

Title: Dealing with Sin in the Church Family

Scripture: 1 Timothy 5:1-2

Series: The Pastoral Epistles

1. Introduction –

- a. The church of Christ is to be a shining example of the power of God to transform lives. It is to be a clarion gospel call to the unbeliever to see within the churches’ midst Jesus Christ being formed within her members.
- b. The Church is to believe, declare, and protect the evangel. Therefore, the church is to be a place of purity and obedience to God.
- c. In scripture, we find many metaphors for the church of God but one of these is directly aligned to our passage today. We are to see the church as a family to which we belong. A dear family that is loved and cared for. The scripture bears this out:
 - i. **Ephesians 2:19** So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,
 - ii. **Galatians 6:10** So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.
 - iii. The mere fact that the bible bids us to call God “our Father” and the fellow believers “Brothers and Sisters” speaks of this truth.
 - iv. Therefore, inherent in any family should be the quality of genuine love and devotion to one another.
- d. This being said, what is the minister to do when the family of God becomes dysfunctional with sin? What are we to do when sin enters the family through one or through multiple members? Scripture is clear on this matter. We are to confront this sin but we are to confront this sin in a godly manner.
- e. The confrontation of sin is vital because as we have learned, unchecked and uncorrected sin has a devastating effect upon the sanctity and holiness of the church, the family of God.
 - i. **1 Corinthians 5:6-7** Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? (7) Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed... **1 Corinthians 5:11** But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if

he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one... **1 Corinthians 5:13** God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

ii. **Matthew 18:15-17** “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. (16) But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. (17) If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

f. These passages embolden the church to act decisively and authoritatively in purging sin from within its ranks. However, the bible clearly shows us that the process should never be vengeful or angry but done with patience, humility, and love.

i. **Galatians 6:1** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness...

g. Today, we will explore how to confront a sinning church family member in the appropriate spirit of love and with the heart set on restoration.

i. It is true that our passage deals with the minister confronting sin.

ii. However, I remind you that confronting sin is not only the job of the minister but as Matthew 18 demonstrates, it is the job of the individual and may become the job of the entire congregation.

2. Verse 1A – Right Attitude in Confronting Sin – Do not rebuke...but encourage...

a. **Do not rebuke...but encourage** –

i. Rebuke (epiplēssō) – a very strong term.

1. to strike upon, beat upon

2. to chastise with words, to chide, upbraid, rebuke

3. In other words, this word refers to harsh or violent rebuke.

4. A sinning Christian is not to be hammered with harsh words. The correction should never be done in a spirit of anger or bitterness. This will only serve the cause of the

devil in destroying the erring brother. It will give the enemy a stronger foothold in the sinning brother's life.

- ii. Encourage (parakaleō) – has the idea of coming alongside to hold up one who is weak. A derivation of this word is used to speak of the Holy Spirit that comes alongside a believer and leads us as Christians.
 1. to receive consolation, be comforted
 - a. to encourage, strengthen
 - b. John MacArthur's Commentary states, "Confronting sin in the church is not to be done by violently attacking fallen brothers and sisters. Rather, sinning saints must be lovingly confronted, strengthened, and encouraged toward holy living. It is to be done with an attitude of gentleness."
 - c. Again we consider the dictates of scripture – **Galatians 6:1-2** Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (2) Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.
 - i. What law is the apostle referring to when he states, "...the law of Christ?"
 1. He refers to the Law of love. The duty that we owe to our fellow Christian. This duty if not rendered speaks out against our profession.
 - a. **John 13:34-35** A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (35) By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."
3. Verse 1B and 2 – The Four Groups within the Church – ... an older man...as you would a father, younger men as brothers, (2) older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity.
 - a. ...**an older man...as you would a father** –

- i. When approaching an older man that is in sin, we must approach that person with all the respect owed to a father.
 - ii. Our culture has very little respect for the wisdom of our elders. Too often, our elders are treated as disposable or as being useless. This was never to be the case in the church of God.
 - 1. In Scripture, fearing God is equated to showing due reverence to our elders – **Leviticus 19:32** “You shall stand up before the gray head and honor the face of an old man, and you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.
 - 2. Age is viewed as a reward for the righteous – **Proverbs 16:31** Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.
 - 3. Disobeying the elders was equivalent to committing a high crime – **Proverbs 30:17** The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by the ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.
 - iii. Confronting an older man that is in sin requires special respect. He must be confronted but with an attitude that loves and understands the significance of his position within the church of God.
- b. ...**younger men as brothers** –
- i. In confronting younger men we are to do so remembering that they are brothers in the Lord. We are to remember that the same God Incarnate that died for me is the one that died for him. We are to remember that the brother is owed an incredible tenderness because he is a part of the family of God.
 - 1. There can be no air of superiority in confronting a younger man but instead there must be an attitude of sibling love.
 - a. **1 John 2:9-11** Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. (10) Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. (11) But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
 - 2. Love does not forbid us from confronting sin. That would be no love at all! Love allows us to confront sin in a God honoring way. It allows us to confront sin as one brother that loves the other.

- a. There must never be a Cain and Abel relationship.
 - c. ...**older women as mothers** –
 - i. Older women are to be treated gently, as one would treat a mother. We are reminded in scripture that to honor our mothers brings forth blessing.
 - 1. **Deuteronomy 5:16** “Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
 - d. ...**younger women as sisters** –
 - i. Younger women (like younger men) must be seen as siblings; as sisters in the Lord. We are to remember our duty to them as those that are equally covered in the blood of Christ and in relationship with God the Father. We must love them as family members; as co-participants in the gospel of grace.
 - e. ...**in all purity** –
 - i. By including the phrase, “...in all purity,” the apostle reminds the minister that he is not to look at the sisters in church in terms of lust. To take advantage of a sister in the Lord is a high crime and one that God will not let go unpunished (especially for the minister).
 - ii. John MacArthur’s Commentary states, “Younger women must be confronted with their sin and encouraged to godliness. They must never be led into sin, but be treated as beloved spiritual sisters whose purity is the highest consideration.”
4. Application – The church family is to be a place of purity. As we live in this world and sin is manifested in a family member’s life, we are to confront it. This confrontation must be done in gentleness, love, and reverence for love of the individual and the entire local family.
- a. The job of confronting sin will ultimately land upon the minister’s shoulders but at its onset, it is an individual and then a church responsibility.
 - b. Any correction should have an eye in restoring the individual but to the family, and to gospel obedience. This heals the family as we continue to live for and proclaim Christ.
5. Benediction –
- a. **Jude 1:23** save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh.

Public Reading of Scriptures
Matthew 18:15-20