

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

in the  **21ST**
Century

David W. Cloud

Church Discipline for the 21st Century
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*Church discipline is a matter of love--love for God,
love for holiness, love for the truth, love for Christ's
testimony in the church, love for the brethren, and
love for the unsaved who are observing the
church's testimony..*

Introduction

Church Discipline in the 21st Century is an expanded edition of the corrective church discipline section of the 550-page *The Discipling Church*.

In truth, church discipline is not merely corrective. It entails everything the church does to encourage discipleship and spiritual growth. It is both preventive and corrective.

The Discipling Church deals with every aspect of church discipleship. It deals with biblical salvation with evidence, care in receiving church members, the church's first love for Christ, the right kind of church leaders, the right kind of preaching, training church members to be Bible students, the many facets of church discipline, building strong families, youth ministry, training preachers, charity, reproof, educating the church for spiritual protection, maintaining standards for workers, the church's prayer life, the church's separation, spiritual revival, the church's music, and many other things.

Dr. Don Jasmin, editor of *The Fundamentalist Digest*, says, "The book *The Discipling Church* is well named. It is loaded with Scriptural exposition, Scriptural explanation, and Scriptural edification. This spiritually rich volume covers almost every phase of a genuine Biblically discipling church. Every pastor should procure this spiritually enriching treasury, one which a preacher will readily consult for valuable assistance and counsel in seeking to maintain a Scripturally balanced N. T. ministry."

New Testament Discipline in the 21st Century

The term “church discipline” might sound harsh and cruel to the ears of this pampered, self-esteem mad generation, but true discipline is neither. Church discipline is a matter of love--love for God, love for holiness, love for the truth, love for Christ’s testimony in the church, love for the brethren, and love for the unsaved who are observing the church’s testimony and who might stumble and be offended and therefore not get saved if sin is not disciplined.

“So long as the churches fail to preserve a pure membership, so long as they refuse to purge out the obvious leaven, so long as they fail to seek to reconcile those who may have been excluded, there is little hope for any improvement in the condition of the churches, and good reason to expect the churches to move in the opposite direction” (Davis Huckabee, *The Constitution of the Church*).

One of the root problems with the lack of spiritual power and zeal in Baptist churches today is the neglect of discipline. This affects nations as a whole. When President Bill Clinton committed adultery and lied to the country about it and tried to pervert the judicial system to cover himself, there was a call for his home church to exercise discipline; but the call was ignored. Bill Clinton was a member of Immanuel Baptist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas, which is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. In that context, Dean Register, president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, testified: “IT’S VERY UNUSUAL FOR SOUTHERN BAPTIST CHURCHES TO TAKE DISCIPLINARY ACTION AGAINST AN INDIVIDUAL” (*The Sun Herald*, Biloxi, Mississippi, Sept. 13, 1998).

This is a very sad testimony, but there can be no doubt that it is accurate. Across the length and breadth of the land there are unrepentant moral reprobates and heretics on the rolls of denominational Baptist churches. Billy Graham and many other radical ecumenists who are promoting unity with Roman Catholicism are members of Baptist congregations. Many politicians, such as Bill Clinton and Al Gore, who support the murder of unborn children, are members in good standing in Baptist churches. More than a million Freemasons, who are yoked together with idolatrous organizations in disobedience to 2 Corinthians 6, are members of Baptist congregations. Many heretics who deny the infallible inspiration of the Holy Scripture are members of Baptist congregations. An example is Mercer University President R. Kirby Godsey in Georgia. In his 1979 book, *When We Talk about God*, he said, "The notion that God is the all powerful, the high and mighty principal of heaven and earth should be laid aside." Wicked heresy such as this is held by thousands of men and women who are members in good standing in denominational Baptist churches.

Neglect of discipline has spread across the entire realm of "evangelicalism." In "Church Discipline: The Missing Mark," R. Albert Mohler, Jr., observed: "The decline of church discipline is perhaps the most visible failure of the contemporary church. No longer concerned with maintaining purity of confession or lifestyle, the contemporary church sees itself as a voluntary association of autonomous members, with minimal moral accountability to God, must less to each other. . . . THE PRESENT GENERATION OF BOTH MINISTERS AND CHURCH MEMBERS IS VIRTUALLY WITHOUT EXPERIENCE OF BIBLICAL DISCIPLINE. . . . By the 1960s, only a minority of churches even pretended to practice regulative church discipline. . . . Consumed with pragmatic methods of church growth and congregational engineering, most churches leave moral matters to the domain of the individual

conscience” (from chapter 8 of *The Compromised Church*, edited by John H. Armstrong, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1998).

Even among non-affiliated fundamental Baptist churches, the ones that are so frequently labeled legalistic and are thought of as being exceedingly strict, there is a rapid decline in the practice of church discipline.

Many, if not most, of the big ones don't practice discipline and have not done so for decades.

Even many of the smaller ones are so busy trying to build impressive numbers that they avoid anything that would interfere with the potential for growth. That includes not only discipline of sinning members but also a plain warning ministry.

Recent history has demonstrated all too evidently that fundamental Baptist pastors at large can commit immorality and other gross sins that should bring serious discipline and discrediting of their pastoral qualifications, but instead they simply move to another church and continue as if nothing had happened.

If someone protests such an action and calls for the permanent resignation of the sinning pastor, he is treated with a withering blast of reproach. The protester is labeled a trouble maker and said to be lacking in compassion, someone, perhaps with a personal grudge against the sinning pastor.

Never has the instruction of biblical church discipline been more relevant and important than at this present time.

Discipline in Old Baptist Churches

Beginning in the 16th century, Baptist churches multiplied greatly, and they were churches of discipline.

They required a regenerate church membership and exercised strict New Testament discipline.

Baptist churches practiced church discipline for centuries. In the book *Corrective Church Discipline: with a Development of the Principles upon Which It Is Based* (1860), Patrick Hughes Mell, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, stated,

“The views which are presented in the following pages are such as have been held by the Baptist churches from time immemorial. The Author attempts to do no more than to exhibit the sentiments of our Fathers, and to defend them by showing that they are sustained by the Scriptures.”

Following are some of the materials published in the 18th and 19th centuries on church discipline:

- *A Short Treatise on Church Discipline*, Philadelphia Association, 1743
- *A Summary of Church Discipline*, The Baptist Association, Charleston, South Carolina, 1774
- *A Short Treatise of Church Discipline*, Sansom Street Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1818
- William Crowell, *The Church Member's Handbook*, 1858
- John Dagg, *A Treatise on Church Order*, 1859
- Edward Hiscox, *The Baptist Directory*, 1859
- Patrick Hughes Mell, *Corrective Church Discipline*, 1860
- James Pendleton, *Church Manual*, 1867
- Williams Rutherford, *Church Members' Guide for Baptist Churches*, 1885
- William Everts, *Baptist Layman's Book*, 1887
- Edward Hiscox, *The Standard Manual for Baptist Churches*, 1890

The churches had strict covenants that the members were required to agree to and obey, and they practiced discipline of sin and error.

Following is part of the Somerset Confession of 1656:

THAT it is the duty of every man and woman, that have repented from dead works, and have faith towards God, to be baptized (Acts 2:38; 8:12, 37, 38), that is, dipped or buried under the water (Ro. 6:3, 4; Col. 2:12), in the name of our Lord Jesus (Acts 8:16), or in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:19), therein to signify and represent a washing away of sin (Acts 22:16), and their death, burial, and resurrection with Christ (Ro. 6:5; Col. 2:12), and being thus planted in the visible church or body of Christ (1 Co. 12:3), who are a company of men and women separated out of the world by the preaching of the gospel (Acts 2:41; 2 Co. 6:17), do walk together in communion in all the commandments of Jesus (Acts 2:42), wherein God is glorified and their souls comforted (2 Th. 1:11, 12; 2 Co. 1:4).

THAT we believe some of those commandments further to be as followeth.

CONSTANCY in prayer (Col. 2:23, 24)

BREAKING of bread (1 Co. 11:23, 24)

GIVING of thanks (Eph. 5:20)

WATCHING over one another (Heb. 12:15)

CARING one for another (1 Co. 12:25) by visiting one another, especially in sickness and temptations (Mt. 25:36)

EXHORTING one another (Heb. 3:13)

DISCOVERING to each other, and bearing one another's burdens (Ga. 6:2)

LOVING one another (Heb. 13:1)

REPROVING when need is one another (Mt. 18:15)

SUBMITTING one to another in the Lord (1 Pe. 5:5)

ADMINISTERING one to another according to the gift received, whether it be in spirituals, or temporals (1 Pe. 4:10)

THE offender to seek reconciliation, as well as the offended (Mt. 5:23, 24)

LOVE our enemies and persecutors, and pray for them (Mt. 5:23, 24)

EVERY one to work if he be able, and none to be idle (2 Th. 3:10, 11, 12)

THE women in the church to learn in silence, and in all subjection (1 Ti. 2:11; 1 Co. 14:37)

PRIVATE admonition to a brother offending another; and if not prevailing, to take one or two more; if he hear not them, then to tell it to the church; and if he hear not them, to be accounted as an heathen and publican (Mt. 18:15)

PUBLICK rebuke to publick offenders (1 Ti. 5:20)

THE brethren in ministering forth their gifts, ought to do it decently and in order, one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted (1 Co. 14:31, 40)

A SPECIAL care to assemble together, that their duty to God, and the church may not be neglected (Heb. 10:24, 25)

AND all things in the church, done in the name and power of the head, the Lord Christ Jesus (Col. 3:7)

THAT in admitting of members into the church of Christ, it is the duty of the church, and ministers whom it concerns, in faithfulness to God, that they be careful they receive none but such as do make forth evident demonstration of the new birth, and the work of faith with power (John 3:3; Mt. 3:8, 9; Acts 8:37; Eze. 44:6, 7; Acts 2:38; 2 Co. 9:14; Ps. 26:4, 5; 101:7)

Following is a standard Baptist church covenant which was written by John Newton Brown and published in J.M. Pendleton's *Baptist Church Manual* of 1853:

Having been led, as we believe by the Spirit of God, to receive the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior and, on profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we do now, in the presence of God and this assembly, most solemnly and joyfully enter into covenant with one another as one body in Christ.

We engage, therefore, by the aid of the Holy Spirit, to walk together in Christian love; to strive for the advancement of this church, in knowledge, holiness and comfort; to promote its prosperity and spirituality; to sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline, and doctrines; to contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel through all nations.

We also engage to maintain family and secret devotions; to religiously educate our children; to seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances; to walk circumspectly in the world; to be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment; to avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger; to abstain from the sale of, and use of intoxicating drinks as a beverage; and to be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.

We further engage to watch over one another in brotherly love; to remember one another in prayer; to aid one another in sickness and distress, to cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling and Christian courtesy in speech; to be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior, to secure it without delay.

We moreover engage that when we remove from this place, we will, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's word.

This covenant called for private and family devotions, which would include the study of God's Word. It called for the religious education of children by the parents, intercessory prayer, strict separation from the world, and aggressive evangelism.

The Baptist churches practiced discipline “because **they could not in good conscience call themselves Christians while ignoring a clear command of Christ**” (Gregory Wills,

Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South).

The Baptists in Georgia in the 19th century “**placed discipline at the center of church life**” (Wills).

“To an antebellum Baptist [referring to the time before the American Civil War of 1861-65], **a church without discipline would hardly have counted as a church.** ... Baptists ... required their members to submit to the church’s authority. Nineteenth-century Southern Baptists exercised church discipline on a remarkable scale. ... By the time of the Civil War Southern Baptists had excommunicated more than forty thousand members in Georgia alone. Baptist churches in the southern states brought to trial between 3 and 4 percent of their membership every year. They excommunicated about half of those brought to trial, excluding between 1 and 2 percent of their membership annually” (Wills).

Jesse Mercer of the Georgia Association of Baptist Churches, in a circular letter entitled “Church Discipline” dated 1806, wrote,

“We would awaken you to, and exhort you to be promptly active in the execution of discipline--**discipline, without which there can be no union, order, peace or fellowship in the church; no, nor church itself--discipline**, which, in its right use, is the church’s ecclesiastical life--bond of union and peace--spring of order and fellowship--and great source of harmony and love.”

The *Summary of Church Discipline*, published by the Baptist Association of Charleston, South Carolina, 1813, said that when churches do not require a regenerate membership, “**they make the church of Christ a harlot.**”

In 1860, David Benedict wrote on church discipline, saying, “**The free circulation of the blood ... is not more necessary to the health of the body, than a good discipline to the prosperity of a Christian church,**” and, “that churches, like armies and families, may be said to be well

disciplined, not when punishments are often inflicted, but when, by due care and faithfulness, they are seldom required” (*Fifty Years Among the Baptists*, chapter 29).

J.L. Dagg, *Manual of Church Order*, 1857, wrote, “It has been remarked, that **when discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it**” (p. 274).

This is borne out in Christ’s messages to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3. He warned that if a church loses its first love, it will lose its candlestick (Re. 2:4-5), and Christ was standing *outside* of the lukewarm church of Laodicea (Re. 3:20).

