

GROW IN GRACE

NEWSLETTER

Volume 39, No.37, September 10, 2013 / Southside Baptist Church & Christian School / P.O. Box 1594 / 1028 South Water Avenue, Gallatin, TN 37066 (615) 452-5951 / **The Grow in Grace Newsletter**— a weekly Bible Study, plus news notes— designed first and foremost for members and those attending services at Southside Church... sent forth to aid one and all, (including friends far and wide who receive the Newsletter), in the experience of 2 Peter 3:18. ***"But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Saviour JESUS CHRIST. To Him be glory both now and forever. Amen."***

The GREAT Need for Church Discipline!

Sexual sin has an ancient history! However our modern world sure does provide EASY ACCESS. Internet Pornography— the size of the industry in dollars: \$57 Billion. Porn revenue is larger than all combined revenues of all professional football, baseball and basketball franchises. Staggering Statistics: Pornographic Websites: 4.2 Million (12% of total websites); Pornographic pages: 372 Million; Daily pornographic search engine requests: 68 Million (25% of total search engine requests); Daily pornographic emails: 2.5 Billion (8% of total emails); Average daily pornographic email/user: 4.5 per internet user; Monthly pornographic downloads (peer-to-peer): 1.5 Billion (35% of all downloads); Daily Gnutella "child pornography" requests: 116 Thousand; Websites offering illegal child pornography: 100 Thousand; Sexual solicitations of youth made in chat rooms: 89%; Youths who received sexual solicitation: 20%; Worldwide visitors to pornographic websites: 72 Million.

AS TO SEX-RELATED SINS, many say: 'KEEP IT SECRET! DO NOT TELL!'

IN THE CHURCHES: MANY Adults, youth and even children are addicted to some form of sexual sin. FORNICATION, (sex before and outside of marriage) is all too common in churches— not only youth with youth; but even adults with youth. And IF and when finally exposed and brought to the attention of the legal authorities, the all too common approach of the churches is to COVER IT UP! Some **'Fine' Church leaders** and/or rank and file members will literally **THREATEN** anyone who dares to blow the whistle. (I am not speaking in theory.)

INCREDIBLE as it sounds— caught church staff members [pastors included] are, at times, allowed to quietly resign and move on to a new ministry in another church! Caught youth might privately be given a slap on the hand— but for their very PUBLIC SIN there will be no form of public rebuke or discipline. IN FACT, MOST PASTORS WOULD NOT EVEN THINK OF ATTEMPTING TO CARRY OUT CHURCH DISCIPLINE! Why? Families would leave the church and/or get the pastor fired.

EVEN SO, beginning in 1978, Southside started down the road of seeking to obey the Word of the LORD as to Church Discipline. Doubtless, there have been times when we have failed to discipline. NEVERTHELESS, by the grace and mercy of God, we have sought to obey God in the carrying out of public rebuke and various other levels of Church discipline. We have been on our faces before God with Bibles open to 1 Corinthians 5 and with fingers on verse 5, we cried out, **“LORD JESUS, we are not at all sure what all this means, but in obedience to your Word we are taking the action called for in 1 Corinthians 5:5!”** [Yes, we lost families from the church because of practicing church discipline. Yes, as some left, they spread evil reports— God bless them!].... Nevertheless,

EVERY OCCASION was a humbling and purifying occasion for the church family. There were times when disciplined ones later repented and THANKED US for loving them. One man told me that while he was under Church Discipline, pastors and others said that Southside was a very unloving and judgmental church; and that many people did what he had done— thus he was welcome to worship with them. For over a year, we were not sure what had happened with this man. However, a year later, at his request, he came back to Gallatin on a Sunday so as to THANK SOUTHSIDE FOR LOVING HIM! He stated that had Southside not so loved him, he was sure that he would still be in a life of sin. Sadly, others whom we disciplined, remained sealed in their sin and rebellion... to this day so far as we know.

