

Pastor Jeremy M. Thomas
Fredericksburg Bible Church

107 East Austin

Fredericksburg, Texas 78624

830-997-8834 jthomas@fbgbible.org

A1330 – July 28, 2013 – 2 Corinthians 2:5-11
Conducting Proper Church Discipline

Last week we found in 2 Cor 1:12-2:4 that Paul changed his travel plans. This caused some at Corinth to charge Paul with being a fickle, ambiguous man of mixed motives who was obviously not qualified to be an apostle. However, the real reason Paul changed his plans was because Timothy reported that the Corinthians had not repented in light of his visit and the letter of 1 Corinthians. Therefore because he loved them and wanted what was best for them he changes his plans by departing from his fruitful ministry at Ephesus prematurely and came to Corinth. When he arrived a man in the congregation offended Paul by challenging his apostolic authority. The Corinthians stood by and watched, doing nothing about it. This did not show Paul that they loved him and it made the visit a sorrowful one. Paul decided to leave and travel into Macedonia visiting other churches. He originally planned to return a second time before going to Ephesus but the visit was so bad that he changed his plans again and wrote a severe letter instead. This letter caused sorrow even though it was not meant to cause sorrow but to show them that he loved them even though they did not show him that they loved him. The letter did call for repentance for their failure to do anything as Paul was being offended. The letter was apparently very difficult to pen. Paul reveals that he shed many tears and suffered much anguish but it was necessary to convict them of their sin so that they would repent and do what they failed to do when he was there; implement church discipline against the man who had sinned openly in the congregation.

We said there are at least three things we can take away from this section of Scripture. Let's review those before we move to the next section. First, we need to be careful judging people's motives because we don't always properly perceive a person's motives. Paul had pure motives underlying his change in plans but the Corinthians did not properly perceive his motives. We don't

have access to a person's heart until they explain their motives with words out of their mouth. For out of the mouth comes that which is in the heart. So we ought to be very careful assigning motives. Second, it is proper to change our plans if our intentions are in the best interest of others. Sometimes people take it that we should never change our plans. However, Paul changed his plans because it was in the best interest of the Corinthians. If he had not changed his plans it would have caused more friction and further division. Therefore if keeping your plans is only going to cause more friction then it's better to change your plans in order to alleviate friction. Third, make every effort to restore unity. Paul visited the Corinthians and wrote letters to them in order to restore unity. He reminded them of what we share in Christ; that we are all anointed by God to serve Him approvingly, that we are all sealed by the Spirit until the day of redemption, that we all have the Spirit in our heart as a down payment until the completion of the purchase and that He is working in each one of us to make us faithful disciples. Since we share all these things and so much more why is their division among us? The Scriptural answer is sinful pride and arrogance. We arrogantly refuse to sit down and work out problems like the early church did at the Council of Jerusalem. Instead we whine and bicker and moan but nobody opens the word of God and sets out to resolve it. Are we making every effort like Paul to restore and maintain unity? Probably not too often, therefore the church since the Reformation is fractured into many pieces, a sad commentary on an organism designed to be walking in unity.

As we come into 2 Cor 2:5 let's reverse briefly into 2:4. This is where you really start to see Paul's pastoral heart. One of the things we said in the introduction to the book is that 2 Corinthians is unique in opening a window into a true pastor's heart. When you read the words, "out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you with many tears" you're getting a rare peek into Paul's heart. It's not very often that Paul opens up and shares what's going on inside of himself. You see it here and you see it in Acts 20:19 when he's departing from the elders of Ephesus so you better take a good look while you can because Paul wasn't a cry baby. Paul didn't cry at the drop of a hat. Most of the time we see Paul as a hard, coarse man, but when it was a serious situation we see him shed tears, we see him afflicted, we see him showing his heart. Is there something wrong with that? Sometimes we are told that emotions are wrong. Interestingly the people expressing that view are often quite emotional about how wrong emotions are; betraying their own

