“The Why & How of Restoration”

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

11-1-2026

Introduction:

I. <u>Why</u> Restore a Repentant Erring Brother

We ought to seek to restore a repentant erring brother because:

A. Restoration lifts the <u>burden</u> and <u>grief</u> of sin (v. 5-7)

B. Restoration is a matter of <u>obedience</u> to God’s will (v. 9)

C. Restoration <u>disarms Satan</u> of using a situation to create further havoc (v. 11)

II. <u>How</u> to Restore a Repentant Erring Brother

A. We need to know when “<u>enough is enough</u>” (v. 6)

B. We need to shower him with forgiving <u>grace</u> and <u>encouragement</u> (v. 7)

C. We need to reaffirm our <u>love</u> toward him (v. 8)

D. We need to treat him as <u>Christ</u> would (v. 9 – 10)

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Introduction:

The local church is to be a holy family.

Like a family, a local church requires three things to have God's blessings:
Love, Truth, and Discipline

Church discipline should be as normal as disciplining children.

Discipline is a family matter, and the church is a family.

God serves as the pattern for loving discipline (Heb. 12:4-13; Prov. 3:11-12; cp. Rev. 3:19).

Today, many churches are reluctant to take disciplinary action to deal with sin among their members.

Why? It takes courage, time, effort, and love (just as family discipline). Another reason is this: It's easy to tolerate sin in the lives of others, when you tolerate it in your own life.

Discipline is really an act of discipleship.

"Is church discipline necessary? Few would dispute the necessity of pulling a drowning man from a flooding torrent or recovering a fallen climber from a mountain crevasse. Most decent people would skip the verbal exercise and give themselves to the rescue! Should less concern be demonstrated for the believer who has fallen morally and whose spiritual life is in danger? With some justification the church has been accused of being the only army that shoots its wounded." ("The Biblical Practice of Church Discipline," Bibliotheca Sacra, Oct.-Dec., 1986, by J. Carl Laney).

The Pattern of Church Discipline:

--The Steps – Matthew 18:15-20
--The Separation – 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 Thes. 3:6

The Purpose of Church Discipline:

--Purity of the Church (1 Cor. 5:6)
--Acknowledgement and Repentance of sin (2 Thes. 3:14)
--Restoration of fellowship (Gal. 6:1; 2 Cor. 2:5ff)

I. <u>Why</u> Restore a Repentant Erring Brother

We ought to seek to restore a repentant erring brother because:

A. Restoration lifts the <u>burden</u> and <u>grief</u> of sin (v. 5-7)

v. 5

Although Paul was miles away from the scene, he was partially grieved over the sinful situation by this offender at Corinth.

But he chooses not to go on reiterating his sorrow and recommending further discipline, because the sinner had repented.

If this was the same situation as described in 1 Cor. 5:1ff (that a man was living in sexual sin with his stepmother), the outcome has become one God accepts. The sinful relationship has been broken off; and the sinner has come to acknowledge the error of his ways.

Another belief states that this offender was one who attacked Paul and his integrity, and it is for him that Paul pleads for forgiveness (Hughes, p. 47). (cp. 2 Cor. 7:8-13a)

v. 7
"Swallowed up" - overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. We expect sorrow for sin, but not excessive sorrow.

"Paul's sensitivity here is implicit as he avoids naming the offender because identifying the culprit by name would not contribute to the man's desired restoration." (Hughes. P. 48)

"If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together." (12:26) (Hughes. P. 49)

"Paul would never have countenanced the free-riding ecclesiastical hitch-hikers of today, much less the McChurch consumers who attend one church for the preaching, send their children to a second church for the youth group, and participate in another church's small groups --- people who live without commitment, without accountability, without discipline, without the Lord's Table. For Paul, the church was central to Christian existence. He never conceived of Christians living apart from the visible church. Rather, Christians lived in such profound relationship that the pain of one was truly felt by all." (Hughes, p. 49).

B. Restoration is a matter of <u>obedience</u> to God's will (v. 9)

When Paul wrote the procedure for church discipline in 1 Cor. 5, he did so on behalf of God.

"Though they had accepted Paul's authority in the case of the rebel, they had yet to prove that they accepted it in all things" (cf. 10:6) (Ryrie note)

C. Restoration <u>disarms Satan</u> of using a situation to create further havoc (v. 11)

"Devices" – schemes; plots.

Satan has many different tactics. Believers cannot afford to be ignorant of anyone of them.

Satan is crafty. He can use any situation where Biblical balance is not achieved.

1) Satan can exploit a situation where no discipline is exercised to create an environment for repeated offense (when there's no penalty, there's no deterrent to the "crime").

2) Satan can exploit a situation where over-discipline can hurt and discourage the offender. He may become embittered and deeply hurt.

"The church is loath to exercise church discipline against an unrepentant sinner. And then when it finally steps up to its responsibility and does it, it finds it difficult to forgive and restore the repentant sinner." (Hughes. P. 48).

"The fact was, if the Corinthian charuch refused to forgive the penitent sinner, a poison would clog the way of grace. The Corinthians' refusal to forgive could have killed the church." (Hughes, p. 51)

"This 'forgiven people forgive' teaching was so integral to Jesus' teaching…" (Hughes. P. 51).

