

TRUE CHURCH CONFERENCE • FEB. 21-24, 2008

2008 True Church Conference

Church Discipline: The Missing Key to True Church Growth

February, 21-24, 2008 :: First Baptist Muscle Shoals

Live-blogging notes provided by Timmy Brister

LIVE-BLOGGING BY TIMMY BRISTER :: WWW.TIMMYBRISTER.COM



Here is the line-up of speakers for the 2008 True Church Conference focusing on church discipline:



JAY ADAMS is well known as the father of the modern biblical counseling movement. He is the author of more than 100 books dealing with counseling, pastoral ministry, and theology, including [The Handbook of Church Discipline](#). Dr. Adams is the founder of the [Christian Counseling and Educational Foundation](#) (CCEF). He now serves as the Dean of the [Institute for Nouthetic Studies](#). Currently Dr. Adams rarely lectures away from his own local church, so this is a unique opportunity to sit under his teaching.



DAVID MILLER has been preaching for 42 years. He pastored for five years before serving as Director of Missions for Little Red River Baptist Association (Arkansas), a position he held for 25 years. An itinerant preacher, David has been in full-time evangelism (Line Upon Line Ministries) since 1995. He served on the Board of Trustees of [Southern Baptist Theological Seminary](#) in Louisville, Kentucky, for eight years. He currently prefers the title “Country Preacher-at-Large.”



JEFF NOBLIT is the Senior Pastor-Teacher of [First Baptist Church of Muscle Shoals](#), Alabama. He has served on the pastoral staff for 26 years, the last 19 as senior pastor. Jeff is the founder of [Anchored in Truth Ministries](#), an expository preaching ministry, and is the author of The Accountability Notebook and the witnessing booklet, The Great Answer to the Great Question. He has written articles for various magazines and journals.



PAUL WASHER ministered as a missionary to Peru for 10 years, during which time he founded the [HeartCry Missionary Society](#) to support Peruvian church planters. HeartCry's work now supports indigenous missionaries in Eastern Europe, South America, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. An itinerant preacher, Paul also teaches in the internship program at his home church, First Baptist of Muscle Shoals. He is the author of *The One True God: A Biblical Study of the Doctrine of God*.



Live from Muscle Shoals . . .

Well, not quite.

About noon today, we (myself, Dusti, and baby Nolan) began our trip down south from Louisville for the True Church Conference to attend and live-blog the first night's service. However, what usually is a four-hour drive turned into 7 1/2 hours due to an ice storm and numerous wrecks (and detours). When I realized that we went three miles in an hour and a half, I quickly realized that the chances of making it tonight was virtually impossible. With that said, I regret missing the first message by David Miller on Justification as I am sure it was a blessing and a joy to all who were there.

I must say, traveling through the back country of Kentucky gave me several tempting things to photograph and live-blog, but I am not sure it would be consonant with the conference! Perhaps it would make for some fun conversation over dinner. :)

Lord willing, I will be at FBCMS bright and early around 8:00 a.m. and earnestly look forward to benefiting from this excellent conference. It is my hope that the live-blogging will offer those who cannot attend a window into the conference as well as notes from the messages. The issue of church discipline is crucial to the health and integrity of our churches, and I consider it is a privilege to play a very small part in sharing that ecclesiological commitment and core value with those attending this year's True Church Conference.

Ecclesia semper reformanda est.

"The Church always in need of reforming . . ."



Pastor Jeff Noblit begins this morning talking about the new aggressive church planting emphasis and the need for partnership with new churches in the Chicago, IL area. Pastor Jeff introduces Paul Washer who will bring this morning's message.

I want to share with you why I came here. Many people think that church discipline is spawned by evil, controlling, dictating pastors who think they are God's standard on the planet. That could not be farther from the truth. I love my children. I move here with my family because this church practices church discipline. I don't trust myself standing alone. Do you know how prone we are to pride, self-centeredness, and arrogance? Do you know what it is like to have men in my life who will watch over me, lovingly challenge, and tell you the truth, protecting you from all these things? I am too weak to live in any other kind of church.

Isn't it true that there is millions of children who are converted because their SS teacher asked them if they want to go heaven, join the church culture, and learn to imitate everyone else? Then when they are a teenager, they abandon the things of God. I need my children to be in a place where they are going to hear a real gospel. I need my children to sing about total depravity, to sit under true preaching, and if they make a profession of faith, I want them to be taught. And if they stray away, I want there to be elders who say, "You made the good profession of faith, and there seems to be good evidence. But you have wandered away, and if you do not repent, you will bear evidence that you never truly experienced the grace of God."

Church discipline is about love. I love my children; therefore, they must be in a church that preaches the gospel and practices church discipline.

TEXT: [1 Corinthians 15: 1-5](#)

In this first message, I want to share with you ways in which church discipline can be prevented.

1. We must get the gospel right.

When the gospel is truly preached, there will be a less need of practicing church discipline. One of the reasons the church is so immoral is because so many who have been convinced they are saved are really lost. The greatest need is to know the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some will say, "Of course." But I submit to you that most people today do not understand the gospel of Jesus Christ. This country is not gospel-hardened; it is gospel-ignorant. And this is because those behind the pulpit are not preaching the glorious gospel of our blessed God.

The reason for eternity is to track down, "What does it mean that Jesus died for me?" The gospel reduced to four spiritual laws or five things people want to know?! It has been reduced to a simply creed. The Gospel!

If we would throw away all things and preach on the character of God and the gospel, it would do more things to heal churches and grow people than anything else! Wouldn't it be sensible to make a seminary student take a class on the gospel every semester? The gospel is not just for lost people. It is for us! I don't know a lot about many Christian things. My life has been devoted to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and I cannot get even to the foothills of the gospel!

We are called to live a certain way because of the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not motivated by "Your Best Life Now." There is no other motivation except the gospel of Jesus Christ. They are humanistic morality. Study the men of history who have been mightily used of God. They did not go into the world for any other reason than the Gospel and love of Jesus Christ compelled them and constrained them. Look what God has done in His Son Jesus Christ!

We no longer have confidence in the power of the gospel. We have ten steps, five ways, and other ways of getting people going. If we get people to understand the gospel, then you will have to put a bridle in their mouth, not a fire in their tale!

I preached to you . . .

Can you be alone with God? That when you open your mouth, God comes out? You are not a life coach. You are a prophet! The greatest need for your people is for you to be filled with God. Not a false fire, not a Friday not motivated or pep rally, but everyday you are tracking down and tracing out who is God and what he has done for me.

If your people are going to be set on fire with the gospel, you must be set on fire with the gospel. If you are going to know it, you must *know* it. Just because by rote you give people the truth, it doesn't make it a real sermon. You do not just communicate tidbits of truth. Men must not only communicate truth; they must be set on fire by it. If it does nothing for you, it will do nothing for them!

What does the world need? What it does not have - preachers. More preaching, less discipline. More preaching, more godliness. Preaching!

Today I hear discipleship. Today I hear this methodology and that methodology. I say, "To rot with that! Give me a man who will preach twice a week, and he will give me more truth than I know what to do with." You are not called to be everyone's friend. You are not called to be a mover and shaker, to be on the cutting edge of our culture so that you can adapt your church to make it successful. You are to get alone with God, and come to God's people with a message, "Thus saith the Lord."

Today, missions is a-theological and filled with every methodology imaginable. Give us a man with a Bible who will go into the plaza and preach until men are converted or the preached is taken away into prison. God has ordained preaching to be the way people are saved. Every time you get up in the pulpit, you must see yourself as you really are. Don't let the devil steal that mantle. You are prophet, standing in the valley of dry bones. Christianity is supernatural, and I will not allow television preachers to steal that word from me. Nothing will happen unless God

moves upon the hearts of men and changes them. O God, unless you move here today, all my work here will be rot.

What do we need? We need preachers! I ask you not to come away from this conference with a new strategy. I ask that you hid yourself in your study, and do not come out until you have gotten with God.

If ever there was a text that was perverted by evangelical Christianity, it is this text. Look what we have done to the Gospel. We tell people that if they want to "receive" Christ, then it means that you have raised your hand, repeated a prayer, taken only five minutes to say "yes" to these steps. God is not a cherry on top of your little cake. He is not an accessory to your life. Jesus is everything or nothing. You do not receive Him partially; He does not divide His offices. You either receive Him as Lord or not at all.

Everybody wants to go to heaven; they just don't want God when they get there. Has there been a supernatural change wrought in your heart? And to receive Him is not to pray a prayer. It is defined as this: repent of your sins and believe. Something God does not ask you to do; it is something God commands you to do. Repent and believe.

Do you realize that we live in an age of "the idolatry of decisionism." They are trusting in a decision and the sincerity thereof. They are not looking to Christ, but to a decision. Look what we have done. Back in the 70s-80s, we have just as many people leaving the back door as the front door, and the reason is because they have not been disciplined. NO! The reason is that they have not been converted. Discipleship does not keep people in the church; the Spirit of God keeps people in the church! (resounding amen)

which you received . . .

To feed on Christ is the correct word to say, that is, to receive Christ. Christ is not a part of our life; He becomes our life.

Let's go to [Romans 10:9-10, 13](#), the famous text for the sinner's prayer. We have told people that confession is nothing more than "pray this prayer." It is agreeing to certain things, or saying "yes" and that's it. This text means that confession is an enduring characteristic of their life. They are confessing Christ throughout their life. You can look at their life and see a perpetual confession that is true as seen in the character of their lives. Our faith is proven by our real, enduring confession that Jesus Christ is Lord. If a man does not confession of Christ, at everything dear to him, he has not faith in Christ. Confession is necessary to prove that this gift of salvation is received.

We are to be men of God. You say, "Well, it's hard." Yes, but you have not suffered to the point of shedding of blood. It's supposed to be hard.

In which you stand . . . - the idea of conviction.

