

**“S.O.S. God’s Rescue Plan”**  
**1 Cor 5/ Mt 18:15-20**

**I. Startling Apathy**

- A) Confirmed?
- B) Accepted?
- C) Celebrated?

**II. Determined Action** [1 Cor 5:2]**A) The History of Church discipline**

- 1) Bad press
- 2) Bad Record [Pope Gregory VII]
  - Why do many churches fail to practice Church Discipline?
    - a) difficult to confront [fear of reactions/ consequences – Gal 2:14]
      - Love is always willing to humbly* \_\_\_\_\_
    - b) difficult to follow through
      - Love always has time to* \_\_\_\_\_
    - c) difficult to do well [avoid legalism/ tyranny etc.]
      - Love is always more aware of God’s faithfulness than the church’s* \_\_\_\_\_
    - d) difficult to ignore
      - 5 different places church discipline [Mt 18: 15-20; 1 Cor 5:1-13; 1 Tim 5:19; 2 Th 3:6, 3:13-15]
      - Love always acts with informed* \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Bad intentions
  - God’s intention for correction is always GOOD, and always out of LOVE for His children and His church. [Hebrews 12:6, 11]
  - \*Church Discipline = God’s Loving Rescue Plan

**B) The Process of Church Discipline**

Ever Increasing Circles: Matthew 18:15-20

- a) one on one
- b) one or two others
  - “as private as possible for as long as possible”
- c) tell it to the church [formal discipline]
- d) let him be as a Gentile and tax collector
  - \*The Reason for Ongoing Church Discipline is \_\_\_\_\_.

**C) The Purpose of Church Discipline**

*“Church censures are necessary, for the reclaiming and gaining of offending brethren, for deterring of others from like offenses, for purging out of that leaven which might infect the whole lump, for vindicating the honor of Christ, and the holy profession of the gospel, and for preventing the wrath of God, which might justly fall upon the church, if they should suffer his covenant, and the seals thereof [the sacraments] to be profaned by notorious and obstinate offenders.”* Westminster Confession of Faith

**III. One Bad Apple** [Joshua 7:10-11]

**Scripture: 5:7** 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.

**Quotes to Ponder:**

† “Nothing could be more cruel than the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing could be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as quoted in *Undermining the Gospel: the Case for Church Discipline*, Ronnie Roberts, p.97.

† “The Christian Church is not just the old society patched up. It is radically new.” Leon Morris, *Corinthians*, p.87.

† “Jesus leaves no options whenever sin separates brothers; He commands informal discipline to bring about reconciliation. He does not say that it would be nice if the offended party were to go and seek reconciliation; He requires him to do so.” Jay Adams, *The Handbook of Church Discipline*, p. 47

† “Reconciliation is a matter of restoring friendship, so it is not enough merely to bury a matter; both parties must work toward a new and proper relationship for the future. Forgiveness simply clears the way for the friendship that grows out of true reconciliation. This means effort, time, and whatever else may be required to bring it about should be given to assure that the weld becomes stronger than it was before the break. Only in that way will it become manifest that ‘where sin abounded, grace far more abounded.’ [Rom 5:20] Jay Adams, *The Handbook of Church Discipline*, p. 54.

**Discussion Questions:**

Why do you think that some churches/Christians mistakenly think that it is cruel and unnecessary to practice church discipline? How would that view change if they understood God’s loving character and God’s unswerving willingness to love His children even when they are in rebellion? In what ways are you personally tempted to ‘shy’ away from supporting God’s Loving rescue plan of church discipline? Why do you think this is so?

Discuss an area where you think Christians typically ‘tolerate’ sin. Try to come up with as many reasons as possible as to why you think that these ‘sins’ are tolerated. Make a list of “sin euphemisms” that make these offenses more palatable to Christian communities. Now separately, make a list of personal offenses that you are aware of, and list ‘sin euphemisms’ that you typically use. Share these lists with one another and covet to help one another when one of these ‘euphemisms’ comes up during the week.

**Related Scriptures to Explore:**

**Matthew 18:15-20** "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. <sup>16</sup> 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. <sup>17</sup> 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. <sup>18</sup> Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup> Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. <sup>20</sup> For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

**2 Thess 3:6** Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from any brother who is walking in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us.

**1 Timothy 1:19 -20** By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, <sup>20</sup> among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme.

**Joshua 7:10-12** The LORD said to Joshua, "Get up! Why have you fallen on your face? <sup>11</sup> Israel has sinned; they have transgressed my covenant that I commanded them; they have taken some of the devoted things; they have stolen and lied and put them among their own belongings. <sup>12</sup> Therefore the people of Israel cannot stand before their enemies... I will be with you no more, unless you destroy the devoted things from among you.

**2 Cor 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

**Mt 5:23-24** So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.