

Discipline is God's Gift and Blessing to the Church

Matthew 18:12-22

Excellence requires discipline.

1. Discipline is all about _____ (Heb. 12:6; Ps. 94:12; Rev. 3:19).
2. Ninety-nine percent of church life involves _____ discipline (Acts 2:42-47; 1 Thess. 2:11; Heb. 10:24-25; 12:10; Titus 1:8).
3. Occasionally we need corrective or restorative discipline (Matt. 18:12-22).

- Note the “_____ of _____” (Matt. 18:12-14; 21-22).
- **Step 1** – What should you do when someone does something wrong?

The world says, “Mind your own business,” “Live and let live,” or “Be tolerant.”

God says, “If your brother sins against you, _____ and _____ him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over” (Matt. 18:15; cf. Lev. 19:17; Prov. 9:8; 19:18; Gal. 6:1-2; James 5:19-20; cf. Prov. 19:11; 1 Pet. 4:8).

“Nothing is more cruel than the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing is more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin.” (Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*)

- **Step 2** -- But what if others don't listen to you? What if they keep on doing something you think is wrong?

The world says, “Tell anyone and everyone about it.”

God says, “If he will not listen to you, _____ one or two others _____ so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses” (Matt. 18:16; Heb. 12:11).

- **Step 3** -- But what if others get involved and the person still won't change?

The world says, “we've done all we can, so let's just drop it.”

What does God say? “If he refuses to listen to them, _____ it to the _____” (Matt. 18:17; Acts 15:1-2, 6).

- **Step 4** -- But what if the person still won't repent, even after others in the church do all they can to persuade him to repent?

The world says, “Judge not lest ye be judged.”... “Don't force your values on me.”

What does God say? “If he refuses to listen even to the church, _____ him as you would a pagan or a tax collector” (Matt. 18:17b; cf. Matt. 18:18-20; 1 Cor. 5:9-13; Titus 3:10).

- **Step 5** -- What if a person repents of his sin and wants to be reconciled?

The world says, “Forgive you? Never! Not after all you've done.”

What does God say? “_____ your brother from your heart ... seventy-seven times” (Matt. 18:21-22; 2 Cor. 2:7).

Conclusion: Discipline is God's _____ and _____ to the church!

Challenge: The next time you are faced with disciplining someone (a child, subordinate, etc.) challenge yourself to discipline as God disciplines: out of love for that person, not retribution.

The Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in (Prov. 3:12).