Listen to this one point. Isn't that enough? Why do we have to promised people all the things of this world, to have their felt-needs met? We are saved! Don't tell me anything else! Don't cheapen the call or go for any other reason that Jesus shed his own blood for my soul! I must raise my hands and worship God for what He is to me and that alone! I'm saved. I'm not going to hell! If you have to keep people in your congregation by adding anything else to the gospel, they are NOT converted.

We have lost our excitement about salvation. We are not passionate about the gospel. You rob your people by not preaching about their sin. She loved much, because she had been forgiven much, and this because she had sinned much. The darker we paint men, the more beautiful Christ becomes. We show men his sin, leading him to condemnation so that he would have no way out except looking to the beauty and excellency of Christ.

If you are not preaching about sin, then the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with your ministry. The Holy Spirit has come to convict men of their sin, and if you have nothing to do with sin in your preaching, then the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with you.

The preaching of the Gospel--it is enough, it is enough.



Continuing with Part 2 from the first message. We will pick up on the text in 1 Corinthians . . .

Church discipline begins with preaching and a right understanding of conversion. It is not merely jumping out of the line going to hell to the line going to heaven. It is the supernatural work of God, the work of regeneration, whereby God makes a new creature. How do we know that we are saved? Because he who began a good work in us continues it (Phil. 1:6). We are new creatures.

if you hold fast the word which I preached to you . . .

You are saved *if* you hold fast to the word preached. I am not going to remove that *if* from the Bible. If they do not hold fast, it is not that they have lost their salvation; rather, it shows that they were never saved at all. We are telling that God can get a man saved from the condemnation of sin but cannot keep them from the power of sin. That is a lie. God's name is upon his people, and he will continue to always work in every one of his children.

I want to look at [2 Corinthians 13:5](#).

The church in Corinth is infamous. We see a lot of giftedness and carnality in the church. Today, people take the church in Corinth as the standard. We use Corinthians to use that churches have always been as wicked as ours. We justify carnal men who claim to be born

again. We are a product of our times, and we have got to put this foolishness away. Paul addressed the sin of those in Corinth; he did not create a doctrine to justify carnal men. He started by saying,

Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

I implore you. Examine your lives in the light of Scripture to have a biblical assurance. How quickly we depart from Scripture to superstition. How do you know? "I was there . . . I just know it." It is the testimony of the Holy Spirit through the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. The lost doctrine of regeneration is causing so much confusion in our churches.

I want to confess to you that I am angry, because what is going on today is not the length of the mantle, how our praise services should be, but I am mad about what is going on in the evangelical church. We have substituted ritual and tracts for preaching and teaching of God's Word. Little things we tell people which are worth nothing.

How do we help people who are doubting their salvation? Struggle with assurance?

Take them to the Scriptures and help them examine themselves in light of it. Consider [1 John 5:13](#):

I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

The purpose is to not let true believers doubt their salvation. It is to show that false converts are not truly saved. John sets out a series of tests throughout the entire book.

Let's begin with [1 John 1](#). I want to throw in the "great assumption." Like Rome, who used infant baptism to lead many to false assurance, Baptists are using the Sinner's Prayer to lead many to the pit of hell. The great assumption can be found in our bookstores. How many books will you find on the true gospel, on conversion and sanctification? The great assumption has to do with the neglect and dismissal over the gospel. We assume we know how to counsel sinners, to addressing those doubting and/or struggling with assurance. When someone comes to us doubting their salvation, we don't coddle them; we help them.

Pastor, you have authority to preach the gospel, to lead a person to Christ, but you do *not* have the authority to pronounce over them they are saved.

1 John Tests:

v.5 God is light, and Christians will walk in that light. (test 1)

God has shown you his will; he has revealed to you who he is. If we say that we are believers, and yet the characteristic of our lives do not line up with God in his ineffable light, then we lie to ourselves. Our lives must conformed to what God has revealed about Himself and His will.

This is not about perfection, but about conforming our lives in obedience. You can take a snapshot image of me sinning and say, "See, Paul Washer is lost." But if you take a video camera day after day after day, you will find some who is not perfect but someone whose still of life is inclined towards and pressing into what God has revealed in his Word. You will see a difference in the inclination and action. The Christian life is a struggle, but therein lies the proof of conversion--a person pressing into this high calling. You cannot encounter God and not be the same. The Christian may be limping and broken, but he is pressing on.

Can a Christian fall into sin? Yes.

Can he backslide? Yes.

Can he stay there? No.

Why? Because God is his Father, and God will discipline those who are truly His.

Those whom God loves, He disciplines.

v.8 The true Christian will be sensitive of the sin in their lives and live a life of confession and repentance. (test 2)

People who are most broken over their sin are those who are the most committed in your church. Those not bothered about their sin will be those in your church you are not committed to Christ and His Church? The difference? The sheep and the goats. Because one sees their sin, they are more broken, but turning to Christ, they experiencing more of God's mercy and pursue greater measure of holiness. There is a mixture of brokenness and joy that produces a pattern of holiness which is the result of God's saving grace which is also sanctifying grace.

One of the greatest evidences of true conversion is not sinless perfection, but the recognition of sin in our lives that makes us rely on the grace of God alone.

2:3 . . . if we keep his commandments (test 3)

Obedience does not lead to salvation, but is evidence that we have been saved. Do you have a new relationship to the commands of God. To the believer, they are a delight and not burdensome. Here there is a new inclination and lifestyle, and the great concern is the knowing and doing of the will of God. And when we get dull in these areas, the loving discipline of God brings us back to Him.

v.6 . . . ought to walk in the same manner as he walked (test 4)

Yes, I cannot walk like Christ; I cannot walk in impeccability, beauty, and glory of Jesus, but in the midst of following Christ, we should desire to be like Christ in every area of our lives.

v. 9-11 Love for the fellow believer in the context of a biblical church (test 5)

One of the greatest evidences for true conversion is love for one another. I say biblical church because there are churches who will go into a community with questionnaires to ask the pagans how to do church. Biblical discipline has to do with the pulpit; godly people will come, and

ungodly people will leave. If the Spirit of Christ is in you, you are going to give your life for the very thing Christ gave his life--the Church.

[excursus on Matthew 25:31-46 and how it is often misinterpreted]

If we believe the Gospel, explain it to God's people, and help them find true biblical assurance, then it will reduce the need for discipline in our church.

Personal Commentary:

Paul Washer highlights something I really believe is not expounded upon, namely the difference between eternal security and perseverance of the saints. So often someone is told they are saved and going to heaven from the point they first believed, that they are eternally secure. Yet this kind of eternal security strips the sanctifying grace and keeping promise of our Father from the Christian life, as though a hell-bent sinner can be glorified without being sanctified. The *if* cannot be removed. The believing and repenting that marked our conversion must be the defining mark of our life at every point--even when we breathe our last breath. There is a prerequisite to church discipline, and that is knowing who the church is. Consequently, if we do not understand regeneration and its relationship to church membership, then matters of church discipline will be great. However, if we labor in the Word as stewards of the gospel and mysteries of God (1 Cor. 4:1), and if we labor as physicians of souls with among whom we shepherd and counsel, then we help people have true biblical assurance and joy in their salvation, know that the God who saved them will keep them, and will perfect in them that which he begun to the praise of His glory.



TEXT: [Matthew 18:15-20](#)

I hope to give a systematic overview of church discipline. [Jeremiah 6:16](#):

Thus says the Lord:

“Stand by the roads, and look,
and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way is; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls.

But they said, ‘We will not walk in it.’

I began thinking, "Since we got the gospel right, how many have we had to discipline?" I can think of only one. There is a powerful truth that, if the pulpit is right and the gospel right, there is a greatly reduced need for church discipline. Before that, we dismissed hundreds at one time, and dozens for drunkenness, adultery, family abandonment, etc.

In Matthew 18, we have the classic text on church discipline. I want to talk about the principle of ownership.

I. The Reasons for Church Discipline

A. The Principle of Ownership:

This has to grab you. It is not *your* church. That just came over me years ago.

[Acts 20:28](#) - the church is purchased with his blood

[Col. 1:18](#) - the church is his body

[2 Cor. 11:2](#) - the church is the bride

[1 Cor. 3:9](#) - the church is his building

B. The Principle of Stewardship:

We are stewards over the bride of Christ. God has left us with the oversight and management responsibility of the church.

[1 Pet. 5:2](#) - shepherd the flock *according to the will of God*

13 Things Under Stewardship of Church Discipline:

1. To glorify God by being obedient ([Matt. 18:15](#)).
2. To sanctify the Lord's Supper ([1 Cor. 11:27](#)).
3. To purify the spirit and message of the church.
4. To deny Satan any advantage in the church.
5. To prove that leaders love and care.
6. To deter others from sin ([1 Tim. 5:20](#)).
7. To destroy fleshly lusts in the believer ([1 Cor. 5:5](#)).
8. To cut emotional ties.
9. To protect Scripture from perversion and error ([Titus 1:10-15](#)).
10. To shame a brother to repentance ([2 Thess. 3:14](#)).
11. To restore repentant believers. This has been the joy throughout all the years.
12. To expose and to remove the unregenerate. It is not for restoration only, but God's means to find the goats among the sheep.
13. To prevent factions in the church.

II. The Range of Church Discipline

A. First of all, private sin requires a private rebuke. We have not right to discuss a brother's sin publicly if we have not gone to him privately. It is wickedness.

B. Prominent, public sin receives public rebuke. In a larger church, that might be in a department of a church. Occasionally there is something so scandalous and public that it needs to be dealt with in a public way. The community needs to hear from the church when they know what is already going on in the church.

John Dagg: "When discipline leaves the church, Christ goes with it."

III. The Results of Church Discipline

[Acts 5:1-15](#) - Church Discipline in the Early Church

I don't know many churches today saying, "We want to be an Acts 5 church."

This is the greatest true revival that will ever be recorded (the Church at Pentecost and following). Right in the middle of the revival, God shuts it down to handle church discipline.

