

Difficult and Hard to Understand Passages

Church Discipline – The Value of a Single Soul

Matthew 18:15-17

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.

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- 1. Brief discussion of the recent history of church discipline - “disfellowshipping” or “shunning”**
- 2. What is actually trying to be accomplished?**
 - a. First and foremost, the loving restoration of the errant member (Galatians 6:1)**
 - b. Making certain others don’t become tempted and also fall away. (Galatians 6:1)**
 - c. It is advantageous to our own soul to turn a sinner from error. (James 5:20)**

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II Peter 3:9

⁹ The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.

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Matthew 18:12-14

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.*

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II Thessalonians 3:6, 14

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

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

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I Corinthians 5:1-5

¹It 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.

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I Corinthians 5:1-5

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.

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I Corinthians 5:11-13

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.

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Galatians 6:1

¹Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

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James 5:19-20

19 My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns 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.

(Note: I Timothy 4:16)

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Titus 3:9-11

9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

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Our Conclusions:

1. Correcting a brother does not have to be done exclusively by an elder(s).

(Matthew 18:15) (Galatians 6:1)

2. Certainly, without question however, it is appropriate to involve the elders at some juncture since the elders are ultimately responsible for shepherding the flock.

(Acts 20:28)

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Our Conclusions (cont.):

3. If a Christian no longer has fellowship for failing to repent, this applies socially as well as the within the worship assembly.

(Matthew 18:17, I Thessalonians 3:6, 14)

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Our Conclusions (cont.):

4. Failing to address an issue of a sinful member was considered 'arrogance' by the Apostle Paul and unacceptable within the local congregation.

(I Corinthians 5:2)

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Our Conclusions (cont.):

5. This is of vital importance. The ultimate goal of addressing situations with errant Christians is three-fold:

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Our Conclusions (cont.):

- a. First and foremost, the loving restoration of the errant member (Galatians 6:1)
- b. Making certain others don't become tempted and also fall away. (Galatians 6:1)
- c. It is advantageous to our own soul to turn a sinner from error. (James 5:20)

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Our Conclusions (cont.):

6. The final and most important facet of this difficult exercise is this: *So it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish. (Matthew 18:14)*

The great value of a single soul to our God!

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