

Sin in the Camp Part 2

by Shane Idleman

Confronting sin in the church is essential for restoration and spiritual growth, and a healthy fear of God is crucial for maintaining a balanced and reverent relationship with God.

Duration: 51:08

Scripture: Matthew 18:15

Topics: "Church Discipline", "Sin and Accountability"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the critical issue of 'sin in the camp' in his sermon, emphasizing the detrimental effects of unconfessed sin on individuals and the church community. He draws parallels to the Israelites' defeat due to sin and stresses the importance of church discipline as a means of restoration rather than punishment. Idleman encourages believers to confront sin lovingly and to embrace conviction as a pathway to spiritual growth, while also highlighting the necessity of accountability within the church. He warns against the dangers of avoiding confrontation and the consequences of living in unrepentant sin, urging the congregation to examine their hearts before partaking in communion.

Transcript

You can turn your Bibles to Matthew 18. Matthew 18. And we're talking about sin in the camp.

Sin in the camp. And I don't know if you were here last week or not, but if you weren't, you're going to need to go listen to Part 1. That's the only way Part 2 is going to make sense. Because I talked about last week how we deal with sin in the camp, meaning like Joshua, when he delivered the children of Israel and they went into battle.

Moses delivered them, but then Joshua took them into battle. They had sin in the camp. There were some things they took, and their next battle they were defeated.

And they weren't able to progress. So it's kind of a term there where you use sin in the camp. It's healthy for the church to look at the church itself and our individuals and our families.

If there's sin in the camp, sin in our lives, it will affect us. Whether you believe it or not, let me tell you right up front, it will affect your marriage, it will affect your walk with the Lord. And that's what we've been tackling.

And we're also talking about church discipline. Sin in the camp, church discipline. It's a topic we don't like to talk about, but we have to because we're in Matthew 18.

And that's what half of this chapter is about. How does a church handle sin in the church? Do we just look the other way and hope it disappears? Or do we confront everybody? Because if we confront everybody, we're all in trouble, right? As far as, you know, there's some level of sin in all of us. Pride and arrogance.

And if you don't think there is, that's a good sign that there's usually a lot of pride there. So I would just encourage you to stick through this series. Part one last week.

You need to listen to that. This is part two. And, you know, it begs the question, why talk about sin in the camp? Why talk about church discipline? Well, it affects the church at a very deep level.

Paul said, don't you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? So a little sin, if left unchecked in your individual life, in my individual life, in the life of a family, in the life of a church, if it's just left unchecked, it grows. And it affects everything that it comes across. And why is it so important to address this from the pulpit? Well, like I said last week, we've become very good at avoiding conviction.

Haven't we? We've become very good at avoiding conviction. If a person dares to challenge us, we dilute the conviction saying they're legalistic, judgmental, and arrogant. In other words, if a person's convicted and a person goes to them, they say, well, that person's prideful, that person's judgmental, that person's arrogant.

And we have a way of hiding our conviction. When God says, listen, conviction can be a very good thing. Don't run from it.

Run to it. But I don't know if it's just America, you know, independence. But we just hate conviction.

And we'll do whatever it takes to get away from it. And we'll hide it. And that's why it's important for the pulpit to bring out some of these things.

Because we're not going to hear it from our best friends a lot of times. Because they're usually into sin. Or they don't want to upset anybody.

They don't want to ruffle feathers. They want to be our friend. And we're not going to hear it from most churches don't want to talk about it.

We're not going to hear it from coworkers or family members necessarily. There are exceptions. But the majority of the time, we can remain convicted.

Or we can avoid conviction by kind of moving things around and excusing our actions. So that's why this is so important. And I want to remind you again, as I did last week.

If someone who cares for you challenges you, there's probably something to it. If somebody who cares for you challenges you, there's probably something to it. It's probably a legitimate thing if a husband goes to a wife or wife to her husband.

But what do we normally do? Are we all ears? Okay, tell me. Not me sometimes. I'm on defense mode.

Well, yeah, let me tell you about you. And we go back and forth. But really, God uses that to help change us.

Because as I've said many times before, and I'll say it again tonight. We won't change often unless we're confronted. Unless we're convicted.

Unless there's consequences to our actions. We often will not change. And it's also important because many times a person is on a very dangerous path.

And that's what happens with sin. It puts us on a very dangerous path. And unless we're awakened from that.

And somebody loves us enough to tell us the truth. When we continue in it, the path is destruction. If you don't like that language, then blame the Bible.

The Bible says sin leads to destruction. Sin leads to death. Sin leads to, it's not a good thing.

And I want to read an excerpt I think I read about six months ago from Tempted and Tried by Russell Moore. He said that the demonic powers not only will give us what we crave. But they will assist us in covering it over for a while.

That's precisely the irony. Often you are fueled on and I'm fueled on from one temptation to another. Because you haven't been caught.

This gives you the illusion of a cocoon protecting you from justice. The demonic powers though don't want you to get caught. Not just yet.

Not this early in the march to the slaughterhouse. They don't have a mere 70 or 80 years to live. They are ancient and patient and quite willing to wait.