In those days, the churches disciplined for drunkenness, **absence from services, resisting the authority of the church**, interpersonal hostility, slander, anger, quarreling, cursing, swearing, profanity, falsehood, adultery, fornication, fighting, abuse, theft, debt evasion, **neglecting family, neglecting duty**, dancing, horse-racing, and gambling (Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South*).

Churches held regular **Days of Discipline** “when the congregation would gather to heal breaches of fellowship, admonish wayward members, rebuke the obstinate, and, if necessary, excommunicate those who resisted discipline.”

In these meetings, the brethren would sometimes accuse themselves of unchristian behavior and ask for discipline.

“Brother Lovall accused himself of drinking too much spiritous liquor and of getting into a great rage of anger at the same time,” or “brother Dread Wilder came forward and observed that he had lately gotten very angry, for which ordered that he be reproved by the Moderator which was done” (Wills).

Many of the churches read the church roll during the Lord’s Supper, and absentees were dealt with as offenders.

The Broadmead Church of England “had all the members’ names engrossed in parchment, that they might be called

over always at breaking bread, to see who did omit their duty” (J.J. Goadby, *Discipline in Early British Churches*).

The churches exercised discipline for neglect of the assembly.

“The general Baptists of the 16th and 17th centuries so respected the nature and importance of assemblies for public worship that the wilful neglect of them was considered as disorderly conduct, which called for the censure of the church. A constant inspection was exercised over the attendance of the members: persons were appointed to take down the names of the absentees, and report them to the elders; and nothing but reasons of obvious importance were admitted as a sufficient apology for their non-attendance. When the societies grew numerous, the members were ranged into districts, according, to the proximity of their habitations: and proper persons appointed to superintend each district. If any member did not appear in his place, on the Lord’s-day, he was certain of a visit, in the course of the week, from one of the inspectors of the district, to call him to account for his absence. These regulations were rendered effectual, by being acted upon with steadiness, impartiality, and decision; and, for nearly a century, contributed much to the order and prosperity of the general baptist churches. In 1655, an ‘Order’ was made, by the general consent of the congregation at Fenstanton, that ‘if any member of this congregation shall absent himself from the assembly of the same congregation, upon the first day of the week, without manifesting a sufficient cause, he shall be looked upon as an offender, and proceeded with accordingly. At the same meeting, it was devised, that, if any member should, at any time, have any extraordinary occasion to hinder him from the assembly, he would certify the congregation of the same before hand, for the prevention of jealousy.’ And, in 1658, the same society, after considering the case of a wife who had been kept back, by the threatenings of her husband, concluded ‘that, unless a person was restrained by force, it was no excuse for absenting himself from the

assemblies of the congregation.’ Resolutions of a similar purport are frequent in the records of these churches: and numbers of cases prove that they were constantly enforced” (Adam Taylor, *The History of the English General Baptists*, London: 1818, Vol. I).

A Baptist church in East Tennessee disciplined members who failed to attend services for 60 days “without legal excuse.” This church disciplined a member who “comes to Sunday School and leaves before preaching” (“Brief Survey of Historical Background to Church Discipline,” pastorhistorian.com).

“The oversight of the members was minute and persistent. Their general conduct, their domestic life, their business, their connections in civil society, their recreations, and even their dress, were all deemed legitimate subjects for the strictest supervision” (J.J. Goadby, *Discipline in Early Baptist Churches*, 1871).

Consider examples of discipline:

A “Sister Watkins” was disciplined by Broadmead Baptist Church for not paying her debts, not keeping her promises, and not working. “Tidings came to the ears of the church that she walked disorderly and scandalously in the borrowing of money, up and down, of many persons--of some ten shillings, of some twenty shillings, of some more, some less, as she could get them to lend--and took no care to pay it again, promising people and not performing, spending much if not most of her time going up and down; and so did not work, or but little, to endeavor honestly to live and eat her own bread. And thus, she walking disorderly and scandalously in borrowing, contrary to the rule (2 Thessalonians 3:6, 10, 12).”

After being admonished several times and not repenting, she was withdrawn from the church fellowship, the ruling elder, “Brother Terrill, declared to her, before the church, how that for her so sinning against the Lord, she rendered herself among the wicked ones, as Psalm 37:21, and,

therefore, the church, in faithfulness to the Lord and to her soul, must withdraw from her, seeing she had by several of the members been admonished once and again, and by several together witnessing against her evil in so doing; yet she had lately done the like, so that there was a necessity upon them to do their duty. And also acquainted her that if the Lord should hereafter give her repentance of the evil that she should reform to the satisfaction of the congregation, they should be willing to receive her into full communion again. And then the sentence, by the said ruling elder, was passed upon her, viz.: That in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the authority he had given to the Church, we did declare, that Sister Watkins, for her sin of disorderly walking, borrowing and not paying, making promises and not performing, and not diligently working, was withdrawn from, and no longer to have full communion with this church, nor to be partaker with them in the holy mysteries of the Lord's Supper, nor privileges of the Lord's house [that is, 'if she doth come to the meeting, not to be suffered to stay when any business of the church is transacted']; and the Lord have mercy upon her soul" (*Broadmead Records*, pp. 211, 413, cited from J.M. Cramp, *Baptist History*).

John Blows, a preacher, absented himself from a day of fasting and prayer at Fenstanton Church in order to attend a "great football play, he being one of the principle appointers thereof." After being confronted about the matter, he confessed that he had done wrong and "promised to abstain from the like for time to come." Nevertheless, as he had "dishonored the Lord," "grieved the people of God," and "given occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully," it was resolved that "he should not be suffered to preach until further fruits meet for repentance did appear" (*Fenstanton Baptist Church Records*, pp. 126, 244, cited from Cramp, *Baptist History*).

The church at Warboys withdrew from Mary Poulter, “for forsaking the assembling with the church and neglecting holy duties, and walking disorderly in pride and vanity” (Cramp).

John Christmas was disciplined “for not loving Ann his wife as he ought, and for speaking hateful and despising words against her, giving her occasion to depart from him by his unkindness.” Happily, “John Christmas, afterward sending for Ann his wife again and promising amendment, after her coming again to him, desired to be a partaker with the church, in holy duties, was joined in fellowship again” (Cramp).

Mary Drage was disciplined “for sundry times dissembling with the church, and out of covetousness speaking things very untrue, at length it being plainly proved against her in her hearing, and she having little to say for herself, was withdrawn from” (Cramp).

Thomas Bass was disciplined “for telling of lies and swearing” (Cramp).

Ellen Burges was disciplined “for lying and slandering of her relations, and counting them and her mother witches, which we have no ground to believe...” (Cramp).

In 1817, a “Brother Lancaster” was brought before Powelton Baptist Church of Georgia and disciplined for allowing the young people to dance to fiddling music at his daughter’s wedding (Wills). The disciplinary proceeding was overseen by the church’s pastor, James Mercer, who later was president of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

The Broadmead Baptist Church did not admit a Mrs. Bevis into the communion “by reason of her selling strong drink” (Goadby, *Discipline in Early British Baptist Churches*).

As we have seen, in all cases of discipline the door was open for repentance and restoration.

Another example of this is “Brother Osman” who was disciplined for leaving his farming work during harvest and spending the day wasting his money in an alehouse.” A few months later, he “did, in the presence of the congregation,

publicly declare his fall, acknowledge his sin, and manifest great trouble for the same. The church gladly embraced him again, believing that God had given him repentance to the acknowledgment of the truth; he was admitted to his membership.”

Baptist churches in America restored about one-third of those who were excommunicated (Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South*).

Those who expressed repentance were not always received back into membership immediately but were often put on probation. They were required to attend the worship services regularly and “to persevere in righteous behavior” for three to twelve months. “They then appeared before the church, confessed their sin, vindicated the church’s action and authority, and pledged to lead a moral life” (Wills).

Strict biblical discipline has been the characteristic of Bible-believing churches throughout the church age except in times of backsliding and apostasy.

The Disappearance of Discipline

By the end of the 19th century, the Baptist churches in America were very weak and had stopped practicing strict discipline.

Convention Baptist Churches

Confidence in the Bible was weakened by theological liberalism and Darwinian evolution.

The Northern Baptists became liberal in theology at the beginning of the 20th century. (They were known as the Northern Baptist Convention until 1950, when the name was changed to American Baptist Convention.) For example, in 1918, Harry Emerson Fosdick, pastor of the influential Riverside Church in New York City, published *The Manhood of the Master*, denying that Jesus Christ is God. In 1926, the Northern Baptist Convention voted by a margin of three to one *not* to evict Riverside Church from the convention.

Liberalism entered the Southern Baptist Convention in the first half of the 20th century.

By 1902, J.W. Bailey of North Carolina wrote in the *Biblical Recorder* that there were a multitude of “theologies” in the Southern Baptist Convention. He said, “Theologies change every day. ... [Baptists do not stand for] formulated dogmas.”

For theological and cultural reasons, the churches became increasingly weak and rejected New Testament discipline.

Even as early as 1874, William Whitsitt, a professor at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said, “[I]t is now very difficult to exclude a person for drunkenness or any other ordinary crime” (*Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches*, Kindle loc. 2138).

In 1878, J.C. Hiden, pastor of First Baptist Church, Greenville, South Carolina, wrote a series of articles in the *Baptist Courier* “lamenting the recent trend of lax discipline.”

By 1921, Z.T. Cody, editor of South Carolina’s *Baptist Courier*, wrote,

“Our churches have practically no discipline. As to worldliness and minor offences, many of our churches do nothing. But what is far worse, our churches often allow the most serious moral transgressions to go unnoticed. Even at times, to save a disturbance in the church, they will grant a minister a letter who, as they know, has grossly violated, not only the proprieties of life, but the moral law of God. ... What we dread today more than aught else is a disturbance in the ‘peace’ of a church. ... We do not know what is the remedy for this lapsed condition.”

A pastorate that was probably largely unregenerate turned from the Bible as sole authority (in practice if not profession) and looked to the world of science for help. The churches stopped depending on spiritual weapons and turned to carnal weapons such as programs and an efficient organization. For example, instead of depending on prayer to prepare for special meetings, they depended on advertising.

There was an emphasis on “efficiency” and “pragmatism” (using whatever works to produce a desired goal).

“Efficiency consisted not in purity or obedience, but in system, organization, and rationality in all areas of church activity. ... progressive church leaders held that the church in the modern age needed a polity based not on ancient authority but on science, rationality, and system. They looked to social scientists and efficiency experts such as Frederick Winslow Taylor, who in this era developed management into a science for producing efficient organizations” (*Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches*, Kindle loc. 2167-2174).

In the 1920s, the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary appointed Gaines Dobbins as a “professor of church efficiency.” His 1923 book *The Efficient Church* had a wide influence. He claimed that Christ’s ministry in the Gospels was “the perfection of efficiency” and Paul was the “world’s greatest efficiency expert in religion.”

The churches began leaning to the spirit and wisdom of the times instead of God’s Spirit and God’s Word. Instead of separating from the world and its fallen thinking, they learned from the world.

They bowed to the American spirit of individualism and consumerism. They stopped requiring evidence of salvation and practicing discipline so as not to offend potential members. The churches appeased the people’s idolatrous, me-centered desire to shop for a church that met their felt needs. They lowered the spiritual standards, became entertainment-oriented, borrowed elements from the world to make Christian music more appealing to the unsaved and carnal, softened the preaching, created “youth ministries” that encouraged the generation gap and were merely Christianized versions of the world’s pop culture.

By the last half of the 20th century, this spiritual appeasement produced the seeker-sensitive movement. A regenerate church membership and discipline only gets in the way of the seeker-sensitive philosophy and will never produce a megachurch today.

The churches bowed to the influence of the “new morality” and allowed church members to live worldly lives. Such things as dating, pre-marital sex, drinking, jazz, rock, divorce, unisex fashions flooded the weak churches.

They bowed to the philosophy of non-judgmentalism and non-dogmatism that permeated society.

The concept of the church as pilgrims and strangers in a foreign country was replaced by Americanism and flag waving.

The Social Gospel produced an emphasis away from evangelism and church planting. Building God's kingdom on earth through social-justice projects, honest business practices, and maintaining good social order began to replace "saving brands from the burning."

In 1910, William Poteat, president of Wake Forest College, told the annual Southern Baptist Convention that Baptists were in the best position to save civilization.

In 1920, Richard Edmonds wrote, "Upon the Baptists of the South may rest the salvation of America and of the world from chaos and from sinking back into the darkness of the middle ages" (*The South, America and the World*).

This was the condition of the church I grew up in. I remember one of my non-church friends saying to me, "Why should I come to your church? You folk are no different than we are."

There was no looking for evidence of salvation. Any profession of faith was accepted and the individual's salvation was never doubted thereafter. As a result, every generation brought a larger percentage of unregenerate people into the membership.

There was no caution about receiving members. The old church covenant from the 1800s hung on the wall, but it was an historic relic, a museum piece. Its principles were not taught or enforced.

There were no serious biblical standards for workers.

There was no serious discipleship, separation, or discipline. I heard the Bible preached and taught, but I was not given a biblical worldview and there was no emphasis on true discipleship.

