

Section: Doctrine of the Church (Ecclesiology)

Wednesday, February 19, 2025

Lesson 82- Q.106 & 107

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**TEACHING NOTES**

Tonight’s lesson is very biblical, very practical, and to some degrees very challenging.

The practice of accountability and discipline is naturally challenging because most *people do not* like confrontation, conflict or discipline. We almost always would prefer to just avoid conflict or confrontation, and some parents are not even faithful to discipline their own children for the fact that they do not like doing it or perceived threat of what it will mean for their relationship with their child.

But God’s word is clear to instruct us that discipline is a good and necessary thing!!

**Proverbs 13:24** Whoever spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.

Church: As we climb into tonight’s teaching, we must set aside our fleshly preferences and receive the instruction of our Lord on these matters. As our Lord Jesus said ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. **Luke 9:23**

It is *so important that we who belong to Christ are* willing to deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow His commands regarding accountability and Christian Discipline!!

Our topic tonight is by no means a popular one in **our “to-each-his-own” culture**. Sadly, as biblically grounded and clear as this is in God’s word, many churches/Christians out right disobey the Lord and do not practice these things. It’s my prayer that we lean in and embrace the practice of these important commands of our Lord.

It needs to be understood that our scope in this lesson is regarding our **relationships that Christians have with others who proclaim faith in Christ.**

What God requires of us in regard to interactions with *non-believers* is also something we need to know, but that is a topic for another study another time.

So please remember, what we discuss tonight has to do specifically with relationships Christians have with others who proclaim faith in Christ.

With much to cover let’s jump into our first Q &A…

**Q106. What is Christian accountability and discipline?**

It is loving correction to someone who professes to be a Christian when he/she is out of step of core sound doctrine or practicing other sin. If he/she does not repent after biblical efforts are made, then God’s instruction is dis-fellowship until he/she does. All Christians are to joyfully submit to biblically-based accountability.

Before we dive into the details and Scripture on the *what and how*, I want us to have a proper foundation on the “why.” *Why* do we do Christian accountability and discipline?

As our second answer tonight says:

**Q107. Why do we do Christian accountability and discipline?**

We practice Christian accountability and discipline because of our love for God and our love for one another. It glorifies God when we trust and obey His commanded will, and it is loving to others to treat them the way God has ordained.

God’s design in all of this is that Christians would seek to honor the purity of the Christ—that *as* His body of believers, we rightly handle those who claim His name but do not walk in a manner worthy of Him. *This is the loving thing to do*.

Look at a few examples of how God’s word speaks to these interactions between us:

**Practicing Christian Accountability and Discipline is a Blessing**

**Proverbs 27:6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

**Proverbs 15:32** Whoever ignores instruction despises himself, but he who listens to reproof gains intelligence.

**Ecclesiastes 7:5** It is better for a man to hear the rebuke of the wise than to hear the song of fools.

**Hebrews 12:11** For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

Please see with me that God’s *design for* Christian accountability and discipline is truly a blessing even though it is hard at times to do.

On the other hand, *what if* we ignore or despise this Christian accountability and discipline?

**Ignoring or Avoiding Christian Accountability and Discipline is a Curse**

**Proverbs 26:12** Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.

**Proverbs 5:22-23** The iniquities of the wicked ensnare [a person], and he is held fast in the cords of his sin. **23**He dies for lack of discipline, and because of his great folly he is led astray.

**Revelation 2:4-5** But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. **5**Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.

See with me that avoidance of accountability and discipline will reap real consequences in your life.

See with me that, Christian accountability and discipline are often significant means that God uses to grow His saved. If not for loving insight and rebuke from others, many times we would not see or fight sin that we are guilty of.

A God given example of this is easy to see and yet many still struggle with it!!

Think of how vital accountability and discipline is for the rearing of a child. If you never told your kids what they didn’t know about things that were bad for them or didn’t hold them accountable to truth or the reality of consequences, how they would turn out? A WRECK!!

Parents who choose to forgo consistent discipline and active accountability not only pay for it with unruly and undisciplined kids that are hard to be around but they are literally raising and forming future adults who will greatly struggle as well. God knows what he is doing when he instructs us to take accountability and discipline serious.

Like a loving Father, Hebrews 12 says it is *because of love* that God disciplines us. In the same way, it is also *because of love* that we he tells us to hold each other accountable and practice discipline in the body of Christ.