Until your downfall will bring with it the most catastrophic consequences. For you, your family, for the kingdom of God. And for the image of Christ you carry.

So they'll help you cover it all up. And then they'll expose you. You'll never see it coming around the bend.

And that's very true. Because a lot of times in God's love and grace and forgiveness. He warns us and convicts us.

And months go by and months and months. Maybe a year and then when that finally falls. The judgment finally falls.

It's because we hadn't turned from these things. We allowed certain things to take a foothold and stronghold. And they kept growing and growing and growing.

So I think it's important to remember about demonic influence. A lot of times they'll be on your side. They'll help you sin.

And they'll cover it up until they can take you down. They don't stop the kid at 18 who's an alcoholic. They want to wait until he's 28 and got everything together.

And his family and his marriage. And do damage. They want to do real damage there.

That's what they do. They're waiting for opportune times. And that's why this type of topic is important.

Because we can go to people and we can lovingly confront them. And say, listen, this is hurting you. This is destroying you.

And yeah, they might get mad right now. But they've got to sit and listen to it. And they've got to sit and think about it all week.

So that's why this is so important. We're actually helping people. Might not look at it that way.

But isn't that what confrontation is? Because we think of it as arguments. As yelling. Or going back and forth.

Or this. Or confronting. But it can be a form of ministry.

It can be formed. This person is not going in a good direction. And we should lovingly challenge them.

Lovingly confront them. And then what they do with it is up to them. But that's the responsibility.

That's why this is so important and so needed. And also, this keeps coming up. I thought it would fit in good here too.

People often tell me. I've heard it I think twice this week. I don't have to go to church to be a Christian.

Like they're proud about that. I don't have to go to church to be a Christian. No you don't.

But you'll never operate fully as a Christian. Without going to church. Without being around other believers.

As iron sharpens iron. Because it's so easy for me. Please don't get offended.

But it's so easy for me to have a relationship with God. The vertical. It's the horizontal ones that are tough.

Right? It's the horizontal ones with people that are tough. He's quiet. He's giving.

He's loving. He'll listen all night. He doesn't throw fits.

I can have a great relationship with God. Horizontally. Or vertically.

But then he wants us to. Horizontally is where we really grow and learn. This is where we grow and we learn.

And the church. It's funny because people say. Well I got offended at church.

Or it's hard there. These people treat me. Yeah.

That's the whole point. Last time a family member upset you. You just didn't leave your family member.

You know if my mom upsets me. I'm not going to say I'm never talking to you again. Ever.

I'm going to find a different family. But that's what happens in the church. We get offended.

And we just kind of bail out. But that's part of iron sharpens iron. You'll see people who are plugged into church are often very mature.

Because they've learned to deal with the offenses against them. They learn to deal with attitudes and egos. And the way people come across.

And the way they're treated. And it's steadfast. So God uses the church.

So if a person doesn't go to church. Of course you can still be a Christian. But you won't operate effectively as a Christian.

You won't grow and mature as a Christian. Well I'll be careful here. I was going to say a little bit more.

But I'll go ahead and say it. Because I know you want to know what it is. But I want to be careful here.

Because this is an absolute statement. But I know quite a few dozen people who don't go to church. And their stuff off in their walk.

Let's just leave it at that. They're not quite there spiritually. Because they're avoiding people.

They're avoiding what God wants to use to shape and mold us. So a lot of times I don't go to church is kind of a cop out. It's like saying I don't go to the dentist.

I don't want the root canals. I don't want the things. So I would just encourage you.

Even on a regular basis. And commitment. And being there even though it's difficult.

And I share with the first service. It was back when I was going to church. Now I have to be here right? There's no way around it.

But it was amazing. The day of church. Why is everything irritating? You're arguing with your spouse.

You're arguing with the kids. You can't get them ready. Even if the church isn't until 10 o'clock.

You can't get them ready. Something's wrong. Everybody's in a bad mood.

But going to a Dodger game, there's no problems. Nothing. The car goes great.

It's full tank of gas. No flat tires. Everybody's full.

Everybody's in a great mood. It's almost like the demons will just drive you there. But when it comes to coming to church, that's where it gets challenging.

And that's where we have every other excuse. And it's almost like if we're not doing anything else, we'll go to church. If I feel just right, we'll go to church.

And I think God will use that often. Use church and coming here in commitment to grow us spiritually. So it's a very healthy thing to be in a congregation that loves you and believes the Bible.

And will tell you the truth. Because if you don't hear it here, where are you going to hear it? Coworkers encourage sin, usually, in a secular environment. Don't they? Not too many coworkers lovingly confront and challenge you, unless they're a Christian.

Family members don't. They'll just, you know, whatever. And so it's in the church that you can really, iron sharpens iron.

And it just happens here. It happens to me all the time. Lovingly confronted.

Not in a bad way. I don't think, you know, it's just challenging, I guess would be a better word. Where people are challenging.

You know, we challenge each other to grow. And how's your devotional life? And how's your spouse? For example, like here we have with the board, the church and the elders can call Morgan or email her. We've got the board of the church treasurer and vice president and different people.