The churches adapted to the pop culture. They entertained pagan fables such as Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny. Like the proverbial frog in the pot, they followed Hollywood's descent into ever-deeper moral filth. They didn't have a testing mindset. They weren't thorough-going Bible people. They weren't true disciples of Jesus Christ. They weren't

pilgrims and strangers in a foreign world. Almost no one in the SBC in those days saw Walt Disney or Ed Sullivan as enemies of the truth. The fact that Disneyland had no church on Main Street didn't register as a warning that Disney was promoting an atheistic worldview and was drawing the hearts and minds of youngsters away from the God of the Bible like a Pied Piper. The fact that *The Disney Hour* and *The Ed Sullivan Show* were weakening Sunday evening church attendance with their enticing wares was not a matter of deep concern by the preachers.

The vast majority of Southern Baptist preachers were as soft as their hero Billy Graham. The preaching lost its rebuking, discipling power.

This is the type of Baptist church that was on nearly "every street corner" in the American South in the first half of the 20th century, which was why it was called "the Bible belt." Southern Baptist churches were one of the most prominent influences in southern society, but because of their spiritual weakness, church was a thing of little significance and social impact. At some point in childhood, most people went through the motion of "receiving Christ" and then continued to live their lives as they pleased with little to no serious reference to Scripture.

The rock & roll pop culture conquered these churches quickly in the 1950s. At first there were a few voices lifted against rock music and its "live as you please" philosophy, but the resistance faded quickly. By the 1960s, Southern Baptist church kids partied as hard as non-church kids. Church kids loved the same music and held the same philosophy of life.

Independent Baptist Churches

The Independent Baptist movement exploded in the middle of the 20th century. Many came out of the Baptist conventions to separate from liberalism. Others were new

churches founded as independent Baptists. Bible Colleges were established to train pastors and missionaries.

Thousands of fundamental Baptist churches were planted worldwide during the last half of the twentieth century.

The heyday was the 1970s and 1980s.

But by the 21st century, a new generation of fundamental Baptists was collapsing in spiritual character and capitulating to compromise in the same way that the Southern Baptists and other New Evangelicals did in the 20th century.

A dramatic change is taking place. The scenario that existed when I was saved in the early 1970s and joined an Independent Baptist church is radically different from the one that exists today.

A large number of fundamental Baptist churches have not kept their spiritual character much beyond the first generation.

Very few are truly discipling churches that practice New Testament discipline.

The change, the downgrade, the erosion, is evident everywhere.

I see it in preachers that I have known since the 1970s and 1980s, a large number of whom have gone in a different direction. They are softening, weakening. It is reflected in the downgrade of reproof and rebuke in preaching, the downgrade in forthright warnings against error, and in the downgrade of standards for workers.

And their children are carrying the changes to an even greater degree.

I see it everywhere I travel.

All of my preacher friends tell me that a great many of their friends are changing and moving in a weaker, contemporary direction. The following communication is typical of hundreds I have received:

“Your stand and articles on the Burlington fiasco have echoed what was in my heart. Once again it’s been an issue

that has revealed how some MINISTRY FRIENDS ARE CHANGING WITH THE TIMES AND SO LACKING IN DISCERNMENT. Very sad. I thank God for those who are standing for and walking in truth.”

We see the effect of the changes in the lives of young people. Many Independent Baptist churches don't have even one on-fire young person who is a true disciple of Jesus Christ, who has a first love for Christ, who is passionately seeking God's will, who is an effectual Bible student, who is separating from the world zealously and is extremely cautious about music and social media, etc., and who *loves* holiness and modesty *from the heart*.

While there are many reasons for this collapse, I am convinced that a fundamental element was the weakness of the standard Independent Baptist philosophy of the church.

The churches that came out of the Southern Baptist Convention rejected liberalism and improved on the Southern Baptist program in many ways, such as preaching separation and supporting missionaries directly, but most of them were never very strong for a regenerate church membership, serious discipleship, and New Testament discipline.

Few of the churches in the Independent Baptist movement were ever dedicated to a thorough-going New Testament church principle. The goal was not to build discipling, disciplining churches; the goal was to build the biggest church possible with the highest number of “salvation decisions.”

Such things as being *very* careful about evangelism, exercising great caution in receiving members, *requiring* the faithfulness we see in Acts 2:42, and exercising biblical discipline would actually get in the way of this program.

Highland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, was one of the chief models of what multitudes of Independent Baptist churches aimed for, and it continues to have a massive influence though it has ceased to exist.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, it was the second largest church in America (Elmer Towns, *America's Ten Largest Sunday Schools*, 1969). But this statistic was measured by Sunday School attendance, which was the product of a fleet of 15 large buses and hyper promotionalism gimmicks. The Sunday School numbers also included the attendance figures of Highland Park's chapels (42 in 1969) which were scattered all across that part of the country, as far as 70 miles from Chattanooga. That is a "universal church" by any standard!

Highland Park had many excellent characteristics. Many people were saved in spite of the shallowness of the evangelism program. The music was sacred and glorious. The Great Commission was large. Hundreds of churches were planted worldwide by the graduates of Tennessee Temple's Bible school, Bible college, and seminary.

But Highland Park was a mixed multitude.

There was an aggressive evangelistic program, but it followed the Jack Hyles "Roman's Road" formula which emphasized a quick, simple presentation of the most basic points of the gospel followed by a push for the individual to pray the "sinner's prayer." This was followed by giving the individual "assurance of salvation."

When people came forward at the invitation, they would be dealt with right during the invitation and expected to pray the sinner's prayer. It was impossible to deal with them properly in this context, and the pressure to make a quick profession was intense. From the pulpit, Dr. Roberson would then ask the individuals the following questions: (1) Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to save sinners? (2) Are you trusting Jesus as your personal Saviour? (3) Do you want to follow the Lord in baptism and live for him? Those who replied in the affirmative (and I never saw someone respond otherwise) were baptized immediately and became church members.

The church reported 50,000 members, but a large percentage were nowhere to be found. Most had prayed a

sinner's prayer, been baptized, then disappeared. In that sense, the church hadn't changed since it was in the Southern Baptist Convention. When Dr. Roberson came to Highland Park in 1942, the membership was 1,000 but there were only about 300 members in the Sunday morning service and much fewer in other services. At least two-thirds of the members were inactive. That percentage probably held true over the lifetime of Dr. Roberson's pastorate.

Only five things were expected of church members: (1) faithful attendance of services, (2) read the Bible, (3) pray, (4) witness to someone every day, (5) tithe.

There was no church discipline except in a few prominent cases, such as when Dr. Roberson's associate pastor, Cliff Robinson, committed adultery with Dr. Roberson's secretary. And even that case was more like a "slap on the hand," and Robinson was soon restored to a traveling ministry. It would be impossible to exercise discipline in a church in which most of the members are nowhere to be found.

This is the model that vast number of Independent Baptist churches followed, and it wasn't strong enough or biblical enough to stand.

New Testament Church Discipline

Every church is required by God to rule itself by the sole authority for faith and practice, which is the New Testament faith recorded in the canon of Scripture.

Christ is the one Head of the church, and as we see in Revelation 1-3, He walks in the midst of the churches and judges the churches. He will not judge a church on the basis of the society and culture in which it exists. He will judge solely on the basis of His Word which is eternally settled in heaven.

We must not have an American church or an Australian church or a Nepali church or a South African church or a Korean church or a Russian church. We must have a biblical church. Our citizenship is in heaven, and we are pilgrims in this present world. We have been translated spiritually into the kingdom of Christ, and we are to live by the laws of that kingdom.

Christ did not accept a church in Corinth that was being influenced by Corinthian society. He did not sympathize with such conformity. He used the apostle Paul to instruct and exhort and reprove that church to conform it to God's Word.

And New Testament discipline is an *essential* part of a biblical church that obeys God's Word.

Biblical church discipline is training and chastening with the goal of conforming the congregation and its individual members to the will of God. It involves teaching, encouragement, correction and reproof, punishment when required, and restoration. Church discipline involves everything necessary to keep a church pure before God (1 Co. 5:7-8). Discipline is a matter of love—love for God, love for holiness, love for the truth, love for Christ's testimony in the church, love for the brethren, and love for the unsaved who are observing the church's testimony.

The Goals of Church Discipline

1. To protect the purity of the church, to keep it from being permeated with sin and false doctrine (1 Co. 5:6-8).

The passover depicts salvation through faith in Christ's blood, and the feast of unleavened bread depicts sanctification. See Lev. 23:4-8. The putting away of all leaven depicts putting sin out of the Christian life and church. The believers have died and risen with Christ that they should no longer serve sin (Ro. 6:6). We are to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness (2 Co. 7:1). Christ gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity (Titus 2:14). Being saved, we are to live unto righteousness (1 Pe. 2:24).

Both of these passages are written in the context of church discipline. In fact, the very epistles themselves (1 Corinthians and Galatians) are examples of the process of church discipline. The apostle was writing to correct sin and error; he was teaching, pleading, rebuking, warning. All of these things are involved in church discipline. Sin and false teaching are called "leaven," because if moral and doctrinal impurities are not corrected and removed from the assembly, they will permeate the body and destroy the church. Unrepentant sin and false teaching cannot be ignored in the vain hope that the problem will somehow disappear on its own. It must be dealt with in a biblical fashion.

Note that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. The church must be strict about dealing with sin and error. Unrepentant sin and false teaching cannot be ignored in the vain hope that the problem will somehow disappear on its own. It must be dealt with in a biblical way, or it will spread and destroy the church. We see the right example in the apostle Paul. He did not ignore *any* of the problems at Corinth. He taught, preached, exhorted, pleaded, warned, rebuked, and called for exclusion of unrepentant sinners. All of these things are involved in church discipline.

“[D]iscipline is used to protect the rest of the body. One church I was helping had a deacon involved in some immoral behavior. Nothing was done, people looked the other way because they didn’t want to be judgmental. Pretty soon another person was involved, and eventually the pastor was caught up in the sin. Sin is like a cancer. Many churches are like a doctor that waits too long to do surgery and the cancer continues to spread” (Ken Sande, “Church Discipline Really Works Part 1,” *Christianity Today online*, January 2005).

2. To maintain a good testimony before the unbelieving community (1 Co. 5:1; Php. 2:14-15; 1 Pe. 2:9-12).

3. To please and glorify the Lord (1 Co. 5:4). In Titus 2:14 we learn that a pure church pleases the Lord because this was His purpose in our redemption. In 1 Peter 2:9, 11-12 we see that a pure church is a praise and glory to the Lord.

4. To restore erring church members (1 Co. 5:5; 2 Co. 2:6-8). As we exercise church discipline, we must ever keep in mind that our goal is not to harm people, but to help them. Even when a member must be expelled from the assembly, the ultimate goal is to see that one restored.

5. To restrain sin (De. 13:11; 17:12-13; 19:18-20; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Tim. 5:20). “It would be ideal if men could be encouraged to live godly lives without any warning of judgment upon ungodliness. But to suppose they will do so is idealistic and contrary to all observation, as well as to Scripture. God warns of impending judgment and says, ‘It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God’ (Heb. 10:31). ‘Because there is wrath, beware...’ (Job 36:18). If sin goes unjudged in a church, we are thereby inviting others to become self-indulgent. It will not do to plead ‘love’ as a basis for neglect. ... God does not put love and punishment in opposition to each other. He says, ‘For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth...’ (Heb. 12:5-11). The church has a solemn responsibility to restrain sin by proper discipline. If we do not exercise the judgment, the Lord will (1 Co.

11:31-32)” (Paul R. Jackson, *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church*).

6. To keep the church ready for Christ’s return (Tit. 2:11-15). We are warned that those who do not remain pure and ready for Christ’s appearing will be ashamed when He comes (1 Jn. 2:28).

The Right Attitude of Discipline

God’s people must be careful to maintain the proper attitude when dealing with sinning Christians and not to give place to the devil.

1. The attitude of humility (Ga. 6:1)

2. The attitude of impartiality (De. 1:17; 1 Ti. 5:21)

“Also, discipline should be strictly impartial. The fact that a wrongdoer is related to us by ties of nature, for instance should in no wise influence our decision in the matter. Respect of persons must not be shown” (William MacDonald).

3. The attitude of compassion (2 Co. 7:12)

Discipline must be exercised with much spiritual care and tenderness. Anything less than compassion is not Christlike. We think of how Christ dealt with Peter when he denied him. Christ reproved Peter with a look (Lu. 22:61). Peter repented in bitter tears (Mt. 26:74-75), and Christ restored him with a solemn, public exhortation (John 21:15-17).

4. The attitude of mourning (2 Co. 2:4)

“Nothing can be more solemn or affecting than the act of putting away a person from the Lord’s table. It is the last sad and unavoidable act of the whole assembly, and it should be performed with broken hearts and weeping eyes. Alas how often it is otherwise! How often does this most solemn and holy duty take the form of a mere official announcement that such a person is out of fellowship. Need we wonder that discipline, so carried out, fails to tell with power upon the erring one, or upon the church” (C.H. Mackintosh).

