

# The Disorderly Life

**Introduction.** No one craves disciplining members of the Lord's body. In some situations, keeping the church pure with business meetings and family ties is almost impossible. We are blessed to have men who will make tough decisions and act upon them.

In describing the evil activity of God's people, Paul uses the terms "unruly" (1 Thessalonians 5:14) and "disorderly" (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11). These words originally referred to the failure of a soldier to keep in rank or who was insubordinate. In the context of what we will address today it refers to Christians who violate the rules of Christ on any subject.

## I. **What Is Discipline?**

### A. A definition of the term.

1. "Discipline" actually means education, development, training, or correction. It is training to submit to established rules of correcting faults.
2. Five Greek words are translated "discipline" in newer versions.
  - a) *Hupopiazō* (1 Corinthians 9:27) -- to keep under control or exercise self-control.
  - b) *Paideia* (Ephesians 6:4) -- to train, nurture, and admonish with words.
  - c) *Taxis* (Colossians 2:5) -- arranging or setting in order.
  - d) *Gumnazo* (1 Timothy 4:7-8) -- exercise or train.
  - e) *Sophonismos* (2 Timothy 1:7) -- to admonish or call to soundness of mind.

### B. Preventive discipline.

1. This is "edification" which means to improve and strengthen (2 Timothy 3:16-17).
2. This is done by preaching in the assembly (Colossians 3:16; Hebrews 10:23-25).
  - a) When someone discovers a public sin, either by hearing it or seeing it on Facebook or Twitter, this is usually the first step.
  - b) Many saints in sin have turned their lives around after being convicted through the preaching of the gospel.
3. A next, more serious step would be private exhortation (Hebrews 3:12-13).

### C. Corrective discipline.

1. This is a stronger form of discipline designed to produce repentance from sin (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:5).
2. If sin is not corrected, eventually encouragement and exhortation have to give way to rebuke and action (2 Timothy 4:2; cp. 1 Timothy 5:20).

- a) This sometimes can be gentle (Galatians 6:1).
- b) Sometimes the circumstances call for harshness (Titus 1:9-11).
- c) Jesus could be both gentle (Matthew 8:26) and harsh (Matthew 23:13-15).

## II. ***The Purpose Of Discipline***

- A. To save the erring Christian.
  - 1. Discipline produces "affliction," "anguish," and "grief" (2 Corinthians 2:4-11).
  - 2. Our fervent desire is for all Christians to go to heaven (James 5:19-20; Jude 22-23).
- B. To keep the church pure.
  - 1. Jesus died for the church (Acts 20:28).
  - 2. Its purity depends upon our commitment to removing sin out of its midst (2 Corinthians 6:14-16; Ephesians 5:25-27).
- C. To protect the reputation of the church.
  - 1. We do not want the Loop reviled in the eyes of other Christians and the world (Romans 2:24; 2 Peter 2:1-2).
  - 2. To avoid this, discipline must be exercised. When a congregation fails to discipline, the strong members leave because they do not want to be identified with error. What is left is a congregation of weak Christians who have not left the world behind.
- D. To respect the authority of Christ.
  - 1. Everyone enjoys following the easy requirements of being a Christian, but what about the harder ones like the discipline of sinning Christians?
  - 2. The authority of Christ says to do it, so as difficult as it is, it must be done (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 3:17).

## III. ***The Manner Of Discipline***

- A. Public acknowledgment.
  - 1. The discipline of the local church is, of necessity, public. Paul says we must "mark" them (Romans 16:17).
  - 2. He added that discipline involves "rebuking before all, that others also may fear" and be persuaded to shun unrighteousness (1 Timothy 5:20).
  - 3. Denominations speak of people that they "remove from their rolls." While this is in the right direction, there is no public marking or acknowledgement of sin.
- B. Withhold social association.
  - 1. Several expressions are used to indicate what we are to do: "avoid" (Romans 16:17), "not to keep company" (1 Corinthians 5:9, 11),

- “withdraw yourselves” and “have no company” (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14), and “reject” (Titus 3:10).
2. These expressions mean that we cease to have fellowship with them; we do not regard them as faithful brethren in Christ or members of Christ’s church. Because of the cessation of fellowship, we are not to do anything that implies we regard them as faithful (cp. John 4:9; Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 15:33).
- C. Take opportunities to admonish.
1. “Admonish” means “to put in mind; i.e., by implication to caution or reprove gently.” It is also translated as “warn” in the New Testament.
  2. It advises someone of the dangerous consequences of an event or action (1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:15).
- D. Refuse to condone the sinful activity.
1. John grounded his warning in 2 John 9-11 on a careful evaluation of the extreme seriousness of false teaching.
  2. To wish someone “God speed” is to give one a greeting or salute of joy, implying a wish for happiness for the person greeted.
- E. Done in a loving spirit.
1. No member of the church is immune to sinning (1 Corinthians 10:12; Galatians 6:1).
  2. Everything we do has to be in a spirit of love (1 Corinthians 16:14; Hebrews 12:5-6).
- F. Must be equal and fair.
1. Nothing is to be done with partiality (1 Timothy 5:21).
  2. Respect of persons is sinful (James 2:9).

**Conclusion.** The Lord commanded discipline to ultimately produce the “peaceable fruit of righteousness.” Our responsibility is to support it and pray for its effectiveness. Ironically, no church will grow without consistent discipline. When people learn the importance of discipline, they will avoid sin, and therefore become stronger.