Why not just say, "God is moving. We will deal with later?" Because the purity of the church affects the power of the gospel.

The results from God's intervention:

A. The Purification of God's Church - "and great fear came over the church"

We live in a day where there is no fear of God in the church.

B. The Unification of God's Church - "and they were all in one accord"

Unity means literally one passion. Our goal should be that we have perfect hearts in Christ, and that brings unity. You focus on holiness, godliness, and purity, and unity comes after the purity issue is settled. What we are calling unity today is the same kind of unity a social club has - the unity behind a common goal. However, the unity in Scripture is based and built upon the holiness of the believers who are looking to Christ and turning from their sin.

C. The Sanctification of God's Church - "none of the rest dared associate with them"

It was obvious that there was a lot of friends and relatives of the true believers, and they would come to these household fellowships. And when God killed Ananias and Sapphira, a great host separated themselves. A church that God is using will draw some and repel others. What that means is, God, pastoring the church through the Holy Spirit, brought the church to a period of decline and plateau. It was a weeding out of those not truly committed to Christ. When was the last time you heard this at a church growth conference?

It cannot be that everyone is comfortable in your church.

D. The Multiplication of God's Church - "more than ever people were added to the Lord"

Evangelism comes after the church has been purified. One of the fundamental reasons why churches are not growing evangelistically is because they are not caring for the purity of the church. The unregenerate nature of so many churches are evidence that the power of God is not there.

E. The Admiration for the Church - "the people held them in high esteem"

Some of the folks who are highly critical now are saying, "Well, I would not go to church there, but I respect them." You have to decide whether you are going to be popular or respectful.

I see so much fleshly sentimentality which has nothing to do with true spirituality, which says, "Since I love you, I will let you go on in sin." Yet we should care enough to bring correction, in God's way, with God's love.

IV. The Power of Church Discipline

A. The Father's Agreement ([Matt. 18:18-19](#))

Whatever you bind on earth is bound in heaven. In church discipline, you are finding out what heaven has already decided on the issue. There is power when you do it God's way.

B. The Son's Presence ([Matt. 18:20](#))

There is an unusual presence of Christ when there is the practice of church discipline. You want Christ known and felt? Christ shows up in a special and powerful way when you care about the purity of My bride.

Personal Commentary:

I thoroughly enjoyed this presentation and overview of church discipline. There's a lot of talk these days about how to do church, about being a "first century church" in the 21st century. If we want to go there, then there is no short-cut regarding church discipline. The growth and health of our churches do not depend on a new technique or tip but the transforming power of the gospel in the lives of our people and the integrity of our churches to care passionately for the testimony of our Lord. For His name's sake, and for the sake of those whom we call brothers and sisters in the Lord, we must embrace the call to take up church discipline as a priority and primary focus as we seek to love the Body where Christ is Head.



It is important in this first session to lay the groundwork in such a way that you are prepared for the other sessions. First, the practice of church discipline is foreign to many congregations today. Let's begin with working definition.

Church discipline is the correct application of biblical principles and practices that brings order in the lives of the people and the congregation for God's glory (paraphrase).

Church discipline is either non-existent or wrongly practiced in a lot of churches and places.

Church discipline is beneficial. But why is it, then, that churches do not practice church discipline.

1. *Church discipline requires discipline of those who practice it.* You cannot do just a slipshod job with it. It takes discipline to upkeep church discipline.

2. *Church discipline is always unpleasant.* It is painful and very messy, and people do not like to get into messy situations. But in the long term, discipline brings about the "peaceable fruit of righteousness."

3. *Church discipline is widely abused in former times.* Terms like "back door revival" express the attitude of many people. That's not the purpose of church discipline. It is to deal with the issues in such a way that they are not only reclaimed and restored but that they become useful in the Lord's work. The fundamental purpose is the restoration of the offender, not to get rid of him. When church discipline is called for, that is the way to go. It is not an optional matter; it is a matter of obedience. Church discipline is a matter of loving and caring enough for those who go astray, to bring back the wayward sheep.

4. *The loss of authority in the church today.* There is authority in the church of Jesus Christ, but it is not recognized in our society today. Why should the authority of the church be less than the church of the state (as in the police giving you a traffic ticket)? We must recognize the authority rightly handled in the church of Jesus Christ. Obey those who rule over you . . .

I know you can go to far here, but I am not talking about be an authoritarian or dictatorial style of authority, but the right use of authority as a loving shepherd leading and ruling rightly according to Scripture. If you have a clear policy of receiving members, that people have to take a vow that they would be under the care and discipline of the church, they would be willing to submit, then they know that being a member of such a church necessitates leadership under biblical authority and incorporates church discipline when cases require it.

This is Christ's church, and it is not our business to tell him how to run it. Vance Havner said that an excuse is the skin of reason stuffed with a lie. od prescribed church discipline, and it is a mark of a true church. God is going to have it his way, even if we don't do it.

Remember 1 Cor. 11 and how they were taking the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. When the Lord judges us, he disciplines us so that we are not condemned with the world. God was judging the church at Corinth, and it was severe. If you won't deal with the situations in your church, God will. You may be wondering why you are going through such difficult situations in your church. Perhaps God is judging your church. I don't know, but the threat is there.

Discipline is important because it draws the line between the world and the church. When someone is put out, he is handed over to Satan to be taught (in a disciplined way). When church discipline was ignored in Exodus 32 (golden calf situation), the anger of God burned against his

people and a serious matter to reckon with. This is serious business and something God considers of great importance.

Church discipline is both positive and negative. It is preventive and remedial. This is really positive in the long run.

The word *disciple* and the word *discipline* come from the same word root. The church is fundamentally a teaching institution. There has to be order in the life of the church where the teaching of the word of God can be done effectively. Church discipline is what assures order in the congregation. There is the positive goal of order through church discipline.

Preventive discipline is everything you do day by day and week by week, building up the church and making it more orderly. Discipline is a means of achieving righteousness. When everything else fails in counseling, there is church discipline.

Church discipline has in mind the goal of God's honor, congregations welfare, and the offenders restoration.

Personal Commentary:

Dr. Jay Adams is well-versed on the issue of church discipline. This session primarily serves the purpose of laying a foundation and launching into other messages forthcoming in the conference.

I think the point regarding the loss of authority in local church is big, especially among younger, more missional oriented churches. Of course, there are ditches to avoid, and for those of us who are Baptists, congregational polity led by a plurality of elders is a well-balanced approach to handling biblical authority under the Headship of Christ. Unfortunately, for many, the issue of church discipline has indeed been perverted, abused, and misunderstood by many. My hope is that this conference (and my notes!) will serve as a helpful tool and resource for ministers and lay people alike to consider a fresh perspective on church discipline.



Dr. Adams has a helpful chart that I cannot reproduce here, but it is a chart explaining when and how people get involved in corrective church discipline, moving from "as a brother" to the point of "as a Gentile and tax collector." The initial phases are informal (self-discipline, one-on-one, one or two others) and the latter phases are formal (the church and the world).

Our goal is always self-discipline so that there is no need for further discipline. Counseling helps people go from beyond stage one (self-discipline).

Let me ask you a question. What are some items that people are to be disciplined? I hope you don't set up a list, because there isn't any action that cannot eventually end up as a matter of

church discipline. It can be a simple matter, or it could be more severe. But we do not make lists of things to be disciplined and those that are not. Anything can be a matter of discipline.

Let's turn to Matthew 18:15 and following.

Look who goes on-one-one. It is the one who is offended that takes the initiative in an informal way, bringing up the matter to the person who offended him/her. You are take the initiative because God says so. For example, if the brother does not realize that he has offended you, this may open his eyes to see what he has done. If he listens to you, you have "won your brother." This means that the brother has been estranged, and this reconciliation is the winning back of what estrangement had lost. It is should be important that we are in a proper relationship with those we are in a covenant community (local church). Clearly it is important for the one who is wronged to go to the one who offended them.

It is important that we do not widen this matter (of church discipline) when it is not necessary. If it can be resolved between two people, let it remain there. It ought to be done informally and privately and settled once and for all then and there.

The convicting of sin is something that the Spirit does, the Word does, and the Christian also does. The Christian goes, in the power and help of the Spirit, with the Word to convict the brother of the sin and bring about the proper relationship. If he listens to you, you have won the brother and repaired that broken relationship.

The operative phrase is, "*If he will not listen to . . .*". More people get involved all the time when the person does not listen and repent. That witnessing of one or two others are brought only when the person refuses to listen. They first are going to become counselors under a biblical basis, trying to reconcile the two parties; if they cannot bring them together, then it becomes a formal matter. When it becomes a formal thing, then they becomes witnesses. Make sure that the one or two other persons is someone who the person really respects and holds in high regard. It is better not to have a leader or minister in the church, but rather a lay person because they will think that it has proceeded formally and are being prosecuted.

Let's suppose that it still doesn't work. Most cases will work by going one-on-one or taking one or two witnesses. But sometimes it doesn't. The one or two witnesses confirms what was heard as they become what took place informally. We cannot allow the process to stop here just because it has become embarrassing or because people do not want to deal with it.

The fourth stage is to tell it to the church. The church gets involved under the direction of the leadership of the church. The church leaders ought to be the first one who ought to hear the matter of church discipline. Only if the person refuses to listen to the leaders that the matter is brought before the congregation. It is a two-stage process in the fourth stage: first to the leaders, and then to the congregation. See [2 Thess. 3:14](#). If they do not obey, then "mark that person." This before the congregation, not the world. The church alone is brought into this session (not visitors, attenders, etc.). If you don't mark the individual (identify the person), other factors come into play. Identify him and do not mix with him. This is not shunning, but not carrying on

normal relations and fellowship. He is under church discipline. He is not an enemy, but a brother. You don't want to ignore him; you want to talk to him, counseling him about his sin.