5. The attitude of firmness of purpose (1 Co. 5:3-5, 13)

The Patience and Wisdom for Discipline

Church discipline requires patience and much godly wisdom. Each situation is different. There are general biblical principles, as we will see, but the application of these principles requires the Lord's wisdom. He alone knows the hearts. The church and all of its members belong to Him. The under-shepherds must constantly obtain wisdom from the Great Shepherd. If they are ready to receive, He is ready to give, and each situation will have the necessary wisdom and power and blessing.

“Discipline calls for discernment. Paul writes, ‘Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*’ (1 Th. 5:14). We should not encourage the unruly, but admonish them. We should not admonish the fainthearted or weak, but encourage and help them. Sometimes, a newer believer is in sin due to ignorance of God's Word. He is weak. But, if he continues defiantly in the sin after you show him what the Word says, he then becomes unruly. I find the analogy of child rearing helpful here. If my three-year-old was acting like a three-year-old, I tried to help him learn how to behave in a more mature manner. But I didn't discipline him for being three. But when your three-year-old is defiant, you must deal with his rebellion. If a believer is overcome by a sin, but is repentant and wants help, you help him. But if he says, ‘I have a right to do as I please,’ he is defiant and needs discipline” (Steven Cole, “Dealing with Sinning Christians,” Aug. 13, 2006, Bible.org).

The church leaders need to be patient and wait until they have the full picture of what has happened and until they have the Lord's wisdom about how to proceed.

Haste can compound the problem.

The Authority for Discipline

See 1 Corinthians 5:4 and Matthew 18:18-19. Dismissing someone from the church is not an easy matter. There are often many doubts and fears. Will it hurt the church? Has everything possible been done to correct the problem in other ways? Do we have the right attitude? Will some protest and sympathize with the offender? How will the erring one(s) react? How will his or her friends or relatives react?

I know of a church that had to discipline a member for marrying an unsaved man; and the offending party's mother and sister sided with her and all of them left the church. This is very common. The power of God is needed in exercising church discipline, and the Bible promises that His power and blessing will be available when His people are earnestly trying to walk in obedience to Him.

Discipline of Interpersonal Problems

The discipline of problems between church members is dealt with very clearly in Matthew 5 and 18.

“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift” (Mat. 5:23-24).

“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. 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. 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. 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” (Mat. 18:15-18).

“There are two commands of Christ, which, if faithfully obeyed, would in almost every instance prevent personal offences from assuming such form and magnitude as to require church action” (J.M. Pendleton, *Church Manual Designed for the Use of Baptist Churches*, 1867).

Note that God is very concerned about interpersonal relationships. Maintaining right relationships lies at the heart of loving my neighbor as myself, which is the second great commandment (Mat. 22:36-40). This is so important to God that He commands His people to put it before worship (Mat. 5:23-24).

The objective is to clear up problems and achieve reconciliation and spiritual harmony - “first be reconciled to thy brother” (Mat. 5:24), “if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother” (Mat. 18:15). “If this is not his purpose, he violated the spirit of Christ’s law though he may obey it in the letter” (Pendleton).

Following are the practical steps in dealing with interpersonal problems in the church:

First, the matter should be discussed privately between the two church members (“go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,” Mat. 18:15).

- The Scripture puts the responsibility of reconciliation equally upon both parties. In Matthew 5, the case is when a brother realizes that another brother has something against him, whether legitimate or not. In Matthew 18, the case is when a brother has trespassed against me. “The offended brother is not to wait till the offender goes to him and seeks reconciliation” (Pendleton).

- The individual who takes the initiative should go not only to confront the other person but also to listen. Oftentimes the problem lies in misunderstanding and lack of information.

- The individual who takes the initiative should go personally to the other person rather than writing a note or sending a text. A face to face interview is what is needed.

Second, if this doesn't solve the problem, the injured brother should take one or two others (Mat. 18:16). "The brethren selected by the aggrieved brother to go with him should be very judicious and eminently spiritual. Sound judgment and ardent piety will be needed" (Pendleton).

Third, if that doesn't solve the problem, the matter should be brought before the church (Mat. 18:17). Even here, there is still opportunity for reconciliation.

Fourth, if the trespasser refuses to hear the church, he is to be disciplined (Mat. 18:17).

What does it mean "let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican"?

It doesn't mean never to speak with him or to forbid him to attend church. The unsaved are not forbidden to do such things.

- It means that the church member that is under discipline is not allowed to serve in a church ministry or to participate in church business and ordinances (such as taking the Lord's Supper). The heathen or unsaved are not allowed to do these things.

- It means that the offender is not to be allowed to participate in the close fellowship that is normal between church members. This is for the purpose of making the offender ashamed. "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (2 Th. 3:14)

"If individual members act contrary to this rule, and carry on freely toward an offender, as if nothing had taken place, it will render the censure of the church of none effect. Those persons also who behave in this manner will be considered by the party as his friends, and others who stand aloof as his enemies, or at least as being unreasonably severe; which will work confusion, and render void the best and most wholesome discipline. We must act in concert, or we may as well do nothing. Members who violate this rule are partakers of other men's

sins, and deserve the rebukes of the church for counteracting its measures” (Andrew Fuller, *Works*, vol. III, pp. 334-335).

The seriousness of church business is seen here (Mat. 18:18). Men often take the church and its business lightly, but God doesn't. Compare 1 Co. 3:17; Heb. 10:25 and 13:17.

The “binding” does not pertain to a person's eternal destiny but to his earthly life.

Discipline of Disorderly Conduct

2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 calls for separation from a church member that seems to fall short of excluding. One difference is that the 2 Thessalonians 3 offender is not turned over to the devil as in 1 Corinthians 5.

The context of 2 Thessalonians 3 is a church member who is engaged in disorderly conduct such as refusing to work and being a busybody in the affairs of others (1 The. 3:6-15).

We believe this principle applies to other cases of refusing to obey the Word of God that fall short of 1 Corinthians 5 discipline. It would seem preposterous to think that churches are to discipline members who refuse to work while ignoring other types of cases. Other examples are as follows:

- A wife who refuses to submit to her husband's authority in the home (Eph. 5:22)
- A husband who refuses to love and care for his family (Eph. 5:25 - 6:4; 1 Tim. 5:8)
- A father who neglects his duties (1 Tim. 5:8)
- A young person who is rebellious against his parents (Eph. 6:1-4)
- An individual who is a reproach to Christ because of his actions in the workplace (Eph. 6:5-8)
- A young widow who is idle and a busybody (1 Tim. 5:11-14)
- Those who refuse to practice Bible separation (Rom. 16:17-18; 2 Co. 6:14-17; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; 2 Tim. 2:16-21; 3:5; 2

Jn. 9-11). An example of this would be participation in ecumenical organizations and ventures.

The old Baptists called this type of discipline “suspension.” It entails removing the individual from the fellowship and not allowing him to partake of the Lord’s Supper or participate in church ministry or business until he repents.

Discipline of Public and Grave Offenses

Excommunication is required for certain types of sins, particularly those of a public and grave nature. This is dealt with in 1 Corinthians 5.

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat” (1 Co. 5:11).

The nature of the sin that calls for this type of church discipline is as follows:

It is public sin (1 Co. 5:1 -- “it is commonly reported”).

It is grave sin (1 Co. 5:11). The moral evils referred to in this passage are listed under six categories: immorality, covetousness, idolatry, railing, drunkenness, and extortion. All of these evils are definite causes for church discipline, because the church which allows its members to partake in such things without exercising discipline becomes a reproach to the name of Christ (2 Sa. 12:14).

Fornication. This is a broad term for sexual impurity. It refers to fornication outside of marriage (1 Co. 7:2) and to adultery within marriage (Mat. 5:32). It is likened to “concupiscence” in 1 Th. 4:3-5, which refers more particularly to the lusting aspect of sexual impurity. A believer would be a fornicator, therefore, who engages in such things as homosexuality, incest, rape, bestiality, and the use of pornography.

Covetousness. This means “to desire inordinately; to desire that which it is unlawful to obtain or possess; excessively

eager to obtain and possess” (Webster). A church member who is covetous and therefore who should be disciplined for this sin will be characterized by the following:

(1) Covetousness is to be greedy. Covetousness is to desire that which is not my own or that which is forbidden (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21; Josh. 7:21).

(2) Covetousness is to obtain things by oppressing others; by cheating, stealing, borrowing and not paying back (Prov. 28:16; Mic. 2:2). Corrupt government officials and legal officials cheat because they are covetous. This is the way of the world, but it must not be the way of God’s people.

(3) Covetousness is to love and pursue money instead of being content with the basic needs of life and pursuing the will of God (1 Ti. 6:6-11). It is to make money and possessions the focus of one’s life (Lk. 12:15-21). The man who puts his business before God is a covetous man.

Idolatry. This refers to worshipping idols or to putting some material possession or pleasure in the place of God and to bestow upon it the love and devotion that belongs to God alone. The first law is to love God with all the heart, soul, and strength (De. 6:5).

Railing. This means to heap abuse upon another, to revile. The same Greek word (*loidoros*) is translated “reviler” in 1 Co. 6:10. It refers to speaking hatefully, calling people ugly names by way of attack. Christ hates this and will not allow it in His kingdom (Mat. 5:21-26). We had to expel a Bible college student one time because he was guilty of this. He called his fellow students “fools” and “dogs” and proudly told one humble student that his character was “a stench in God’s nostrils.” “A reproachful man; a man of coarse, harsh, and bitter words; a man whose characteristic it was to abuse others; to vilify their character, and wound their feelings” (Barnes).

Drunkennes. To be intoxicated with foreign substances, either by alcohol or drugs. We believe that this sin also

involves selling liquor, because he contributes to and is a party to drunkenness (Hab. 2:15).

Extortion. This is the act of taking things from others by means of force or abuse of authority. It refers to cheating, blackmailing, kidnapping, requiring bribes, unjust or unauthorized taxation, fees, penalties (e.g., the publicans). See Ps. 109:11; Eze. 22:12. Those who work in the government, police, or courts in corrupt nations are particularly tempted by this sin.

It is sin that would destroy the church if ignored (1 Co. 5:6). There will always be sin of one sort or another in a church that is populated by sinners, but there are some sins that have the ability to destroy the church if left alone, and these must be disciplined by exclusion.

Note that patience is important for every aspect of discipline. The church should not get into a hurry to act until it has all of the relevant facts and has gotten wisdom from the Lord about how to proceed, and it should not be in a hurry about restoration when that time comes.

It is important that the church leaders investigate the matter thoroughly and not act on partial facts and hearsay. The leaders can appoint mature deacons or other mature church members to help conduct the investigation.

When the church is satisfied that it has all of the relevant facts, it can take one of several actions.

First, it can find the accused innocent and dismiss the charges.

This happened about half the time in Baptist churches in America in the 19th century. If it was found that a member had brought an accusation against another without sufficient cause, “the church generally charged the accuser with slander or hostility” (*Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches*, Kindle loc. 2126).

Second, it can rebuke the offender, receive his confession of repentance, and forgive him without further action.

This can happen when the church believes that the matter is settled and there will be no further problem with the individual.

Third, it can accept a confession of repentance and put the individual under probation with whatever restriction of privileges the church deems proper for the situation.

The old Baptists would sometimes exclude even if the individual expressed repentance.

“Exclusion always ensued if there was no repentance. But repentance did not always save. For grave sins that brought particular dishonor to the Saviour or that involved habitual deceit or fraud, churches usually excluded even if the accused repented. About 50 percent of those whom the church brought before its discipline experienced exclusion” (*Restoring Integrity in Baptist Churches*, Kindle loc. 2121).

The exclusion in these cases is for the purpose of proving the individual’s profession of repentance and of showing the congregation the gravity and consequence of such sins so that sin is not taken lightly.

In some churches it is common for sinning members, such as fornicators, to “confess his sin” and be forgiven and restored pretty much as if nothing happened. Or they are put on a short probation and then automatically restored at the end of that set time. This does not make sin look very evil and dangerous. It gives the wrong message. It does not result in the fear of God.

If an individual shows repentance and submission to the church’s authority and shows evidence that he wants to make the matter right before God and man, that is good, but because of the gravity of the sin and its consequences, the church can still put him under exclusion for a time.

He can be excluded from the Lord’s Supper, not allowed to hold any ministry, not allowed to participate in church business, not even allowed to give testimony during

testimony times, but he can be allowed to attend the services and fellowship with the brethren in meals and such.

Fourth, the church can put the offender under discipline according to 1 Corinthians 5:4, 5, 13. This is called exclusion or excommunication.

This is done when the individual is unrepentant and unsubmitive to the church's authority.

“If the offender continues obstinate and appears to be incorrigible, the church is under a necessity of proceeding to the execution of the great censure against him. ... [B]y the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the name and behalf of that church, [the minister] cuts off and secludes the offender by name from union and communion with the church; he having broke his covenant with them, they also excluded him from the privileges of a member, as unworthy; yet praying the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Good Shepherd, to restore him by giving him unfeigned repentance that he may again be received into the sheepfold” (*Summary of Church Discipline*, Charleston Association, 1774).

