**GUM SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH**



**A.W. Tozer, Men Who Met God. “We must face the fact that many today are notoriously careless in their living. This attitude finds its way into the church. We have liberty, we have money, we live in comparative luxury. As a result, discipline practically has disappeared. What would a violin solo sound like if the strings on the musician's instrument were all hanging loose, not stretched tight, not "disciplined"?**

Disciples and Discipline are from the same root word meaning **“to instruct”** as Christians we are to be people of that **live by instructions, commands, laws**



**Many of you know we have a new puppy, Midnight! Teaching him about proper poop etiquette (Judy’s going to kill him if he doesn’t become disciplined)**

**Focus on the Family founder Dr. James Dobson**

We can listen in on God's response to these Christians in Hebrews 12:1-11. This is how God disciplines His children.

After a brief introduction, the writer of Hebrews reminds his read­ers that they have "***not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood***" **in their struggle against sin** (v. 4).

He also reminds them that God calls them "sons" and encourages them as such (v. 5-6). After all, they're Jewish believers who are very familiar with the Old Testa­ment, so they know the encouragement God has already given in

**Proverbs 3:11-12**: *"My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline and do not resent his rebuke, because the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."* God's disciplines because God delights in His children.

Then the Hebrew writer gets to his main teaching: *"Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disci­plined by his father? If you are not disciplined (and everyone under­goes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live!"* (vv. 7-9).

The passage gives a very human illustration: *"Our fathers disci­plined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness"* (v. 10). The point? ***"No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it"*** (v. 11).

**Do you see what Scripture is saying here? Far from being a dirty word, discipline is evidence of love.**

We all need discipline in our lives. Many of us can do better, Percentage of American's who **own running shoes but don't run: 87%**

**The church is messy because of people. Here is how we are to first try and resolve issues in the church,**

**Galatians 6:1-2** *“Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. 2Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.”* **This works in most situations**

**But not always. When it doesn’t then the bible gives us clear ways to handle conflict and people causing problems**

**Have you heard Don’t Judge others?**

We are all sinners and fail, but let’s look at a few verses

**Matthew 7:1**, *“Do not judge so that you will not be judged”* is one of the most misunderstood passages of the bible. If you keep reading, in **verse 6** Jesus says, *“Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine….”* In **verse 15** He adds, *“Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.”* **To obey those verses, you must make some fairly astute judgments!**

**Many Christians are more worried about offending those in unbiblical behavior than offending the Holy God they claim as Lord.**

**Relativism** is the philosophical position that all points of view are equally valid, and not to insult by claiming one religion right and the other wrong. Basically, that all truth is relative to the individual and their culture. This means that all moral positions, all religious systems, all art forms, all political movements, etc., are truths that are relative to the individual. Nobody is wrong or a sinner? **No absolute truth**?

**This thought poison is why many Christians justify their bad behavior with no apology or regrets**.

As a salt-less society, the rejection of Gods commands, and Christianity in particular, therefor absolute truth is being abandoned.  Many today have no real right and wrong convictions in agreement.

**Our deteriorating judicial system has more and more trouble punishing criminals so why should the church enforce biblical standards?**

Because when you read 1 Timothy 5 you will find that when a church refuses to discipline their members blatant, habitual, bad behavior that destroys the testimony of our Lord, then the church takes the responsibility of the sin on the congregation.

*“19Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses. 20****Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence* of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning**. 21I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus and of His chosen angels, to **maintain these principles** without bias, doing nothing in a spirit of partiality. 22Do not lay hands upon anyone too hastily and thereby **share responsibility for the sins** of others; keep yourself free from sin.” 1 Tim 6:19-22

Churches doing the right thing is not always easy. We are told to avoid the little things but when a person stirs up a major division in a faith community, then leaders must lead in truth.

**Matthew 18:15-18** *“If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses ever fact may be confirmed. 17If 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. 18Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.”*

**Step One – Privately go to your brother/sister in Christ and confront the sin or issue**

**Step Two – If privately it cannot be resolved, take 2-3 witnesses to mediate**

**Step Three – If resolution cannot be found then take it to the church leaders and the church**

Paul is clear again in **2 Thessalonians 3:13-15** *“13As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good. 14If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. 15****Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.****”*

If after waring does not work with a brother, then Paul tells us in **Titus 3:9-11**, *“9But avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10****As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him,*** *11knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.”*

Paul also warns in **Romans 16:17-18** *“17Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. 18For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.”*

Proverbs tells us discipline will be received in one of these three ways;

*“Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.”* **Proverbs 9:8-9**

1. A scoffer rebuked will hate and continue to cause divisions and hatred in gossip groups (obvious behavior).
2. A wise man rebuked will love in return with a humble heart seek to make things right with those he offended.
3. A righteous man rebuked wants to learn and be taught how to be better.

Doing the right thing is not always easy but the desire is to see love, wisdom and righteousness prevail is the goal.

**John Newton** said, “When people are right with God, they are apt to be hard on themselves and easy on other people. But when they are not right with God, they are easy on themselves and hard on others.”

**James 5:19-20** is the desire of this pastors heart when at all possible. Be biblical church, it may not be easy but integrity is always the real path to God’s love.

*“19My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, 20let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”* James 5:19-20

Many miss Peter’s question in Matthew 18 after Jesus gives us the 1,2,3 steps to church discipline

“21***Then Peter came and said to Him, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?” 22Jesus \*said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.”***

**Discipline is needed in our personal life, professional life and even more in our faith community. Real love has real absolute truth boundaries to protect not just themselves but the others who they share life with.**

**When boundaries are broken, we forgive, but when done habitually and intentionally you have to address it and if needed punishment. Forgiveness is never off the table when true repentance and restoration is sought for.**

Fellow pastor shared a story about discipline, out of parental concern and a desire to teach our young son responsibility, we require him to phone home when he arrives at his friend's house a few blocks away. He began to forget, however, as he grew more confident in his ability to get there without disaster befalling him. The first time he forgot, I called to be sure he had arrived. We told him the next time it happened, he would have to come home. A few days later, however, the telephone again lay silent, and I knew if he was going to learn, he would have to be punished. But I did not want to punish him!! I went to the telephone, regretting that his great time would be spoiled by his lack of contact with his father. As I dialed, I prayed for wisdom. "Treat him like I treat you," the Lord seemed to say. With that, as the telephone rang one time, I hung up. A few seconds later the phone rang, and it was my son. "I'm here, Dad!" "What took you so long to call?" I asked. "We started playing and I forgot. But Dad, I heard the phone ring once and I remembered." How often do we think of God as One who waits to punish us when we step out of line? I wonder how often he rings just once, hoping we will phone home.