

Message #20

I Corinthians 5:9-13

In any social environment, whether it is a family, a team, a school, a company, a job, a community, a country or even a church, there must be certain rules and certain guidelines if that society is to progress forward. If a team member, a class member, an employee, a family member or even a church member is allowed to do whatever he wants, whenever he wants, you will be left with chaos.

There are times when the “bad-egg” must be removed. There are times when a player needs to be cut. There are times when a student needs to be expelled. There are times when an employee needs to be fired. There are times when a church member needs to be excommunicated.

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN THE CHURCH IS TO REMOVE CERTAIN PEOPLE FROM ITS FELLOWSHIP AND IS TO REFUSE TO ASSOCIATE WITH CERTAIN PEOPLE IN ITS FELLOWSHIP.

As tough as it may seem, as difficult as it may be and as unpleasant a task as it is, God demands, at times, that this type of action take place in His Church.

DISCIPLINARY MATTER #1 – A church IS to associate with sinful unbelievers. 5:9-10

That word “associate” (5:9, 11) is one that means not to mingle or associate or to mix with. The present tense used in both instances speaks of a continual action. Paul had obviously told these Corinthians that they were not to continually associate or mingle or mix with those who were sexually immoral.

Apparently the Corinthians had separated themselves from any lost person who was immoral, any lost person who was covetous or any lost person who was an extortionist or idolater. The Corinthians had lost sight of the reality that Christ came to save these types of sinners (i.e. 6:9-11).

Christ Himself has commanded us to go to the lost world (Mark 16:15) and has actually prayed us into the lost world (John 17:15, 18). In order for us to stop associating with the lost people of this world, we would literally have to leave it.

Do you realize the implications of this? You are a missionary. Forget for a moment all the foreign countries, of your own job and your own neighborhood. Your assignment and my assignment is not to point our finger at our lost heathen boss, co-worker or neighbor; we are to reach them for Christ.

The Corinthians were refusing to associate with lost people that you do expect to sin and they were continually associating with saved people that you don't expect to continue in sin. We are not to live like the lost people of this world (Rom. 12:2) but we are to live with the lost people of this world.

DISCIPLINARY MATTER #2 – A church IS NOT to associate with sinful believers. **5:11**

(Type 1) - One who is immoral refers to one in sexual immorality.

(Type 2) - One who is covetous refers to one who is very greedy and always wants more and more (closely connected to idolatry – Eph. 5:3-5).

(Type 3) - One who is an idolater refers to one who devotes his life and worship to something other than God.

(Type 4) - One who is a reviler refers to one who always verbally abuses other people and their character.

(Type 5) - One who is a drunkard refers to one who becomes intoxicated with intoxicants, which would include alcohol and could include drugs.

(Type 6) - One who is a swindler refers to one who cheats others out of money

The reason why Paul says a “so-called” brother is because one who continually practices these sins cannot know for certain whether or not he is truly saved and neither can the church. One cannot determine true salvation by the fruit of one involved in continual sin.

Response #1 - The church MUST NOT associate with him. **5:11a**

Response #2 - The church MUST NOT eat with him. **5:11b**

Response #3 - The church MUST remove him. **5:13b**

The church that just sits idly by and tolerates any form of sin and does nothing about it is a carnal church, probably filled with many hypocrites who do nothing about their own sin.

DISCIPLINARY MATTER #3 – A church IS NOT to judge the sinful unbeliever. **5:12a, 13a**

It is NOT our job to judge the sinful world. God will judge it; in fact, He has a “fixed day” set aside for this very purpose (Acts 17:31).

That word “judge” is specifically one that speaks of making a judicial decision, especially one of condemnation. It IS NOT our job to judge or condemn the lost world. Jesus Christ Himself taught this very same thing (John 3:17; Luke 9:51-56). Our job is to preach the truth of God to this world that their vile sins can be forgiven in Jesus Christ.

DISCIPLINARY MATTER #4 – A church IS to judge the sinful believer. **5:12b, 13b**

It IS the responsibility of the church to judge those “within.” A person who calls himself a brother, who persists in sin, is to be judged and removed.

The context of Matthew 7 is pharisaical religion that sees the sins of others but not the sin of one’s own life (Matt. 5:20). Matthew 7 does not negate I Corinthians 5. Matthew 7 is not talking about righteous church discipline; it is talking about self-righteous pharisaical judgment.

The truth is if a believer is willing to judge himself, he will never reach the point where he has to be judged by some other person.

The church that refuses to discipline is one who pleases people but not God; whereas the church that does discipline is one who will not please some people but it will please God.

The warning in this passage applies to me, to our board, to our members, and to you. Discipline is hard but it is also biblically right!