

The Philosophy of Ministry – Week 8

“Dealing with Sin in the Church”

- What vitally important truths stand out to you in the following phrase: “People are people, nothing more, God is God, nothing less.”
- Have you ever been surprised or even shocked by something you saw or heard from another believer?
- Have you ever had to work with two believers who were at odds with each other?
- Have you ever been a part of a Church split? How did that affect your life?
- One thing that is true among the Church is people’s lives can be messy. No matter what Church you go to you will find problems, because no matter what Church you go to people will be there. Although believers are saved and become a new creation in Christ, they still have the old man of the flesh they battle on a daily basis, and we do not always win. This lesson is designed to discuss the reality of problems in the Church and how you are to handle them.

1. The Reality of Church Problems

A. The Church at _____

- 1) The first 4 NT books give us a fourfold view of the life of Christ. The Book of Acts gives us the launch of the Church and Paul’s great missionary endeavors. The Book of Romans is the Christians constitution as it lays out the many great doctrines of the faith. Then comes the two long letters to the Church at Corinth. What you find is the very first Church Paul addresses is filled with problems.

2) What were some of the problems at Corinth?

1. **Chapter 1:10-17** - Divisions and schisms in the Church body based upon who had _____ them. Some felt superior due to being baptized by a more notable leader.
2. **Chapter 2:1-5** – believing you had to speak/preach with great and elevated oratory to make the message effective.
3. **Chapter 3:1-4** – Spiritual immaturity and carnality
4. **Chapter 5** - They were allowing fornication _____ to go on unchallenged as a man was sleeping with his father’s wife (his stepmom).
5. **Chapter 6:1-6** - They were going to court and _____ one another.
6. **Chapter 8-10** - They were abusing Christian _____.
7. **Chapter 11** - Abusing the _____ Supper and getting drunk; they had a “love feast” and some overate while others went without.
8. **Chapter 12-14** - Abusing _____ gifts.
9. **Chapter 15** - False teaching concerning the Resurrection _____.

- B. Not only were there problems at Corinth, but also false teachings at Galatia, fighting among believers at Philippi, heresies at Colossae, in revelations, 5 of the 7 Churches were being warned by God that judgment would come if they didn’t repent of their sins. Clearly Churches face problems.

2. Confronting Sin in the Church

- **The Bible gives a clear, 4 step process in confronting and disciplining sin in the Church – Matthew 18:15-17**

A. Step 1 – Go to the person _____ on one and seek to resolve the problem.

† **Matthew 18:15** - "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."

- 1) The goal is not to destroy them, the goal is to restore them. If you see them in sin, go to them, _____ – do not spread the sin or you will be as or more guilty than they could be.
- 2) If the person “hears you”, accepts the rebuke, and the sin is repented of, then you have “gained thy brother”. (What if they won’t listen?)

B. Step 2 – Take _____ - **Matthew 18:16**

† **Matthew 18:16** - " But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

- 1) If the sin is not remedied and they will not listen to you, then take one or two more. They should be people that are spiritual leaders in your life, those who are mature in the faith.

† **Galatians 6:1** - *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, **ye which are spiritual, restore such an one** in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.*

- 2) “restore” here is a Greek medical word that means “to set a broken bone.” It takes a lot of patience and tenderness to do that kind of work! That is how we are to be in seeking to restore someone.

- 3) Notice the spirit of those seeking to restore someone – “*in the spirit of meekness...*”

- 4) You go to them humbly, not seeking to win an argument, but rather to win a brother/sister.

C. Step 3 – Go to the _____

† **Matthew 18:17** - "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."

- 1) The third step is required if they are still open about their sin and unrepentant. The Lord says they are to be unto thee as an “heathen man and a publican”. Meaning they are no longer part of the Church, they are viewed as one who is lost.

- 2) Unrepentant sin reveals a lost condition according to Jesus (see also Galatians 5:19–21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10).