position. Emotions in and of themselves aren't wrong, they can be out of control and governing the person and that is wrong, but equally wrong is no emotion. We are creatures made in the image of God and therefore we have emotion because God has emotion. God is not a cold stone statue in heaven, untouched by anything in creation. Sometimes people say that God is impassable, that's a fancy word for an attribute of God which means God cannot be impacted by His creation (i.e. we can't hurt God). Other people claim that God is passable; that He can be impacted by His creation (i.e. we can hurt God). I think neither is correct in full. I like to point to the OT book of Hosea which is an OT love story, it shows that God does have and express emotion; He even has love in the OT. The proper way to state the truth is to say that God can permit Himself to be impacted by His creation if He wants to. He doesn't have to be impacted by His creatures but He can permit it in situations at His discretion. Hosea is one place we see that. I think we should follow that model in our own lives when it comes to our emotions. We should show emotion but under control, we should not allow our emotions to master us. There's nothing wrong with showing emotion when it's proper. Here Paul was showing emotion and it is part of being a model pastor. Paul's showing what every pastor on occasion ought to show, not all the time, we don't need leaky pulpits, but if you don't ever see a pastor's emotion it might be because he's disconnected from the people, not genuinely caring about anyone other than himself. I think that a true pastor will inevitably show emotion and even shed tears because of what he's going through with the people and how much he loves them and how much he knows they need Christ and how hard he works to point them to Christ! It just comes with the territory. It's a corollary to how much you've poured in to the people. Even when God expresses emotion it's because of what He has poured into them. In Hosea, God chose to love Israel and yet Israel is not loving Him and God is weeping over Israel. Paul's emotion over the Corinthians is expressed for the same reason. He had poured a lot into the Corinthians; he was their spiritual father, he spent 18 months training them in the word of God, he wrote at least four letters to them and he visited them on three occasions. Paul had invested his life in them and notice the degree of love he says he has for them at the end of verse 4, love "I have especially for you." Paul especially loved the church at Corinth; in fact he loved them more than he loved the other churches he founded. Even Hodge said in the 19th century, "His love for them was more abundant, or greater, than that which he had for any other church. This view is borne out by numerous other passages in these two epistles,

which go to show that Paul's love for the Corinthian church was, for some reason, peculiarly strong."ⁱ Why? Because of how much he poured into them. That's the way relationships work. You'll always have more love for those you pour your life into than those you don't. It's very simple and makes perfect sense. That's part of what it means to be a genuine human made in the image of God. That's why it's important to get involved with this church and get to know the people. Not so you'll have emotion but so you'll build relationships with people who love the word of God. So, emotion is fine as long as we're able to govern it and not it govern us, and when we have especially poured ourselves into someone then that makes the genuine expression of emotion even stronger. We have invested ourselves and the emotion is an expression of that investment.

Now it was out of that love that he wrote a very difficult letter because of the man who committed open sinful rebellion in the assembly. Even the writing of the letter itself was a manifestation of Paul's love. Only someone who really wanted to solve conflict in a relationship would write a letter. Yet the letter caused sorrow. Verse 5, **But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree—in order not to say too much—to all of you.** They were the ones who had most of the sorrow, not Paul. Paul brushed it off and whatever was necessary to forgive, if anything, as he mentions in verse 10, Paul himself had already forgiven. But they had ongoing sorrow because they had to implement church discipline and that is never something easy to do. But all of this is said with such pastoral restraint as you can see by the expression—**in order not to say too much**—Paul did not want to belabor the point. But he did want them to know that he was no longer affected by the situation as they were.

They were the ones who had to follow through with church discipline and therefore they might have some degree of sorrow due to the difficulty of managing a church discipline situation. We're now going to embark on a little section of Scripture which deals with how to properly carry out church discipline. Don't be scared, hardly anyone gets the church discipline issue properly balanced. We'll try to do that today.

Verse 6 shows you that they had in fact already exercised church discipline and Paul had been notified of it. Titus we'll learn later was the one who reported it to Paul. He may have even overseen it. But Paul says of the

discipline, **Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, 7so that on the contrary you should rather forgive and comfort him, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.** You can see clearly they did it, actually you can see that they overdid it. But let's get some background by making some general statements about the doctrine of church discipline. First of all, is church discipline Scriptural? Of course it is. Turn to Matt 18:15. People say all the time, you can't judge me. Of course, that's a judgment itself. The claim not to judge is self-defeating. Everybody judges. Every law judges; it judges between those who are behaving properly and those who are not. Not only is not judging logically fallacious, it's Scripturally fallacious. Jesus ordered it for the church in this passage. He said, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16But 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** 17If 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. 19"Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20"For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst." Now I take it this entire passage is about church discipline and the part about prayer is how the discipline should be carried out by the two or three that may get involved. It's to be carried out prayerfully because it's a delicate situation.