They can ask her how things are going. They can email her. They can talk to her here.

Or at different times, there's open transparency. And they're challenging sometimes. Well, how's the marriage? Do people like that? Or do you just want to be left alone? Don't ask me anything.

It's those people who want to be left alone that there's usually junk in the trunk. There's usually something going on that's not very healthy. Because they're not opening up to transparency and accountability.

So with that long introduction, Matthew 18, verse 15. Matthew 18, chapter 18, verse 15. How do we deal with a sinning brother? Have you ever heard Matthew 18 before? People say, Matthew 18, Matthew 18, Matthew 18.

Go get him, Matthew 18. So I'm not going to run through this quickly. It's going to take probably a few sermons.

Because Matthew 18 is very interesting. You go to a brother. And if they don't listen, you bring a witness.

If they don't listen, you take them to the church, more people. If they don't listen, then you actually throw them out of the church. Physically? Well, not necessarily.

But the whole point of that is restoration. Because if a person is in unconfessed, unrepentant sin, the church can't just look the other way. They have to lovingly go after this person.

That's what we're doing. It's actually a restoration process. It shouldn't be called necessary church discipline, even though it is.

It's a restoration process. And that's probably a better term. But I'm not going to get through all that tonight.

Just the first section here. Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Now you're saying, what does that last part mean? Well, we're getting there. We can't jump ahead.

Not the cart before the horse and all that, right? We have to go in order here. The first thing I'd like you to realize is the context of this. We just talked about it last week, where Jesus is talking about going after a lost sheep.

And that God is, chapter 18, before this, for the Son of Man has not come to save that which, for the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost. What do you think if a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains and seek the one that is straying? So he's talking about the angels rejoice when a prodigal son is brought home, when a wayward daughter returns, when they find that lost sheep. And then he goes and says, moreover, if your brother sins against you.

So to me, that context, that imagery there is of a lost sheep. He's not going in a good direction. There's been some sin that's taken place.

So what do we do with that? Well, first, the balancing act is very difficult. And what I mean by that is on this side, you have churches or congregations or people that take sin too lightly. Have you ever seen that side? Well, we can all gravitate towards that.

I mean, who likes to confront, except judgmental people, heresy hunters, they love to confront. But most people don't like to confront. You'd like to make that phone call or that email, or that, no, we don't want to.

So this side takes sin too lightly. And I like what J.C. Ryle in his book on holiness wrote, that we must stand guard as a soldier on enemy ground. The problem is that many who profess to be Christians love the world and have a hard time separating.

They believe in heaven, but they don't long for it. They say that they fear God, but they don't live like it. So what happens is churches who fear men more than God will take sin lightly.

That's just bottom-line truth. If I take, if I fear man, in other words, oh, I don't want to, you know, people are going to get upset, or they're going to think we're going to lose some people. If we fear man, then we're going to take sin lightly, because God says don't take sin lightly.

So there's a balancing act there. Have you heard the phrase, put the fear of God in them? Did you know that's very biblical? Very biblical to have a healthy respect and fear for God. Actually, I think that more churches need that.

People need to come into church, and not an angry, abusive stepfather, not that type of fear. I'm talking about reverence and respect for Almighty God. There should be a healthy fear.

The Bible says the beginning of wisdom, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. It's the beginning of understanding.

Those who fear the Lord and tremble in His presence, that's very healthy. So it's good to put the fear of God in people, and not take sin too lightly, because often if a person has a fear of God, they'll change, or they'll think differently. When we think of God as a doting grandfather, or a cosmic ball of love, or just all He does is forgive, then what's the big deal? But we don't see that.

We see God's attributes of love and mercy and grace, and thank God for that, but we also see His attribute of holiness and righteousness, and the fear of God. I like what Joshua 24 says, Now fear the Lord

and serve Him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods of your forefathers, and serve Him, and Him only.

Psalm 211, Serve the Lord with fear and rejoicing, with trembling. Psalm 115, He will bless those who fear the Lord, small and great alike. Acts 9.31, Then the church throughout Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, enjoyed time of peace.

It was strengthened and encouraged by the Holy Spirit. Why was that? It grew in numbers living in the fear of the Lord. Or what about in Acts? You know, the two people who sold their land, and said, oh yeah, we sold it for \$100,000, you know, I'm just using a number here, and then they gave the church \$100,000, really they sold it for \$200,000, and they kept the money.

And as soon as the husband, you know, told the lie, he was dropped dead. He said, oh my goodness. Now the wife comes in, and they said, tell me, did you sell it for such and such? What happens to the wife? Same thing.

And then what's the Bible say? And then the fear of the Lord spread throughout the whole church, the fear fell upon the church. It's very healthy, it's because we're like little kids who will grab the cookies. If we're allowed to, so the healthy fear of God, do you want your kids to have a fear of God or not? Uh-oh, there's not too many head shaking on that one.

I do, because the fear of the Lord will keep people away from things, it will keep us in the right direction. A healthy fear of the Lord. It was grace that taught my heart to fear.