D. Step 4 – _____ or Removal

- **1 Corinthians 5, 2 Corinthians 2:6-8**

3. The Goal of confronting a sinning brother.

A. Removal of the defilement of _____

† **1 Corinthians 5:6–8 — 6;** *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? 7;* *Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: 8;* *Therefore let us keep the feast, not with*

old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

B. To _____ other believers from sinning

† **1 Timothy 5:20** - "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."

† **Hebrews 10:32** - "But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;"

† **Hebrews 12:5-11**

C. To _____ the erring brother

† **Galatians 6:1** - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

D. _____ to the Word of God

† **Titus 1:13 — 13**; *This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;*

4. 3 Principles to Remember in confronting problems in the Church.

A. Do not show _____.

† **1 Timothy 5:21** — *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality.*

B. Do not be _____, but rather follow the Biblical steps (Matthew 18:15-20)

- 1) Always remember if you hear something there are usually 3 sides to a story! Each person's own story and then there is the truth.
- 2) Many times people can jump to a conclusion without hearing both sides of the story. Be patient to find out if an accusation of sin is real before you come to a conclusion.

C. Remember the goal of discipline is _____ (2 Corinthians 2:6-8).

5. 6 Biblical Attitudes in dealing with problems in the Church.

A. You must show _____

- 1) What does it mean to be "patient"? Webster defines patient as – "*being able to remain calm and not become annoyed when waiting for a long time or when dealing with problems or difficult people.*"
- 2) What are things that can "test" our patience with people in the Church or those we are discipling?
- 3) **Paul spoke of the importance of patience when dealing with people.**
 - † **2 Timothy 2:24** - *And the servant of the Lord **must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,***
 - † **1 Thessalonians 5:14** - *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, **be patient toward all men.***
- 4) In 1 Thessalonians 5:14 Paul lists three groups of people that require patience in the Church as you deal with them.
 1. The " " (Greek *ataktos*) – this word was used in those days to refer to a soldier who behaved in a disorderly or insubordinate way. These are believers who need to get back in line with God's

Word. We are to patiently _____ them many times over and over again.

- a. How do you handle the “unruly”?
- b. Have you ever become impatient with them?

2. The “_____” (Greek *oligopsuchos* – literally *small souled*).

- a. These are fainthearted people who live with fear of getting out of their comfort zone, they don’t like to take risks, and being bold for Jesus is very difficult.
- b. These are people with little faith and instead of getting angry or short with them, God says rather for the stronger more mature Christians to patiently “_____” or encourage them by teaching and leading them in the truths of God.
 - i. How do you handle the “feeble-minded”?
 - ii. Have you ever become impatient with them?

3. The “_____” – This word refers to believers who are morally and spiritually weak. They struggle to live for God and give up sin.

- a. Paul says to “_____” them (Greek *antecho*), which means “to hold firmly, to cling to, to support, to hold up”.
- b. Stronger believers are to go to the weak and hold them up and give them support found in God’s Word for victory (Gal. 6:1-2).
- c. How do you handle the “weak”?
- d. Have you ever become impatient with them?

5) The key to having patience with a new believer is to:

- 1. Remember the patience that _____ has shown you. Whenever you get frustrated with someone you are trying to disciple because of their sin or lack of desire, always remember in those times how patient God has been with you over the years.
- 2. Remember the patience that _____ have shown you in the past. It is easy to forget the patience others have had with us when we were first saved.

B. You must show _____.

- 1) What does “grace” mean? *Grace is the favor and goodness of God that has been shown to sinners who have not earned it or deserved it. Grace is a free gift that God has given to man that provides salvation to the sinner and is entirely based on the goodness of the “giver” (God) and not on the goodness of the recipient (sinner).*
- 2) Grace is what produces salvation in a sinner’s life.
† **Ephesians 2:8** - *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: (Romans 5:15; Eph. 4:7)*
- 3) There will be times you will need to show grace to those in the Church. People may say something wrong, do something wrong, act inappropriately, have a wrong attitude, etc. There will be times you have to be “gracious” and instead of elevating their sin, elevate your grace to them.
- 4) This can be true in discipling a new believer. Always remember “ministry is messy”; sometimes a new convert or young believer may struggle with sin, with being faithful, with doing what is right. Many do not disciple

people because they don't have the grace to grow someone in the Lord. Just as it takes grace with our children, it will take grace with God's children.

