

Learn Your Bible

Lesson #16

Discipline is a subject that has fallen into disrepute in much of our society today. It once was an accepted principle that "Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child; The rod of discipline will remove it far from him." (Proverbs 22:15) Today the accepted principle is that if you don't hide your head in the sand, your children shall be driven far from you. "Correct not the child for he must have a natural development and experiment with all ideas of life."

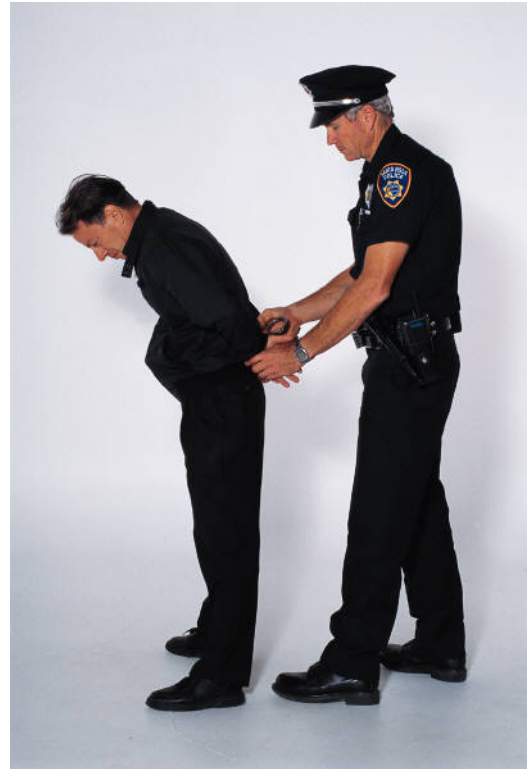
Any form of retribution is considered out of place. What right have we to judge right and wrong? We live in a free society. We must be allowed to explore all avenues...

As a result of these attitudes, crime increased by 47% in 6 years and 15% in 1974 alone. In the classrooms the students virtually dictate to the teacher their will. But they are happier... or are they? Teenage suicide rose by 92% in 2 years, during the height of the "God is dead" movement.

Nearly three thousand years ago the Bible said: "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil." (Ecclesiastes 8:11).

Paul Harvey reported 1-12-81 that in the town of Liberal, Kansas, a town of 15,000, a judge decided to give this principle of punishment of lawbreakers a try. He made a 30-day sentence mandatory for 1st time offenders of shoplifting. Previously they'd had 15-16 cases per month. Within 6 months that number was cut to 3! Most of those were outsiders who hadn't seen or didn't pay attention to the warnings posted in the stores.

Discipline in the nation, the church and the home are all interrelated. Let's consider the story of Eli. "Now the sons of Eli were worthless men; they did not know the LORD" (I Samuel 2:12)."



You'll notice here the total failure of the parent. In this life many things are important to teach our children but without teaching them about God, we fail.

"Now Eli was very old; and he heard all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting. He said to them, "Why do you do such things, the evil things that I hear from all these people? "No, my sons; for the report is not good which I hear the LORD'S people circulating. "If one man sins against another, God will mediate for him; but if a man sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?" But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for the LORD desired to put them to death." (I Samuel 2:22-25)

Notice according to God's word (Proverbs 22:15) that reasoning with a child isn't always possible. It takes correction. Eli's child had come to the point that words were futile. Children and adults alike learn if your words are going to be backed up with action. Eli had not backed up his words.



Eli had several courses of action open to him at this point; 1) he could have cut them off from the priesthood (probably the minimum action called for in this case) 2) disowned them as sons 3) had them stoned as rebellious sons.

Today we forget how strongly our Lord believes in and demands discipline! Notice, "If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them, then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his hometown. "They shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.' "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear {of it} and fear.." (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) It is important to notice this wasn't condoning child abuse in anger or otherwise. It was to be administered by the old men of the city after all other hope had been exhausted.

Eli's failure to administer discipline is described by God. He said to Eli you "honor your sons above Me," (I Samuel 2:29) and that "those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed." (I Samuel 2:30).

God appeared to Samuel and said, "Behold, I am about to do a thing in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle." (I Samuel 3:11). He then proceeded to tell Samuel how he would perform against Eli, "all that I have spoken" (I Samuel 3:12).

"For I have told him that I am about to judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knew, because his sons brought a curse on themselves and he did not rebuke them" (I Samuel 3:13).

Today we suffer from the Dr. Spock syndrome. Don't *make* a child **do** anything... don't make him stick to anything, don't make waves... Does a lack of restraint really cause their minds to develop, or does it make them vile?

We have noticed necessity of discipline in the nation and in the family. Doesn't it make sense that if God required these two great institutions to administer discipline to its members, that he also would require it of the third and greatest institution... the church?

Notice in the administration of discipline that we find one of the primary purposes of discipline is to "have won your brother." (Matthew 18:15) that "so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Corinthians 5:5) or "restore such a one" (Galatians 6:1) and "will save his soul from death" (James 5:20).

Discipline when administered properly is to be motivated from love. Too often we confuse a *lack* of discipline with an abundance of love. Solomon set the record straight regarding this attitude centuries ago: "He who withholds his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him diligently" (Proverbs 13:24).

The Lord himself prescribed the procedure of discipline.

1) "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother." (Matthew 18:15).

Notice that in this the first step he didn't say to go tell the whole church and get them so upset that all hope of reconciliation is destroyed! This common error sadly causes some to lose faith in all forms of congregational discipline.