Remember the old hymn, in grace my fear is relieved? How precious was that grace appeared the hour I first believed. It was grace that taught my heart to fear. Because when I fear God, I don't fear other things.

It's very interesting, people who deal with fear, often, often they're fearing the wrong things. Death, early death, what I did to my life, shame, guilt, a government, there we go, September. Everybody's scared about September.

Four blood moons and everything else, and we're fear, fear, fear, fear, fearful, fearful. So if I'm still here preaching in October, I'm gonna give a lesson on that too. So there's fear, and there's fear, and there's fear, but when you fear God, you don't fear those things as much.

It's a healthy balance there, but when we start to fear all these other things, then we don't fear and we don't trust God. So I found that when I fear and trust God, I'm trusting a sovereign God who holds my breath in His hands. He holds the nations in the other hand.

He's in control of everything. I fear Him. I look to you and you alone as my source of strength and comfort, and then other fear diminishes.

And it's interesting, that fear's healthy and it feels good. That fear brings me joy and peace. The other fear doesn't.

That's where depression and anxiety come in. So often, if you ever struggle with that, with depression, anxiety, and fear, which a lot of people do, I'm not talking about severe cases, but a lot of times you can look at, are you fearing God? Are you getting to know Him? Are you looking to who He is and who He is alone and how He can guide you through this? And when we look to Him, all this other thing will diminish.

It's a balancing act, but it will happen.

And here's the other flip side, judging too quickly. If this side doesn't judge at all, this side judges too quickly. Oh, you've got to send your life, boom, boom, boom, you're out of here.

And they just go around pointing fingers. And I like what A.W. Tozer said, that a religious hypocrite is hard on others and easy on himself. That's a Facebook post right there.

A religious hypocrite is hard on others and easy on himself. Isn't that true? I can spot them a mile away. They are so hard on others, but on themselves.

Oh, no, sir. I mean, they'll point out sins, and I want to say, what about the sin of gluttony? What about the sin of arrogance? What about the sin of pride? But that's what we do. We're hard on others and easy on himself, but a spiritual man is easy on others and hard on himself.

And really, when you approach that, that's a healthy view. I need to be hard on myself. What do you mean by that? Well, Jesus said, remove the plank out of your eye.

Then you can go and remove the speck from your brothers. So a spiritual person is hard on themselves and they're easy on others. Because when you reverse that, it's ugly.

Because then you go around critiquing everybody and everything. And you think you're God's gift to Christianity. And, oh, sure, I've got a few flaws.

Anytime you hear that or say that, rest assured that this could apply. I've been guilty of that. Oh, yeah, well, sure, yeah, who doesn't have flaws? But, and you go back to that person.

That's not being hard on yourself. It's being hard on the other person. It's interesting.

Prideful, judgmental people can always find supposed scriptural support for their actions while ignoring the clear-cut teachings on grace and forgiveness. And now here's the key. I'm gonna move into the first step right here.

But here's the key, and hopefully this will help you guys. It's helped me a lot of times. People don't like confrontation, right? When you go to them, they're not smiling and, oh, yeah, bring it on, give me some more.

It's important sometimes to remind them that they created this environment. So you have the rebellious teenager or the rebellious son or daughter or whoever and you have to take hard steps, you can remind them that they created this atmosphere, not you. They created this environment, not you.

I'm just responding to it. Why are you so upset? You created this. You created this.

I'm just responding. So always remember that. We're going in as response team to respond to what has happened here.

And we don't have a one-size-fits-all approach to this. I wanna make myself clear on that. There's not a one-size-fits-all approach.

Okay, you got a family of four, the guy's in this sin, the mom's doing this, here's what we do. Because there's so many different variables. If the little kids are involved and there's a process and maybe there's

some success and then a little bit of failure versus ongoing failure.

You have to look at every single situation on its own merit and pray and wait patiently and seek God's advice as you pray and wait through other counsel too. But here's the first step. Moreover, if your brother sins against you, you go and tell him his fault between you and him alone.

If he hears you, you've gained your brother. And I don't like this first step because this means that I'm the initiator. And so are you.

If your brother sins against you, you don't wait at home waiting for the phone call where they're asking for forgiveness. Darn it. If somebody sins against me, then I'm obligated to go and talk to them and try to win that brother back.

So we're as Christians, now here's the key, as spiritual mature Christians, because a lot of people say they're Christians, but as spiritual mature Christians, you're just supposed to be the feet and the arms of Christ. So we are the initiator. We actually have to initiate forgiveness.

I don't like that either. We initiate, I'm sorry, forgiveness. We initiate conflict resolution.

We are the initiators here. So we're to go to the person, not wait for them to come. The next point here, number two, sins are to be dealt with.

Jesus is clear, but offenses are to be released. Have you ever thought about that? Because you were thinking, well, people sin against me all the time. Well, there's a big difference.

An offense is somebody took your parking spot. Somebody didn't say hi to you when you came in. Somebody had an attitude.

