



SECOND CORINTHIANS



The Comfort of God FOR and THROUGH His People

Part 9 — “The Intended Goal of Church Discipline” (2 Cor. 2:5-11) — 19 November 2023

Introduction: The Discipline of the Lord - Heb. 12:5-9

Paul explained to the Corinthians that he had written to them, rather than visiting them in person, in order that they might be all be spared another painful encounter. Although his letter was ‘severe’ and directly addressed the issue of sin within the church, it was written out of his deep love for them and in the confidence that they would heed his exhortations.

Main Point: While church discipline is primarily _____, it must at times be _____ so that instances of serious sin might be dealt with and those caught up in it might repent and be restored to fellowship.

Restoring the Repentant Offender

Introductory Considerations

I. The biblical process of and basis for corrective church discipline:

Matt. 18:15-18—¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of 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 Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

⇒ The authority to enact corrective discipline comes from the Lord Jesus Himself and is exercised in accordance with His _____ and by the leading of His _____ (Matt. 16:16-19).

2. A biblical example of corrective church discipline:

1 Cor. 5:1-5—¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. ² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. ³ For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. ⁴ When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, ⁵ you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

⇒ The removal of the unrepentant offender(s) is intended to preserve the collective _____ of the church and to heighten the consequences for those who would persist in their sin.

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

- Having been obedient to Paul's instructions to exercise corrective discipline, the Corinthians should now restore the offender who has repented (2:5-8)

Observations:

1. The offense that was committed had affected both _____ and the _____.

⇒ Although the exact nature of the offense is not mentioned, there are a few possibilities. The first is the situation in 1 Cor. 5 with the man in the relationship with his step-mother. A second possibility is that someone who had come into the church after Paul had initially departed had then opposed him when he returned to them.

2. The church seems to have acted to _____ the offender from fellowship and this action had its intended result. “this punishment”

3. The church should now extend to the offender the _____ of the Gospel that belonged to them all in Christ. “forgive” “comfort”

⇒ If they do not handle the repentant offender properly, there is a chance that he could become ‘consumed’ by excessive sorrow. This term (*katapino*) is the same that used in 1 Pet. 5:8 regarding Satan's actions in seeking someone to ‘devour.’

4. Paul strongly exhorted them to reaffirm their love for this person in light of his repentance.

"I beg you"

"reaffirm"

"The reaffirmation of love for which Paul calls, then, appears to be a formal act by the congregation, in the same way that the imposition of punishment in the first place appears to have been formal and judicial." —Colin Kruse

Key Point: That Paul exhorted them to reaffirm their love for the repentant brother shows that the ultimate goal of corrective discipline is the restoration of _____.

- Paul then further explained the importance of forgiving and reaffirming the repentant offender (2:9-11)

Observations:

1. The 'severe' letter had been sent in order to reveal whether or not they would be obedient to the Lord.
2. Paul recognized the _____ of the Corinthian believers to restore the repentant offender.
"Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive."
3. Paul then assured them that he had himself personally forgiven the offender.
"I have forgiven" "in the presence of Christ"
4. The exhortation to restore the repentant offender is grounded in the reality that believers have an active _____.
"outwitted" "designs"

Key Point: Believers must pursue _____ and _____ in order that Satan's plans to keep them divided from one another might not succeed.

Concluding Thoughts

- The Lord disciplines His people _____.

Formative discipline occurs in our lives as we engage in the practices and habits of the Christian life.

2 Tim. 3:16-17—¹⁶All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, ¹⁷that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

Corrective discipline occurs in our lives as the Spirit convicts us of sin and assures us of pardon in Christ.

1 John 1:9-10—⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

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Formative discipline occurs in the church when we gather regularly and participate together in worship.

Col. 3:16—Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Corrective discipline occurs in the church when we are forced to confront matters of sin within the body in order to preserve our collective witness and bring those in sin to repentance.

Rev. 3:14,16—¹⁴But I have a few things against you: you have some there who hold the teaching of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the sons of Israel, so that they might eat food sacrificed to idols and practice sexual immorality...¹⁶Therefore repent. If not, I will come to you soon and war against them with the sword of my mouth.

2 Cor. 2:6-8—⁶For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, ⁷so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him.



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