

Freedom in Christ

Knowing When and How to Confront Sin

In the last lesson we discussed the dangers of falling into legalism and how we as a church or as individuals are not to decide what someone else's religious liberties are or are not. We are not to place ourselves above others based on our convictions on issues that are not clearly sins. It is the responsibility of each individual to seek the Lord's will concerning liberty issues and it is not the role of the church to dictate what they are or are not.

As we learned in the last lesson that we are not to dictate to fellow believers or make conclusions about fellow believers based on our own personal convictions concerning liberty issues. Does this mean that if we see our brothers or sisters in Christ habitually sinning we are not to do or say anything about it?

- *Why or why not?*
- *Are liberty issues and sin issues the same in nature or in the way they are to be handled?*
- *What are some of their differences?*

If we see that a brother or sister in Christ is struggling with a sin issue, how are we to respond to them?

Luke 17:1-4

[1] And he said to his disciples, "Temptations to sin are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! [2] It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin. [3] Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, [4] and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

1. *When Jesus said "Pay attention to yourselves", what was he wanting us to pay attention to?*
2. *What are we to do if we see our brother or sister in the Lord sin?*
3. *If they repent what are we to do?*

4. *After we have confronted a sin issue with our brother or sister in the Lord and they do not repent, then what do we do?*

Matthew 18:15-17

[15] “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. [16] But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. [17] If 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.

1. *When confronting sin what are the steps we must take to confront it properly?*
2. *Why do you think God gave us these instructions?*
3. *What is the purpose of confronting sin?*

1 Corinthians 5:9-13

[9] I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— [10] not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. [11] But now I am writing to you not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—not even to eat with such a one. [12] For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? [13] God judges those outside. “Purge the evil person from among you.”

1. *Does God say we are not to associate with everyone who is living a life controlled by sin?*
2. *If we did not associate with sinners would we ever be able to reach them with the love of Christ?*
3. *Who is it that we are not to associate with?*
4. *Of the sins listed, were any of them a one time thing – or a way of living?*
5. *Do all of these sins have anything in common?*
6. *In our list that was given idolatry was listed. Idolatry is the worship of other gods or the teaching of false doctrine. The Bible has more to say about false doctrine and how we are to respond to those who teach it. In the next message we will focus more on false*

doctrine but for now let's just know that we are to avoid those who would cause division in the body of Christ for their own personal gain.

Romans 16:17-20

[17] I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them. [18] For such persons do not serve our Lord Christ, but their own appetites, and by smooth talk and flattery they deceive the hearts of the naive. [19] For your obedience is known to all, so that I rejoice over you, but I want you to be wise as to what is good and innocent as to what is evil. [20] The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Let us take a look for a moment at a sin issue that was taking place in Corinth. Let us see how it was dealt with and what we can learn from it.

1 Corinthians 5:1-8

[1] It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. [2] And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. [3] For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. [4] When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, [5] you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

[6] Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? [7] Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. [8] Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

- 1. What do we know about the sin that had been taking place in Corinth?*
- 2. What did Paul say about this sin?*
- 3. What had been the response of the church up to this point?*
- 4. What were they told to do?*

5. *What was God concerned about?*
6. *Was this man's sin going to kick him out of Heaven?*
7. *What was the purpose of removing the immoral brother?*
8. *God is greatly concerned about the purity of the church. Why do you think this is so important to him?*
9. *This is not the last word about this issue. Let's go to 2 Corinthians to see what happened to this immoral brother.*

2 Corinthians 2:5-11

[5] Now if anyone has caused pain, he has caused it not to me, but in some measure—not to put it too severely—to all of you. [6] For such a one, this punishment by the majority is enough, [7] so you should rather turn to forgive and comfort him, or he may be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. [8] So I beg you to reaffirm your love for him. [9] For this is why I wrote, that I might test you and know whether you are obedient in everything. [10] Anyone whom you forgive, I also forgive. Indeed, what I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, has been for your sake in the presence of Christ, [11] so that we would not be outwitted by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his designs.

1. *Had God turned his back on the immoral brother? Are we to?*
2. *What was the goal of disciplining the immoral brother?*
3. *What was the church at Corinth to do after they had had disciplined the immoral brother?*
4. *We know that there are steps to confronting sin in the Body of Christ. Are there steps to restoring a brother or sister who has sinned back into fellowship?*

Galatians 6:1-5

[1] Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. [2] Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. [3] For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. [4] But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. [5] For each will have to bear his own load.

1. *What kind of person should restore a brother who has sinned? What does that mean?*

2. *What kind of spirit are they to have?*
3. *Is there a danger in restoring a brother or sister who has sinned if our heart is not right?*
4. *Is restoration and Godly living a solo act or a group effort?*
5. *What is the difference in bearing your own load and sharing the burdens of others?*
6. *If we find that we are struggling with a sin issue, or it has been brought to our attention by a brother or sister in Christ, how are we and our church family to respond?*

Hebrews 13:17

[17] Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

1. *As brothers and sisters in Christ it is our duty and privilege to watch over and care for one another. When we see one another suffering we should help to carry the load; when we see them struggling with sin we should try to restore them; if we are struggling we should ask for help.*

Reflection

- We have learned a lot about truly being a family in the Body of Christ, loving one another and lifting one another up.
- Will you spend the next few minutes in prayer? Ask the Lord to reveal any sin issue or attitude that you may need to deal with. Take this time to make things right between you and the Lord.