Let's break this down, we can learn a lot here about church discipline here. What are some obvious things? First, we already stated, it is Scriptural. If you say you are a follower of Jesus and you don't do what Jesus says you aren't much of a follower. What is verse 15 if it's not a command to judge, "go and show him his fault." If you don't do that you do not follow Jesus. So we've got that out of the way; if you're a follower of Jesus then you'll judge one another. Second, any believer can judge. It's not the elders or the deacons that are the ones who are supposed to do all the judging. Any believer can do it. You don't have to hold an office in the church; you don't have to be a pastor; you don't have to be on the judging committee. The only qualification

is you have to be a believer because it says in verse 15, “if your brother sins.” I might mention Gal 6:1 in passing at this point because that passage says you better check yourself before you go judging someone else, make sure you’re with it. But basically, if you are and they are a fellow believer then you have the duty to judge. Third, the sin has to be visible. How else could you know about it? You can’t know what goes on in the invisible realm of a fellow believer’s heart. And you better thank God for that because you don’t want to see what goes on in my heart any more than I want to see what’s going on in yours. It’s a mess in there and you don’t want to see all that. If you did you’d probably throw up. Who disciplines those hidden sins? God does. God knows the heart and that’s divine discipline. But open sin that’s church discipline. Now having confirmed that church discipline is Scriptural, it can be carried out by any believer and its visible sin Jesus gives an important procedure for handling it. First, it’s just one believer going to another believer. It’s kept private. Nobody else needs to know. Why are you spouting your mouth off about someone else’s sin? Shut up and go talk to them in private about it. If they listen to you and repent that’s the end of it, you have won your brother. Now go rejoice and never speak of it again. But if they don’t listen to you and you don’t win them then...second, you get two or three other people not given to gossip and you go to your brother again to confirm every fact. And as you do this you’re praying because vv 18, 19 and 20 are telling you that when two or three of you get together and agree that yes, this person has committed a sin then you pray about that and God is going to go to work on your behalf for this person. But if they don’t listen to the two or three, then third, verse 17, tell it to the church, not outside the church, to the church and you don’t go blabbing your mouth to your co-worker about the sin going on in your church, that is none of their business and you are making a mockery of Christ’s church so shut your mouth. It’s a family issue. Finally, fourth, if he refuses to listen even to the church that’s it, you cut them off as far as fellowship is concerned, you don’t mingle with this person. Why? Because like leaven they will corrupt the whole church. That’s 1 Cor 5 and the incestuous man which some people think is the man they disciplined here. I’m not inclined to that view but some people think it’s the same man.ⁱⁱ In any case what’s the driving point? There are six basic things you can take away from Jesus’ teaching on church discipline. First, it’s Scriptural, second, any believer can initiate it, third, the sin has to be a visible one committed by a believer, fourth, the sphere of knowledge about the sin is kept as small as possible, fifth, when the

person repents that's the end of it and sixth, while you carry it out you're praying.

Now let's come back to our situation in 2 Cor 2 and see how Paul applied these things to the situation at Corinth. Obviously it was a hard thing for them to carry out as they were experiencing sorrow because of it. The first thing in verse 5 is that the discipline, **punishment** as it is described here; a judicial word used here and only here in the NT, **was inflicted by the majority**. The Greek word for **majority** here is *polus* and refers to the whole church. Now why was the whole church involved in disciplining the man? I thought we just learned that it was supposed to start with one, then two or three and lastly the whole church. So why didn't they follow this procedure? Very simple, the man committed the sin in front of the whole church to begin with. Therefore the whole church has to deal with it. So if the person decides their going to sin in front of 10,000 people then 10,000 people have to deal with it. If the person chooses to sin in front of five people then five people have to deal with it. The sinner chooses how many disciplinary agents get involved. And if they sin in your face you have to deal with it. That's your obedience to God. God's not going to deal with it, it was a visible, in your face sin and He is telling you to deal with it. Here the guy decided to sin in front of the whole church so the whole church is instantly involved in the church discipline. It's not just the elders. Anyone know why it's not just the elders? Because then everybody else doesn't really ever get it resolved in their mind. In real life it doesn't do any good for someone to say, "Well, they said they were sorry to us." "Really? Hmm...I'm not so sure about that." So the first thing is that the **punishment was inflicted by the majority** which in this case refers to the whole church.

