

Church Discipline

“3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6)

1. The church, especially the pastor and the leaders of the church should stand firm and steadfast against those who want to introduce wrong principles and false teaching: “1 The LORD said to Aaron, “You, your sons and your family are to bear the responsibility for offenses connected with the sanctuary, and you and your sons alone are to bear the responsibility for offenses connected with the priesthood.” (Numbers 18:1) The church should not give way to fear and start to compromise. There is an incident where one of the Kings of Judah wanted to burn incense, a thing that is only the priest can do, and let us read how the priests in office combated him, “16 But after Uzziah became powerful, his pride led to his downfall. He was unfaithful to the LORD his God, and entered the temple of the LORD to burn incense on the altar of incense. 17 Azariah the priest with eighty other courageous priests of the LORD followed him in. 18 They confronted King Uzziah and said, “It is not right for you, Uzziah, to burn incense to the LORD. That is for the priests, the descendants of Aaron, who have been consecrated to burn incense. Leave the sanctuary, for you have been unfaithful; and you will not be honored by the LORD God.” (2 Chronicles 26:16-18) The Lord supported the priest in this disciplinary action, “19 Uzziah, who had a censer in his hand ready to burn incense, became angry. While he was raging at the priests in their presence before the incense altar in the LORD’s temple, leprosy broke out on his forehead. 20 When Azariah the chief priest and all the other priests looked at him, they saw that he had leprosy on his forehead, so they hurried him out. Indeed, he himself was eager to leave, because the LORD had afflicted him. 21 King Uzziah had leprosy until the day he died. He lived in a separate house —leprous, and banned from the temple of the LORD. Jotham his son had charge of the palace and governed the people of the land.” (2 Chronicles 26:19-21)

2. The church should not be afraid, for the Lord had given authority and weapon for the church: “3 For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. 4 The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. 6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete.” (2 Corinthians 10:3-6) The church has weapons from God, they are divine to deal with sins and strongholds. We do not use the weapons of the world. The world use nice talk, lies, smart answers, friends, gifts, contacts, money, influences, politics, manipulations, corruption, mutual respect and mutual interest. These weapons and methods the church should not use because they are the instruments of devil; and if the church adopts them and get infected with them that will bring destruction to the church. The church should use the word of God and as The Holy Spirit directing the pastors and the leaders of the church, which word and message they need to use and give to the church members and those who are under the care of the church. The work of God through His church is to bring His salvation to the lost souls and disciple those who come to Him. For this purpose the church should deal with sins and strongholds. The strongholds are complexity of sins (group of sins that are aggregating together and demons will use such places to hide and get entrances into the church). Strongholds are most of the time linked with traditional practices, adding to that pride, greed, jealousy, love of power, witchcraft, lies, etc. Therefore the bible studies should be carefully directed with the help of the Holy Spirit to combat those sins that the Devil is using as stronghold.

Prayer, fasting, bible studies using the Word of God, and casting out demons are the weapons that the Lord is giving to the church to fight the spiritual battles that God allow the church to pass through. These spiritual weapons will be used to *“demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God.” (2 Corinthians 10:5)* People in the world they use arguments and empty words to fight the battle, that is why the Word of God tells us that we should not get involved in arguments, *“16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 23 Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.” (2 Timothy 2:16, 23)* Rather we should use the Word of God as we are directed with the Holy Spirit to deal with arguments. The word pretension can give the following meanings: **affectation** which can mean (habit, mannerism, or showing off), **airs** which can mean (pride, narcissism, conceit, arrogance, egotism), and **self-importance**. So all these words are about pride, and to understand this word ‘pretension’ better we can just put what is opposite to it and that word is humility. So pretension is something related with pride and that is what devil uses to fight and to get stronghold in the church.