Exclusion involves the following:

1. The excluded one is turned over to Satan (1 Co. 5:5). This refers to turning the unrepentant offender over to Satan's domain, the world, and over to Satan's power for chastisement. Compare Lk. 22:31-32; 13:16.

2. The excluded person cannot hold a ministry or participate in church business.

3. The members should not have close fellowship with the excluded person so that he will be ashamed and brought to repentance. (1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Th. 3:14). This doesn't mean that the members can never talk to the individual. When they do talk to him, though, it should be more for the purpose of exhorting him to repent. The expressions “not to eat” and “have no company” refer to close fellowship: sitting down together at a meal, attending a social occasion at the individual's house, etc. The individual should not be allowed

to attend church meals and social functions. This is not an easy thing for God's people to do, but it is for the individual's good, so that he will face his sin and be ashamed, and for the church's testimony.

The manner of treating the individual under discipline depends, to some degree, on his or her attitude. If the individual is open to hearing exhortation and reproof, it would not be wrong to meet with him for that purpose.

4. The offender is not allowed to partake in the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 5:11). The eating in this verse probably refers both to social eating and to eating the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:26, 29).

5. The members should pray much for the individual that he will repent and take any opportunity to exhort him to do this. "admonish him" (2 Th. 3:15).

Restoration

When the excluded individual expresses repentance and seeks restoration, the church must try to determine whether the repentance is sincere. The church looks for ready, hearty, and full admission of guilt. The church looks for admission of and naming of the specific sins that were committed, as opposed to merely saying, "I'm sorry," or, "I'm sorry for what I did." If the individual is blaming others and otherwise making excuse for his sin, this is not true repentance. If there is any sign of abiding stubbornness or bitterness toward the church or ill feeling toward the leaders or toward one or more church members, that isn't repentance.

I think of a young couple who ran away together without marriage and lived as man and wife, and we put them under discipline. One day they threw a rock over our gate that had a note tied around it. The note expressed that they wanted to return to church and they were "sorry for what had happened." They didn't even talk to us face to face. That is not repentance, and when we refused to accept that empty act, the girl's family charged us with being hardhearted and

“too strict” and left the church. But their lives have subsequently shown that there was no repentance, and they continue to have a bad testimony. Some of the family members regret their action against the church, but they are intimidated by stronger, more hardhearted members of the family.

We see the definition of true repentance in 2 Corinthians 7:11.

See also David’s repentance in Psalm 51:3-6.

Those who show genuine repentance should be forgiven and restored (2 Co. 2:7).

Oftentimes it is wise to put the individual on probation. During probation the individual is required to *show* repentance for a period of time until the church is convinced that things have been made right. Old Baptist churches expected a longer period of probation for “sins that were especially grave or involved deceit.”

It is wise not to put an exact time limit on the probation. A set time allows an unrepentant person to feign repentance and simply wait for the probation to expire and go on with his life in the church.

There can be a *minimum* period of six months or whatever, but there should not be automatic restoration at that time. How long should the probation last? Let it last until true and full repentance is shown by the individual and his family (if they are in the church) and all concerned and the church is convinced the matter has been dealt with thoroughly, however long that is.

Forgiveness and restoration to church membership does not mean there are no abiding consequences to sin and that things can necessarily return to the way they were before the sin. If a pastor commits adultery, for example, we believe that he should never again hold the office of a pastor. If a girl runs off with a boy and commits fornication, she cannot regain her virginity. There are many consequences to sin in this present life. We think of David. Though he repented truly

and deeply of his sin as recorded in Psalm 51 and was forgiven by God, he suffered consequences for the rest of his life. He suffered the death of his illegitimate child, loss of respect, and the rebellion of his sons.

Discipline of Heretics

The apostle Paul warned the leaders at the church in Ephesus that false teaching would come from without and from within (Ac. 20:20-21). This warning is even more necessary in these closing days of the church age, days of great apostasy and of serious compromise even among those who claim to be Bible-believers. We must be constantly alert to this danger and deal with every false doctrine which reveals itself within the assembly. See Ephesians 4:11-14. Here Paul described false teaching as “wind.” It moves around. It is not passive. And it influences objects in its path. False doctrine cannot be ignored.

The discipline of heretics (those who cause divisions by false teaching) is described in Titus 3:9-11.

The word “heretick” is an English transliteration of the Greek word “hairetikos,” which refers to a willful alignment with error and then to the schism that the heretic makes by promoting his error. “The word ‘heresy’ originally meant ‘a choice,’ then an opinion that is the product of choice or of the will, instead of being drawn from the Divine Word. It refers to a man-made opinion. Hence the term was given as a name to departure from orthodox teaching which carried in them a breach of church unity” (G.P. Fisher, *History of Christ Doctrine*).

A true heretic is not a person who is merely ignorant of truth. If the heresy is a matter of ignorance on the part of a true believer, the individual will respond to the truth and turn from it. For example, a pastor friend was saved out of a hippie lifestyle and went to Bible college only a few months after he was saved. Soon after arriving, he saw a book in the bookstore entitled “Was Jesus God?” and in his mind he said,

“Of course, Jesus wasn’t God!” But this great heresy was only an ignorance problem, and as soon as he was taught about Christ’s deity he readily accepted it.

Verse 11 tells us that the heretic has a heart problem. He is subverted, which is the Greek word “ekstrepho,” meaning to be twisted or turned inside out. Matthew Henry says, “... [ekstrepho] is a metaphor from a building so ruined as to render it difficult if not impossible to repair and raise it up again. Real heretics have seldom been recovered to the true faith: not so much defect of judgment, as perverseness of the will, being in the case, through pride, or ambition, or self-willedness, or covetousness, or such like corruption, which therefore must be taken heed of.”

The heretic doesn’t listen in order to learn. He isn’t interested in learning; he only wants to espouse his opinions and win converts. He loves to argue.

And the heretic can be male or female. I am reminded of the following description of a woman who has caused trouble in several churches:

“One area she was trying to ‘teach’ everyone was in the area of food and medicine. She loved telling many where they are wrong in diet and how they are ‘in sin’ if they take medicines and pain killers. She had a discussion with a pastor friend about the subject of ‘Sunday school,’ proceeding to ‘teach’ him all the things that were wrong about it. She is ready to fight and argue. She would start out, ‘I have a question, because I do not know,’ then she will argue to the point of great contention. She loves to teach men.”

This is a description of a female heretic.

The heretic’s fruit is described in verse 8. Heresy results in questionings rather than settled truth. It results in contentions. It results in discussions about things that are unprofitable and vain rather than things that edify. It turns people’s attention away from solid truth to unprofitable doctrinal debates.

This bad fruit can overthrow the faith of individuals, harm families, even seriously injure or even destroy churches.

It does not matter what the heresy might be, if the fruit is after the fashion of Titus 3:8, it must be dealt with according to the principles of this passage.

The heresy might be something along the lines of conspiratorial theories or special diets. I know of churches that have been harmed by people who push such things within the body. A pastor friend's church was split by teachings about alternative health care. The man who taught these things gathered a loyal following within the church body and began attacking the pastor who was not agreeing. A friend wrote recently about a man who left a church and tries to influence the members by his heresies. He sends them DVDs about the "four blood moons" and the so-called "Protocols of Zion" and other such things. Many churches have been negatively impacted by the movies and YouTube videos produced by Steven Anderson, who promotes Replacement Theology and anti-Jewish conspiracies and denies the imminency of the Rapture, among other errors. Many churches have lost members and entire families due to these heresies. Anderson's former pastor, Stephen Nichols, says that more than 900 pastors have contacted him through the years with concerns about the man.

Titus 3 tells us how to deal with such a person, regardless of what the particular heresy might be. He is to be admonished twice. This will determine if he is a true heretic or merely ignorant. But the church is not instructed to spend a lot of time and effort in this matter if the individual does not repent. After only two admonitions, he is to be rejected.

To reject him means the church must take whatever steps are necessary so that he cannot influence the members. The passage is not limited to church members. It tells us how to deal with heretics whether or not they are church members.

- If the individual is a church member, he should be put under discipline until he repents.

- If he is not a church member, he should be forbidden to attend services and church functions, and the people should be forbidden to listen to him. If the heretic is a relative of a church member or a friend of a church member, it might be possible that the church member could have some relationship with him socially, but the heretic must not be allowed to teach his doctrine on such occasions. If the heretic persists in trying to influence any church member, that church member should refuse to have anything to do with him.

This might sound severe, but the heretic condemns himself by his self-willed commitment to error (Titus 3:11).

Discipline of Church Leaders

“Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality. Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure.”

Pastor/elders are members of the church body, and they are subject to discipline just as other members. In addition to the things we have stated above about discipline, which would apply to any church member, including a pastor, there are some important lessons in 1 Timothy 5:19-22 about the discipline of church leaders in particular:

1. It is essential that the church be very cautious about selecting and ordaining pastors (1 Ti. 5:22). This is a fundamental issue of keeping the church pure. Haste and carelessness in ordaining leaders will result in great injury to the work of God. If the congregation is careful to ordain only God-called, scripturally qualified men who have proven themselves, it will rarely need to go through the heartache of disciplining an erring pastor. And the right leaders are

necessary to create the discipling atmosphere that builds up the church spiritually.

2. Accusations must not be received against a pastor unless they can be substantiated by two or three witnesses (1 Ti. 5:19). This principle was a part of the law of Moses (De. 19:15). See also Mt. 18:16 and 2 Co. 13:1.

3. Pastors that sin in such a manner that requires discipline should be rebuked publicly (1 Ti. 5:20). This action would be occasioned by the type of sins listed in 1 Co. 5:11.

4. God's people are solemnly charged not to show partiality in these things (1 Ti. 5:21). Because of fallen human nature, it is a great and constant temptation to show partiality in judgment.

When it is necessary to discipline a pastor, the action should be led by the other pastors, or if there are no other pastors, it should be led by the deacons or other officers appointed by the congregation.

Inactive Membership

If an individual ceases to attend our services faithfully, the church leaders or appointed church workers meet with that individual to try to restore him.

If he continues to absent himself for two months, he is put on the inactive membership roll and cannot participate in the Lord's Supper, ministries, and church business.

For another three months, the church leaders continue to try to restore the individual. If that is unsuccessful, he or she is removed from the membership altogether.

According to the standard of Acts 2:42, an individual who is unfaithful is not qualified to be a New Testament church member.

Discipline and the Lords Supper

The proper exercise of the Lord's Supper is an important part of a disciplined church.

It is one of the major elements mentioned in Acts 2:42. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

Paul issued a strong warning to the church of Corinth about abusing the Lord’s Supper (1 Co. 11:20-22).

“When ye come together therefore into one place, *this* is not to eat the Lord’s supper. For in eating every one taketh before *other* his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise *you* not.”

The Lord’s Supper, rightly conducted, maintains discipline in the following ways:

- It is an occasion of remembering Christ and His atonement (1 Co. 11:24-25).

- It is an occasion of reaffirming Christ’s lordship over the believer’s lives. The word “Lord” is used eight times in 1 Co. 11:20-32.

- It is an occasion of being reminded of Christ’s imminent return (1 Co. 11:26).

- It is an occasion of solemn examination in fear of God’s chastisement (1 Co. 11:27-32). We always begin the Lord’s Supper with a time of quiet personal confession.

The Lord’s Supper is also part of the church’s disciplinary system.

“But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; **with such an one no not to eat**” (1 Co. 5:11).

The fact that the Lord’s Supper is an aspect of the church’s discipline is why the church must control who partakes of it. The church member who is under discipline cannot partake.

We practice the Lord's Supper in a separate service when only members in good standing are in attendance so that visitors are not confused and embarrassed.

I am always shocked by the practice of open communion. Some time ago I visited a church on a Sunday morning and after the sermon they had the Lord's Supper. Visitors were invited to partake, even though they were not a part of the church body and were not therefore under the church's discipline, and some of them were strangers. I quietly slipped out of the auditorium.

I believe that the church can invite select visitors to participate if they and their home churches are well known and if the host church is confident that these visitors are in good standing. This is called "close communion," and it is what we practice to some degree. We don't routinely invite visitors from other churches to partake of the Lord's Supper, but we do invite short-term missionaries and visiting preachers who are gathering with us and ministering with us on a temporary basis.

Respecting the Discipline of other Churches

Bible-believing churches should respect the discipline of other churches.

If an individual seeks membership after having been a member of another church, the receiving church should inquire about his relationship with that church. The pastor should contact the church and inquire as to whether there are any unresolved disciplinary matters.

Sadly, this is rarely done. We have disciplined members, and they have joined other Baptist churches, and not once has a pastor contacted us to inquire about that member's relationship with our church.

Church Discipline and Liberty

The Bible gives clear principles that are sufficient for every aspect of church discipline, but it does not answer every question that can be raised and does not address every situation.

The church must seek wisdom from God in each situation. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (Jas. 1:5).

The Spirit of God knows the motives and secrets of each heart, and He alone can give wisdom about how to handle disciplinary matters.

The church does not have authority to ignore or disobey any clear teaching about discipline, but it must always seek the mind of the Lord and proceed with godly wisdom.