The MOTIVATION is love for Christ and His body.

The WHY is blessing and proper testimony and God’s glory.

See the mindset and approach to life we are to have in:

**Romans 12:9** Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

We must understand that accountability and dis-fellowship is loving and gracious to all parties:

First, God uses it as the means to draw back a true believer who is in sin, for glorious reconciliation and sanctification. That’s loving.

Second, in some cases, God uses it to show a deceived person—a falsely testifying person—they are not actually united to Christ, and, if God wills, the Holy Spirit will convict that person and bring about true salvation—true unity to Christ. That is loving.

And, third, God uses it to help protect His people from approving, tolerating, and/or falling into sin. That is loving.

We practice Christian accountability and discipline because of our love for God and our love for one another. It glorifies God when we trust and obey His commanded will, and it is loving to others to treat them the way God has ordained.

**The Bible’s Commands for Christian Accountability and Discipline**

With that, now we consider the *what and how* from Scripture.

* **Go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone**

Jesus says in **Matthew 18:15**, “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.”

In God’s design, we are not to make a brother/sister in Christ sin other people’s business.

First we are to: Lovingly talk to a brother or sister when there is legitimate concern of sin.

In many cases, the extent of accountability needed is only one conversation. That’s all that it takes.

That’s all it should take if both parties are humbly seeking to live by God’s word!

*Two Christians who love God and long to honor Him. So, the approaching party comes in a humble and loving posture, even opened handed, to inquire if what was seen or heard was indeed what was perceived. In this, we give the brother or sister the benefit of the doubt that maybe we saw it or heard it wrong. This is not a which hunt. It is with the goal only of Honoring the Lord.*

*If it was indeed sin, then, the person being held accountable needs to be humble, honest and quick to confess that yes, indeed this is sin and to pursue repentance. If this is the case that person should be thankful someone loved them enough to help them see it and address it so they can honor God!!*

Jesus says when this goes well, **“you have gained your brother”**

This is because you both are walking uprightly in the repentance and no discipline or relationship separation is needed. In unity you walk forward. Praise God!!

As **Ephesians 4:3** says [Be] eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

It cannot be in self-righteousness. It’s not about *being* right, it’s about *being right with God*. Desire and seek unity *in godliness.*

Jesus’ instruction in **Matthew 18:15** is clear, right?

Talk to your brother/sister in Christ and seek unity and his/her good in seeking repentance.

Hopefully we all get to experience with this happening all the time. This is because the Christian life is loving and looking out for each other and fighting sin and practicing repentance.

This happens at all levels and areas of the church. Amidst your elders, deacons and staff leadership. It happens in groups and discipleship circles and it happens in homes and among our members. Church, it should happen among anyone who bears the name of brother/sister in Christ.

We should celebrate this accountability and the real repentance that God produces in it.

Now, if this step doesn’t produce clarity, humility and repentance then Jesus is clear what we should do.

* **If he does not listen, take others along with you**

**Matthew 18:16:** “But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

Sometimes, a single interaction, like a one-on-one discussion, doesn’t produce the clarity or repentance it should—this can be due to a hardness of heart, or pride, or fear of man or simply perhaps a disagreement of the facts.

When that’s the case, (sometimes the loving thing to do is ask the other person to pray about it, seek Scripture on the topic, and tell him/her you’ll follow up in a short time. Then we need to prioritize the follow-up. We are not loving that person to leave them to their sin struggle. We need to not feel like, “well I made an effort to help and they didn’t really want it so, it’s there issue” NO, its now your issue according to Christian accountability. We are on this together. The body of Christ is not a to each his own kind of thing.

*Jesus says, we are to bring another mature Christian, sometimes a few, to help us seek clarity, unity and accountability.*

Often, one of the best ways this helps a wayward Christian is to see that this is not just another person’s opinion that you are in sin but there is a conformation in plurality and a witness to help you be accountable instead of argumentative or stubborn.

I have sat in many of these kinds of plural sit downs and it is a true blessing when the Holy Spirit users this to bring good God honoring resolve. Even as your pastor, the plural voice of mature bothers in my life has been a great blessing to help me slow to see that if these all agree, then I am clearly the one who needs to see that I am likely out of bounds or needing to change how I see or have maybe justified it. We need to look across the table a multitude of Blood bought family and count it a true blessing that they are there to help you get where you need to go. To help you get unstuck. We need to value this so much that we listen well and act on their helpful counsel and accountability.