Dealing with stronghold is dealing with people sins. As well as the aim of the teaching and the bible studies is to turn the people away from sin toward God and toward doing His will. Because pretension is pride that pride will be used by Satan. Therefore these thoughts that will be reproduced by the pretension will be not humble thoughts, but wants to show off, so these thoughts will take a high position and when you analyze these thoughts you will found that they are against the knowledge that the word of God give us. That is why Paul said about pretension that it, *“sets itself up against the knowledge of God.” (2 Corinthians 10:5)* The pretension that people have are due to their pride and pride will reproduce thoughts that will ultimately linked with boasting and show off, and will be sure contradicting the word of God and the plan of God and His will in their lives. Therefore we need to recognize these odd thoughts that come from pride and devil is using and direct our bible studies to combat that and to use the Word of God to expound these sins and strongholds, and to explain to the people the bad effects on their lives and on the lives of others and how these sins will affect their salvation.

We do all what we can to turn them away from sin, and we can be encouraged with the following Scriptures: : *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are Spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.” (Galatians 6:1) “19 My brothers, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring him back, 20 remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of his way will save him from death and cover over a multitude of sins.” (James 5:19-20) “23 save others by snatching them from the fire; to others show mercy, mixed with fear—hating even the clothing stained by corrupted flesh.” (Jude 1:23)*

Those who are in sin we need to snatch them, turn them and restore them back to the Lord by communicating to them gently the word of God and the teaching of the Lord and explain to them the ways of God so that they might repent. We will use supportive Scripture and the stories from the bible to explain the ways of God and His will. Those who belong to God will turn away from their sins according to God's word in **2 Timothy 2:19** *"19 Nevertheless, God's solid foundation stands firm, sealed with this inscription: 'The Lord knows those who are his,' and, 'Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness.'"*

Paul also said, **"6 And we will be ready to punish every act of disobedience, once your obedience is complete."** (**2 Corinthians 10:6**) The church should impart disciplinary action against sin and against those who persist in their way of sin and disobedience. The punishment is not only for the sake that those who do wrong should pay the consequences of their sins but that would take a lesson and will not do that with others and harm them, as well as others will take heed and not to do the same evil. To inflict punishment it can be done in various aspects and Scripture will teach us how to do that.

A. Dealing with sin using Matthew 18:15-20: Those who are trained with righteousness, who already knew the truth, but later on they go and fall in sin and do wrong, the church should deal with them in the following way: We can communicate with them the word of God according to **Matthew 18:15-17 KJV** *"15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."* According to **Matthew 18:15-17** those who fall in sin, they needed to be confronted in such a manner: The one who is offended by the sin, should go alone at the first instance and face the one who sinned against him, and try to win his brother over, *"Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother."* (**Matthew 18:15 KJV**) Once the sin is seen the first one who saw or hear the sin is the one who need to go and confront. God wants us to confront and not to go and speak at the back of those who sin. Most of the time people will not go and confront. They are either ashamed or coward to confront. But God does not like coward people. Coward people as they fail God's expectation they will not enter into the Kingdom of God.

If after confrontation fail to gain him, then he can open the issue to one or two brothers and bring with him and speak with the person who sin, trying to convince him, *"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."* (**Matthew 18:16 KJV**) This is important because certain time the opinion of other one or two will verify if what is seen or heard is sin or not. If bringing one and two along fail to gain the brother, then the situation should be referred to the church to deal with, *"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."* (**Matthew 18:17 KJV**) Finally if the person is not listening to the church and is not willing to repent and is not convinced to change his ways, then he will be considered and treated as **heathen man and a publican**. The meaning of that is that we need to treat him as non believer that we need to start once again to evangelize him and teach him God's Word and God's ways.

the church is called to judge those inside the church, *"For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within?"* (**1 Corinthians 5:12 KJV**) The testimony should be established by two or three people, *"This will be my third visit to you. 'Every matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'" (2 Corinthians 13:1)* *"15 One witness is not enough to convict anyone accused of any crime or offense they may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses."* (**Deuteronomy 19:15**) *"6 On the testimony of two or three witnesses a person is to be put to death, but no one is to be put to death on the testimony of only one witness."* (**Deuteronomy 17:6**) Those who are unwilling to repent of their sins and not listen even to the explanation and appeal of the church then we need to consider them as unbeliever. That decision that the church will reach according to the word of God and according to His will, the Lord shall honor and approve and will make it come true. *"18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. 19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."* (**Matthew 18:18-20**)