This is why it is important not to be hasty.

Thus, no book on church discipline can or should try to answer every question that can be asked on this subject. The church leaders must walk in fellowship with the Lord of the Harvest and seek His mind for every situation.

Questions Answered on Church Discipline

Following are some questions on church discipline that are not answered in the previous studies. These are questions that are commonly asked today about discipline, or that were sent to us by readers.

QUESTION: “Isn’t church discipline a judgmental thing? Christ Himself said, ‘Judge not that ye be not judged.’”

Many churches avoid discipline so as not to appear “judgmental,” but this is a matter of isolating Scripture rather than comparing Scripture with Scripture.

We must understand that there are different kinds of “judging.”

The judging that Christ forbade in Matthew 7:1-5 is *hypocritical judgment*. He made this very clear in the context. This is an important teaching that we need to take to heart. It is easy to be a hypocrite and to judge others in a more severe way than we judge ourselves. To forbid something in another person that I allow in my own life is hypocrisy, and it is a great and deep-seated sin. To tell my children not to smoke when I smoke or to be kind to others when I am not kind to them or to their mother, or for a mother to tell her children to obey her when she doesn’t obey her husband, is hypocrisy. This is the type of thing that Christ was warning about.

This is not to say, though, that Christ forbade judging in general. That is evident from the context. In the same sermon, Christ taught us to beware of false teachers (Matthew 7:15-17), which requires judging the lives and teaching of preachers by God’s Word to see if they are true or false. And in the same sermon, Christ taught us to beware of false Christians, which requires judging the true from the

false (Matthew 7:21-23). Elsewhere, Christ instructed us to “judge righteous judgment” (John 7:24).

The New Testament epistles require the churches to judge sin (1 Corinthians 5:3, 12). That is not a suggestion; it is a commandment of God. When a church exercises discipline, it is not exercising its own judgment; it is exercising God’s judgment.

(For more on this see the free eBook *The Judge Not Heresy*, available from www.wayoflife.org.)

QUESTION: “Some churches have abused discipline and have caused a lot of harm.”

Chuck Lawless observes, “For those churches that *have* done discipline, the memories of poorly done discipline seem to last long. They remember confrontation, judgment, heartache, and division--with apparently no attempt to produce repentance and reconciliation” (“12 Reasons Churches Don’t Practice Church Discipline,” Apr. 9, 2015, Thomrainer.com).

The simple answer, of course, is that the wrong practice of discipline does not discount sound church discipline. Man has misused and corrupted every teaching and practice taught in Scripture, but this does not mean that we should stop trying to obey God.

Church discipline is no light or small matter. It must be practiced in the context of a sound New Testament church built on a sure biblical foundation and led by qualified men of God.

Otherwise, it can indeed cause more harm than good.

QUESTION: “Do you treat a person that is a regular attender to the church, but is not a church member the same way in church discipline, or a little different?”

Church discipline is for members of the congregation, but there are occasions in which the church must deal with non-members in ways that are similar to discipline.

For example, a young man who was visiting our church regularly but isn't saved was found out to have been fornicating with a 20-year-old church member. He had known her from before he began attending the church. No one was greatly surprised at the matter, as the young woman has not shown a lot of spiritual zeal and has had improper relationships with boys in the past (though these were not proven to have included fornication). But in this case she expressed repentance, and we put her under disciplinary probation until her repentance is perfectly clear, which is not a set time. During that time she can't take the Lord's Supper or give testimonies or serve in any ministry, but she can attend church and converse with the members. In fact, faithful church attendance is part of the way that she shows her repentance.

As for the non-member, we warned him that if we hear that he has had any further contact with her or with any other girl in the church, he will not be allowed to attend services at our church or have anything further to do with our people, and we will do our best to enforce it. In other words, he can use our church to seek the Lord, and we will do everything we can to help him in that, but he can't use our church as a facility to seek girls.

QUESTION: “What are your thoughts on exercising church discipline on a teenager that is still at home under his parents' authority? Is there a place for 'church discipline' if the parents exercise discipline with their child in the home? Or, should the church just go ahead with the process of church discipline no matter what the parents do or do not do in discipling their children? In most of our church constitutions a person cannot be a full voting member of the church till over 18yrs, does this mean that we can't exercise discipline because they are a 'minor' and not a full voting member of the church? I am asking in the context of older children (15-18 yrs). They are at that age where they are exercising their wills & wanting to do their

own thing. I am speaking of things such as general self-will and rebellion in attitude in the home and going against parental wishes in having an unsaved boy friend/girl friend. The ‘heart’ of my question is, at what point is ‘parental authority’ in dealing with a wayward child taken over by ‘church discipline’ in addressing the sin within an ‘older’ child?”

For one thing, I believe that if we are more careful about baptism and church membership, we can avoid some of these problems (though certainly not all). I believe that if we follow the pattern given in Acts 2:41-42, this will solve many issues. In our churches, we don't baptize anyone who does not give clear evidence of salvation and who is not ready and able to continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers. Here we have both the evidence of salvation and God's requirement for church membership, and it doesn't describe a child and it doesn't describe a teenager with a testimony that is iffy at best. We have found that by being more careful in this matter we won't have as many cases of rebellious teenage church members (or older ones, either).

In my opinion, the evidence for salvation is more clear when the person is old enough to start making his or her own decisions and thereby show his true heart. A younger child typically wants to please his parents and other adults in his life, so his motives are not very clear. Of course, if the child shows submission to authority and an independent love for God's Word and a personal relationship with the Lord, that is good evidence. Still, I don't think we are obligated to baptize a child until he meets the biblical requirement which is most clearly given in Acts 2. That is a position I have gradually come to over the years. I think it is not only Scriptural, but it is a safe position both for the child and for the church. It helps avoid the problem of a child making multiple professions, as often happens. Since baptism is not necessary for salvation, we are not discouraging any child from coming

to Christ for salvation. We are only dealing with the issue of baptism and church membership, and I don't see the example of child baptism in Scripture.

This means that we don't baptize and receive into membership until the teen years and then only when things are very clear in that individual's life. We receive them into full membership the same day we baptize them.

We have dealt with these things extensively in the book *The Discipling Church: The Church That Will Be Standing until Christ Comes*.

As for church discipline toward a teen who is showing rebellion in the home, in my estimation that would depend on what form the rebellion took. If the teen is doing something that would fall under Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:11; and 2 Thessalonians 3:14, then the church should take action as well as the family. But if it does not rise to the type of situation described in these Bible passages, then the family should do the discipline and the church should back the family up in every way possible.

We recently disciplined a 16-year-old girl after she ran off with an 18-year-old Hindu. Her parents are members of the church, and they supported the discipline, but we would have proceeded with the discipline regardless of what the parents did in the case, because we are required by Scripture to do so.

QUESTION: "If a young person is involved in an unequally yoked relationship and has publicly posted pictures of an unholy lifestyle on social media, does that young person become illegible for church discipline? He has been approached several times concerning his sin and is unrepentant. His parents kicked him out of home. Does the church still need to take action? He is around 18-20 years old. He now comes to church only spasmodically, but his Facebook page still influences many of the young people in the church. He grew up in the church and now is come of age and has rebelled."

Anyone who is a church member is under the church's discipline, regardless of age.

In the case you described, that young person is committing things the Bible describes as unholy, is negatively influencing other church youth, and is bringing reproach upon the testimony of Christ in the community.

Open rebellion against parental authority and a worldly lifestyle is definitely a cause for church discipline. God labels the love of the world spiritual adultery (James 4:4).

The church should act so that everyone, both in and out of the church, will see that the church stands for holiness. To me, it is disgraceful that young people like that are allowed to continue as church members with no serious action. At the very least, they should be removed from the church membership in a very public way.

QUESTION: "I know of a situation which took place years ago where a church was proceeding to discipline a woman that committed adultery with the pastor of that time. The pastor confessed his sin & was dealt with by the church scripturally, but the woman threatened to take the 'church to court' if they disciplined her. As a result, the church did not proceed with discipline."

As for threatened lawsuits, it is a matter of obeying the Lord and trusting the Lord for the consequences. The church must fear God more than man. 1 Corinthians 5:4 is a promise that Christ is with the church that exercises discipline. And Matthew 18:18 indicates that the Lord stands behind a church's discipline.

The church should also take any necessary legal steps to protect itself, particularly in America, which is one of the most litigious nations on earth.

The following pages describe some of these steps:

<http://www.brotherhoodmutual.com/index.cfm/resources/ministry-safety/article/responding-to-lawsuits-arising-from-church-discipline/>

<http://whiteheadlawllc.com/legal-issues-surrounding-church-discipline/>

<https://www.9marks.org/article/informed-consent-biblical-and-legal-protection-church-discipline/>

QUESTION: “With the option of ‘resignation’ from membership, we give people an easy way out of accountability to the local church. I have had situations where I have moved to apply church discipline only to have the individual ‘resign their membership.’”

As for people quitting the church to avoid discipline, the Bible doesn’t address it specifically, and I believe that each church can follow the Lord’s leading in such cases, meaning in cases in which the Bible doesn’t clearly speak. Bible silence is liberty.

I can see cases when discipline should proceed, and cases when it should be dropped. Again, it is the Holy Spirit who can and will give wisdom in every case, as long as we make sure that we are first following every clear teaching in the Bible.

Just because an individual leaves the church and “resigns” his membership does not mean that the church cannot proceed with the discipline, since nowhere does the Bible give a church member the authority to resign when he is facing discipline.

QUESTION: “What should a church do about someone who visits from time to time who is *not* a member, but there is a danger he could have a negative influence? We have a man visits our church from time to time when he is in the area to visit a relative who is a church member. Because of past actions there is concern that he could have a negative influence on our members.”

The Bible gives every principle that is needed for every situation that will arise in the church (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

The Bible addresses the issue of the heretic (Titus 3:9-11), which refers to someone who causes schism through false

teaching. The word “heretick” is an English transliteration of the Greek word “hairtikos,” which refers to a willful alignment with error and then to the schism that the heretic makes by promoting his error. Verse 11 tells us that the heretic has a heart problem. He is subverted, which is the Greek word “ekstrepho,” meaning to be twisted or turned inside out.

The heretic’s fruit is described in verse 8, which is foolish questions, contentions, and conversation that is unprofitable and vain. The fruit of the heretic is the opposite of spiritual edification.

Regardless of what the heretick is teaching (whether a denial of Christ’s deity or gibberish tongues speaking or an “alternative” health program) and thereby causing contention and unprofitable fruit, this passage tells us how to deal with such a person. He is to be admonished twice. This will determine if he is a true heretic or merely ignorant. If he is not a true heretic, he will heed the admonition and turn from his error.

But the church is not instructed to spend a lot of time and effort in this matter if the individual does not repent. God’s Word says that after two admonitions, he is to be rejected.

The rejection involves taking whatever steps are necessary so that the individual does not influence the members negatively. The passage is not limited to heretics within the church membership. If the individual is a church member, he should be put under discipline until he repents. If he is not a church member, he should be forbidden to attend services and church functions, and the people should be forbidden to listen to his heresies.

If the heretic is a relative or close friend of a church member, it might be possible that the church member could have some relationship with him socially, but the heretic must not be allowed to teach his doctrine on such occasions.

Another way that the church rejects the heretic is by carefully and thoroughly instructing the members so that they are not susceptible to the heretic's error.

God tells us that the heretic condemns himself. The church does not condemn him. He has condemned himself by choosing and cleaving to error.

QUESTION: “What do you do if the Church is divided on a particular issue in respect to the person being disciplined?”

This is an important question.

The short answer is that the leaders should try to find a way to achieve unity in the matter.

Tools for this include a lot of fervent prayer, Bible teaching and reproof, and private meetings with all of the parties concerned.

If the church remains divided, should the leaders proceed with the discipline? The answer is that we must obey God rather than man. If it is a clear matter that requires discipline according to God's Word, the leaders must find a way to proceed.

This question reminds us again that church discipline must be done within an atmosphere of a discipling church. Effectual church discipline requires such things as the following: being very careful about evangelism, caution in receiving members (including the requirement that every individual that is received exhibit one mind with the church, 1 Co. 1:10), a strong and thorough-going Bible preaching/teaching ministry, a deep and effectual prayer life, building godly homes, and serious discipling of the youth.

These are the type of things that create and sustain true spiritual unity so that when the church needs to practice corrective discipline there is one mind.

The church must be properly and continually educated on all issues that it will face. For church discipline to be effectual, it cannot be the subject of one or two sermons when a crisis

arises. It must be an integral part of the very fabric of the church's thinking. Then when corrective discipline is required, the church is prepared and unified.

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The eBooks are designed and formatted to work well on a variety of applications/devices, but not all apps/devices are equal. Some allow the user to control appearance and layout of the book while some don't even show italics! For best reading pleasure, please choose your reading app carefully.

For some suggestions, see the reports "iPads, Kindles, eReaders, and Way of Life Materials," at www.wayoflife.org/database/ebook.html and "About eBooks, eReaders, and Reading Apps" at www.wayoflife.org/help/ebooks.php.