- 5) How have people been gracious to you as they mentored/discipled you?
- 6) When you struggle with discipling someone, the key is to:
 1. Remember how _____ has been gracious and forgiving to you and where you would be if it were not for grace.
 2. Remember how _____ have been gracious and forgiving of you over the years.

C. You must show _____

- 1) **Galatians 6:1** - "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in ***the spirit of meekness***; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."
- 2) **What is meekness?**
 1. The world defines meekness as - fearfulness, compliance, weakness, tameness, timidity. (Encarta ® World English Dictionary © & (P) 1998-2005 Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.)
 2. **A Biblical Definition of Meekness:** Meekness comes from the Greek "*Praotes*", it means "*to be _____-hearted*". It is the opposite of being vengeful or violent, or retaliating; it is the ability to harness the passions of anger.
 3. Meekness is not passivity, rather meekness is _____ under control
- 3) **Meekness is looked at as a great virtue throughout the N.T.**
 1. God commends wives who have a meek spirit.
 - † **I Peter 3:4** – "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."
 2. It is a fruit of the Spirit – Galatians 5:22-23
 3. Jesus exalted meekness in the Sermon on the Mount – Matt. 5:5
 - † **Matthew 5:5** – "*Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.*"
 4. The spirit in which we are to deal with problems is not with anger, but with meekness. Why is this important?
 5. How can addressing other people with anger hurt them?
 6. How have you responded to people who addressed you in anger?

D. You must have an uncompromising stand against _____.

- † **Titus 1:9-13** - " Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be _____, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. This witness is true. Wherefore _____ them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;"

† **1 Timothy 5:19-20** - " Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin _____ before all, that others also may fear."

† **John 2:13-17**

- What can happen if sin is allowed and tolerated in a Church?

E. You must confront sin in _____, with a desire to _____ them.

1) **Church discipline is not** a bunch of self-righteous people pointing out the faults of people, rather it is brokenhearted brothers and sisters in Christ seeking to restore their fellow believer.

2) **Church discipline is an act of love.** It is seeking to restore a member of our Church family to Christ-like living.

† **Revelation 3:19** - *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*

† **2 Thessalonians 3:14-15** - " And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. **Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**"

3) Paul, referring to the punishment that was administered to the fornicating man in I Corinthians 5 says: **2 Corinthians 2:6-8** - "Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your _____ toward him."

F. You must be _____ toward those who repent.

† **Luke 17:3-4** - " Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, _____ him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

† **Ephesians 4:32** - " And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

† **2 Cor. 2:5-11**

6. Biblical Example of Church Discipline – 1 Corinthians 5

A. What sin was going on in the Church at Corinth?

1) **V. 1- "It is reported commonly (actually reported) that there is fornication among you..."**

1. **"fornication"** – (Greek – *porneia*) from which we get pornography and it refers to any illicit sexual activity.

2. Here the sin that Paul was confronting was a form of incest – not biologically, but through marriage.

2) **"...that one should have his father's wife."**

1. A professed Christian and member of the Church was living with his stepmother. The term "father's wife" indicates that the woman was not his natural mother but this lady had married his father after his mom died or his parents were divorced.

2. God's Word clearly condemns this type of sin.

† **Leviticus 20:11** - *And the man that lieth with his father's wife hath uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.* (Lev. 18:6-8; Deut. 22:30)

3. Paul shamed them by saying in verse 1 – ***“and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife.”***

4. Even the laws of the unsaved world in that day condemned such a practice. It was not accepted or legal in the Roman world and they were allowing it in the Church!