The second thing is that Paul says **this punishment was sufficient**. We don't know what the punishment was but we do know it was **sufficient**. In other words, it had met its goal; the man had repented publicly before the whole church. There was no reason to keep him on the outs; there was no reason to hold it against him. It was over, move on! They had victory, the man repented. But that's not enough, it's not enough to have church discipline and have the man repent. It's not over yet. That may sound funny but it's not over yet.

The third thing is verse 7, it is incumbent on the whole church to **forgive** him and **comfort him**. Two things here every member of the church was to do once the man repented. And boy, Christians just really have a problem with this. They have a problem here because they're led by the flesh 99% of the time and not by the Spirit. They don't want to forgive them. They want to say they forgive him but hold a grudge. Oh nonsense. You know what the real problem is here. These people don't understand forgiveness themselves. The Greek word **forgive** is *charizomai* which actually stems from the root for "grace," it means "to show yourself gracious by forgiving sin." Do you do that when someone sins? Assuming they repented. Do you show yourself gracious by forgiving them? Or do you grudgingly hold it over them? Why is this so hard? Because we're being driven by our flesh. Our flesh wants to hold a grudge. But the Spirit wants us to be gracious by forgiving. What do we mean by forgiving? People wrongly say forgiving is forgetting. No it's not, you can't erase your memory bank. What you can do is two things; one, never bring it up again, if that thought comes up you stamp it down and think about something else, you're not going to throw it in their face again, two, you can do what Paul says here in a moment and that is comfort the person which means encourage them. If you'll do those two things you know what will happen over time, you will forget.

Now if you don't do this a very real question arises? Do you understand how gracious God was in forgiving you when you put your repentant faith in His Son? Do you really grasp that the most righteous things you did before you were a believer were filthy rags in His sight. We won't go into the Hebrew to draw out the meaning of the word "filthy rags" but its filth. And that was your righteous deeds. Aren't you glad God doesn't bring up your unrighteous deeds and rub them in your face over and over again? I am. I'm glad that He doesn't do that. And you shouldn't do that to those who've repented either. If you do you really don't understand gracious forgiveness of sin. We forgive because He first forgave us? Eph 4:32. That's the entire basis. So to not extend to others what God has extended to you is hypocritical. Don't hold it over their heads, don't bring it up again, don't rub it in their face and hold a grudge. Forgive them and move on!

But even that's not enough; the second thing verse 7 says to do is **comfort**. The Greek word is *parakaleo* and means "to come alongside someone and encourage them" "to instill in them courage." Really? I'm going to actually

verbalize to this person encouragement? Ha! That'll be the day. Well, if you'd grow up and learn to live by the Spirit you'd enjoy that day. Someone who just committed a church-wide visible sin and repented of it needs what at that time? Someone to knock them down again? No, they've been through a tumultuous time. It has not been easy. What does that person need? They need encouragement to keep pressing forward in the Christian life; they need someone to cheer them up. Do you do that? Do you encourage those who have sinned and repented? Do you come alongside of them and personally tell them that you forgive them and encourage them? It's very important to do this. If you just briefly scan down to verse 11 you'll see who can take advantage of us if we don't do this. Satan. You're effectively inviting Satan in to sow discord among you if you don't personally encourage them. They are extremely vulnerable at this time and you are called to lift them up and stand with them.

Otherwise, Paul says in verse 7 what might happen? **such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow**. What does this mean? It's a word picture. The verb **overwhelmed** comes from the ocean, it's a picture of giant waves overwhelming a person, they can't stay afloat, they are overwhelmed and swallowed up by the dark waters beneath. That's what happens to the repentant person when we don't forgive them and encourage them. They get swallowed up **by excessive sorrow** and they fall into the darkness of depression. It's not their fault, they repented; it's our fault for not forgiving and encouraging them. When did you ever hear that in a church discipline case?

Obviously from vv 6-8 Paul was concerned that they were overdoing the church discipline. The discipline inflicted was sufficient, it had met its goal, the man had repented, it was not proper to keep holding it over his head, it was time to forgive and encourage the man so that he was not inundated by the flood of sorrow.

