 13:10; 1Cor 16:14; 1Cor 13:4-7 But love demands we "tell him his fault" Matt 18:15
- C. It must be according to the law of Christ Jas 1:25
- D. It must be administered steadily and constantly
  - 1. When do we clean the house or take a bath etc? Only when things are so bad you can stand the smell and filth no longer - maybe some do, but most don't
  - 2. It is easier to practice regularly and consistently than occasionally and spasmodically.
- E. Wisdom should be sought and used Jas 1:5
- F. It should be practiced impartially and without discrimination 1Tim 5:21; Jas 3:17 (Some refuse to discipline because it involves brothers or sisters, elders children or preacher's children, etc)

#### V. WHO SHOULD BE DISCIPLINED?

- A. Every disciple is a receiver of discipline in the fullest sense by every learning and corrective process. See again 2Tim 3:14-17
- B. All of the teaching and admonishing; reproof and rebuking that we do is our discipline of each other
- C. Corrective and punitive discipline involves these:
  - 1. One refusing to correct a personal wrong Matt 18:15-17
  - 2. One who divides contrary to teaching of Lord Rom 16:17,18
  - 3. The factious and heretic Tit 3:10
  - 4. One led by the flesh into works of the flesh Gal 5:19-21
  - 5. The idle and tale-bearers 2Thess 3:10-15
  - 6. The disorderly 2Thess 3:6,11 (out of ranks, irregular, inordinate, deviating from the prescribed order or rule - Thayer)

#### VI. WHAT IS OUR DUTY TOWARD THE "DISFELLOWSHIPED"?

- A. Publicly
  - 1. Not used in worship and work Matt 18:15-17
  - 2. No endorsement or support in what is wrong 2Jhn 9-11
  - 3. Marked and avoided Rom 16:17
- B. Privately
  - 1. Close association indicating social approval must be withheld 2Thess 3:14; Rom 16:17

- 2. Count him not as an enemy, but as a brother 2Thess 3:15; Jas 5:19,20; Gal 6:1

- C. The entire church must cooperate for the action to be most effective and achieve the desired results. (think how effective child's discipline is if both parents do not concur)
- D. If he repents and seeks forgiveness we must forgive 2Cor 2:4-11; Lk 17:3. The unforgiving cannot logically pray for forgiveness themselves Matt 6:12-15

#### CONCLUSION:

- A. This lesson on fellowship and church discipline is basically a lesson on fellowship in edification. In our next lesson I plan to look at some misconceptions in congregational fellowship in the areas of Evangelism and Benevolence
- B. It is my prayer that these lessons will help us to understand more fully the Bible concept of fellowship, because there is a great deal of misunderstanding in the church today in regard to fellowship, and specifically in regard to fellowship in discipline (Edification), Evangelism and Benevolence and really these three areas covers all that there is as far as the work of the local congregation is concerned Eph 4:11-13

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