We do not make a heart judgment about the state of a person, but we treat them "*as* a brother" and eventually "*as* a Gentile and tax collector". The word *as* is really important. We have no right to make the judgment that they are reprobates or unbelievers. [1 Cor. 5:11](#) and 2 Thess. 3:14 speak of not mingling in daily affairs with the person under church discipline, that he might be ashamed of his sin. The sense of personal shame ought to lead that person to repentance.

Personal Commentary:

The diagram provided by Dr. Adams was really helpful in breaking down Matthew 18. An important point was that it is the person offended that should take the initiative to go personally to the one who has offended them. How often do we see that, instead of such a gospel-centered approach, that the response is to get bitter, turn inward, and resort to gossip? Yet such loving confrontation is the kind of gospel confrontation that the cross is to our sin, knowing that we have been redeemed with the precious blood of Christ. Paul speaks much of self-watch and personal examination, whether it is being someone who does not box as one beating the air or exhorting young Timothy to take great pains in watching his life and doctrine. Coupled with what was said earlier in Paul Washer's messages about the place of preaching and true gospel faithfulness, I wonder how much of matters of formal discipline could be prevented if we daily confront ourselves with the wickedness and sin of our own hearts? Is this a discipline in my life? This is a question and a challenge I plan to take up more, knowing that I am ever in need of such self-discipline.



TEXT: [Romans 7:14-25](#)

Last night, I talked to you about salvation in the past tense: "I have been saved."

Have you been saved?

I have been justified, full and free, as a gift of grace. I have been cleared of guilt. Cleared. And I have been declared innocent, and I have been given the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Glory, glory! I have been saved.

Tonight, I want to talk to you about salvation in the present tense. I have been delivered from the penalty of sin. But there is a sense in which I am presently being saved. I am in the process of being delivered from the power of indwelling sin in the Christian life.

Are you being saved? Right now? Right here? Being saved? Being delivered from the power of indwelling sin?

That is my assignment tonight.

The passage before us is my testimony. I am going to read this passage, not so much out of exposition but, as a word of personal testimony.

I want you to see *the striving for sanctification*, and secondly I want you to see *the means for achieving sanctification*.

Some have said that sanctification is the pursuit of holiness. Others have said that it is the outworking of the indwelling Spirit of God. Properly put, it means to set apart unto and for the Lord. It means to be made holy. Tonight, I want us to discuss the thing around two categories: there is what we shall call "**positional holiness**".

Tonight, this sinner stands in a position of total, complete holiness in the sight of a just God. That's my position. That's who I are. I'm a saint. :)

God imparted to me not only the righteousness of Christ, but also His holiness. If you stand justified, you have been give a position of holiness by grace.

But there is a second category. There is salvation in this aspect of sanctification is "**personal, practical, and progressive**." It is something that takes place in you; it is the mind discerning who God is, who Christ is, what doctrine and duty is. It is the affections desiring Christ, desiring to do the duty which the doctrine implies. Sanctification is the volition determining to do what the mind has discerned and the affections desired. It is personal; it is what you do in your inward man. It happens in the heart; it happens in the soul; it's what you do in the dark; in the chambers of your inner being. This is a process. It is never fully achieved in this lifetime. It is incomplete; eradication and mortification can never be perfectly done in this lifetime.

And yet while it is true that sinless perfection is a heresy, it is also true that sinful imperfection is a heresy. We seek to make progress, to go onward and upward with the Lord.

Having said all that, I want to share with you a difficulty in achieving this process. Have you noticed it is not easy being like Jesus. Why is it that some of us have been saved for over 40 years, and yet we have made so little progress? Why is it that our passions do not burn more fervently for the Lord? Why is that we do not know more of His precepts? Why is it on our best day, in our finest hour, in our most noble moments, we look yet at the holy law of God and in comparison have to say, "I am carnal, sold under sin?" I didn't want to sin. I had sober, spiritual moments when I knew better, and I resolved to do better; and yet at the end of the day, I had need to repent and to confess my sins. Why is it that as I address the creme of the crop tonight, and yet you have need to explain that I know in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. To will is present is present, but how to perform that which is good, I find it not.

Our problem is that we have an enemy to our spiritual souls. And that enemy is in us. It is part and parcel to who we are. It's the flesh. It's the old man. And it's the law of sin, not just sin as a principle, but sin as a living, abiding law that is in us so that when we would do good, evil is present with us.

Is that not just your experience?

Do you want some means to progressing in sanctification?

1. Jesus Christ.

You see, justification leads to sanctification, and not vice-versa. When you begin meditating on what God has done for you in Jesus Christ, such meditation will sanctify you as your focus and devote your life in adoration and worship to Jesus Christ.

When you are weary and worn, think of the calvary road, and you will learn the doctrines of the cross and the atonement, so that when you are thrown into the lion's den, you can exit unscathed, when you are thrown into the fiery furnace, you will not get singed; when you are at midnight in prison, you can sing praises to God.

2. The Scriptures.

"Sanctify them by the truth; thy Word is the truth."

Listen to me, if you would gain the victory day by day, week by week, month by month, you must saturate your soul with the Word of God. Sanctification takes place when you sit with your Bible opened, and the precepts of God's begin to apply to your heart and mind, and this by the Spirit of God.

Listen to me, reading a sentence or two, a paragraph or so, even on a daily basis ain't going to get it. Reading 16 chapters a day will get you through the Bible in three months, even with your Sunday's off. :) People ask me about Bible reading plans. I tell them to read Genesis chapter 1. That's probably why it is at the beginning of the Bible. Read as much as you can. Then, when you get done, pick up where you left off.

3. The Spirit

2 Pet. 1:3 - his divine power has given us all things that pertain to life and godliness

You and I have in us He that is greater than the world, greater than the flesh. Learn how to walk in the Spirit, to yield to the Spirit. Pray that the Spirit will carry on the warfare when you are weak. Are you struggling? That's strong evidence that you are among the elect? When I was lost, I did not struggle with not sinning. The struggle came when God saved me.

4. Spiritual Songs

Learn how to sing the songs of the faith. Put the great hymns of the faith to memory. Meditate and sing them. As much money as you have, you couldn't pay to sing a song. I'm intimidated about my singing, but when my song lay in the ICU, I would sing for two hours at a time. I would sing him to asleep with songs of Zion, and let him find rest.

5. Suffering

You learn something about the love of God when you have children, and your children backslide. You learn about the heart of God, how He is grieved, how sorrowful God's heart is when I turn south and sin against Him. The God of all grace, who has called us unto His eternal glory, after he has made you suffer, will make you perfect, established, strengthened, and settled.

How badly do you want to be sanctified? Are you willing to know pain and disappointment? Willing to go outside the camp and suffer with Christ.

6. Supernatural Providence

Here is a theological question for you. Have you ever noticed that when the temptation to sin is strong that the opportunity is not present? Have you ever noticed that when the opportunity to sin is strong the temptation is not present? Is this not a divine work of God's grace? We are still shut up to and dependent upon God for our sanctification, for it is God at work in us both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Prone to wonder Lord, I feel it,
prone to leave the God I love,
Here's my heart,
take and seal it,
seal it for Thy courts above.

(Come Thy Fount)

Personal Commentary:

Man, you've gotta love David Miller. :) His messages are so sincere and sweet. Tonight, I heard a message about sanctification from a man of whom the pursuit of holiness is in clear view for all to see. My heart has been refreshed and my will has been resolved to pant even harder for the heart of God. I pray that the Lord allows me the same opportunity to encourage and provoke others to love Jesus and pursue Christ-likeness in a similar manner through my life and love for my Savior. A great way to end the day. :)



TEXT: [1 Corinthians 5](#)

I like the title of this conference which says, "Striving not to build great churches but true churches." Here is a church that failed to deal with a very serious issue in its midst. To deliver someone to Satan is to cast someone outside the care and protection of the church and into the world (Satan's territory). This man will have a great difficulty because he will be apart from the care, guidance, protection, and ministry of the church.

Here's the problem with this church. "Your boasting is not good." It is, "We do not have to do church discipline. We're above it. It's not going to be a problem here." The problem is that a little leaven leavens the whole lump. The picture Paul is getting across is that this matter will surely affect the rest of you. This business of keeping sin in your midst will have devastating effect in the rest of the church. It is serious business not to deal with sin in the camp.

Paul is putting the emphasis not on immorality in general but immorality in the church. He is telling them that they need to get this man out of their midst.

Counseling and church discipline go hand in hand. Now let's go on to talk about this here. This business of putting someone outside the church for the destruction of his flesh is also found in [1 Tim. 1:18-20](#). Here they were to be taught not to blaspheme. Even when they were being handed over to Satan, the church is reaching out, teaching (in a disciplinary manner) them not to blaspheme. Handing over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh is to admonish them of their sin and bring them back.

It was "commonly" or generally reported that this man (in 1 Cor. 5) was committing incest. Church discipline began where the knowledge exists. In this case, the knowledge was common, in that everyone knew about it. Therefore, you begin at that moment where the knowledge is.

Christians have to work for restoration. In [2 Corinthians 2:5-11](#), you have the account of this man's restoration in the church. There are three items necessary for the restoration of the church.

1. "You must turn rather forgive him." (forgiveness) - v.7
2. "You must turn and comfort him." (comfort/help) - v.7
3. "Reaffirm your love for him." (affirmation) - v.8

This word occurs only once in the NT, and it is here. It is the readmission of something lost. It is not bringing him back a person to a special status, but treating him as a reinstated member of the church. He is a part of the body, even if that part of the body is wounded.

What about an officer of the church? Do we reinstate an elder who has undergone church discipline? No. Though a person who has sinned has been in a leadership position might conceivably might eventually be reinstated back into the office or place of leadership, they should not at this time, because the qualifications of being an elder or deacon is clear in 1 Timothy. And the person involved falls short of the qualifications as deemed by Scripture. For instance, 1 Tim. 3:7 says:

Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

Leaders in the church need an exemplary reputation, above reproach, and not a disgrace to the church.