REALITY: Regardless of the temporal outcome— Church Discipline carried out in a Biblical fashion is LOVE IN ACTION. What follows is an outline used in preaching on this subject many years ago. (Note: I’m sure a number of sources were used in the preparation.) Please get your Bibles and DIG IN! We need a reminder of these truths.

Sadly, in many churches the common belief is that folks can be saved and keep their sin as usual. In the minds of many, their sin is nobody else’s’ business. In such atmospheres, many pastors face the reality of fearing the congregation they are supposed to serve more than they fear God. I understand:

These pastors are trying to survive— to keep a roof over their heads and food on their table. Many desire to honor the LORD. They agonize but they neither preach the Biblical truth about nor attempt to practice Biblical Church Discipline— being afraid of the COST, they allow open sin to continue.

This response to open sin is as old as the tragedy of Aaron with Israel. As recorded in Exodus 32, Aaron’s message basically was, “You can keep your idols and

also worship God; and I will help you accomplish your goals!" THEY HAD A GREAT TIME until God's man with God's Word came; and God's wrath followed!

I. THE NECESSITY OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE: The holiness of God demands it. Love demands it. Love for the lost demands it. The health and unity of the Body demands it. Holiness is not an option— Hebrews 12:14. Holy Love is not an option— 1 Corinthians 13:1-7; 1 John 4:7-8.

II. THE PURPOSES OF DISCIPLINE: **The purpose** in the life of the offender is restoration. (Galatians 6:1) **The purposes** in the life of the church body are holiness, purity, and keeping one another from profaning the Lord's Supper. (I Corinthians 5:6-8; 11:27) **Another purpose** for those in the Body is that they/WE might fear. (I Timothy 5:20) **Still another purpose is to keep God's name from being blasphemed. (Titus 2:1-5)**

III. PROBLEMS REQUIRING DISCIPLINE:

1. Unresolved personal conflicts violate Christian love and thus must be dealt with: (Matthew 18:15-20)
2. Divisiveness which violates Christian unity: (Romans 16:17; Titus 3:10; II Thessalonians 3:6-15)
3. Scandalous lives of sin which violate Christian purity: (I Corinthians 5:1-13; I Thessalonians 5:14)
4. False doctrine which violates Christian truth: (I Timothy 6: 3-5)

IV. SOME DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES:

1. **Admonition**, reproof, rebuke, warning, which may be private or public- Romans 15:14; I Thessalonians 5:14; II Timothy 3:16; I Corinthians 10:11; Hebrews 10:24-25.
2. **Marking**- Romans 16:17.
3. **Sharp rebuke**-Titus 3:10.
4. **Withdrawal of fellowship**-I Corinthians 5:11-13; II Thessalonians 3:6-14.
5. **Excommunication and deliverance to satan**- I Corinthians 5:5

V. THE PROPER ATTITUDE OF DISCIPLINE: Meekness and Gentleness- Galatians 6:1. Sorrow, love, readiness to forgive, with redemption as the goal- II Corinthians 2:4-7

VI. STEP BY STEP PROCESS OF CARING, CONFRONTING LOVE:

1. **Go** to brothers and sisters when things are right (Romans 16:1-2; I Corinthians 12, 16:15)

2. Go to God in prayer and in behalf of each other (Acts 12:1-5; Colossians 1:9-12; I Samuel 12:23-25)

3. Go before God for the cleansing of your own soul (Joshua 7:10-13; Matthew 7:1-5)

4. Go privately to each other in meekness with the goal of restoring (Galatians 6:1; Matthew 18:15; Romans 15:14; I Corinthians 4:14; I Thessalonians 5:14)

5. Go with one or two more to restore, if private admonition fails (Matthew 18:15-16)

6. Go tell the matter to the Church body, if steps 4 and 5 fail (Matthew 18:17)

7. If there is still no positive response of repentance, then “if he (or she) neglect to hear the church, let him (her) be to thee as a heathen man (woman) and a publican”. (Matthew 18:17; I Corinthians 5:4-5, 11, 13) All of this is with the hope that there will even yet be repentance.