B. Confrontation: It is required to confront and face those who are doing wrong. Paul said to Timothy, **"3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer."** (**1 Timothy 1:3**) That is a fair punishment, to tell those who teach wrong to stop teaching. Because they are bringing harm to others, therefore you need to be of good courage and ask them to stop teaching wrong things. Paul also said to Timothy, *"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."* (**1 Timothy 5:20 KJV**) The purpose of that, people would take heed of wrong and not to do it and those who did wrong would be put to shame. Paul said to Titus, **"5 The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you."** (**Titus 1:5**) So Paul left Titus in Crete in order to put in order the things that are unfinished and to appoint elders in every town. Paul also instructed him about the people who are called believers but are opposing the work of God, and he taught him why and how to deal with them, **"10 For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. 11 They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of Crete's own prophets has said it: 'Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.' 13 This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith."** (**Titus 1:10-13**) Those people whom Paul instructed Titus to rebuke them sharply he described the following things wrong in them:

1. **Rebellious:** They do things opposite the truth.
2. **Full of meaningless talk and deception:** They are good in talk, they answer back, they twist facts, try to turn your head, they deceive and try to confuse you.
3. **They disrupt the whole household by their teaching:** Their wrong teaching will miss direct the people and bring them away from God.

4. **They are after dishonest gain:** They interact with people and use the church structure and the ministry to make money and for selfish and personal gain.
5. **Always liars:** They are ready to lie whenever they are cornered or caught.
6. **Evil:** Wickedness is their life style.
7. **Brutes:** They are aggressive and have criminal intention and attitude.
8. **Lazy:** They are not willing to spend effort and suffer to work.
9. **Gluttons:** They love to eat and they love to be invited and go to places in order to eat.

Paul instructed Titus about those kinds of people that they need to be silenced (they should be asked not to teach) and they needed to be rebuked sharply to their faces so they will be sound in faith

Therefore the minister and the elders of the church should take the responsibility and go and face and rebuke certain people when he is called for and when it is needed, as Paul instructed Timothy and Titus, *“3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain people not to teach false doctrines any longer.” (1 Timothy 1:3) “10 For there are many rebellious people, full of meaningless talk and deception, especially those of the circumcision group. 11 They must be silenced, because they are disrupting whole households by teaching things they ought not to teach—and that for the sake of dishonest gain. 12 One of Crete’s own prophets has said it: “Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, lazy gluttons.” 13 This saying is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, so that they will be sound in the faith 14 and will pay no attention to Jewish myths or to the merely human commands of those who reject the truth.” (Titus 1:10-14) “Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear.” (1 Timothy 5:20 KJV)*

C. Put away and expel: Those brethren who will be a bad influence on others then they needed to be expelled, *“11 But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such person. 12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13 God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.” (1 Corinthians 5:11-13)* These categories of people, *immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler*, after they had taught the word of God and trained and they are still persistent in their sinful course they need to be put outside the church. The Pastor of the church and the elders should go and face that particular person and ask him not to come to church and not to be part of the fellowship.

D. Hand over to Satan: Those who are beyond the control and are so harmful they need to be hand over to Satan to destroy their sinful nature and to teach them not to blaspheme so that their souls will be saved in the day of the Lord, *“18 Timothy, my son, I am giving you this command in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by recalling them you may fight the battle well, 19 holding on to faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and so have suffered shipwreck with regard to the faith. 20 Among them are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan to be taught not to blaspheme.” (1 Timothy 1:18-20)* Hymenaeus and Alexander in this example those people were teaching the people wrong doctrine about the resurrection of the dead, that you can read again here, *“16 Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 17 Their teaching will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, 18 who have departed from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place, and they destroy the faith of some.” (2 Timothy 2:16-18)* In the Old Testament those who are wicked and beyond the limit they use either to stone them or burn them, in the New Testament those who are doing wickedness who are beyond the control of the church we need to hand them to Satan to deal with their sinful nature and to teach them not to blaspheme.