Also, offense is when Jesus said in Matthew 5, therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there at the altar and go and be reconciled to your brother. So the context always here is brother. This is like a believer.

Believers together, if there's a conflict there, we should resolve it. But if the world, like Jesus said, turn the other cheek, if the world insults us, we're to turn the other cheek and allow that offense to bounce off. But if it's a brother sinning against us, we're to go to them.

So I think it's an area we have to be careful in. Sins are to be dealt with different from being offended from everybody. Because if we approached offenses, we'd be approaching people all the time, right? It's probably not a Saturday that somebody doesn't offend you, right? But you're still here.

So we handle those a lot differently. And also, number three, we should not move too quickly when confronting. Now this is interesting.

Jesus said, moreover, if your brother sins against you, well, what's the timeframe there? Yesterday? Last week? A month ago? Last night? So this, again, wisdom is needed. Because we shouldn't move too quickly when confronting. There are exceptions.

I just read one in Matthew. And so we know, okay, there's something I gotta go work this out. But often, we don't have to move real quickly.

Because what happens when you move quickly, you react, not respond. And reacting is never pretty. Reacting is you hit me, I hit you back.

You're reacting to the punch. Boom, boom. You hurt me, I'm hurting you.

You sin against me, I'm confronting you. And so in the waiting time, we can remove the log from our eye, we can sit, we can wait in God's presence, we can pray, we can go in peace, and not react, but instead respond. So we should not move too quickly.

And then that brings me to number four. Patiently wait on the Lord. Patiently wait on the Lord.

Pray about the situation. Examine your own motives first. This is harder than you think.

Because we do want to respond. We do want to take care of this. And it's hard to patiently wait on the Lord.

And the more we wait on him, he'll push you into things. I call it holy pushing. You'll run into somebody somewhere, or he'll make something happen.

And so you can't go wrong waiting on, okay, Lord, show me your timing, and show me where I might be wrong, and show me if it's just my feelings got hurt. Lord, show me somehow how to resolve this. I'm waiting on you.

You need to bring something to light. And he will answer that prayer. So I just encourage you to do that.

Patiently wait on him. And then fifth, when you go to approach somebody, go when the timing is right. Have you heard the phrase, don't throw fuel on the fire? Well, you don't go after a hard day's work, or they just found out they lost their job, or they just found out this, but you don't go and just throw fuel on the fire.

Timing is critical. Timing is very critical on this area, and praying and waiting on God's timing. Then the next point, this is a wonderful time for ministry.

The person is probably already hurting. And I already mentioned to you before, if you go into this thinking this is ministry, it will change the way you act. Because you're not going into this saying, this is confrontation.

I'm gonna confront them. I'm gonna prove I'm right. I'm gonna put my foot down.

I'm gonna show them they're wrong. It's the wrong attitude right there. So you have to, and I have to, look at this as an opportunity for ministry.

Isn't it? If you see somebody, and they're hurting, or they've wronged you, or something, this is not a good thing. So we can look at this as a ministry opportunity, and then it changes our whole heart there. And there are times when you can send a delegate, I believe.

We look at Jacob sending a delegation to meet his brother Esau. We look at Barnabas intervening with Paul. There are times, especially if it's somebody at work, or in a position of authority, if abuse has taken place, or something where it's just not comfortable, it's just not right, it's awkward, you can have somebody intervene, and go and start that process off for you.

So that's really what the first step is. As we get into more steps. So you don't just throw somebody out of the church right away.

This is the first step. And actually we haven't had to do this in five years. So that's pretty good.

We haven't had to, we've prayed and God has changed some hearts, so that's a good thing. But there are times when you have to go and confront, and if that doesn't work, you pray and you wait, I'm gonna get on the rest of that in the next week or two, or three, maybe part three, part four, part five, because you want to do this the right way. We don't want to just rush through this.

And even when you go to them, you want to give them time. You don't go to them, they have a bad attitude, you bring witnesses a day later. You know, that's not healthy.

You want to give them time to process everything and follow up, and we're gonna go through all that. But many issues work themselves out when taken to prayer and fasting. I don't know if you're aware of that, but that's why I don't think we've had to do this at this church.

Many times, I can think of a half dozen off the top of my head, where I took it to prayer, fasting, or other people did it, we just prayed, we just fasted, and God worked it out. Because we sought Him. Because, see, the confrontation is just one method He uses to change a person.

It doesn't have to be the only method. When you pray and you fast, and you have a person come to repentance on their own, and God just brings a weight of His glory in on their lives, and maybe He'll take that job from them, maybe He'll bring that injury in, maybe He'll do something, and it causes a person to repent and turn back to Him, and then you don't have to do anything. So I would encourage you to do that.

Make time for prayer and fasting. We talk about it so much because it's so crucial. It's very crucial.

Now here's an interesting side note. How you handle confrontation reflects your level of maturity. How you handle confrontation will reflect your level of maturity.

So when a person is confronted, if they act like a baby, guess what? They're a baby, spiritually speaking. So how a person handles confrontation speaks volumes about where they are in their walk with the Lord. Because you can say, okay, well thank you.