Paul sums up the proper response in verse 8, **Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him**. Agape love here encompasses both the forgiveness and comfort of the prior verse. If we truly have *agape* love sown in our heart by the Holy Spirit then we will **reaffirm our love for him**. *Agape* love is love that has the best interest of the other person in mind, it's a selfless love, it just wants what is best for the other person without thought

of return. To reaffirm your love for such a person is an essential step in their restoration which is the ultimate goal of church discipline to begin with, that the person be fully restored and growing in grace and knowledge, worshipping in spirit and truth with the body.

So you can see there are two equally opposite and egregious errors here to avoid. The first one is obvious and more common today; failure to exercise church discipline. This error allows sin to continue in the church, eventually becoming a breeding ground for more sin, leading to justifications of sin by reinterpretations of the text and consequent extinguishing of the light of the gospel. The second one is seen here; over-exercising church discipline. This error allows an unforgiving spirit to enter the church, eventually becoming a breeding ground for Satanic schemes, leading to division in the church and consequent extinguishing of the church as a lighthouse. Both errors end in defeat. There is only one answer; Scriptural exercise of church discipline. This cleanses the church of sin, maintains fellowship with God, fosters encouragement and love among us and consequently the bright light of a church proclaiming the light of the gospel.

Verse 9, **For to this end I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.** That is, to see whether you would exercise church discipline properly or not? Are you obedient in all things? Do you exercise Scriptural church discipline? The severe letter was written to test whether they would carry it out or not? If not you're not an obedient Christian. An obedient Christian carries out church discipline. An obedient Church carries out church discipline. In this case at least they had carried out church discipline although they should be careful not to overdo it by reaffirming their love for him. But in so many cases in America there is no church discipline. These churches become breeding grounds for sin, attractions for those who are overcome by their sin, even places to exploit others who share their sinful behaviors. To top it all off these churches re-interpret the Bible to justify sinful dispositions, leading people down a path of destruction!

Let's take an example of a conversation between a Modern or Liberal Christian and an Orthodox Christian. I'm taking this from Charles Clough who's the author of the series on same-sex marriage that is found in the Monthly Messenger. What he has here is a carefully thought through

conversation over the issue of same-sex marriage and how the liberal Christian has re-interpreted the text.

L to C: I disagree with your claim that the controversy over same-sex marriage and the acceptability of homosexuality is merely a continuation of the age-old conflict between pagan culture and the Judeo-Christian tradition.

C to L: Why do you say that?

L to C: Our denomination has begun to ordain homosexuals for the ministry. There's even an evangelical denomination for homosexuals now--the Metropolitan Community churches. Our pastor says that the Bible really doesn't condemn what we today call homosexuality. He's been teaching how recent scholarship *reinterprets the Bible passages traditionally cited in this debate*.

C to L: Such as?

L to C: The Old Testament story of Sodom and Gomorrah that traditional Judeo-Christianity always cites as a judgment against homosexuality (Gen. 19). Our pastor said some late 20th century scholars argue that the sin of Sodom was simply inhospitability and maybe violence. The men of Sodom merely wanted to know who Lot's visitors were. The Hebrew verb "yadah" that is translated "know" occurs hundreds of times without any sexual meaning.

C to L: I'm glad you agree that the Sodom and Gomorrah story has always been interpreted as a judgment upon homosexual behavior. That millennia-old interpretation rests upon solid ground that the recent writers your pastor cites haven't really refuted.

L to C: How so?

C to L: The men of Sodom wanted Lot to bring outside the two angels in his house so they could "know" them (Gen. 19:5). Context shows that it refers to sex. In a few verses further (19:8) where Lot speaks of his daughters as not having "known" a man--it's clearly a reference to sex. Moreover, look how "know" is used earlier in Genesis (4:1,17,25). The verb "know" can mean other things, but you determine meaning in a given text by the context and argument of that passage. Take the parallel story to Sodom, the homosexual assault on the Levite guest in Judges 19. The verb "to know" in 19:22 again is clearly referring to sex, not an attempt at hospitality (see how the Levite later described the situation in 20:5-6)!

L to C: Why is it, then, that when Old Testament writers refer to Sodom, they don't single out homosexuality as the reason for God's judgment?