In the next verse, Jesus says, **Matthew 18:17** 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.

Before we get to the action of disfellowship with the professing believer, see that if the larger group of two or a group has not worked you can then lean on the authority of the elders who represent the church at large. This is a more formal step of bringing the authority of the elders and the body at large into the situation. There is a weight that God uses when the church at large is about to find out your sin struggle that you refuse to address. No one likes to be exposed but sometimes it is this exposure that is the thing that is needed to help you see the seriousness of your sin.

The Christian is also to take serious the authority that God has given the elders/pastors in your life.

That we who belong to Christ and His church take very serious the role our shepherds are to play in our life.

**Hebrews 13:17** Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

God’s word says, to choose to argue with your shepherds and not heed their Godly counsel is of no advantage to you. The sheep are to do this so well, with so much respect and good listening that it is a JOY for the elders to do this, instead of wearisome and cause for groaning.

Church, please understand that this rule of your elders in your life is a serious thing.

A good example of this is, the fact that scripture is clear that two Christians cannot sue each other in court. This is because they should have true and right deference to God’s word and to their elders o be the ones to decide a final verdict. One that is honored and followed. Think about that.. Think about how convinced you can be that you were wronged but God’s word says, you obey Christ and honor God to give yourself over to the final judgement of the word and your elders. That’s it.

Cast closed. You Don’t get to continue in disgruntledness or bitterness or your sin. You are to repent and go forth in peace!!!

Church: see the seriousness of this so that we call can heed it!!! The person that is so warped in their self-mindedness and pride to not head now the third layer of Christian accountability proves to not be humbly submissive to the Lordship of Christ and His word and His church and therefore is to be treated not as a Christian and is to be disfellowshipped with.

If the person who sinned is still stubborn to not repent then the greater authority of the elders and church at large is to be leveraged to help them see that they are at risk of losing all the blessings of Christ Church if they persist to deny help and accountability.

* **If he refuses to listen to the elders/Church: dis-fellowship**

**Matthew 18:17** 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.

Jesus is clear, that after going through these biblical steps, if repentance is still not something the person agrees to, and the professing Christian is insisting on their own way, their own desires, preferences, view, or beliefs, they are to be put out and disfellowshipped with.

This means Christians in relationship with that person are to *cease relational interaction* with him until he repents. Not only does Jesus speak of this step clearly here in Matthew 18:17, it is what Scripture repeats in several other places, such as in 1 Corinthians 5, which we see in detail (along with other passages) in a bit.

Dis-fellowship is certainly **not** a popular thing in our flesh and even in our modern society and because of that, it’s **not** something you’ve likely seen happen much of in the span of your whole lifetime thus far. But let’s be clear that it is God’s good command on us.

The God who is perfect, who hates sin, who should **not** be dishonored, has put in place this system—these steps. **Who are we to question God?**

*Christians need to honor God in this*.

-Here, your elders are committed to it—you’ve heard and seen these things from us.

-Your membership covenant agrees to it.

-The church’s, statement of beliefs (publicly published and locally agreed to) clearly declares it.

While, in the past or at other church’s you’ve been a part of, you may not have experienced all of this being lived out according to God’s word. This was a part of our historic reformation to aligned with God and His word *more fully* 15 years ago.

The fruit of our obedience to the Lord on this issue has been hard and good at the same time. Like I mentioned, believers in this church benefit from the blessing of God’s design of Christian accountability and discipline. We are all better for it.

Please understand that God requiring accountability and dis-fellowship is not a new thing, nor an uncommon thing. God has had the principle of accountability and dis-fellowship in both the Old Covenant and the New Covenant. Let’s consider both for a moment so we all can see how consistent this command is in the economy of God.

* **Accountability and Dis-fellowship in the Old Testament**

In the economy of the Old Covenant, God made clear that grievous sin was not to be tolerated. He said clearly to **“purge the evil”** from among them.

That meant to no longer have relationship with those committing grievous sins. Sin such asbeing a false prophet, sin of idolatry or false worship, not obeying the priest in matters requiring their judgement, being a false witness who has accused his brother falsely, being a stubborn and rebellious child—not honoring parents, having premarital sex, committing adultery, etc.

Now, for certain sins, like the list we looked at, God ordained dis-fellowship *by way of death* in the Old Covenant.

