



## Pursuing the Pattern for Church Discipline Pt 6: Learning from the New Testament CRCC Bible Study, August 10, 2017

Last week, our proposition was this:

*Biblical discipline (God's correction) began at the Fall (leaving the garden, curses, death), intensified at the Flood, and continued through the Tower of Babel. After God called Abraham, it took on a more "congregational" feel because God had called a unique people for Himself.*

- We looked at three instances of "congregational" discipline in the Old Testament: *The Rebellion at Sinai, The Incident at Peor, and The Sin in the Camp at Ai.*
- We missed one I'd like to quickly read though: Lev 10:1-3. Question: does God still desire to be sanctified (or revered) among His people? I think so...

**Heb 12:28-29** Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: **29** For our God *is* a consuming fire.

Tonight, we'll look at three New Testament instances of discipline: *The Discipline of Ananias and Sapphira, The Discipline of the Man in 1 Cor 5, and our LORD's Discipline of His Churches in Revelation.* Our Proposition tonight is thusly this:

**Biblical discipline (God's correction) continues in the New Testament, as God still desires a positionally AND practically holy people for Himself. Love and Redemption remain the foundation of Church Discipline, as does God's desire to be glorified among His people.**

### **The Discipline of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11):**

**Historical Context:** The Church of Jesus is apparently very young. Most timelines put this incident either within the same year as Pentecost in Acts 2 (30 AD) to around 35 AD.

**The People's Contempt:** Both Ananias and His wife joined together to lie to the church, which from Peter's perspective was to lie to the Holy Spirit (to God). (vv 3-4; 9) To many people, this whole incident seems harsh. It's too Old Testament! This article is one of the best I've read on this subject: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Ananias-and-Sapphira.html>

**God's Correction:** God killed this couple. There is no way around this uncomfortable truth.

### **The Discipline of the Man in 1 Cor 5:1-13 (focus on 1-7):**

**Historical Context:** Corinth (on an isthmus between mainland Greece and the Peloponnesian Peninsula) was known to be a place of great wealth, trade and a source of information. It was infamous for corruption and sexual immorality. Religion in the city was dominated for a time by the worship of Aphrodite, the goddess of "love", whose priestess-prostitutes at one time numbered 1,000, and whose temple was on the highest mountain peak. Prostitution was a driving force of the city's prosperity. It was so bad, that to "Corinthianize" became a way of saying, "to practice immorality."

Paul first arrived in Corinth during his 2nd missionary journey in the early 50's. First Corinthians was likely written some time in 55 A.D. from Ephesus, however, this was not the first letter Paul ever wrote to this new church. *"I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—"* (1 Corinthians 5:9). According to Acts 18, Paul planted this church and nurtured it for 18 months.

**The People's Contempt:** "The saint's, in Corinth, apparently relaxed attitude about the sin in question.

In his commentary on 1 Corinthians, Gordon Fee writes, 'The problem for Paul is twofold: that a believer is living in an incestuous relationship that even pagans disallowed is bad enough; but far worse is the church's relaxed attitude about it.' John MacArthur writes, 'This sin was so vile that even the church's pagan neighbors were doubtless scandalized by it. The Corinthians had rationalized or minimized this sin which was common knowledge.'

Somehow, this church had developed (or continued in) a low view of sin. They weren't shocked. They weren't astonished. They weren't saddened. They weren't penitent. They were arrogant and boastful! (v2) It reads like a trifling headline: "This just in...man has father's wife in church, story at 6." For the repentant, this is a non-issue. But Paul addresses a bold sinner and a church that didn't seem to care."

**God's Correction:** Excommunication (v5). To Paul, to be put out of the church was to be delivered to Satan.

### **Our LORD's Discipline of His Churches in Revelation (chps 2-3):**

**Historical Context:** Through the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, our LORD addresses seven historical churches: *Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea*. The timeline here is very controversial, so let's just say Revelation could have been written prior to 70 AD or in the late 90's AD. ;) Of note, Jesus reminded them that He is LORD over His Church everywhere. (Rev 1:9-20)

**The People's Contempt:** Of the seven churches, only Smyrna and Philadelphia weren't rebuked. The other churches had fallen in some way, in full view of the Savior.

**God's Correction:** The churches in question were "read" by Jesus and commanded to repent, some rather harshly. For example, at Thyatira, the toleration of Jezebel was particularly tough (Rev 2:20-23).

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**Conclusion:** Discipline in the Church was (and is) part and parcel of walking with and following Jesus. Maybe His own words to Laodicea would be an appropriate way to conclude tonight:

**Rev 3:15-19** *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked: 18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and*

*anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see. 19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*