One last issue: a special case or situation as seen in [Titus 3:10-11](#).

When someone is schismatic, bad-talking the church or leadership in a divisive fashion, a person like that after a first or second time to bring to repentance, he ought to be put out. There should be no hesitation on this matter. If you do not do it quickly, he's going to tear your church apart. I've known what this is all about. One of my elders got a group to have a Bible study and eventually take this Bible study and start a church. I met with the elders and together we put him out of the church. That kind of thing can happen to your congregation if you do not deal with it right away.

It's wonderful to know that, at every stage, the goal is the restoration of that person to right standing with the church and full functioning in the body of Christ.

Personal Commentary:

I appreciate the point that Dr. Adams brought up about the relationship of biblical counseling and church discipline. As believers in a covenant community, we bear responsibility to one another's sanctification, to speak the truth in love, bear one another's burdens, and stimulate one another to love and good deeds. Perhaps one of the reasons why there are so many factions in the church is that members have abdicated themselves of this responsibility and in turn closed their spiritual life off from the community of faith in which they belong. In a day where it seems like hyper-individualism dominates the air we breathe, the church's responsibility to care for one another is amazing counter-cultural and a great way to show the distinctive characteristic of Christ's disciples. They will know that we are his by the love we have for one another. This love means that we will not let each other go, wander off into sin, and blaspheme the name of our Lord. May the Lord increase a burden upon our hearts to become more intimately involved in the lives of one another for our sanctification, the Church's unity, and Christ's glory.



I want you to know that this matter of church discipline is not a New Testament phenomenon. It goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden when God removed Adam and Eve from the garden.

Discipline Denied

Let's look also at [Exodus 32](#) and the account of the golden calf. This is a story of discipline exercised by the Lord and not by Aaron.

First, we see that the leadership failed, and let the people loose to do what they wanted (no restraint). Moses says that Aaron led them into this sin ([v. 25](#)). The people were "let loose" under Aaron's leadership. The leaders make the difference. All you have to do is look at the Judges to see the difference leadership makes. I cannot emphasize this enough. Pastor, you are the leader, and the people cannot be allowed to just take over. That is what happened to Aaron; he let the people loose and take over. The people were leading the leaders, "Let us make for ourselves . . .". That is what is happening today. The leaders are listening to the people rather than God. When the people are in control rather the leaders God put in place, you are in for trouble every time. That is why God ordained you to be a leader with strength and authority.

Second, the leaders listened to the people and did what they wanted to.

Third, the leaders made excuses. The people were too hard to handle, they said. If God put you in a position of leadership, you have to learn to deal with difficult issues, step in with courage and strength, and move in those situations and not allow people to take over the situation.

The leadership is held responsible by God. It was Aaron who Moses left behind who had been given the authority and responsibility. The people are responsible as well ([v. 30, 31, 35](#)). The people cannot say, "Our leaders didn't tell us what to do. It's their fault." Nobody can make excuses for disobeying the Word of God. Here are the leadership and people alike who are out of control and making excuses.

>> What were the results of no discipline in the camp?

1. There was division ([v. 26-28](#)).

Whoever is for the Lord, come to me. Moses wanted to know who means business with the Lord and who was not. Verse 27 says that those who did not come were killed. This is a horrible sight!

2. People are vulnerable to the enemy ([v. 25](#)).

When good leadership comes in, discipline is practiced, and order is restored ([v. 28](#)).

Just when you think that the people learned their lesson, they were in trouble again. They were stiff-necked people, murmuring and rebellious.

Discipline Applied

Let's look at a situation where discipline was applied. Let's look at [Numbers 16](#) and the rebellion of Korah. In this case, even the leaders rebelled against Moses (250 chiefs among the congregation). The central portion of the text:

20 And the Lord spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 21 “Separate yourselves from among this congregation, that I may consume them in a moment.” 22 And they fell on their faces and said, “O God, the God of the spirits of all flesh, shall one man sin, and will you be angry with all the congregation?” 23 And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 24 “Say to the congregation, Get away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.” 25 Then Moses rose and went to Dathan and Abiram, and the elders of Israel followed him. 26 And he spoke to the congregation, saying, “Depart, please, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest you be swept away with all their sins.” 27 So they got away from the dwelling of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. And Dathan and Abiram came out and stood at the door of their tents, together with their wives, their sons, and their little ones. 28 And Moses said, “Hereby you shall know that the Lord has sent me to do all these works, and that it has not been of my own accord. 29 If these men die as all men die, or if they are visited by the fate of all mankind, then the Lord has not sent me. 30 But if the Lord creates something new, and the ground opens its mouth and swallows them up with all that belongs to them, and they go down alive into Sheol, then you shall know that these men have despised the Lord.” 31 And as soon as he had finished speaking all these words, the ground under them split apart. 32 And the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the people who belonged to Korah and all their goods. 33 So they and all that belonged to them went down alive into Sheol, and the earth closed over them, and they perished from the midst of the assembly. 34 And all Israel who were around them fled at their cry, for they said, “Lest the earth swallow us up!” 35 And fire came out from the Lord and consumed the 250 men offering the incense.

What a tragedy, but here is a case where discipline was applied to those who wanted to go out on their own and exalt themselves.

1. They challenged the leadership ([v. 3](#)).
2. They accused the leadership of arrogating the authority to themselves.

The leadership turned the accusation around ([v. 7](#)).

3. The leadership said that rebellion against God's authority is rebellion against God Himself ([v. 11](#))

They "conspired against the Lord." It was the Lord who had given Moses authority, and Moses was God's representative.

4. The leadership didn't hesitate to confront the people.

>> **What were the results?**

A. *Division* - Korah v. Moses (There is always going to be division).

B. *Destruction of the Ringleaders* - God is going to deal with those people

C. *God purges the community* - Rebellion is in the heart of every one of us, and that is why we need godly leadership.

[1 Cor. 10](#) makes it clear that it was their complaining that the Israelites were scattered in the wilderness.

Some principles that emerge from these texts:

What about the leaders?

1. Leaders are going to be challenged.
2. Authority is given to you to use.
3. The leaders will be pressed to follow the people's desires.
4. God will hold the leaders responsible for restraining the sin of the people.

What about the people?

1. The people are held responsible.
2. The people will be affected adversely or positively by how the leadership responds.
3. Discipline divides people, one from another.
4. Lack of discipline destroys the people. Discipline is to lead them out of sin and destruction; lack of it destroys the people.
5. Restoration is possible. Aaron was restored, and so were many who took their stand with Moses against Korah. Time may be rough before restoration occurs.

What about God?

1. If the leaders won't discipline, God will.

I want to say something about "church-hopping."

When you do the hard work of church discipline, and a member leaves to another church, and they do not recognize church discipline. If you are willing to take anybody in without finding out why that person left their last church, if you don't consider what it is behind that, you will get in trouble. When you take a Jonah in your boat, you will find that the waves get rough. Not only that, you will have to throw him overboard yourself, just like he was in a previous church.

Personal Commentary:

In my opinion, this was the best of Dr. Adams four messages. As he shared at the outset, discipline does back the Garden of Eden. A fundamental reality is the depravity of man, the accusation of the devil, and the temptation to evil. Dr. Adams also showed in the text that division will take place, for good or for ill, and we must be willing and have the courage to stand for holiness and for the truth of the gospel. I pray for our pastors--that they would be strong and courageous and not fear man but God. Practically speaking, for ministers to apply the truths of this message, as Jeff Noblit explained, would cause many to lose their ministries or forced out of their churches. We need leaders who care enough for the bride of Christ that they would be willing to suffer loss and pain in taking a stand and not "letting people loose." With the meekness of Moses and the courage of Joshua, I believe God could bring a sweeping movement of renewal and revival in our churches.



Question and Answer time includes the following panel:

Jay Adams, Jeff Noblit, Paul Washer, and David Miller

What are some of the most common misconceptions of church discipline, and how should we address those concerns?

Adams: For one thing, there are certain sins which are discipline issues, and not others. That is a mistake. Any sin could be actionable if they refuse to do what God says. Another problem is that church discipline is simply getting rid of trouble makers. Another is that it is an unkind sort of thing instead a great kindness of God whereby He makes every measure to bring people back to repentance and faith.

Noblit: We heard, "They will throw you ought of the church." I was encouraged by Matthew 18 that we were doing what was already decided in heaven, that we were aligning up with God's will.

Adams: Now there is a man who is after my own heart, who understands what the text says. It "shall have been settled in heaven."

Washer: People see church discipline is sending people out of the church. It is not. It is tenderly, lovingly correcting them. People often begin where they should not begin. There is also a logical fallacy, viz., that it has been abused in the past; therefore, we should not do it anymore.

What do you do if you are a member of a church that does not practice church discipline? Should you confront the leaders about this issue or should you find another church?

Adams: I think there is no question that you should gently, kindly confront the leaders, not with a kind of attitude like you know better than anybody else, but if you go in the right way, and you present the Scripture, then there is not any Scripture that you shouldn't bring up to the leaders. And if they do not consider it, then yes, you should pursue Matthew 18 as much as you can (as far as you can go).

Paul, how important is it that missionary church plants to practice discipline, and do you teach your planters about discipline?

Washer: The question is do you plant biblical churches? You cannot have them if you do not obey the Lord of the church. Missions today is a-theological. Missions is to be designed by the exegete and the theologian, and must have your heads stuck in the Scriptures. One of the problems today is the plague of pragmatism. We are not called into in the decrees of God; we are to obey His commands. We fail to see that if a man spends his entire life spending one biblical church, he did something angels cannot do. We must practice church discipline, but we must practice everything else God commands us to do.

Where should a church start discipline when 50% of the church does not attend church, and what are some practical steps to this?