Let me take that to the Lord. I appreciate your heart. And you can still be upset inside.

Right? You feel that volcano. You feel that raging. You feel that flesh getting upset and getting mad.

You can feel that as long as you don't act upon that. So really gauging right here, how you handle confrontation will reflect your level of maturity. I've seen this to be true in every single situation.

It's funny. You watch how somebody handles confrontation. I've seen people leave the church for the silliest, I'll say stupid, silliest stupid things I've ever seen or ever heard of.

They'll just leave the church. They're offended because you had the audacity to bring up something. It wasn't even a big deal.

You had no idea that somebody would get upset. And they're like, well I'll never see you again. Okay, well over that, that's spiritual immaturity.

That's what that is. I can say this, I hope, because they haven't been here in a few years and I think they've moved to a different state. They definitely don't listen to sermons.

But a person, they wanted their son to be on the worship team. He's like 14 years old, playing guitar. I said, oh maybe when he's older and different things.

Well, we'll find a church that lets him play on the worship team then. I'm like, okay. We can't say that we'd like to wait a few years? I mean, what in the world? Why do you even ask me? So just these little things that you see, that they're little, microscope size, right? That you should not get offended over.

But in every case, it was a gauge of their spiritual maturity. As I've said before, when a vessel's hit, what's inside spills out. So when they're hit with confrontation, do they take it well? Or do they get defensive and angry? Because that's one thing, that's one place that anger has in a conflict, is it will diffuse it.

Supposedly, that's what they think. So when somebody gets very angry, they're trying to diffuse it and throw it back on somebody else. They don't like the confrontation.

They're basically saying, leave me, you know what, alone. Leave me alone, and I'm just going to get angry and loud, and that will stop you. And that's not a healthy way to view conflict either.

So always remember that. How you handle conflict will reflect your maturity. Now, I wish I could say I've done this perfectly all the time, and I haven't.

You know, nobody, none of us can walk maturely, consistently all the time. The Bait of Satan. I would recommend this book if you get a chance.

It's a good book on how to handle offenses. John Bevere said, many people go from church to church, and ministry to ministry. They leave blaming the leadership.

They are blind to any of their own character flaws, and they do not realize that God wanted them, God wanted to refine and mature them through the pressure they were under. And this is so true. We'll see, and I don't know, I don't know too many here hopefully, but church hoppers, you know, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, hop, they are not mature spiritually.

Just shooting you straight. This is one reason. They leave.

Every little thing causes them to leave, and they do this little circle thing. And they go, then they come here, and they go, this is the real church. We found this, we love this church, you're preaching the truth, and then two months they're gone.

Where'd you go? And then they're there four months, and then they're gone. It's because of this reason. This is, he's right, he's absolutely right.

They blame other people. They are blind to any of their own character flaws, and they don't realize that God wanted to refine and mature them through the pressure they were under. Do you ever realize that? Before you bail out on a job, or before you bail out on a church, or before you, I mean there's legitimate reasons, don't get me wrong.

There's probably more legitimate ones than not, especially in this time we live in. But have you ever thought that God might be putting you in the pressure cooker? How do you change unless you're

confronted? How do I develop patience if I'm never wronged? How do I develop forgiveness if I'm never wronged? How do I develop, slow to speak, unless I'm challenged to speak? So God uses these situations to bring out the character of Christ in us, but instead of conforming, we run. Look at an 18 year old kid who's been through Navy SEAL training, look at an 18 year old kid who has a sense of entitlement, sleeps in bed until 11 o'clock.

What's the difference between those two? Training, discipline. I've seen 18 year olds come out of, maybe he's 19 now, come out of a Navy SEAL camp, and you think they're 28, by their demeanor, the way they talk, the way they conduct themselves. And I've seen 28 year olds that look like they're 16.

But see, so God uses that. So before people just bail out, you have to look, Lord, are you really leading me? Are you guiding me? Because God will use those situations to change us. And how do I know? Just to be honest with you, we weren't real consistent in our church going five or six years ago.

And that was a lot of times we didn't want to talk to people. You know, offenses, this, this guy's gonna ask me this, he's a market level marketing amway, this, they want me, you know, just like, we'd avoid it. But now we can't.

Right? That's one thing, I have to be here every Saturday regardless. Every single Saturday. And there's not one Saturday I don't leave with one offense, somehow.

Every single, week in and week out. But God's taught us through that, that you work through it. You love the other person, you go to them, you try to, you're growing together.

But when you bail out, and you say, well I'm just going here, they'll treat me better. Well then, you never grow. You actually become very stagnant in your walk.

You don't mature. Because that's how you mature. Do you know it hurts, it hurts when you mature? Growing pains in kids.

We have our daughter, one of our daughters, not anymore, but she used to come in crying, their legs are hurting, and this, she's growing. And to grow spiritually, it hurts. It hurts.

But you stay there, and you work it out, and you let God refine. Now not in all cases, there's churches who aren't preaching, the truth anymore. God calls people elsewhere, I'm confident of that, no problem there.

