

**Observations in Relation to Church Discipline, #6**  
**Selected Scriptures**

**Introduction:** In this study, we will make some observations in relation to church discipline.

**I. Reasons for Church Discipline:**

**A. First, church discipline is commanded in the Bible (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:11-15).**

**B. Second, God takes all sins seriously:**

- 1. Adam and Eve brought sin into the world because they ate of the forbidden fruit (Genesis 3:1-24; Romans 3:23-24; 5:12).**
- 2. Moses did not enter the Promised Land because he smote a rock to which God commanded him to speak (Exodus 17:6-7; Numbers 20:7-13).**
- 3. Uzzah died because he touched the ark which God commanded not to touch (2 Samuel 6:5-8; cf. Exodus 25:10-15; Numbers 4:15; 1 Chronicles 15:11-15).**
- 4. Achan and his family were stoned to death because of Achan's sin of covetousness (Joshua 7:24-26).**
- 5. David's son died, and David experienced many problems because of his sins of covetousness, adultery, and murder (2 Samuel 12:13-18).**
- 6. Ananias and Sapphires died because they lied about the amount of money that they gave to the church (Acts 5:1-11).**
- 7. Some in the church at Corinth were becoming sick, and some even died because of sins (1 Corinthians 11:27-30).**

**C. Third, church discipline helps to restrain sin in the local church (1 Corinthians 5:6-7; 1 Timothy 5:19-20; Proverbs 16:6).**

**D. Fourth, God withholds blessings from a church that does not deal with sin (Proverbs 28:13).**

- 1. Sin hinders answers to prayer (Isaiah 59:1-3).**
- 2. The Army of Israel was defeated at Ai because of the sin of Achan (Joshua 7:1-26).**

**E. Fifth, church discipline helps to prevent divine discipline:**

- 1. God disciplines His children (Job 5:17; Psalm 94:12; Proverbs 3:11-12; Hebrews 12:3-11).**
- 2. Divine discipline may involve sickness and even death (2 Samuel 12:14-18; Acts 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 11:28-30; 1 John 5:16-17).**

## II. Resistance to Church Discipline:

### A. Those who resist church discipline frequently quote out of context "Judge not" in Matthew 7:1.

1. "Judge" translates the Greek present, active, verb *krinō* (κρίνω) which means "to express an opinion about, to distinguish, to separate, to evaluate, to pick out, to select, to choose, to condemn, to decide, to punish, to avenge, to make a legal decision.

2. The immediate context, Matthew 7:1-6, and the broader context, Matthew 18:15-20, clearly show that Jesus is not prohibiting church discipline.

#### a. What Jesus is saying in Matthew 7:1-6:

1) Jesus is prohibiting the hypocritical judgment of others before dealing with sin in one's own life: "And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye;' and look, a plank is in your own eyes? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5, NKJV).

a) The scribes and Pharisees made hypocritical judgments (Matthew 23:1-36).

b) David made a hypocritical judgment (2 Samuel 12:1-14).

2) Jesus is warning that the standard you use to judge others will be used to judge you: "For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you" (Matthew 7:2, NKJV; cf. Luke 6:36; Galatians 6:7; James 2:13).

#### b. What Jesus is not prohibiting in Matthew 7:1-6:

1) Jesus is not prohibiting all judgments because He commands His disciples to make discerning judgments regarding dogs and swines (Matthew 7:6), false prophets and fruits (Matthew 7:15-20).

2) Jesus is not prohibiting church discipline (Matthew 18:15-20).

### B. Judgments we are not to make:

1. We are not to make hypocritical judgments (Matthew 7:1-5; Romans 2:1; cf. 2 Samuel 12:1-14).

2. We are not to make judgments regarding motives – only God knows the heart (1 Samuel 16:7; Jeremiah 17:9-10).

3. We are not to make judgments on the basis of appearances (John 7:24).

4. We are not to make judgments regarding rewards in heaven (1 Corinthians 4:1-5).

5. We are not to make judgments regarding food, drink, and certain days (Romans 14:13-23; Colossians 2:16-17).

6. We are not to make discriminatory judgments based upon race, riches, or rank (James 2:2-9; 4:11-12).

**C. Judgments we are commanded to make:**

1. We are commanded to make discerning judgments regarding false prophets (Matthew 7:15-20; 1 John 4:1-3).
2. We are commanded to judge ourselves before coming to the Lord's Supper (1 Corinthians 11:31-32).
3. We are commanded to make judgments in relation to conflicts between church members (1 Corinthians 6:1-8).
4. We are commanded to make righteous judgments based upon the Word of God (John 7:24; 20:23).
5. We are commanded to make judgments regarding divisive people in the church (Titus 3:10).

**III. Requirements for Church Discipline:**

**A. First, be sure that you have dealt with sin in your own life.**

1. Jesus said, "First get the beam out of your own eye so that you can see clearly how to get the mote out of your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5).
2. Jesus is not saying that step should not be taken to correct a sinning member of the church (Matthew 18:15-20).

**B. Second, follow the four steps Jesus listed in Matthew 18:15-20:**

1. Go to the sinning church member one-on-one (Matthew 18:15).
2. If repentance does not occur, then go again to the sinning member with one or two more believers (Matthew 18:16).
3. If repentance still does not occur, then informed the elders of the church (Matthew 18:17a).
4. If repentance does not occur, then the final step is excommunication in order to bring about repentance and restoration (Matthew 18:17b; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:14).

**C. Third, demonstrate these virtues:**

1. Love (John 13:34-35; 15:12, 17; Romans 13:8; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Thessalonians 4:9; 1 Peter 1:22; 1 John 3:11, 23; 4:7, 11; 2 John 1:5),
2. Grace (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6),
3. Mercy (Matthew 5:7; Luke 6:36; James 2:13),
4. Kindness (Ephesians 4:32),

5. **Forgiveness (Ephesians 4:32),**
  6. **Meekness (which is power under control, Galatians 6:1).**
- IV. Results of Church Discipline:**
- A. One of the desired results of church discipline is repentance, which is a change of sinful behavior (Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4).**
  - B. A second desired results of church discipline is confession:**
    - 1. Private sins require private confession (Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9).**
    - 2. Public sins require public confession:**
      - a. Achan was required to confess publicly because his sin affected many others (Joshua 7:11-13, 19).**
      - b. David confessed both privately and publicly because his sins affected many others (2 Samuel 12:13; Psalm 32:1-5; 51:1-19; cf. James 5:16).**
    - 3. God blesses a true confession (Psalm 32:1-5; Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9).**
  - C. A third desired results of church discipline is reconciliation (Matthew 18:15).**
  - D. A fourth desired results of church discipline is restoration:**
    - 1. The purpose of confrontation is restoration (Matthew 18:15).**
    - 2. The purpose of excommunication is restoration (Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; cf. 2 Corinthians 2:5-11; Galatians 6:1).**
      - a. Excommunication is the exclusion from the rights of membership including fellowship (Matthew 18:17; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15).**
      - b. Excommunication is to occur after all attempts to bring about repentance and confession have failed (Matthew 18:15-17; Titus 3:10).**

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