3) A couple of things to point out about this relationship/situation.

1. **First** - The term “have his father's wife” is present tense – meaning this shameful sin had been going on and still is going on. It wasn't a one time or short lived event, it was an open sin that was going on – everyone knew about it.

2. **Second** – the charge is fornication and not adultery, this points out they were both unmarried living together – and the women had already divorced from this man's father. Their relationship could most likely have been the reason for the divorce.

3. **Third** - Since Paul does not confront this women, or pass judgment upon her, it is implied that she was not a member of the Church and probably not a believer (v.9-13).

4) So, you have a guy in the Church who looks to have caused his dad and stepmom to divorce, and is now living with this unbelieving women in open sinful fornication, and the Church is doing nothing to confront the situation.

B. What was the Church's attitude about this situation?

1) **V. 2 – “And ye are puffed up”** – They were being prideful!

2) What were they prideful about?

1. They were prideful about how open minded their Church was. How that even fornicators were accepted into their membership!

2. They were using grace as a license to sin; and were boasting of their great love and acceptance of anyone into the membership of the Church.

3) What should their attitude have been?

1. **V. 2 – “...and have not rather mourned”**

a. The word for mourn here is used in mourning for those who have died.

b. Sin should saddened the believers heart.

† **Psalms 119:136** - *Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.*

2. Instead of mourning over sin, the Church at Corinth was “puffed up” with pride!

C. What is the right action toward sin?

† **V. 2 – “that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.”**

D. God has given the Gov't, the family, and the Church the authority to discipline wrong doing.

- 1) When a Church sees open flagrant sin that is not repented of or confessed, it has both the responsibility before God and authority from God to confront sin. It is what love does.
- 2) When a Church doesn't confront sin they are telling the person what they are doing isn't a big deal or isn't wrong.

E. At Corinth the sin is brought to the Church and the unrepentant sinner is to be removed from the Church body.

- 1) V. 2c – *“that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.”*
- 2) V. 7a – *“purge out therefore the old leaven...”*
- 3) V. 13 - ...put away from among yourselves that wicked person.”

F. Notice the authority of the Church

- 1) V. 4 – in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ...”
- 2) A Church dealing with sin is acting on behalf of God; they are God's human agent of disciplining sin among believers.

G. The danger for the unrepentant sinner – v. 5

- 1) ***To deliver such an one unto Satan...***
 1. “Deliver” – is a judicial term which speaks of handing a prisoner over for punishment.
 2. They are living in obedience to Satan's temptations/sins, by putting them out of the safety of the Church by discipline they were thus in the domain of Satan where his inflictions were unhindered by the spiritual protection of the body of Christ. They were a rebellious sheep who was now subjected to the roaring lion.
- 2) ***“For the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved...”***
 1. Destruction may refer here to the extent of physical death. At times, Satan is seen in the Bible as able to attack people's bodily health.
 - † **Job 2:7** - *So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown.*
 2. Though Satan may be able to destroy a person's body, he has no power over their souls – *“that the spirit may be saved...”*
 3. The believers soul is in God's hands, though they may face great physical trials until they repent of their sin.
 4. **Paul mentioned a couple rebellious Christians in 1 Timothy 1:20** - *Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.*
 5. Peter in his pride faced Satan who sifted him as wheat as he fled from Jesus that night, but was later restored.
- 3) **V. 6 – *“Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?”***
 1. Leaven is the agent, typically yeast, that is added to dough to make it rise.
 2. In those days, when bread was about to be baked, a small piece of dough was pulled off and saved. That little leaven, or yeast, would then be allowed to ferment in water which would later be kneaded into the next batch of fresh dough in order to make it rise.
 3. **Sin is compared here to “leaven” (this is seen throughout the Bible)**