If a solid believer's taken to the Lord in prayer, and he feels called elsewhere, that's, God could be in that, for sure. But a lot of times, you have to look at, why you're leaving, and how often you're leaving. I mean, when a person tells me, this is their fourth church this year, I don't expect, they'll be here very long, honestly.

Because there's an issue there, and the issue's usually not with the church, in those kind of situations. Because the church sometimes has to say, no, not right now. A church has to lovingly confront, and if the person doesn't like it, they just leave, and that's not spiritual growth.

They will not grow spiritually, when that happens. Well, there's a lot more I could say on that point, but that's step one, in this process. If your brother sins against you, you go to them with the right heart, all these points, you can rehearse them later, patiently, waiting on God, right timing, and all these, but that's the very first step.

And actually, it's interesting. It doesn't mean you go gossip, or call your friends, and I can't believe they did. We're never told to go to others, and vent out about somebody else.

Now, there's a time and place for that, because if you're seeking counsel, genuinely seeking counsel, but the majority of the time, we're supposed to go to that person. And actually, if the truth be told, if it's not a big deal, we're supposed to just let it roll off our back, like a water off the back of a duck. If it's not that big a deal, come on.

Such and such didn't say hi to me? I know of three people, who don't go there anymore, because I didn't say hi to them. I'm being honest. And I apologize, I go, I can't even, like I walk away from them on purpose? I mean, it doesn't even cross my mind.

But, so I don't know to laugh or cry. And I have not seen them, one of the guys I asked, and he said his son, yeah, he kind of got offended, I didn't say hi to him in the foyer. So he's not coming back? Wow.

Can you tell him I'm sorry? I'll say hi to him every time I see him. Now, I had no clue. But that's the silliness, if I can use that word.

We see from our vantage point. Now, there's a time and place, that the church leadership isn't always, I've had to apologize more times than I can mention. You know, you should have that heart of, okay, I'm sorry.

But when I look back over five years, and a lot of the people have left, it was some over the most silliest, ridiculous, couldn't have their name in the bulletin to, you know, can't have your name on the PowerPoint, can't start this ministry, just silly little stuff. So I know that it's a hard issue, because we don't want, we don't want to hear no. That's what it boils down to.

We don't want to hear no. We don't want, if somebody said, no, I don't think we're going to do that right now. We don't want, you always have to smile, you always have to say you're nice.

And it's basically, you know what church is? It's walking on, and that's what it is, isn't it? Especially, I get here from right, the moment I get here, I'm like, don't say, don't, just smile at everybody, say hello, don't offend, you know, can we, you're walking on eggshells, because you don't want to offend people. And that's sad, but it's true. But God uses the church, offenses and all, to refine us.

You know, there's a very solid church, when you've had people come in here, many, many years, and they love each other, regardless of the faults. And you can say, you know what, I love you, let's get past this. And that's how a church grows.

So that's the first step. We're going to talk about the, the other steps in the weeks to come, but I want to do a quick message on communion. It won't be too long, because that's what we're closing with.

We've got communion back here. And a lot of times, I talk about communion briefly. I say, you know, we're going to remember what Christ did on the cross, we're going to take communion, if you're a believer, you know what that means, and that's about it.

But if you look at some of the scriptures, and I did this week, I read over this a few different times, there's some interesting things about communion, that I think we should look at. And you can look at 1 Corinthians 11. Read it tonight if you want, the whole chapter is great, 1 Corinthians 11, because remember, these weren't written in chapter and verses.

These were written as entire letters to the church. But 1 Corinthians 11, 27, listen to this. Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

I don't know about you, but that's a pretty strong warning. That's speaking volumes about the sincerity of where our hearts should be when we do communion. But let a man examine himself, so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason, many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep, many are dead. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

And I'll tell you right now, there's no way to sugarcoat this verse, and I'm not going to. I'm going to shoot you straight and let you know that it's very important that the body and blood of Jesus, we recognize that it freed us, but we will take it in vain. We will mock Christ.

What he said here, we will be guilty of the blood and body of the Lord Jesus Christ if we take this in an unworthy manner. Now, the context you'll find is people are coming to these things, they're eating all the food, they're getting drunk, and they're just, yeah, whatever, and mocking the Lord's Supper. But the overarching principle can still apply.

If we come into the church, and we come here, and we bring continual sin, besetting sin from jealousy, and anger, and bitterness, and arrogance, and we keep coming in week in and week after that, and we take communion as if God doesn't care. I can hold on to these sins, God doesn't care. No, we're to examine ourselves, and see if there's anything in me that I'm taking this in an unworthy manner.

For example, if somebody comes in, and they're constantly hooked to porn, they're constantly looking, they're constantly hooked to addiction issues, and all these things, and they're constantly, I don't care, I'm going to come to church, and they keep taking communion, they're not turning from these things that they know is not pleasing to God, that's taking it in an unworthy manner. That's what it is. And I don't know how else you can read this, but he's saying, if we do this, many people who are weak, and sick, and dead, are so because they took the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner.