If you think the NT prescriptions to have no more relationship with a person under discipline is to harsh, in the Old Covenant God required Dis-fellowship in many cases by putting the offender to death.

Based on Scripture, standard process was that *the one offended or the ones who witnessed the sin* would initiate the dis-fellowship and then the rest of the covenant community in relationship with them would join.

Look at **Deuteronomy 13:9**, “Your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people” and

**Deuteronomy 17:7,** “The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So, you shall purge the evil from your midst. ”

Take note of that phrase there in D17: “you shall purge the evil from your midst.” That is a common way that God communicated the requirement for dis-fellowship. Remember that for later.

I’ve given you a sample list in your notes of some of the verses that God commands *dis-fellowship by death* in the four books of Law in your Old Testament:



* **Christian Accountability and Dis-fellowship in the New Testament**

Now, you may be thinking…

*But we live in the New Covenant. Does the Old Covenant really have anything to offer this discussion to us in the New Covenant?*

When rightly understood, the Old Covenant Scripture will always help us; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says this is the case about all Scripture.

For example, the reality of General Equity is very important. To remind you of that term…

General Equity requires us to know the principles to honor in Old Testament law/commands that are **not** binding *in the exact same way* now.

The Apostle Paul makes this connection on this topic for us in 1 Corinthians 5.

We’ll see from that passage (and our look at other passages) that all Christians are called to biblically participate in accountability and dis-fellowship. Christians have clear instruction from God not to ignore sin in ourselves or in others who profess to be Christians. Repentance from falsehood and other ungodliness is to be sought.

One of the most direct passages in Scripture about Christian accountability is 1 Corinthians chapter 5. Let’s walk through it as the jumping off point for a New Covenant understanding. The Apostle Paul writes:

**1 Corinthians 5:1-2** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. **2**And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

PAUSE – Ok, this begins right into it. Paul is acknowledging that grievous, unrepentant sin is present amongst the church (the covenant community) of Corinth. The grievous sin, in this case, is a man having inappropriate relations with his step-mother.

And notice as well that the believers there are overlooking it and not holding him accountable—remember that for later.

**What does Paul command them to do at the end of verse 2?** “Let him who has done this be removed from among you.” That’s simply Dis-fellowship language….for this man who is in **unrepentant sin**.

If this were still the Old Covenant, the command would be to put him to death, but being in the New Covenant now, God through Paul commands *relational dis-fellowship*—not death. Ok, let’s move on…

**1 Corinthians 5:3-5**For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. **4**When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, **5**you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Ok, so let’s point out some things in this portion.

-Paul makes a righteous judgment on the man (he calls the man’s sin *sin*).

-Paul then commands the believers in this community to dis-fellowship with that man. Paul says in v5, “You are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.” We need to understand this important point.

Paul is saying that since this man is not repenting of this sin, he is to be given over to it. He is to be no longer fellowshipped with; instead, he is to be given over to his sinful pursuits *in isolation*.

**An unrepentant person claiming Christ cannot have both God’s community and unrepentant sin. They cannot profess that Jesus is Lord but then walk in unrepentant rebellion form his Lordship. This is to lie about the gospel’s saving and sanctifying work in ones life.**

Now, I want you to see that Paul doesn’t hate this man. He Loves him. How do we know this.

Paul says the man should be brought to repentance through this accountability and dis-fellowship. “…So that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.”

*What Paul is wants is truth and Love to go to work. It is not truth to stand with his man who is professing faith in Jesus when he is not living that faith out and it is not love to stand with this man while he perpetuates sin.*

*It’s loving* to NOT simply tolerate or passively speak against unrepentant sin in someone claiming Christ. *It’s loving* to obey God about accountability and dis-fellowship.

*It’s hopeful* to do these things God’s way *so that if God wills*, His sovereign power might bring the person to repentance and restoration because of it. That’s so key; we hope you *understand and value* that.

Paul continues, and seeks to stir up conviction and build out the church’s understanding:

**1 Corinthians 5:6-13** Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? **7**Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. **8**Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

**9**I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— **10**not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. **11**But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

**12**For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? **13**God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

In the remaining section there of 1 Cor 5 next notice that…

- Paul uses symbolic language about leaven. “a little leaven leavens the whole lump”…Sin will spread; sin begets more sin. The point of this is to see what we’ve seen tonight already. God’s people are to seek and be holy and righteous, and **not** permit or tolerate unrighteousness in the body. He commands “sincerity and truth.”

