

# The Most Neglected Topic in the Bible

## (1 Corinthians 5:5)

The topic of church discipline is probably the most neglected in the Bible. It is neglected both when it comes to being studied and carried out. It is a topic that is often met with resistance among the family of God.

And yet, the topic challenges us in a variety of different ways.

- It challenges our trust in God. Do we really believe that God's way is the best way?
- It challenges our love for God. See John 14:15.
- It challenges our love for one another.

Assuming that we feel strongly about all of these things, tonight I want us to rehearse what the Bible says about this very important subject.

### I. Church discipline is promoted in the Bible.

- A. Jesus gives clear instructions for it in Matthew 18:15-17.
  1. Step #1- Go to the brother in private (vs. 15).
  2. Step #2- Take 1 or 2 more (vs. 16).
  3. Step #3 – Bring the matter before the church (vs. 17a).
  4. Step #4- No longer count him among the faithful (vs. 17b).
- B. The Apostle Paul teaches on the subject several times in the New Testament (Romans 16:16-17; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14; 1 Corinthians 5:1-2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13).

### II. Church discipline is not easy.

- A. This is true for a couple of reasons.
  1. It is not easy to confront someone with sin (Matthew 18:15-16).
  2. The third and fourth steps often come at the end of a long process.
  3. Often the process involves judgment from the leaders. We need to always be mindful of Hebrews 13:17.
- B. This can be a very difficult and sensitive matter for a local church.

### III. Church discipline is an act of love.

- A. Why do parents discipline their children? Is it because they hate them and want to make their lives miserable? Or, because they love and want to help them have a great future?
- B. Real love for a brother involves...
  1. Taking notice when he falls into sin.
  2. Confronting him with his sin (Galatians 2:11-14).
  3. Being willing to pull back fellowship from him until he repents (Matthew 18:17).

### IV. Church discipline is not to be our final act.

- A. Even after a sinful brother is "withdrawn" from, there is more that God wants us to do (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). We are not to give up completely on him!
- B. Remember the goal of this process is to save a soul (1 Corinthians 5:5).