The proper manner is to go directly to the person involved to try to straighten it out. Our ***first and primary motive*** is to gain thy brother. Since our Lord specifies we are

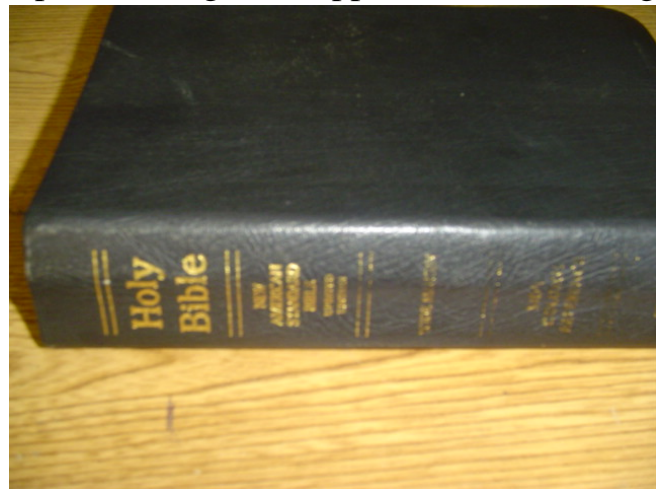


to go to him alone, another major intention is to try to cause as little embarrassment as is possible, for both parties. The person going may find out the brother is innocent of the charges which are being brought.

I recall an incident in which a congregation had heard that a certain preacher had said something out of turn about the group. Instead of finding out firsthand, the elders of the offended church upset their congregation with the rumor by spreading it, then brought the preacher up before the elders of another congregation, with the original congregation present. In the course of the discussion it was brought out that they had charged the wrong man!

2) " But if he does not listen {to you,} take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.**" (Matthew 18:16) Notice this is a measured and semi-private step in God ordained discipline. A couple of things are apparent to the erring party, that although still private, the matter must be straightened up. His fellowship with his brethren is on the line.

This third party has one advantage in that he can hear both sides and hopefully resolve conflict. If it is a misunderstanding, it can still be resolved. If not...



3) " If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." (Matthew 18:17) The full congregation now must make a decision as to the matter and stand on it.

Today some are proud of their lack of discipline. Look how "liberal minded" we are... when harbored, sin festers and destroys. Corinth was this way, " It is actually reported that there is immorality among you, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife. You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst." (I

Corinthians 5:1-2). When a problem such as this comes up it is not the time for pride, revenge, etc. but for *mourning*.

Another major reason for discipline is to nip a problem in the bud. History teaches us that problems that are not dealt with do not go away, they only get bigger. " {I have decided} to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (I Corinthians 5:5)



The Church, then has a responsibility to keep itself pure. "Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump," (I Corinthians 5:7) This purity is essential. The church preaches of **godliness** and the right to make this call must not be lost through a tarnished image.

The motives of the church must be pure as well. " Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." (I Corinthians 5:8).

The church, ~ in sincerity and truth ~ has the responsibility to
1) mourn I Corinthians 5:2 2) judge the erring I Corinthians 5:3-4
3) to put him away I Corinthians 5:2,5,7 4) to accept him back if repentant II Corinthians 2:2-10.

1) When discipline is withheld, everyone is happier and better adjusted to cope with life. True / False

2) What did Solomon say about punishing criminals? (Ecclesiastes 8:11) _____

3) Read I Samuel 2:12-30, 3:12-13, then answer:

a) his sons were worthy men, they



knew well the Lord. (Vs.12) True / False

b) Eli should have reasoned with his children. True / False

c) Did Eli rebuke his children? (Vs. 22-25) Explain:

d) Words had a powerful effect on Eli's children. True / False
Why or why not? _____

e) What were the options open to Eli? _____



4) Read Deuteronomy 21:18-21 a) What is our Lord's view of discipline? _____

b) The rebellious child isn't the only one we should be concerned with - who else? _____

5) Read I Samuel 2:29 What is God's estimation of lax discipline? _____

6) Compare I Samuel 2:29 and Matthew 10:34-39 _____

7) Read I Samuel 3:13 What had Eli failed to do? _____

8) List 3 descriptions of the purpose of congregational discipline with scripture. _____

9) (Thought question) What is the threefold motivation for congregational discipline? _____

10) If we're emotionally "very close" to the individual, its ok to forgo our responsibility to discipline. True / False

11) Read Matthew 18:15-17

a) List the 3 steps to be taken if one brother trespasses against another:

b) Explain the significance (or benefit) of going "in private" in vs. 15

c) What advantage have the one or two witnesses of vs. 16 over both the offended party and the offending party? _____

12) Read I Corinthians 5:2 What should be our response to sin when it is uncovered? _____

13) What happens if the church ignores problems within its ranks? (see I Corinthians 5:6) _____



14) Read Isaiah 32:1-5 Note Vs. 1 it is a prophesy of what is to happen within Christianity. Now look at vs. 5 (try to read a KJV). The "vile" is compared to what term? _____ Is it a compliment to be called a "liberal" in a moral sense? _____

15) Read I Corinthians 5:5 What must the church do? _____

16) Read II Thessalonians 3:6, 14, 15

a) What must the church do? _____

b) Note that man, and have no _____ with him that he may be _____.

c) (thought question) What happens if a few in the congregation don't support the church's actions? _____

17) Compare I Corinthians 5:9-11 and II Thessalonians 3:14 "no company" means: _____ See II John 10, 11 it also includes _____.

18) Re-read I Corinthians 5:9-11 What is the significance of a "brother"? _____

19) Read I Corinthians 5:8 What is said about motives? _____



20) Read Galatians 6:1,2 The concern is for two parties, who are they? _____

21) Read II Corinthians 2:2-10 After discipline has been administered, what is also the congregation's responsibility? _____

22) If the lines of morality are blurred within the church through hypocrisy, how is the world to see Jesus clearly? _____



23) Does scripture teach on discipline? _____ How important is this subject? _____

Jerry Blount 2/84 revised 6/05