"John Wesley once had the occasion to drive this daunting truth home. He had offended the British General Oglethorpe, who exploded, 'I never forgive!' To which Wesley replied, 'Then, Sir, I hope you never sin'." (Hughes. P. 51)

We need to strike the balance of God. God chastens all of His children (Heb. 12:6), but when confession (1 Jn. 1:9) and repentance is exercised, forgiveness is immediate (Ps. 32:5).

II. How to Restore a Repentant Erring Brother

A. We need to know when "enough is enough" (v. 6)

What would the "punishment" involve?

1) Dismissal from church membership (1 Cor. 5:7)

(no participation in church ministry)

2) Separation from church fellowship (1 Cor. 5:11)

(no joyful communication & interaction with church members, other than loving confrontation and loving rebuke)

"Sufficient" - enough; no more needed.

We do not believe that the repentant sinner should have to do "penance" for the rest of his life or wear the scarlet letter "A" (for adulterer) across his chest forever.

"There is nothing quite as liberating as the assurance of being forgiven. A pardon wipes the slate clean. Probation, on the other hand, keeps you ffeling unsettled, distrusted, and watched."
"Have you ever been placed on probation? Ever been told, I forgive you"' but what you really heard was, "I'm putting you on probation"? At best, probation is half-forgiveness, dangling you somewhere between suspicion and supervision. You feel more like a criminal out on bail than a Christian accepted in the family." (Swindoll, p. 29 A Ministry Anyone Could Trust)

Wisdom in discipline is knowing when "enough is enough."

Lesson learned --- Sin acknowledged and forsaken --- Confession to God and the offended party(s). Now begins the healing ministry of reconciliation.

"Inflicted of many" - The church at large (a corporate effort) applied group "peer" pressure to encourage the wayward sinner toward repentance.

Such united admonition is the final phase of church discipline (Mt. 18:17 - "Tell it unto the church").

B. We need to shower him with forgiving <u>grace</u> and <u>encouragement</u> (v. 7)

It is very important to note that the Bible uses very specific words with very specific names in regard to forgiveness:

The O.T. Hebrew words:

1) *Kaphar* = to <u>cover</u> (as God sees our sins no more) (Ps. 78:38; Jer. 18:23)

2) *Nasa* = to <u>lift up</u> and or <u>lift away</u> from someone (Gen. 50:17; Ex. 10:17, 32:32; Ps. 32:5) (the sin burden is lifted off)

3) *Salach* = to send away; to let go of (the sin and its penalty is dismissed) (1 Ki. 8:30-39)

Jeremiah 31:34
And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

The N.T. Greek words:

1) *Apoluo* = to <u>loose away</u>; to <u>release</u> someone (Lk. 6:37)

2) *Aphiemi* = (from *apo* away from & *heimi* to send) to send away; to dismiss the sin and its penalty; to cancel a debt (Mt. 6:1) (Mk. 2:5, 7, 10; Mt. 18:21; Lk. 17:3)

3) *Charizomai* = to be gracious toward someone; to shower someone with undeserved gracious kindness and favor (Eph. 4:32; Col. 2:13, 3:13).

**Charizomai* is the word used in 2 Cor. 2:7, 10.

"Forgive" - to bestow undeserved grace upon someone. The word describes the "<u>fruit</u>" of forgiveness. By kind actions you display an attitude of forgiveness.

"Comfort" - *parakaleo* – to encourage; to come alongside and encourage, as a nurse would come alongside a patient's bed and offer comfort.

C. We need to reaffirm our <u>love</u> toward him (v. 8)

"Confirm your love" - reaffirm to him that you love him unconditionally. Despite his past, your love (as God's love) continues.

D. We need to treat him as <u>Christ</u> would (v. 9 – 10)

v. 10

"In the person of Christ" - Gracious forgiveness is for the offender's sake (not merely for our sake and our release); and when we offer gracious forgiveness, we do so just as Christ would if He were here.

Conclusion:

The goal of church discipline is not a permanent shunning or lifelong excommunication, but <u>restoration</u>. (SEE: II Cor. 2:5-11)

When genuine repentance is evident by the offender's public acknowledgment and pursuit of Godliness, we cannot keep the offender at a distance. We must joyfully restore the person back into the fellowship (NOTE: This does not necessarily mean a restoration to public office - Ex: pastor or deacon. Total forgiveness does not necessarily mean restoration to leadership privilege if one becomes disqualified).

We must always be willing and ready to *"forgive"..."comfort"...*and "*reaffirm"* our *"love"*

"Unlike the "Scarlet Letter" in Nathaniel Hawthorne's classic novel, Biblical church discipline is designed to restore not to punish" (Laney, p. 354).

We must never give up on people!

In reality the church discipline process should not end until the "brother has either repented or died. . . the purpose of the ostracism is not to punish (or rid ourselves of the sinner), but to awaken" (and restore) (MacArthur, <u>MATTHEW</u>, p. 136-137).

Church discipline is not fleshly revenge, nor cruel punishment, not an act of hatred but to the contrary it is a humble, gentle, truthful, loving response to seek to save a *"soul from death"* and to *"hide a multitude of sins"* (Ja. 5:20).