Publications for These Times

Following is a selection of the titles published by Way of Life Literature. The books are available in both print and eBook editions (PDF, Kindle, ePub). The materials can be ordered via the online catalog at the Way of Life web site -- www.wayoflife.org -- or by phone 866-295-4143.

BIBLE TIMES AND ANCIENT KINGDOMS: TREASURES FROM ARCHAEOLOGY. ISBN 978-1-58318-121-8. This is a package consisting of a book and a series of PowerPoint and Keynote (Apple) presentations which are a graphical edition of the book. The PowerPoints are packed with high quality color photos, drawings, historic recreations, and video clips. Bible Times and Ancient Kingdoms is a course on Bible geography, Bible culture, and Bible history and has a two-fold objective: to present apologetic evidence for the Bible and to give background material to help the student better understand the setting of Bible history. We cover this fascinating history from Genesis to the New Testament, dealing with the Table of the Nations in Genesis 10, the Tower of Babel, Ur of the Chaldees, Egypt, Baal worship, the Philistines, the Canaanites, David's palace, Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Ahab and Jezebel, the fall of the northern kingdom of Israel, the Assyrian Empire, Hezekiah and his times, Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylon, the Medo-Persian Empire, Herod the Great and his temple, the Roman rule over Israel, and the Roman destruction of Jerusalem. Many of the archaeological discoveries from the past 200 years, which we relate in the course, are so fascinating and improbable that they read like a novel. It is easy to see God's hand in this field, in spite of its prevailing skepticism. The course also deals with Bible culture, such as weights and measures, plant and animal life, Caesar's coin, the widow's mite, ancient scrolls and seals, phylacteries, cosmetics, tombs, and the operation of ancient lamps, millstones, pottery wheels, and olive presses. The course begins with an overview of Israel's geography and a timeline of Bible history to give the student a framework for better understanding the material. Each section includes maps to help the student place the events in their

proper location. The course is packed with important but little-known facts that illuminate Bible history and culture. The preparation for the book is extensive, the culmination of 40 years of Bible study, teaching, and research trips. In this context the author built a large personal library and collected information from major archaeological museums and locations in North America, England, Europe, Turkey, and Israel. We guarantee that the student who completes the course will read the Bible with new eyes and fresh enthusiasm. 500 pages book + DVD containing 19 PowerPoint presentations packed with more than 3,200 high quality color photos, drawings, historic recreations, and video clips.

THE FUTURE ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE. ISBN 978-1-58318-172-0. One of the many reasons why the Bible is the most amazing and exciting book on earth is its prophecies. The Bible unfolds the future in great detail, and *The Future According to the Bible* deals in depth with every major prophetic event, including the Rapture, the Judgment Seat of Christ, the Tribulation, the Antichrist, Gog and Magog, the Battle of Armageddon, the Two Witnesses, Christ's Return, Muslim nations in prophecy, the Judgment of the Nations, the resurrection body, the conversion of Israel, the highway of the redeemed, Christ's glorious kingdom, the Millennial Temple, the Great White Throne judgment, and the New Jerusalem. The first two chapters deal at length with the amazing prophecies that are being fulfilled today and with the church-age apostasy. Knowledge of these prophecies is essential for a proper understanding of the times and a proper Christian worldview today. The 130-page section on Christ's kingdom describes the coming world kingdom in more detail than any book we are familiar with. Every major Messianic prophecy is examined. Prophecy is a powerful witness to the Bible's divine inspiration, and it is a great motivator for holy Christian living. In this book we show that the Lord's churches are outposts of the coming kingdom. The believer's position in Christ's earthly kingdom will be determined by his service in this present world (Revelation 2:26-27; 3:21). The book is based on forty years of intense Bible study plus firsthand research in Israel, Turkey, and Europe.

BAPTIST MUSIC WARS. ISBN 978-1-58318-179-9. This book is a warning about the transformational power of Contemporary Christian Music to transport Bible-believing Baptists into the sphere of the end-time one-world “church.” The author is a musician, preacher, and writer who lived the rock & roll “hippy” lifestyle before conversion and has researched this issue for 40 years. We don’t believe that good Christian music stopped being written when Fanny Crosby died or that rhythm is wrong or that drums and guitars are inherently evil. We believe, rather, that Contemporary Christian Music is a powerful bridge to a very dangerous spiritual and doctrinal world. The book begins by documenting the radical change in thinking that has occurred among independent Baptists. Whereas just a few years ago the overwhelming consensus was that CCM was wrong and dangerous, the consensus now has formed around the position that CCM can be used in moderation, that it is OK to “adapt” it to a more traditional sacred sound and presentation technique. The more “conservative” contemporary worship artists such as the Gettys are considered safe and their music is sung widely in churches and included in new hymnals published by independent Baptists. As usual, the driving force behind this change is the example set by prominent leaders, churches, and schools, which we identify in this volume. The heart of the book is the section giving eight reasons for rejecting Contemporary Christian Music (it is built on the lie that music is neutral, it is worldly, it is ecumenical, it is charismatic, it is experienced-oriented, it is permeated with false christs, it is infiltrated with homosexuality, and it weakens the Biblicist stance of a church) and the section answering 39 major arguments that are used in defense of CCM. We deal with the popular argument that since we have selectively used hymns by Protestants we should also be able to selectively use those by contemporary hymn writers. There are also chapters on the history of CCM and the author’s experience of living the rock & roll lifestyle before conversion and how the Lord dealt with him about music in the early months of his Christian life. The book is accompanied by a DVD containing two video presentations: *The Transformational Power of Contemporary Praise Music* and *The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music*. 285 pages.

BELIEVER'S BIBLE DICTIONARY. This volume, the product of forty years of study, is based upon the King James Bible and is written from a dispensational, Baptist perspective. The studies are thorough, practical, devotional, and designed to be used by preachers, teachers, and homeschoolers. The *Believer's Bible Dictionary* is designed to be more affordable and transportable than the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity*. We encourage every believer, young and old, to have his own Bible dictionary and to have it right beside his Bible as he studies, and we are convinced that this is one of the best Bible dictionaries available today. There are eight ways it can help you: (1) **It can help you understand the Bible.** The first requirement for understanding the Bible is to understand its words. (2) **It can help you understand out-of-use words and phrases from the King James Bible,** such as blood guiltiness, die the death, and superfluity of naughtiness. (3) **It can help you to do topical studies.** The student can study the full range of Bible doctrines by following the thousands of cross references from entry to entry. (4) **It can help you to study issues relating to morality and practical Christian living,** such as capital punishment, child training, cremation, and divorce. (5) **It can help you to study Old Testament types of Christ,** such as day of atonement, high priest, Melchizedek, passover, and tabernacle. (6) **It can help you to find the meaning of Bible customs and ancient culture,** such as agriculture, idolatry, military, money, music, and weights and measures. (7) **It can help you to study Bible places and geography,** such as Assyria, Babylon, Caesarea, Ephesus, and Jordan River. (8) **It can help you in preaching and teaching.** The doctrinal material in this dictionary is presented in a practical manner with outlines that can be used for teaching and preaching, in the pulpit, Sunday Schools, Bible Colleges and Institutes, home schools, family devotions, prisons and jails, nursing homes, etc. Missionary author Jack Moorman calls the dictionary "excellent" and says, "The entries show a 'distilled spirituality.'" Second edition May 2015. 385 pages.

THE DISCIPLING CHURCH: THE CHURCH THAT WILL STAND UNTIL JESUS COMES. New for March 2017. This church planting manual aims to establish churches on a solid biblical foundation of a regenerate church membership, one mind in

doctrine and practice, serious discipleship, thorough-going discipline, and a large vision for world evangelism. We examine the New Testament pattern of a discipling church, and we trace the history of Baptist churches over the past 200 years to document the apostasy away from the biblical pattern to a mixed multitude philosophy. We also document the history of “sinner’s prayer” evangelism which has affected the reality of a regenerate church membership. The book deals with biblical salvation with evidence, care in receiving church members, the church’s essential first love for Christ, the right kind of church leaders, the right kind of preaching, training church members to be Bible students, the many facets of church discipline, building strong families, youth ministry, training preachers, charity, reproof, educating the church for spiritual protection, maintaining standards for workers, the church’s prayer life, the church’s separation, spiritual revival, the church’s music, and many other things. The last chapter documents some of the cultural factors that have weakened churches over the past 100 years, including the theological liberalism, public school system, materialism and working mothers, the rock & roll pop culture, pop psychology, the feminist movement, New Evangelicalism, television, and the Internet. There is also a list of recommended materials for a discipling church. 550 pages.

THE EFFECTUAL BIBLE STUDENT. This is a 12-hour series of video presentations plus an accompanying textbook containing a detailed outline to the course. It is our goal and passion to help God’s people, including teenagers, become effectual Bible students. The course, which is the product of 40 years of Bible study and teaching, has life-changing potential. It has four major sections: (1) The spiritual requirements for effectual Bible study, (2) tips for daily Bible study, (3) principles of Bible interpretation, and (4) how to use Bible study tools. It also deals with using Bible study software on a computer, a tablet, or a smartphone. It is a package consisting of the videos of the course and the textbook with review questions for testing. The course notes can be used as a standalone tool by teachers to teach church classes and home schooling programs or can be used for self-study. The package can be purchased as a set of 6 DVDs and a textbook, or it can be downloaded for free from www.wayoflife.org.

KEEPING THE KIDS: HOW TO KEEP THE CHILDREN FROM FALLING PREY TO THE WORLD. ISBN 978-1-58318-115-7. This book aims to help parents and churches raise children to be disciples of Jesus Christ and to avoid the pitfalls of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The book is a collaborative effort. It contains testimonies from hundreds of individuals who provided feedback to our questionnaires on this subject, as well as powerful ideas gleaned from interviews with pastors, missionaries, and church people who have raised godly children. The book is packed with practical suggestions and deals with many issues: Conversion, the husband-wife relationship, the necessity of permeating the home with Christian love, mothers as keepers at home, the father's role as the spiritual head of the home, child discipline, separation from the pop culture, discipleship of youth, the grandparents' role, effectual prayer and fasting. Chapter titles include the following: "Conversion," "The Home: Consistent Christian Living and the Husband-Wife Relationship," "Child Discipline," "The Church," "Unplugging from the Pop Culture," "Discipleship," "The Grandparents," "Grace and the Power of Prayer." 531 pages.

THE MOBILE PHONE AND THE CHRISTIAN HOME AND CHURCH. ISBN 978-1-58318-198-0. Many Christian homes and churches are losing a frightful percentage of their young people to the world. This practical and far-reaching youth discipleship course deals with the parent's part, the church's part, and the youth's part in discipling young people. It covers salvation, child discipline, the Christian home environment that produces disciples, reaching the child's heart, Bible study techniques, how to protect young people from dangers associated with the Internet and smartphones, how to use apologetics, and many other things. The section on building a wall of protection deals with such things as having a basic home phone that teens can use under parental oversight, using filters and accountability software, controlling passwords and apps, the power of pornography, the dangers of *Facebook* and video games, avoiding conversation with members of the opposite sex, and monitoring the young person's attitude. The course explains how the church and the home can work together in youth discipleship. It describes the characteristic of a church that produces youth disciples, such as having qualified

leaders, officers, and teachers, maintaining biblical standards for workers, being careful about salvation, being uncompromising about separation from the world, building godly homes, discipline, prayer, and vision. It deals with how to train young people to be effective Bible students and how to involve them in the church's ministry. Finally, the course deals with eleven biblical principles of spiritual protection that young people must build into their own lives. These are living to please the Lord, living by the law of the Spirit, practicing humility, pursuing Christian growth, pursuing edification and ministry, pursuing honesty, practicing vigilance and separation, pursuing pure speech, redeeming the time, pursuing temperance, and obeying and honoring one's parents. 200 pages. The *Mobile Phone* youth discipleship course can be downloaded as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.

MUSIC FOR GOOD OR EVIL. This video series, which is packed with photos, video and audio clips, has eight segments. **I. Biblical Principles of Good Christian Music.** **II. Why We Reject Contemporary Christian Music.** It is worldly, addictive, ecumenical, charismatic, shallow and man-centered, opposed to preaching, experience-oriented, and it weakens the strong biblicist stance of a church. **III. The Sound of Contemporary Christian Music.** In this section we give the believer simple tools that he can use to discern the difference between sensual and sacred music. We deal with syncopated dance styles, sensual vocal styles, relativistic styles, and overly soft styles that do not fit the message. **IV. The Transformational Power of Contemporary Worship Music.** We show why CCM is able to transform a "traditional" Bible-believing church into a New Evangelical contemporary one. Its transformational power resides in its enticing philosophy of "liberty" and in its sensual, addictive music. We use video and audio to illustrate the sound of contemporary worship. **V. Southern Gospel.** We deal with the history of Southern Gospel, its character, its influence, and the role of the Gaithers in its renaissance. This section is packed with audio, video, and photos. **VI. Marks of Good Song Leading.** There is a great need for proper training of song leaders today, and in this segment we deal with the following eight principles: Leadership, preparation, edification, spirituality, spiritual discernment, wisdom in song selection, diversity. One thing we emphasize is the need to sing worship

songs that turn the people's focus directly to God. We give dozens of examples of worship songs that are found in standard hymnals used by Bible-believing churches, but typically these are not sung properly as "unto God." **VII. Questions Answered on Contemporary Christian Music.** We answer 15 of the most common questions on this subject, such as the following: Is rhythm wrong? Isn't this issue just a matter of different taste? Isn't the sincerity of the musicians the important thing? Isn't some CCM acceptable? Didn't Luther and the Wesleys use tavern music? What is the difference between using contemporary worship hymns and using old Protestant hymns? **VIII. The Foreign Spirit of Contemporary Worship Music.** This presentation documents the frightful spiritual compromise, heresy, and apostasy that permeate the field of contemporary praise. Through extensive documentation, it proves that contemporary worship music is controlled by "another spirit" (2 Cor. 11:4). It is the spirit of charismaticism, the spirit of the "latter rain," the spirit of Roman Catholicism and the one-world "church," the spirit of the world that is condemned by 1 John 2:16, the spirit of homosexuality, and the spirit of the false god of *The Shack*. The presentation looks carefully at the origin of contemporary worship in the Jesus Movement of the 1970s, examining the lives and testimonies of some of the most influential people. 5 DVDs.