Noblit: We have made a lot of blunders, but I would suggest that you begin by cleaning up the membership roll. We dismissed 500 at one time from the roll that were inactive, etc., but we learned that some did not need to be disciplined. It's probably not right if you do not know for sure that discipline is necessary. We are updating the rolls until specifically we know the issues, so that we can with good knowledge know the spiritual state of each person. Until God gave you a 1 Cor. 5 issue, I would try to get the deadwood off and take steps from there (i.e. removing inactive members).

Adams: Go to those and seek forgiveness, telling them that you were not the shepherds that we should have been, by letting you go astray. Would you forgive us? Okay, not that you have forgiven us, we are going to be the shepherds and discipline you.

Washer: I was in a church when the leadership realized that they should practice church discipline. All the leadership stood up to the church and apologized.

How long does this process take when it comes to the point when someone is removed from the church?

Adams: That varies according to situations; not two are precisely the same. I would probably think that it is not going to take months, but a lot sooner than that (a few months at the max). I don't think we get to these things fast enough.

Noblit: One of the things we wanted to make clear is that we haven't arrived, even though we have dealt with dozens and dozens of cases. Sometimes people show repentance and they fall back. I would say that we have failed in that we have not gone quickly enough, probably because very few other churches in our area does this, and we have been severely criticized by others that we are too harsh. In trying to be overly compassionate as a result, we have sinned against those who need to be brought to repentance.

Adams: If you have waited too long, the problem has multiplied.

If someone is asked to leave the church, but they want to come back without repentance, how are they kept out of the church? Lock the doors? Call the police?

Adams: I would be happy to talk about that. How do you handle a heathen and a publican? You try to win him to the Lord. You share the gospel. We do not want to keep them out of the church, unless they are divisive, and that is another case.

Noblit: You may be implying that they are a sinful or divisive influence. MacArthur points out that they have actually that they were so regular in attendance and open immoralities that they were considered as part of the church and were asked that they stop attending.

Adams: That raises another issue--letting people attending forever without ever making a profession of faith and joining the church.

Washer: We are seeing in these cases, there are various issues, and wisdom is crucial. As a pastor, you must live in the Word, know Proverbs, and you need divine wisdom from God's Word, and nothing can replace an enduring lifestyle of being in God's Word and in prayer.

Where do we find the concept of church membership from Scriptures?

Noblit: Acts 2 the Lord added the number those who were being saved; Heb. 10:24-25 do not forsake the assembling together . . . Exercising your spiritual gifts and ministering to one another takes places in a formal gather of believers.

Washer: One thing is very important here, this question betrays church life as a product of our culture. You are not a part of local, biblical assembly, under the care of elders--that is not the way Jesus designed the church. You need to be under the care and protection of the church.

What about discipling young people who are still under the authority of their parents who are still in their home?

Adams: I would bring parents and children in together and try to bring about some kind of harmonious resolution that everybody would agree to.

Noblit: Typically, we defer to the authority of the parents and encourage them to deal with the issues with their children.

Is a signed church covenant essential to church discipline?

Noblit: We do ask that people sign a church covenant before joining the church body. A person needs to understand the responsibilities of members. Also we had a lawsuit in the church, and the lawyers recommended that we explain in our covenant the responsibilities of a church in discipline.

Miller: The church is a local, visible congregation of baptized disciplines who are united in the belief of what the Lord has said and are covenanting to do what the Lord has commanded. The idea of covenant is essential to the very nature of the church. Selah.

[missed a few questions to take some photos--questions on personal evangelism, sanctification, when a person under discipline leaves to join another church, and when a church ceases to become a church]

What advice would you give for someone who wants to be a church planter?

Washer: Young men come to me and tell me that they want to go to seminary to become a youth minister. I tell them not to do it.

Adams: Amen!

Washer: I will want them to learn Greek, Hebrew, systematic theology, preaching, and hermeneutics; then I want them to learn logic and church history. I want to them to read through the Scriptures systematically and memorize Scripture. We don't need all this specialization; we simply needs to know the Scripture and church history so that we do not reinvent the wheel. The best place to train a man is in a church under godly ministers and elders, and we have lost that. A man goes off to seminary, but can a seminary do for him? He is sent by the church to be trained; a seminary at best can only provide tools, and so he is never brought under the nurturing and yet he is sent out there to plant there.

I think we should plant churches around seminaries. They are limited; they are not the church. God has only one organization in the world--it is the church. What has happened to us? It is not an organization--it's an organism. I want to make a t-shirt that says, "It's the church, stupid!"

Noblit: A biblically healthy church is a place where a young minister and they will send out more preachers and planters than any seminary.



I was guilty with nothing to say, and they were coming to take me away, but then a voice from heaven was heard and said, "Let him go and take me instead."

I have been saved. I have been cleared of guilt, and I am glad. Glory! Glory!

I have been declared innocent, and I have been given the righteousness of Christ. It is a done deal. I've been delivered from the penalty of sin. Death holds no fear for me. I've been saved.

Have you?

You haven't gotten over it, have you?

I've been justified, and I am being saved. I am pressing on to higher ground, forgetting those things which are behind, I press toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ in Jesus. I love to apprehend that for which I have been apprehended. I long to be more like the Lord. I long to be delivered from the power of indwelling sin. I am working on it. The Lord is working, and I am gaining ground. I've had some peaks and some valleys, but when I look back on my experience and chart it on the graph, with deep gratitude I say, there has been some ascension. I've gained some ground; I'm being sanctified.

Are you? Are you gaining the victory more and more? Day by day?

The warfare continues to rage, but we are going on; our hand is on the plough; our shoulders at the wheel; we are pressing on, are we not? We are being sanctified.

There is a sense that I am yet to being saved. There is coming a time when I shall be delivered from the presence of sin. That is the subject tonight--the biblical doctrine of glorification.

Are you interested.

TEXT: [Romans 8:28-39](#)

I thought about giving a disclaimer of giving a full exposition of this text. I read Martyn Lloyd-Jones (cut into my deer hunting time). I read Donald Grey Barnhouse. My mind was spinning for days. But my purpose is to talk about glorification from this text. Are you ready?

Glorification guaranteed. I want to do two things.

I want to give an explanation around three headings: definition, details, and the design.

Definition

That we might become conformed into the image of God's Son--that's what glorification is all about. That we might ultimately and altogether be like Jesus. That we might derive from Him this image.

Now the Mormons are wrong. The New Age folk are wrong; Benny and Kenneth are in error.

To be conformed to the image of God's Son does not mean that we are going to be little gods. It doesn't mean that. Even in our glorified resurrection bodies, we are not going to be little deities. God possesses certain characteristics that are incommunicable and non-transferring, and even Benny doesn't have some of them.

God is omnipresent, and the heaven of heavens cannot contain him; he is omniscience, and the high minded cannot comprehend Him. The God of the Bible is also immutable, and in essential essence, God remains the same. For one to become a little god would require a rather substantial change in their essential nature. When we speak of glorification, being conformed to the image of God's Son, we do not mean to teach even by implication that we are going to be little gods, not even itsy-bitsy, teeny-weeny gods.

You can only have one superlative, and Christ Jesus is that one superlative. But if you are interested, I will give you some details what our resurrection bodies will be like.

Explanation of Glorification

Details

[1 John 3:1-3](#)

We will not be little gods, but as Christ is immortal, we shall be immortal also.

[1 Corinthians 15:50-57](#)

This life is not all there is; the best is yet to come. One day the trumpet is going to sound; those who are dead in Christ will be raised, and those that are alive will be caught up with us in the clouds, and we are going to have incorruptible bodies.

I cut my teeth on the old heavenly highway hymnbook. I believe that stuff.

Your best life now? Give me a break! Those people need to get a life. This is not it!

Not only shall our bodies be incorruptible, but our minds will be greatly improved; we shall know even as we are known. We are going to see glories in Christ that are going to make us shout with joy. Some of you have wondered how are going to maintain an intensive level of worship for eternity. I tell you, your mind is going to stretch further than you ever imagined.

If we have suffered with him, we shall also reign with him. What Adam lost in the Fall, God is going to restore when Jesus comes again.

Design

"That he might be the firstborn among many brethren."

"He is the body, the church, the first born from among the dead, that in everything he might have preeminence."

It's not about you. It's about Him! In eternity past, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost had a meeting, and they entered into what we call the everlasting covenant; God the Father arranged our redemption; God the Son accomplished our redemption; and God the Spirit applied our redemption. And at the appointed time, God the Father is going to say to God the Son, "Go get my children." We have been given to Jesus by the Father; and those whom the Father gave, not one shall be lost.

Now, put that aside. Let's look at the exposition of the text.

Exposition of the Text

You have been predestined for glory. That means to determine beforehand. If you saw me easying out to the edge of the platform, and I am not paying attention and get too close, and the front wheels go over the edge, and I commence to fall out over the alter, and you said, "David, I predestinate you to fall into the alter."

For what? So what?

That would be nonsensical language. I'm going to hit the alter whether you predestinate it or not.

When the Bible predestinate, that means that God Almighty determined before what He intended to do. He set His heart's affection upon us. Do you know where I preach Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of this week? I preached at the Alabama State Freewill Baptist Pastor's Conference. I did. And I had great discussion about some of the brethren over the world "foreknowledge."

God loved us and determined ahead of time that we would be glorified. But now not only have we been predestined, but **we have been prepared for glory.** You are not fit for glory. You had to be prepared. You know how God prepared you? He spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, to be crucified, to be made sin for us though He knew no sin, and for confirmation, God raised Him from the dead. God saved you when you were a stranger; God quickened you and implanted in you the spiritual life and granted you the grace of repentance and faith, causing you to cast off any confidence in the flesh, and caused you to rest on the person and work of Christ.

Who is it that can bring any charge against God's elect? God has prepared you through the sacrifice of His Son and the sprinkling of His blood.