Paul spoke to the Corinthians to hand over to Satan a person who slept with his step mother, *“1 It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. 2 And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.” (1 Corinthians 5:1-5 KJV)*

God opposes the proud but He gives grace to the humble, therefore the church should stand with God and use the authority that God had given to her to make the process of nurturing the new souls more effective and more fruitful. Paul gave to the Corinthians final warning, *“2 I already gave you a warning when I was with you the second time. I now repeat it while absent: On my return I will not spare those who sinned earlier or any of the others,” (2 Corinthians 13:2)* So Paul used his authority to extend God’s love to those whom he cared and disciplined. They were as if challenging him if he is going to discipline them and deal with their wickedness, *“3 since you are demanding proof that Christ is speaking through me. He is not weak in dealing with you, but is powerful among you. 4 For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God’s power. Likewise, we are weak in him, yet by God’s power we will live with him in our dealing with you.” (2 Corinthians 13:3-4)* Paul he went further with them and explained to them his strict and firm stand with them denote the presence of God in their lives, when he told them, *“5 Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test? 6 And I trust that you will discover that we have not failed the test.” (2 Corinthians 13:5-6)* God would always put the church to the test and force the church and compel His church to discipline those who do wrong. And the people would need to see that the church stood the test and did the correct thing. After he told them the warning, Paul prayed for them, and we need to pray after we rebuke and discipline, that the people will not do anything wrong but the correct thing, *“7 Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. 8 For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth.” (2 Corinthians 13:7-8)*

Paul reminded them that he rather prefer to be weak, and what he mean that he prefer not to use his authority to be harsh in disciplining them, and he would be glad to see them strong, and what he mean here is that they would obey and do what is right so that they can be recovered and ultimately got restored, “ **9 We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored.**” (2Corinthians 13:9) And for this reason he is writing his letter to them so that when he will meet them, they had already done the correct thing, and so he will not be needing to be harsh with them in using the authority that God had granted to him for caring and for the building of His church, “ **10 This is why I write these things when I am absent, that when I come I may not have to be harsh in my use of authority—the authority the Lord gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down.**” (2 Corinthians 13:10)

My dear and beloved: “**What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.**” (2 Timothy 1:13) Those who are in sin we need to communicate to them gently the word of God and the teaching of the Lord and explain to them the ways of God so that they might repent. You need to do your best to save the souls that are sinning and in sin. But there are certain times that the word of God tells us not even to pray for those people whom they knew the Lord but they are going back to sin. Apostle John wrote the following: “**16 If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that he should pray a bout that. 17 All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death.**” (1John 5:16-17) The sin that lead to death is the willful sin that is done deliberately. Such person who intentionally sin, then this is the word of God that will be fit for him, “**26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. 28 Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. 29 How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” and again, “The Lord will judge his people.” 31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**” (Hebrews 10:26-31) Such people who are abusing the grace of God and are deliberately sinning and harming and affecting others and are resisting changing, it will be fit for them to be treated as non-believers, and might further needed to be expelled and/or hand over to Satan. Therefore stand firm and do not compromise. If you are willing to obey then no power or force can force you to sin.

My Prayer: Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus, who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the death to give me eternal life. Lord thank you for encouraging word to me.

Lord forgive me the following sins_____

Confess your sins to the Lord _____

Lord forgive me in the past I give in to some people, but today Lord as I hear your word, I commit my life not to compromise again. Lord sustains me and upholds me with your grace so victoriously I will be passing all the obstacles that you are ordained for me to pass through.

Lord I pray that those who repented from their sis, that you will restore them back to serve you and to do your work and your will.

Lord I pray for my brothers and my sisters who committed their lives to serve you, Lord fill them with the Holy Spirit and give them the spiritual gift that will make their ministry fruitful and effective.

Lord help us to deal with sin and those who sin according to your word that we studied in this message.

Lord bless your church and bestow on us the spiritual gifts that we need to go on and make disciples of all nations. Lord enable us to evangelize and to reach the lost and new areas with the Gospel of Jesus. Lord help us to plant more Bible studies and to raise up more disciples to serve you. Lord continue to protect us and provide all our needs,. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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