ONE YEAR DISCIPLESHIP COURSE, ISBN 978-1-58318-117-1. This powerful course features 52 lessons in Christian living. It can be broken into sections and used as a new converts' course, an advanced discipleship course, a Sunday School series, a Home Schooling or Bible Institute course, or for preaching outlines. The lessons are thorough, meaty, and very practical. There is an extensive memory verse program built into the course, and each lesson features carefully designed review questions. Following are some of the lesson titles (some subjects feature multiple lessons): Repentance, Faith, The Gospel, Baptism, Eternal Security, Position and Practice, The Law and the New Testament Christian, Christian Growth and Victory, Prayer, The Armor of God, The Church, The Bible, The Bible's Proof, Daily Bible Study, Key Principles of Bible Interpretation, Foundational Bible Words, Knowing God's Will, Making Wise Decisions, Christ's Great Commission, Suffering in the Christian Life, The Judgment Seat of

Christ, Separation - Moral, Separation - Doctrinal, Tests of Entertainment, Fasting, Miracles, A Testing Mindset, Tongues Speaking, The Rapture, How to Be Wise with Your Money, The Believer and Drinking, Abortion, Evolution, Dressing for the Lord. 8.5X11, coated cover, spiral-bound. 221 pages.

THE PENTECOSTAL-CHARISMATIC MOVEMENTS: THE HISTORY AND THE ERROR. ISBN 1-58318-099-0. The 5th edition of this book, November 2014, is significantly enlarged and revised throughout. The Pentecostal-charismatic movement is one of the major building blocks of the end-time, one-world “church,” and young people in particular need to be informed and forewarned. The author was led to Christ by a Pentecostal in 1973 and has researched the movement ever since. He has built a large library on the subject, interviewed influential Pentecostals and charismatics, and attended churches and conferences with media credentials in many parts of the world. The book deals with the history of Pentecostalism beginning at the turn of the 20th century, the Latter Rain Covenant, major Pentecostal healing evangelists, the Sharon Schools and the New Order of the Latter Rain, Manifest Sons of God, the charismatic movement, the Word-Faith movement, the Roman Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the Pentecostal prophets, the Third Wave, and recent Pentecostal and charismatic scandals. The book deals extensively with the theological errors of the Pentecostal-charismatic movements (exalting experience over Scripture, emphasis on the miraculous, the continuation of Messianic and apostolic miracles and sign gifts, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the baptism of fire, tongues speaking, physical healing guaranteed in the atonement, spirit slaying, spirit drunkenness, visions of Jesus, trips to heaven, women preachers, and ecumenism). The final section of the book answers the question: “Why are people deluded by Pentecostal-Charismatic error?” David and Tami Lee, former Pentecostals, after reviewing a section of the book said: “Very well done! We pray God will use it to open the eyes of many and to help keep many of His children out of such deception.” A former charismatic said, “The book is excellent and I have no doubt whatever that the Lord is going to use it in a mighty way. Amen!!” 487 pages.

A PORTRAIT OF CHRIST: THE TABERNACLE, THE PRIESTHOOD, AND THE OFFERINGS. ISBN 978-1-58318-178-2. This book is an extensive study on the Old Testament tabernacle and its priestly system, which has been called "God's masterpiece of typology." Whereas the record of the creation of the universe takes up two chapters of the Bible and the fall of man takes up one chapter, the tabernacle, with its priesthood and offerings, takes up 50 chapters. It is obvious that God has many important lessons for us in this portion of His Word. Speaking personally, nothing has helped me better understand the Triune God and the salvation that He has purchased for man, and I believe that I can guarantee that the reader will be taken to new heights in his understanding of these things. Everything about the tabernacle points to Jesus Christ: the design, the materials, the colors, the court walls and pillars, the door into the court, the sacrificial altar, the laver, the tabernacle tent itself with its boards and curtains and silver sockets, the tabernacle gate, and veil before the holy of holies, the candlestick, the table of shewbread, the incense altar, the ark of the covenant, the high priest, and the offerings. All is Christ. The tabernacle system offers brilliant, unforgettable lessons on Christ's person, offices and work: His eternal Sonship, His sinless manhood, His anointing, His atonement, His resurrection glory, His work as the life and sustainer and light of creation, His eternal high priesthood and intercession, and His kingdom. In addition to the studies on every aspect of the tabernacle, *A Portrait of Christ* features studies on the high priest, the Levitical priests, the five offerings of Leviticus, the day of atonement, the ransom money, the red heifer, the cherubims, strange fire, the golden calf, leprosy, the Nazarite vow, the pillar of cloud and pillar of fire, and the transportation of the tabernacle through the wilderness. The tabernacle is very practical in its teaching, as it also depicts believer priests carrying Christ through this world (1 Pet. 2:5, 9). Like the Israelites in the wilderness, believers today are on a pilgrimage through a foreign land on the way to our eternal home (1 Pet. 2:11). Don Jasmin, editor of the *Fundamentalist Digest* says, "This new book on the Tabernacle constitutes the 21st-century classic treatise of this rich theme." 420 pages.

SEEING THE NON-EXISTENT: EVOLUTION'S MYTHS AND HOAXES. ISBN 1-58318-002-8. This book is designed both as a stand alone title as well as a companion to the apologetics course *AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH*. The contents are as follows: Canals on Mars, Charles Darwin and His Granddaddy, Thomas Huxley: Darwin's Bulldog, Ernst Haeckel: Darwin's German Apostle, Icons of Evolution, Icons of Creation, The Ape-men, Predictions, Questions for Evolutionists, Darwinian Gods, Darwin's Social Influence. The **ICONS OF EVOLUTION** that we refute include mutations, the fossil record, homology, the peppered moth, Darwin's finches, the fruit fly, vestigial organs, the horse series, the embryo chart, the Miller experiment, Archaeopteryx, bacterial resistance, the big bang, and billions of years. The **ICONS OF CREATION** that we examine include the monarch butterfly, the trilobite, the living cell, the human eye, the human brain, the human hand, blood clotting, the bird's flight feathers, bird migration, bird song, harmony and symbiosis, sexual reproduction, living technology, the dragonfly, the bee, and the bat. The section on **APE-MEN** deals with Cro-Magnon, Neanderthal, Java Man, Piltdown Man, Nebraska Man, Peking Man, Lucy, Ardi, Ida, among others. The section on **PREDICTIONS** considers 29 predictions made by Biblical creationism, such as the universe will behave according to established laws, the universe will be logical, and there will be a vast unbridgeable gulf between man and the animal kingdom. **DARWINIAN GODS** takes a look at inventions that evolutionists have devised to avoid divine Creation, such as panspermia and aliens, self-organization, and the multiverse. 608 pages.

SOWING AND REAPING: A COURSE IN EVANGELISM. ISBN 978-1-58318-169-0. This course is unique in several ways. *It is unique in its approach.* While it is practical and down-to-earth, it does not present a formulaic approach to soul winning, recognizing that individuals have to be dealt with as individuals. The course does not include any sort of psychological manipulation techniques. It does not neglect repentance in soul winning, carefully explaining the biblical definition of repentance and the place of repentance in personal evangelism. It explains how to use the law of God to plow the soil of the human heart so that the gospel can find good ground. *The course is unique in its*

objective. The objective of biblical soul winning is not to get people to “pray a sinner’s prayer”; the objective is to see people soundly converted to Christ. This course trains the soul winner to pursue genuine conversions as opposed to mere “decisions.” *The course is also unique in its breadth.* It covers a wide variety of situations, including how to deal with Hindus and with skeptics and how to use apologetics or evidences in evangelism. There is a memory course consisting of 111 select verses and links to a large number of resources that can be used in evangelism, many of them free. The course is suitable for teens and adults and for use in Sunday School, Youth Ministries, Preaching, and private study. **OUTLINE:** The Message of Evangelism, Repentance and Evangelism, God’s Law and Evangelism, The Reason for Evangelism, The Authority for Evangelism, The Power for Evangelism, The Attitude in Evangelism, The Technique of Evangelism, Using Tracts in Evangelism, Dealing with Skeptics. 104 pages, 8x11, spiral bound.

THINGS HARD TO BE UNDERSTOOD: A HANDBOOK OF BIBLICAL DIFFICULTIES. ISBN 1-58318-002-8. This volume deals with a variety of biblical difficulties. Find the answer to the seeming contradictions in the Bible. Meet the challenge of false teachers who misuse biblical passages to prove their doctrine. Find out the meaning of difficult passages that are oftentimes overlooked in the Bible commentaries. Be confirmed in your confidence in the inerrancy and perfection of the Scriptures and be able to refute the skeptics. Learn the meaning of difficult expressions such as “the unpardonable sin.” A major objective of this volume is to protect God’s people from the false teachers that abound in these last days. For example, we examine verses misused by Seventh-day Adventists, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, and others to support their heresies. We deal with things such as the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, cremation, head coverings, did Jesus die on Friday, God’s repentance, healing in the atonement, losing one’s salvation, sinless perfectionism, soul sleep, and the Trinity. Jerry Huffman, editor of *Calvary Contender*, testified: “You don’t have to agree with everything to greatly benefit from this helpful book.” In researching and writing this book, the author consulted roughly 500 volumes, old and new, that deal with biblical difficulties and the various other subjects addressed in *Things Hard to Be Understood*. This one volume, therefore,

represents the essence of a sizable library. Sixth edition Feb. 2014, enlarged and completely revised, 441 pages.

AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH: A CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS COURSE. ISBN 978-1-58318-119-5. The course is built upon nearly 40 years of serious Bible study and 30 years of apologetics writing. Research was done in the author's personal 6,000-volume library plus in major museums and other locations in America, England, Europe, Australia, Asia, and the Middle East. The package consists of an apologetics course entitled *AN UNSHAKEABLE FAITH* (both print and eBook editions) plus an extensive series of Powerpoint/Keynote presentations. (Keynote is the Apple version of Powerpoint.) The 1,800 PowerPoint slides deal with archaeology, evolution/creation science, and the prophecies pertaining to Israel's history. The material in the 360-page course is extensive, and the teacher can decide whether to use all of it or to select only some portion of it for his particular class and situation. After each section there are review questions to help the students focus on the most important points. The course can be used for private study as well as for a classroom setting. Sections include The Bible's Nature, The Bible's Proof, The Dead Sea Scrolls, The Bible's Difficulties, Historical Evidence for Jesus, Evidence for Christ's Resurrection, Archaeological Treasures Confirming the Bible, A History of Evolution, Icons of Evolution, Icons of Creation, Noah's Ark and the Global Flood.

WAY OF LIFE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE BIBLE & CHRISTIANITY. ISBN 1-58318-005-2. This hardcover Bible encyclopedia contains 640 pages (8.5x11) of information, over 6,000 entries, and over 7,000 cross-references. Twenty-five years of research went into this one-of-a-kind reference tool. It is a complete dictionary of biblical terminology and features many other areas of research not often covered in such volumes, including Bible Versions, Denominations, Cults, Christian Movements, Typology, the Church, Social issues and practical Christian living, Bible Prophecy, and Old English Terminology. It does not correct the Authorized Version of the Bible, nor does it undermine the fundamental Baptist's doctrines and practices as many study tools do. The 5th edition (October 2008) contains new entries, extensive additions to existing entries, and a complete

rewriting of the major articles. Many preachers have told us that apart from *Strong's Concordance*, the *Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia* is their favorite study tool. A missionary told us that if he could save only one study book out of his library, it would be our Bible encyclopedia. An evangelist in South Dakota wrote: "If I were going to the mission field and could carry only three books, they would be the Strong's concordance, a hymnal, and the *Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia*." Missionary author Jack Moorman says: "The encyclopedia is excellent. The entries show a 'distilled spirituality.'" 5th edition, 640 pages. A computer edition of the encyclopedia is available as a standalone eBook for PDF, Kindle, and ePub. It is also available as a module for *Swordseacher*.

Way of Life Literature

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