C to L: A careful reading shows they do. Take Ezekiel 16, for example, where he accuses Jerusalem of being worse than Sodom. In 16:50 he includes the term "abomination" in Sodom's sin list. That is the term used of homosexuality in the two classic Old Testament references of Lev. 18:22 and 20:13. Ezekiel refers to homosexual religious acts going on in defiance of the Law (cf. Deut. 23:17-18; 1 Kings 14:24).

L to C: I'm not as well acquainted with the Old Testament as you are. Our church doesn't bother with it much. But our pastor said those two references you call "classic" in Leviticus speak only of homosexual priests involved in Jewish temple worship, not homosexuality that we see today. They restrict homosexuality for only the Jewish Levites.

C to L: A careful reading shows that interpretation doesn't stand up. The sins mentioned in Lev. 18 and 20 aren't ceremonial sins; they are all sexual and apply to all nations everywhere. Also, the word "abomination" besides referring to the entire list, is specifically attached to only the sin of homosexuality (18:22 and 20:13). The millennia-long interpretation of the Old Testament by both Jews and Christians still stands.

That's an aside on this issue and it shows what happens when you are not obedient and exercising church discipline. This is the end result, this is where it leads and you better pay attention because it can happen to your church. It's gradual but it happens. It's nothing more than plain old disobedience to God. The Corinthian church however had passed the test, they had been obedient in exercising church discipline, though they might want to make sure they forgive and comfort the man. Paul now, in verse 10, sets himself forward as having led by example in the area of forgiveness. **But one who you forgive anything, I forgive also; for indeed what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, I did it for your sakes in the presence of Christ,** Paul really didn't make a big deal of what the man did, he sort of downplays it here in order to encourage them to forgive him as well, as he had in the presence of Christ, that is, knowing that Christ was observing him. But while downplaying it he still shows the forgiveness is essential because of verse 11, **so that no advantage would be taken of us by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his schemes.** That's your *hina* clause which is a purpose clause. Why is it so important to forgive? Because not to forgive is an open invitation for Satan to take advantage of us and sow the seeds of discord. As long as there is an unforgiving spirit it's an open door to Satan to come in and cause more problems for the church. We should not be

ignorant of his schemes. He want's disunity and disharmony, God wants unity and harmony. But just look at the church today and tell me what dominates.

In summary, Paul shows us a pastor's heart in that he sent a severe letter composed with tears and affliction. The results reported by Titus were that they had repented and disciplined the offender. This was a sorrowful process, Paul himself was not sorrowful because he had already forgiven the man and moved on, but for those who carried it out it was sorrowful and difficult. Paul warns not to overdo it. What had been done was sufficient and the man had repented. What was needed now was the congregation to forgive and comfort the man, that is, reaffirm agape love for him. Otherwise the man might be overwhelmed by the flood of sorrow and sink into depression. Paul had already forgiven him, they should follow his example and do so too, otherwise Satan would take it as an open door to enter and sow discord among them.

What can we learn in conclusion? First, church discipline is a necessary component of obedience to Christ. Jesus taught it and Paul confirmed it. Second, church discipline should extend only as far as the sphere in which the sin was visible. If it's in the presence of one believer then that's all that gets involved unless the person refuses to repent. In this case the whole assembly was involved so the whole assembly had to carry out the discipline. Third, church discipline should be followed up by forgiveness and encouragement; that is, a reaffirmation of agape love from all involved. This is critical for the person to know they are accepted and to continue to grow in grace and fellowship with the body. Fourth, whether a church carries out church discipline is a test of obedience. If a church does not carry it out it is a breeding ground for sin and rebellion and consequent loss of purity and witness to the world. Fifth, failure to carry out church discipline invites Satan in to sow discord among the assembly, the very things that result in quarreling and division.

ⁱ Constable, T. (2003). *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (2 Co 2:4). Galaxie Software.

ⁱⁱ Who was this man? The question is a matter of debate. We don't know for sure, some posit he was the incestuous man from 1 Cor 5:1-8 who was lying with his step-mother. Others think he was someone who had been rude to Paul and had challenged his apostolic authority. I think he was probably the latter, a man who was simply rude to Paul and had challenged his apostolic authority. Whether he was a member of the church at Corinth or just a visitor we don't know but Paul did consider him a believer.

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