Then Paul makes some more very important teaching points and gives important commands.

-Paul says that he already told them not to fellowship with the unrepentant, but he makes a very important clarity. He’s saying this applies to people professing to be Christians: “Anyone who bears the name of brother.”

-He says these principles and commands do not apply to the world—unrepentant sinners not claiming Christ—for then we would **not** have any relationships with the unbelievers of the world, and this would be impossible (we’d have to “go out of the world.”)

So, it’s not calling for the cutting off relations with self-proclaimed **non-**believers who only know sin and do not have faith in the Lord.

A primary reason for this is the gospel will not be shared if we don’t wisely engage non-believers; the remaining elect would not be reached with the gospel. God hasn’t removed us from this world; rather, we are to live in it for His purposes.

Then we see…

-Paul again talks about judging, commanding proper judging, and we’ll cover this more later in our lesson.

-And finally, Paul uses the key General Equity statement we read so many times in the OT: “Purge the evil person from among you.”

Paul is not saying to “purge the evil” in the exact same way as the Old Covenant, rather, he is saying

God’s hatred for sin still stands,

God’s expectation for holiness in His people still stands,

God’s expectation of His people holding those who claim or desire to be His people accountable still stands,

and God’s way of using those in proximity to a sinning person for accountably *still stands*.

This is very important to see. God has not removed the requirement for accountability and dis-fellowship in the New Covenant. He has changed the way dis-fellowship *happens*, but He has not changed the core principle within it.

Hopefully you see how relevant and instructive 1 Corinthians 5 is.

In the New Covenant, the command of dis-fellowship means we are not to have relational interaction with the unrepentant professing Christian, to any degree. They are to be isolated from God’s church—God’s people.

In line with that, once dis-fellowship is in place, if and when there is a focused opportunity to bring the unrepentant person Scripture and a call to repentance again, this opportunity should be taken. But the contact should be strictly for the purpose of admonishment and restoration.

These things might seem tough, but let us remember:

It glorifies God when we trust and obey His commanded will, and it is loving to others to treat them the way God has ordained.

*The primary purpose of this level of accountability is the spiritual restoration of unrepentant professing believers unto the honoring of God’s name and the strengthening of the body of Christ.*

When a sinning believer is rebuked and he turns from his sin, *he is won back to relational interaction and normal Christian fellowship with the body of Christ.* This is huge.

Unity in truth and life together with the body is one of the greatest joys of our salvation. This is the joyful reality of what a person gains when adopted into the body of Christ. So, to have that taken away in dis-fellowship is a big deal to a true believer.

And God, in His providence, uses that removal of fellowship to really cost and weigh on the sinning person. In the end, if a person receiving accountability truly loves God and His people, he will not be able to stay away forever in selfishness—in sin. The true Christian will repent.

**See with me that Christian Accountability and Discipline is a blessing from God.**

Let me briefly list the reasons why it is a blessing:

1. God often uses it as the means to draw back a true believer who is in sin, for glorious reconciliation and sanctification.

2 In some cases, God uses it to show a deceived person, a falsely testifying person, an unrepentant in sin person, that they are not actually united to Christ, and, if God wills, the Holy Spirit will convict that person and bring about true salvation—true unity to Christ.

3. God uses it to help protect His people from approving, tolerating, and/or falling into sin.

4. Christian Discipline protects Christ people and the gospel from being tainted with the false testimony of those who claim Christ but are not walking in step with the gospel.

Church, see with me that GOD is wise. In love, He has designed this system for us.

By now, you should be able to see our catechism answer clearly in Scripture: Christian accountability and discipline is loving correction to someone who professes to be a Christian when he/she is out of step of core sound doctrine or practicing other sin. If he/she does not repent after biblical efforts are made, then God’s instruction is dis-fellowship until he/she does.

**Look with me for a few at some Additional New Testament New Covenant Passages**

Now, 1 Corinthians 5 is not the only New Testament—New Covenant—passage on accountability and discipline; quickly look at some others:

**Galatians 6:1** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

**Hebrews 3:13** But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

**Titus 3:10-11** As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, **11**knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

**2 Thessalonians 3:14-15** If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. **15**Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

These next four verse apply to anyone who is spreading false doctrine, especially those who are claiming to be Christian…

**Romans 16:17-18** I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. **18**For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive.