Or they lived their life in an unworthy manner, and God judges sometimes, through sickness, through illness, through death. The judgment of God can't fall in that area, there's no other way to look at this. That's why he says, for if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.

So by judging myself, I look at myself, I say, Lord, I cannot take this in an unworthy manner, there's issues in my heart all month that I need to deal with, and I need to deal with now, and I need to deal with tonight. I want to take this in a worthy manner. I'm judging myself, I'm examining myself, before I take communion.

And remember, the body that was broken, the blood that was shed. There's no other way around this. We have to examine ourselves.

Can you imagine a person continuing, and living in, I mean, it happens, I'll just give you one example. If there's a couple, and they're living together, and they're in just blatant sexual sin, they don't care, they'll get married someday, and they keep coming to church, and hearing the message, and worshiping, praise you Lord, blessed Redeemer, amazing grace, and tonight we're going to go home, and get a bottle of wine, and you know what? And who cares? And they're communion, communion. You don't think that's

taking it in an unworthy manner? So God said, if you judge yourself, judge yourself, then I won't have to judge you.

And it's not a, you know, we think God's judging, but it's a loving Father, if there's illness, or sickness, or weakness, or, and God's, listen, I'm trying to wake you up, I'm trying to show you this isn't right, and Paul said it right here, this is why some are weak, and sick among you, and some of you have died, you're taking, you're basically mocking Christ, is what he says here. Weak means lacking physical strength, and energy, breaking under pressure, they're unstable, sickness and death can be a judgment. I've seen a lot of sickness in homes, where dishonesty is taking place.

I've seen a lot of chaos and confusion, and people breaking under pressure, because of rebellious attitudes. I've seen a lot of disease and destruction, in the lives of those who are addicted. I've seen a lot of mysterious illnesses, in the lives of those who don't do, what God has told them to do.

So, my flesh says, avoid this text tonight Shane, this is not going to go over well, the spirit of God says, preach it, because this needs to be said. We have so many people in the church, because they're not hearing this. They're not hearing, you can't just come up and take communion, and live in unconfessed sin.

We all live, we're all sinners, and that's why, that's the point of communion, is to remember what Christ did on the cross. And we come, and we come with the right heart, Lord I'm repenting of my arrogance, I'm repenting of my slander, I'm repenting of dishonesty, I'm repenting of all these things, Lord I want to take this in a worthy manner, Lord renew in me, renew in me a right spirit. And he says, because the body that was broken, do you remember when he was whipped? Watch the passion of the Christ, I'll give you a very good example.

He was whipped, he was scourged, you know one of the reasons for the scourging, was Roman interrogation. They would hit hard, the guy would say, oh stealing, I stole from Caesar. And then the next one would go lighter.

And they would confess. It was a way of getting the confessions out, but Jesus opened his mouth, and didn't say, never opened his mouth, like a lamb that was led to the slaughter, he opened not his mouth. But he opened not his mouth, so we could.

Have you ever thought about that? He said nothing. But he says, but guys you need to. You don't keep your mouth shut, and say I'm just going to keep this hidden, I'm going to keep this hiding.

I know, if the lights could go on in our hearts right now, I know there are a lot of besetting sins, taking place in this room, that we don't want to give up. And we come and we take communion, I think that's scary. And I know there's illness, there's weakness, there's judgment, that God will bring to our lives.

He'll slowly bring things away, and take out, until we can get this area right. Look at anybody that's addicted to anything. Look where they're at, now, and two years from now.

Are they prosperous, great marriage, the kids love them, the vehicles are paid off? No, it's the opposite. That's why a loving father warns this way. If you give me, I'm not saying all illnesses, you get that right, hopefully.

I'm not saying all weakness, all illness, all disease, I'm not saying it, but there's no other way you can, what they call exegesis. They look at the text, they look at the Greek, they look at the context, there's no way you can come away with this, and say that many people are experiencing, illness, or things, maybe even depression, anxiety, weakness in their body, they're experiencing difficulties in life, because of sin, that they have not confessed from, and they're taking the body and blood of Christ, they're mocking it, and they're taking communion in an unworthy manner. It's very clear, very clear.

If you can come up with any other interpretation, I'm open to hear it. But you better start looking at a lot of commentaries too, from John Calvin, to John MacArthur, to Chuck Smith, looked at them all. This is having us examine ourselves.

I mean, how dare we go up and take communion, and remember what Christ did, but say, I'm not gonna give up what you died for. I'm not gonna repent. You kept your mouth quiet, but I'm gonna keep mine quiet too.

I'm not gonna confess anything. I mean, I know if the truth be told, there should almost not be a dry eye in this room. There should be many of us, just saying, Lord, I need you.

I need to get my life in right relationship with you. I need to take communion, in the right way. I've been holding on to bitterness.

I've been holding on, do you know you can hold on to bitterness, and judgmentalism, and anger, a long time, and it just festers, and grows, and grows, and you become something you never wanted to become. God says, let it go. He says, no, I'm not gonna let it go.

And those toxic emotions, bring in disease, and illness, and sickness. It's God's judgment, because we don't judge ourselves.

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