8. When there is repentance, the Church is bound to bestow forgiveness, love, and reconciliation. (II Corinthians 2:1-11)

VII. Additional note: Even though we have outlined these 8 steps, please understand that the Bible examples of discipline do not require us to be slaves to “8 steps”. On occasions certain discipline actions are simply announced. Of course, principles of truth, purity, compassion, meekness, and a goal of restoration are never optional.

1. Also, the direct thrust of Matthew 18:15-17 is for those occasions when an individual has transgressed against an individual.

2. Paul in I Corinthians 5:1-13 did not precisely follow each of these steps for the man’s sin that was against the whole Church. It was not a private offense against Paul.

VIII. If you or I ever need Church discipline let us pray that: We will be in a church that will love us enough to do it. We ourselves will not be so devious as to look for microscopic loopholes in the church procedure, so as to smokescreen and refuse to repent, on the grounds that the church did not follow proper procedure. We will not be deceived by friends, pastors, and churches who will entice us to run to a church who will let us keep our sin!

IX. TRAGIC REALITY: Most even SO CALLED CONSERVATIVE, BIBLE-BELIEVING CONGREGATIONS do not practice Church Discipline. **In many churches, sin is running wild and unchecked.** Again, sadly, in many churches if the pastor were to teach the Biblical truth on this subject and begin to obey the Bible on this subject—there would be a MASS EXODUS from that church AND/OR the pastor would be quickly fired.

The FOLLOWING truth will help us all in a walk of HOLINESS and LOVE! EMBRACE this Biblical teaching and you can avoid ever NEEDING Church Discipline! Model and share this and you can positively HELP OTHERS avoid ever needing Church Discipline!

CHRISTIAN— YOU ARE BOUGHT WITH A PRICE! “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s!” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

TO ALL WHO ARE IN CHRIST! You Are Bought With A Price: You and I are tempted on every hand and in many different ways to feed the flesh, to bow to the world, the flesh and/or the devil. But GOD tells us: We are not our own! We are bought with a price!

“Look you back to the day when you were bought, when you were bondslaves to your sins, when you were under the just sentence of divine justice, when it was inevitable that God should punish your transgressions; **remember** how the Son of God became your substitute, how He bared His back to the lash that should have fallen upon you, and laid His soul beneath the sword which should have quenched its fury in your blood.” (C. H. Spurgeon)

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE! You were redeemed “...with the precious blood of Christ...” (1 Peter 1:18) Spurgeon preached, “That the blood of Christ was shed to buy our souls from death and hell is a wonder of compassion which ... ought to overwhelm us with adoring love for Christ. Christ’s death was the substitute for the death of the ungodly. He was made a curse for us, and the presence of God was denied Him because of it.” **Behold the suffering Lamb of God!** Open the pages of Scripture and meditate deeply of Christ at Gethsemane and Golgotha.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE! Let any right thinking Christian sit down and write his or her biography and all would agree:

“WITHOUT QUESTION THE MOST SIGNIFICANT EVENT in all of my personal PAST is that I have been bought by the blood of Jesus!” Thus, let all saints confess: I am not my own. I belong to Jesus! My past is forgiven! The blinding, binding, grinding powers of sin and satan are broken. Sin’s weights are lifted! I am set free from the futility of performance based living, of trying to be good enough to merit heaven. I am resting in the total sufficiency of Jesus, in His precious blood, in His goodness and merit.

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE! The MOST SIGNIFICANT REALITY in all of my experiences in the PRESENT is that I am IN CHRIST and CHRIST IS IN ME; and that I am a Minister of Reconciliation, an Ambassador for Christ, and On Mission with God!

(1 Cor 3:7-9; 2 Cor. 5:19-20) I am forgiven (Past! Present! Future!) and I am resting in Christ. I am now free to be and become all that Christ intends today! I no longer search or strive for significance. For in Christ I have supreme significance— **I am a**

Child of God!

