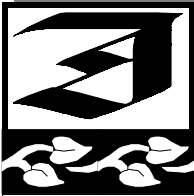


DISCIPLINED BY LOVE

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

Charles Swindoll writes, *“There is nothing quite as liberating as the assurance of being forgiven. A pardon wipes the slate clean. Probation, on the other hand, keeps you feeling unsettled, distrusted and watched.”* In this passage Paul deals with a situation in the Corinthian church that had required church discipline. It seems that the leaders did not shrink back from confronting the person, but now there was the danger of the discipline going too far and becoming too harsh. How should we handle such problems? What is the balance between grace and responsibility? When should we recognize repentance and restore a person?

WHAT DOES IT SAY?



f anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you, to some extent -- not to put it too severely. ⁶The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient for him. ⁷Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. ⁸I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. ⁹The reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. ¹⁰If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him. And what I have forgiven -- if there was anything to forgive -- I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, ¹¹in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Here in verse 5 Paul reveals a second reason for writing the “Severe Letter”. What is it?

What is the background to this issue? (see 1 Corinthians 5:1-5)

What could Satan’s scheme have been in this issue?

What is the difference between discipline and condemnation? What is the goal of each? (read Romans 8:1, Hebrews 12:7-11)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

2 Corinthians 7:8-13

⁸ Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it -- I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while -- ⁹ yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. ¹⁰ Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. ¹¹ See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done. At every point you have proved yourselves to be innocent in this matter. ¹² So even though I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong or of the injured party, but rather that before God you could see for yourselves how devoted to us you are. ¹³ By all this we are encouraged.

In addition to our own encouragement, we were especially delighted to see how happy Titus was, because his spirit has been refreshed by all of you.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Read how discipline was used in the following situations and record your observations.

1. Woman caught in adultery

(John 8:1-11)

2. Annanias & Saphira

(Acts 5:1-11)

3. Peter's denial of Christ

(Luke 22:54-62 and John 21:15-19)

Paul discusses "good grief" and "bad grief" in this passage. Read what he says later in 2 Cor 7:8-13 about the same thing (it's printed out for you here to the left...). What's the principle?

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?

In your own words, summarize the main point of this passage.

Write a brief definition of “church discipline”, using this passage, Jesus’ teaching from *Matthew 18:15-17* and Paul’s advice in *Galatians 6:1*.



LIFE RESPONSE

How is God asking you to put this into action in your life this week?

Have you ever been a part of a disciplining process? Did you feel that it was done in a Biblical way? Was the end result destructive or life-giving?

