

SERIES: Marks of a Healthy Church  
“**Mark #8- Biblical Church Discipline**”  
Matthew 18:15-20

## What is Church Discipline?

Two main types of discipline:

- **Formative** Church Discipline- Continual encouragement to turn from sin and walk with God.
- **Restorative** Church Discipline- Corrective care when we are caught in sin away from God.
  - The myth- “Church discipline is **legalistic**.”
  - The truth- Church discipline is **loving**.

## Where is it in the Bible?

- The New Testament speaks about *formative* discipline (our efforts to grow in holiness together) in countless passages about pursuing holiness and building one another up in the faith, such as Ephesians 4:11-32 and Philippians 2:1-18.
- The New Testament commands *corrective* discipline (excluding unrepentant sinners from the fellowship of the church) in passages like Matthew 18:15-17, 1 Cor. 5:1-13, 2 Cor. 2:6, and 2 Thess. 3:6-15.

## Why is it Important?

Think of discipline as the stake that helps the tree grow upright, the extra set of wheels on the bicycle, or the musician’s endless hours of practice. Without discipline, we won’t grow as God wants us to. With discipline, we will, by God’s grace, bear peaceful fruit of righteousness (Heb. 12:5-11).

## When Should a Church Use Corrective Discipline?

- A sin must be **outward**—it can be seen or heard (unlike, say, pride).
- It must be **serious**—serious enough to discredit the person’s verbal profession to be following Jesus.
- And it must be **unrepentant**—the person has typically been confronted but refuses to let go of the sin.

## The Process of Discipline- Matthew 18

Approaching church discipline-

- We need childlike **humility**. (18:4)
- We need a deep concern for **holiness**. (18:6)
- We need compassion for the **hurting**. (18:14)
- We need forgiving **hearts**. (18:21-22)

Applying church discipline-

- Step 1: **Private** correction. (18:15)
- Step 2: **Small** group clarification. (18:16)
- Step 3: Church **admonition**. (18:17)
- Step 4: Church **excommunication**. (18:17)

## The Promise of Discipline

Jesus has given us His **authority**. (18:18)

Jesus has granted us His **support**. (18:19)

Jesus has guaranteed His **presence**. (18:20)

## The Purpose of Discipline- 1 Corinthians 5

- We discipline for the **salvation** of the individual being disciplined. (1 Cor. 5:5)
- We discipline for the good of other Christians. (1 Tim. 5:20)
- We discipline for the **health** of the Church as a whole. (1 Cor. 5:6-8)
- We discipline for the corporate witness of the church. (1 Cor. 5:1)
- We discipline for the **glory** of God.

*Never is the church more in harmony with heaven and operating in perfect accord with her Lord than when dealing with sin to maintain purity. -- John MacArthur*

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