**Galatians 1:8-9** But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. **9**As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

**2 John 9-11** Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **10**If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house or give him any greeting, **11**for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.

And finally, we see again Jesus’ teaching on accountability for the ekklesia—that is Christians…

**Matthew 18:15-17** **15**“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **16**But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **17**If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church (ekklēsia –that means believers). And if he refuses to listen even to the church (ekklēsias—believers), let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

See how clear this is for the New Covenant. It’s woven in the whole New Testament. This isn’t a take it or leave it thing. This isn’t just for some Christians. It’s for all of us to know and seek God’s revealed will in.

* **Patience with those struggling but *not* rejecting accountability**

It is super important that we who belong to Christ patient with those *who are less mature in the faith and struggling*. We need to understand that there is a bearing with the less mature that occurs ***when*** *they are actively receiving your biblically sound influence, counsel, teaching, and admonishment*.

This is accountability in action, as well.

When the relationship bears the real fruit of the less mature moving in a godly direction **and not rejecting** you or your efforts to look to Scripture with them to bring about repentance, doctrine, and/or godliness, we maintain patience with them. We do not dis-fellowship with those struggling **but *truly* heeding** correction and growing.

**Ephesians 4:1-3**I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, **2**with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, **3**eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

MORE ON WHY patience is so important

With those who are practicing repentance and leaning into accountability but still struggling, we need to be patient with them. But in contrast to this are those claiming to be Christians that God has relationally put into our lives who are unwilling to hear and heed admonishment, unwilling to seek God’s will and truth in Scripture and be accountable to it, and are unwilling to repent of other sin. This is them rejecting accountability. After biblical steps are taken, we are to cut off relational interaction with them if they do not repent.

**Before we wrap up let me address a couple key things that help us practice Christian Accountability and Discipline.**

* **Seek counsel**

We want to urge you to seek counsel from church leaders in these matters. There is a communal aspect to these things, as well as the always important wisdom in not being on an island in how you’re seeing things and doing things.

* **Judge with right judgment**

Many wrongly think that we should not judge others, but *we leave the judging up to God.*

*This is a misunderstanding of God’s word if globally applied.* Scripture certainly restricts us from certain kinds of judging. For example, in the case of Romans 14, when we study the immediate context, we see that what is in focus here is “opinion” type matters, *Christian liberty* type matters. The examples Paul uses are that of food choices and of regrading one day to be above another day. These Christian liberty matters are not things to quarrel over or judge each other over. However, what we must understand is that we don’t get to think of core doctrine matters or violations of God’s law simply as Christian liberty matters *in order to prohibit righteous* *judging*.

Jesus commands in **John 7:24** to "judge with right judgment". It is essential that we have righteous judgment of one another. It is also important that we understand that those who are outside of Christ have a judge (God Himself) for them remain guilty for their sin before Him.

Examples of the kinds of unrepentant sin issues that we are to exercise righteous judgment on for those who claim Christ are:

• unrepentantly persisting in twisting of the gospel (Galatians 1:8-9),

• not acknowledging or teaching sound doctrine as a whole (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 John 9-11; Titus 3:10-11);

• disobeying the commands found in the Bible (2 Thessalonians 3:14-15);

• and sexual immorality, greed, idolatry, slander, drunkenness, and theft (1 Corinthians 5:11).

While these various passages explicitly mention certain things, Christian discipline would also apply to things not mentioned in these passages, such as things that fall into one of these categories or are related to these categories. We must acknowledge once again that biblical truth and wisdom, not man’s feelings or preferences, must aid in discerning what topics not explicitly mentioned require discipline.

Christians must come into obedience with God’s word on this topic. Far too many professing believers are not obeying or seeking to obey accountability the way God’s word sets forth.

*What about you, personally*? Are you *truly* willing to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Jesus in these things? That’s the call on each of us.

As we warp up, hopefully you have a focused sense for what is a stake in all of this:

Honoring the glory of God

The true testimony of His gospel

Our own sanctification

The spiritual health of our brothers and sisters in Christ

True unity & peace

The testimony of the church and the authenticity of our witness

Godly love fights for righteousness and truth unity instead of ignoring sin.

Remember: **Romans 12:9**, **“**Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.”

And, we finish with a final exhortation from King Jesus:

**Revelation 3:19** Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent.

Let’s pray.