- a. Leaven is a picture of sin; it is small and it is powerful and influential; it works secretly; it will begin to “puff up” the dough and spreads throughout it.
- b. Paul likens the sinning Church member to leaven that was influencing the entire Church with his sin, causing them to be “puffed up” (v. 2- *And ye are puffed up*; v.6- *Your glorying is not good*)

H. What is the answer?

1) V. 7 – *“Purge out therefore the old leaven”-*

1. **Purge out** – means to remove and cleanse thoroughly

2. Why?

- a. V. 7b – *“as ye are unleavened”* – you are to seek to be pure without sin
- b. V.7c – *“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”*
- c. The Jews put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and lintel to save them from the 10th plague on Egypt; Jesus came as our Passover lamb whose blood has been applied to our lives, making us clean that allows God’s judgment to Passover us now!
- d. When the Jews were leaving Egypt God instituted the feast of unleavened bread; they were during this time not allowed to use leaven.
 - i. Leaven represented Egypt, the old life, the old ways – sin
 - ii. During this feast all leaven was removed from the home – symbolizing all sin eradicated. Paul says in verse 8 – *“let us keep the feast...not with malice and wicked”*
 - They kept it once a year during the feast, but we are to keep it continually; constantly purging our lives of sin – will sin enter – unfortunately yes, but we must throw it out, and purge it; if we see it exposing and rising in someone else – we must warn them in love to remove the influential damaging effects of sin.
 - iii. Instead of “malice and wickedness” the Church must be filled with “sincerity and truth”.

I. The Right sphere of discipline – v. 9-13

- 1) V. 9 – Paul had written a letter (which has since been lost) concerning not associating with sexually immoral people.
- 2) **“associate with”** literally means **“to mix up with”**; it speaks of being in a intimate, close relationship with.
- 3) Christians should not keep a close intimate friendship with people that are living in openly known sin. It doesn’t mean isolation from sinners, but separation from sin.
- 4) **But Jesus hung out with sinners?**
 - In the Bible Jesus clearly spent time with sinners, b/c that is all people are! But He called them to come out of their sin; the women caught in adultery he did not condemn, but commanded her to “go and sin no more” (John 8:10-11, 3:19-20).
- 5) V. 10 – The Corinthians misunderstood Paul’s earlier letter and though he meant just to stop associating with unbelievers; but Paul was speaking about dealing with sin in the Church.

1. In order to stop associating with sinners in the world you would have to go “*out of the world*”.
2. Christians must have some interaction with the lost, we are to be in the world but not of the world; we are to live like Jesus in the midst of a lost society. Again – not isolation from people, but separation from sin.
 - † **John 17:15** - *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil.*
 - † **John 17:18** - *As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.*
 - † **Philippians 2:15** - *That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, **in the midst** of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;*
 - We are to again be salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16)
- 6) V. 11 – Do not keep company if someone professes Christ but lives like the world.
- J. Do not keep company** – is the same word used in v. 9 – it again speaks of close, habitual association with the person.
 - 1) V. 12-13 – Paul tells them we do not judge unbelievers – we have no authority over them; God judges them. We are only to witness the Gospel to them and reach out to them in love and truth.
- K. The result of removing sin**
 - 1) The Church has a good _____.
 - 2) The sinning Christian understands that sin is _____.
 - 3) The sinning Christian has the opportunity to be _____.
- L. 2 Corinthians 2:1-11** indicates that this man did later repent and was restored to the fellowship.
 - 1) God is exalted, Holiness is exalted, sin is disciplined and dealt with, and God’s blessings flow.
 - 2) Love both confronts sin, and it also covers sin
 - † **Revelation 3:19** — *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*
 - † **1 Peter 4:8** — *And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.*

Assignments:

- **Read: chapter 8 – Pursuit of God** – “Restoring the Creator-Creature Relationship”
 - Paragraph one: Summarize what this chapter was about.
 - Paragraph two: How you can apply these truths to your life.
- **Study for a test over lesson 8**