You are also being preserved for glory. Who is he that condemns? Those of you who know me might condemn me. You know my infirmities and bring a charge. But Christ loves me though I was ungodly; in fact, herein is the grace of God manifested, that when we were without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. If Christ died to save me when I was ungodly, surely He will not let me go now.

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?

Do you have victory in the midst of afflictions and trials? Is this not a true test of assurance? We are more than conquerors, even in afflictions.

I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities or powers shall be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus. You might as well quick wrestling and worrying and start resting. It's is a done deal. It is guaranteed.

Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Personal Commentary:

I have thoroughly enjoyed Mr. Miller's exposition and presentation of the gospel in all of its tenses. What wonderful meditation is it to think that God has predestined us, is preparing us, and preserving us for glory! Truly salvation is of the Lord! Indeed, let him who boasts, boast in the Lord. Not to us, not to us, O Lord, but to your name be all the glory. SDG



Our job is to bring the Bride home. We have been a great task, that is, a passionate love for the Bride of Christ, and the working with all our heart to bring her home and present her spotless and chaste. To this we give our lives, that Jesus Christ might be pleased with the one upon whom he has pledged His love. The battle is very difficult, and it is hard. It is on every side; we were born and bred for every battle. This is what we are supposed to be doing. This is not the time for small hearts; a time for leisure. This is a time for men, the men of God, to take their place and work and labor and suffer and die for the church.

We are talking about missions tonight, but we must begin somewhere else--with the church of Jesus Christ, because the only way to do biblical missions is to through a biblical church. We must do everything according to Scriptures. It is true. The door is open more than ever before. I think about the countries that have not been reached, but if we are going to walk through the door, we must do it biblically. We must return to Scripture, not the methodologies of men.

First, I want to talk about finding the church, in other words, stopping the slander. If you want to be endeared to me, then treat my wife with the greatest respect. If you want to be on my bad

side, then slander my wife. The accusation of infidelity and immorality is the hindrance in the work of missions.

"The name of God is blasphemed among you" - those who do not know God

It is argued that the church of Jesus Christ has always been full of sinful, idolatrous people, proof-texted by the idolatry of Israel, and using Corinthians as the standard for NT Christianity. Then we have experts who tell us over and over that there is little difference between the actions of the church and the actions of a fallen world. We hear experts that there is just as much immorality in the church as there is in the world. I am here to tell you that angers me because it is a lie. The experts do not even know what the church is. The church today is absolutely beautiful, and I will have words for anyone who says anything else. Because we are talking about Christ's bride.

The church is in a process of sanctification. Yes she has her weaknesses; yes she has failings. Our bride is broken and humble and believing her master, and she is following him and being changed by him in a way that exalts the power of God in salvation. We are calling Christian that which is not Christian, and it has led to the slandering of the bride of Jesus Christ. Because of our watered-down view of the gospel, our superficial views of regeneration and conversion, because we believe that God is enough to save from the condemnation of sin but not enough to save from the power of sin.

It is not the fault of a liberal political party; it is the fault of pastors. Even conservative, fundamental pastors.

If you are going to carry this title, then it is going to cost you. This is not a place for men of leisure or care more for self-preservation than the glory of God. The true church of Jesus Christ is beautiful, but she is hidden under a twisted mess called American Christianity, and if the world is going to know true Christianity, it needs to see a true church. We need to cut a way all that contrary to a true church.

TEXT: Jeremiah 31:31-35

An Old Testament view of the New Testament church

Here we see the doctrine of regeneration--a doctrine that is lost in our regeneration. Salvation is the supernatural work of God whereby the person regenerated becomes a new creature by the power of God. That regenerate heart is where God writes His law, fixed inside of them which will guide them, control them, and change them.

There is nothing just hopeful about this passage. God does not hope that they will act like His people. We mistake many times by interpreting something as promise when it is a reality. God is going to create a new people and change their heart. This *will* happen. There is not a remnant in the church; the church is the remnant. Everybody in the church has God as their God, and we are His people.

They will not know God because of apologetical arguments or reasons why Jesus is raised from dead, but because God will open their hearts and bear witness to His own glory. He will grant them supernaturally the Spirit of God, and their minds will be illumined, and they will know the things of God. Everyone truly converted will understand the essential things of God in their salvation. One of the essential things is this:

The one thing they will know is that they are forgiven; they are God's, and they are forgiven.

The lack of church discipline and the doctrine of the continuously carnal Christian has slandered the church of God and ruined her testimony.

Today, because men do not study their Bibles and do not study God's Word, look at a mass of worldly, carnal people, and say that God is among them, and that is not true! When you look at the real bride, you see a bride. You see someone who hears the Master's voice and follow Him. Isn't it amazing that a normality today that the reason why Christians are not being Christians is because we are not discipling enough. It is not that they need discipling. They need to be converted.

"I will give them one heart and one way . . ."

Over the years, if I had one dime how many times I have heard about the lack of unity in the body of Christ, I would be a millionaire. Either the NT covenant promise has failed, or the prayer of Jesus in John 17 has failed. I want to tell you something: the church of Jesus Christ in this world today is one. She is united, and her members love one another. If you are hating one another, you are not Christian. We are one.

I am tired of seeing the bride of Jesus Christ slandered. I have heard preachers say that the bride of Christ in America acts like the prostitute. No she isn't! She is beautiful! If *any* man be in Christ, he is a new creature. This is so important because in it we see the reputation and glory of Christ in the church. Muslims laugh at Christianity, for they see Christians who have turned salvation into a matter of mockery.

"I will make an everlasting covenant with them . . ."

God is not a derelict father. He does not have children that he does not care for and does not discipline. We do not have a poor heavenly Father.

Let's talk about the "once saved always saved." Look what we do. We look at only one side of the coin. We fail to tell them that God will "put the fear of God in their hearts so that you will not turn away from Him." If there no fear of God in your heart to keep you, you are not in God's covenant of salvation. God will rejoice over them and to do them good. He will do it will all His heart and all His soul and will perfect His bride.

Because we no longer believe these things, the name of God is blasphemed among the nations. Not because of the church, but because the wheat is hidden among the tares, the fruit of God's

vineyard is overgrown with bushes and the vine is entangled and strangled with weeds. How has this happened?

Who is called to look after the bride of Christ? To present her as chaste? Is it not the ministers? As ministers of God, we seem to be preoccupied with everything but that which is most precious to God--His bride.

Very few churches are built today asking God what kind of church he wants; we ask carnal people what kind of church they want. Throughout the years and on our watch gentleman, the gospel has been reduced to an evangelical ritual, four spiritual laws and five things to learn, to say yes, a superficial view of conversion and assurance, trusting in a prayer and not in a risen Savior.

The kingdom has been built on the bones of unconvered sinners. The church is slandered for crimes she has never committed. We doubt the sufficiency of Scriptures and turn to the false fire of church growth and man's methodologies. We adapt our ministries and the ministry of the church to cater to the carnal majority, and the precious lambs go unfed.

In most places, the church functions as a democracy, and the majority rules. The majority is usually carnal; the carnal determine the direction of the church and becomes vanity fair and six flags over Jesus. Over the corner, the weak, anemic, and neglected is the bride of Christ. All she wants is her husband. All she longs for is to hear words from Him. She doesn't need entertainment or a circus. She doesn't need self-esteem.

I have seen so many people languish because the pastor will not stand against the carnal majority because of self-preservation. Do you remember when the Word of God was lost in the Temple? The bride of Christ has been lost in this circus of American Christianity. It does not have to be this way.

What is the cure? Intercessory prayer. Have we forgot to pray? Battles are won by God. Show me your knees. Would you dare roll up your pants legs and show me your knees. Show me your Bible. Show me the stains on the pages as you have wept over the text, that the power of God might fall on your ministry.

Missions is not about sending missionaries. No man in Peru needs your life. It's about sending truth through missionaries, otherwise it becomes nothing but a peace corps. 95% of the time, mission conferences is about methodology and strategy. But what about the message? It's the message! It's the gospel, and we must preach the gospel of Jesus Christ. We must have it burning in our hearts and lived out in our lives.

You will not be anathema if you did not plant churches, but you will be anathema if you did not preach the true gospel.

One of the greatest contributions Calvin ever gave the church is, alongside the offices of Christ: "How can we walk into a place where no one even knows where Jerusalem is and expect men to

be saved. Calvin said, "Because the Spirit of Almighty God will bear witness to our words. God will bear witness to his own message and validate the gospel.

God delights to vindicate His gospel!

Missions is founded upon Scripture. We must believe they are sufficient, and therein lies the problem of the conservative movement. That means we do not have to go the anthropologist and sociologist; if we want to know how to do missions, we go to the Book.

[2 Timothy 3:15](#) - to find salvation, we find it in the Scriptures, wisdom leading to salvation! I believe that if I open this book and explain it as I ought, the Spirit will work on men's hearts, and men will be saved.

We have Aristotle and Freud walking through the church more than Paul? What has Jerusalem to do with Athens? Go back to the Book! Everything you need is found in this Book. It is sufficient, and if you don't believe that, you don't believe nothing. Everything you believe about inerrancy is rot if you do not believe that it is sufficient.

There has never been a time that the door has been so open for missions. Countries that 1500 years ago, 10 years ago no one has ever dreamed would be open. We are the most privileged people on the face of the earth. The opportunity to live for something worth dying for, to live for our Master, to have the great joy on the day when all the children are gathered home!

Live for that day when that great Bride of Jesus will be with her Bridegroom, when everything is brought to fruition, a bride from every tribe, every tongue, every nation before the throne worshipping the Lamb who was slain!

I am overwhelmed, not by the lostness of the world, not by guilt, but by privilege--that God would raise people like us up from the dungheap.

One of the most horrible things about preaching is that you walk out of the pulpit and you have failed. The gospel is too big; God's glory is too big; Christ is too great. I remember praying at the hotel one night in tears, "God let me preach Jesus Christ as He really is." I remember the Lord replying to me, "Even then, you will not preach them as you ought."

Personal Commentary:

There is without a doubt no man I know who preaches harder and with more passion than Paul Washer. His message is intolerable for some but necessary for all. He is the subject of criticism for being too harsh, and perhaps that might be the case in some sense. Nevertheless, one message from Paul Washer does more for my soul than dozens from the men I listen today. Here is a man arrested by the gospel, possessed by the glory of God, consumed in the pursuit of the nations--that they may know Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. His love for the church is convicting; his conviction is humbling; his humility attracting us to Jesus. And in the end, as John Piper says is, he leaves us with God. And that, I surmise, is the greatest gift a preacher could leave us with.



TEXT: [1 Corinthians 10:31](#)

We must consider the missing key to true church growth. I want to preach on the topic, "Church Discipline and the Glory of God." It all must end there. What are you going to do for eternity? You are going to be a trophy of grace for the glory of God.

To glorify God in one sense I think of young married folks--honeymooners. Sometimes you hear the phrase, Boy, he makes much of her." I think that applies here. Glorifying God is making much of God. Scripture has revealed to us marvelous things of who he is, and we should make much of His **person**, His **precepts**, honoring and obeying His truths; making much of His **power**, knowing that God is with you in His power; make much of Him in His **purposes**. They are impeccable, perfect, and altogether glorious.

I. God is glorified by submission to His Word. We do not need another expert telling us why God's Word is not sufficient for His Church. God has given us a significant and substantive manual for church discipline in the Scriptures. Always approach it with humility and compassion, and always obey the Word. We must have a child-like faith, not childish faith as we seek to submit our lives under the authority of God's Word.

[1 Sam. 15:20-24](#) - Saul did not fully obey God; he thought he could achieve God's ends by not God's way

The idolatrous twin towers of the fear of man and selfish ambition plagued Saul, and it is prevalent today. God is not interested in the church going forward in the ingenuity and whims of man. God is first and foremost concerned about His glory; therefore, we should do church His way. In a sense, our church should not be explainable. People must conclude, "God must be supporting that."

Two excuses often heard for disobeying God's command for church discipline:

1. *It will hurt evangelism.* There will not be an end to the glory of God, but there will come a time when evangelism will end.
2. *It's not compassionate.* To obey is better than sacrifice. What arrogance to supplant God's wisdom with our own!

[Rom. 16:19](#) - what else would you want that to know that your obedience is being made known?

We do not want to be like those in Titus 1:16.

II. God is glorified through church discipline by the magnification of His name in the world.

There was a time in my ministry where I concluded that the world is going to hell, and God does not care about their opinion of Him. God is deeply concerned about His reputation among the heathen.

[Ex. 32:12-14](#) - God is angry, planning to exterminate the Jews for their obstinate spirit, but Moses intercedes on the basis of God's name and reputation

God if you exterminate these people, it will hurt your reputation. So the Lord changed his mind about the harm which he said he would do. Put that into your sovereignty theory there. God is bigger than we think he is. When Moses appealed on the basis of God's reputation, God changed his mind.

[Isaiah 52:5](#) - "my named is continually blasphemed all the day long"

[Ezekiel 36:20-23](#) - "they profaned My holy name . . . but I had concern for My holy name"

God is more concerned for His name than He is for you. And that is right and righteous. It is not for your sake that God is going to act, but for His name which has been profaned.

[1 Cor. 10:31-32](#) - everything is for the glory of God

[Col. 4:5](#) - conduct yourself with wisdom towards outsiders, because you

[1 Tim. 3:7](#) - an elder must have a good reputation outside the church

[Phil. 2:15](#) - prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent children, above reproach, as lights to the world

[Matt. 5:14-16](#) - you are the light of the world, that God might be glorified in heaven by our good works

Instruction from God whereby we strive, a type of sanctity and holiness, is a must because we bear God's name. God is glorified through the faithful exercise of church discipline by the way it magnifies his name in the world.

III. God is glorified through church discipline by the purification of His bride.

There is a kind of corporate sanctification of the bride that God intends as a whole. There is an interdependency and reciprocal relationship in the body of Christ. Impurity in the body of Christ is loathsome to God. I wish our age could grasp a trembling before the holiness of God. I wish we could gain a hold of the holiness of God in our daily lives. Are we not like the church of Laodicea today?

The Bible teaches that unrepentant sin is like a malignancy. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. Paul gave a graphic illustration to show the urgency of honor the biblical steps of discipline within the church.

Impurity is a contradiction to our destiny.

[Eph. 1:4](#) - we were predestined to be holy and blameless before Him

It glorifies God, grasps His goals, honors His dignity, pleases His sovereign purposes, to practice church discipline in the church.

IV. God is glorified through church discipline by the restoration of His sheep.

Prone to wander, Lord I feel it; prone to leave the God I love.

You are a wanderer. We are all wanderers. I would not put my family in a church where the church would not come after us! If me or my wife or children wander into sin, I want you to go after us. The Bible says that the wages of sin is death. Sin is lethal.

Once a person crosses over from being a repentant believer to being an unrepentant believer, then you have broken the spiritual fellowship of the church. You have separated yourself from the most vital unity--the unity of the Spirit. And He is the *Holy* Spirit.

We are not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God. [Eph. 4:3](#) - we are to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Church discipline is maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Church unity is produced by the person and power of the Holy Spirit, and when an unrepentant believer grieves the Spirit, a disunity exists and the breach must be repaired.

Have you ever noticed when we have unfortunately come to the last step of church discipline and voted to remove a member from the church body, there is the sweetest unity when the church is purified. All of us are humbled to expose ourselves and the sin in our lives. A unity of the Spirit comes in and a fear of God and hatred for sin.

[Gal. 6:1-2](#) - This is a guideline for restoring a wandering sheep. The word "brethren" puts a note of compassion in the whole conversation. Being caught in a sin is running from sin but the sin catches up with him. No Christian wants to live in sin. Yet Christians are sometimes caught in sin and need help. The spiritual man sees the spiritual root issue. Restoring is like putting a bone back in its joint. It make take time and be a painful experience, but it is what is necessary for a healthy member of the body.

We do not withdraw ourselves from the sins of others as burdens we should gladly bear.

When a fallen brother humbles himself to receive correction, that humbles God. The fruit of the Spirit is exhibited--gentleness, compassion, love, etc. The unity that is repaired glorifies God. The humility exhibited by the restorer himself glorifies God.

V. God is glorified through church discipline by the multiplication of disciples.

The Israelites under the direction of Joshua conquered Jericho and were told to keep nothing, but Achan kept some of the spoils. The power of God left and there were defeated at Ai. Why has the power of God left?

[Josh. 7:10-13](#) - This is not time for prayer--this is time for action! There is sin in the camp, and it requires immediate action. God is saying, "Either you judge Achan, or I will judge you." Too many things banned by God are in our midst. We are not faithfully exercising discipline and the power of God is no longer in our midst.

Glorifying God in one way is to make much of Him, and properly exercising church discipline makes much of **His person** (God is holy, holy, holy); you make much of holiness by contributing to the holiness of His bride.

You make much of **His precepts**--His truth and His word (Job. 23:12) - I have treasured the words of His mouth more than necessary food. When we obey Matt. 18, 1 Cor. 5, etc., we show the value of God's Word to us and bring glory to God.

You make much of **His power**. His power is invincible, incapable of being overcome ([Jer. 27:5](#)). God will give power to the one pleasing in His sight. [Matt. 28:18](#) - all authority is given to Christ; Matt. 6 - when you follow His Word, God's invincible power will be with you, that you should not worry about what you will wear, what you will eat; when you stand on the Word of God, you glorify God by showing the world you make much of His power when all hell raises up against you.

You make much of **His purposes**. Rev. 5:9 - God is making a people for Himself from every tribe, tongue, and nation; God's singular purpose is to redeem, purify, preserve, and perfect a people for Himself and His glory. You make much of that purpose when you faithfully shepherd the flock of God, which means you must practice church discipline.

If you are not tied into the glory of God, you will not make it. The glory of God has to be the driving passion of your life, that which motivates you when it is difficult, undergirds you when you buckle. The glory of God will keep you till the end.

Personal Commentary:

Jeff Noblit is a pastor who in public and private is "glory of God" driven, and it is evident in His preaching and in the worship of this church. It is sometimes difficult to see the ultimate end and overarching purpose of church discipline when you are working through the details, wrestling through difficult cases, and may even wonder if it is worth it. Is it worth the pain, difficulty, sleepless nights, personal attacks, being misunderstood, and facing opposition. But as Noblit has so often said, "The glory of God is worth it." It is hard to justify a passion for the glory of God if you are not passionate about the church of God; it is hard to justify a passion for the church if you are not passionate about the purity of the bride and reputation of God's name. And this can and must come about when we faithfully live obedient to the Word of God in our lives individually and our churches corporately. And means that we must be churches that practice church discipline.



Appendix: Resources on Church Discipline and Regenerate Church Membership

Below are some resources I pulled from my shelves and online. It is by no means meant to be exhaustive, but given that I will be blogging on church discipline as a part of the 2008 True Church Conference, I thought I'd put some resources online. Feel free to add others if you think of any. Jay Adams. *Handbook of Church Discipline: A Right and Privilege of Every Member*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986.

Resources on Church Discipline and Regenerate Church Membership

Joseph S. Baker. "[Church Discipline](#)" in *Polity: Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life*, edited by Mark Dever. (Washington, D.C.: IX Marks Ministries, 2001), 249-92.

Charleston Association. "[Summary of Church Discipline](#)" in *Polity: Biblical Arguments on How to Conduct Church Life*, edited by Mark Dever. (Washington, D.C.: IX Marks Ministries, 2001), 115-34.

J.L. Dagg. "Discipline" in [A Manual of Church Order](#). (Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1990), 268-74.

Mark Dever. "A Biblical Understanding of Church Membership" in *9 Marks of a Healthy Church*. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2004), 147-66.

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