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE! “The most significant thing about my FUTURE is that I will continue to experience the ongoing cleansing power of the blood of Christ; and I will rule and reign with Christ for all eternity.” (Rev. 5:9-10; 7:9-12; 12:11) Moreover, I am free from any obligation to fear death or the future. Nothing nor no one can separate me from the love of God in Christ. Whether I live or whether I die, I am the LORD’S! As I walk with Him, being on Mission with him, I am invincible until He calls me home!

We are **BOUGHT WITH CHRIST’S PRECIOUS BLOOD!** CHRISTIAN! YOU ARE HIS TEMPLE! “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Cor. 3:16) “... You are the temple of the living God...” (2 Cor. 6:16) When we come to the New Testament we read, “And the WORD was made flesh, and **dwelt among us...**” (John 1:14) God came down and “tabernacled among us “in the person of His Son, Jesus!

BUT WHERE IS JESUS NOW? He is seated at the Father’s right hand! (Mark 16:19) And Every Christian experiences “... the riches of the glory ... which is CHRIST IN YOU, the hope of glory...” (Col. 1: 27) Or as Galatians 2:20 tells us, “... CHRIST LIVETH IN ME ...!”

YOU, CHILD OF GOD, YOU ARE HIS HOLY TEMPLE ON EARTH! You, dear local assembly of saints are His Holy Temple— and HE IS HOLY and HE IS LOVE!

“If you refuse the implication of His claim upon you, then what business have you to hide in the shelter of John 3:16? **You cannot have the grace of God without the government of God!** ... The price of His blood demands a practical surrender of all your body ... you acknowledge, ‘I am no longer my own; I am bought with a price!’” (Alan Redpath)

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE! Your Body is the Dwelling Place of the Holy Spirit. Your Body is His Temple. You Are Not Your Own! Therefore, Glorify God in Your Body and in Your Spirit, Which Belong Exclusively To GOD!

“His [indwelling] presence is ... like the sun, which cannot shine **without** brightening the earth and sky and sea; **without** giving color to the rose, its fragrance to the lily, its flavor to the peach; **without** ripening the golden grain and cheering and brightening the hearts of men.

GOD CANNOT DWELL IN THE SOUL WITHOUT CORRESPONDING INFLUENCES; without fostering love and purity; **without** making sin more odious and holiness more attractive; **without** giving it [the soul] strength to banish the one [sin] and [strength] to follow the other [holiness].” (W.G. Blaikie)

BOUGHT WITH A PRICE! The context of I Corinthians 6:19-20, is very significant! GOD IS WARNING SAINTS AGAINST VARIOUS FORMS OF SEXUAL SIN! (Be sure to read these verses before finishing this article! (1 Cor. 6:15-20)

John MacArthur writes, “Christ’s people are one spirit with Him. We have been looking at some of the wondrous implications of that statement. But for his purpose here, Paul uses it to show that **a Christian who commits sexual immorality involves**

his Lord!

All sex outside of marriage is sin, BUT WHEN IT IS COMMITTED BY BELIEVERS it is especially reprehensible, because it profanes Jesus Christ, with whom the believer is one, (John 14:18-23; 15:4, 7; 17:20-23) ...it places Christ in an unthinkable position ...Christ is not personally tainted with the sin ... But His reputation is dirtied ...”

Furthermore, “... although sexual sin is not necessarily the worst sin, it is the most unique in its character. **It rises** from within the body, bent on personal gratification. **It drives** like no other impulse and when fulfilled, affects the body like no other sin. **It has a way** of internally destroying a person that no other sin has.

Because sexual intimacy is the deepest uniting of two persons, its misuse corrupts on the deepest human level. That is not a psychological analysis but a divinely revealed fact.”

[Please, DO NOT FAIL to look up these verses and meditate upon them: Prov 5:3-5; 8-12; Prov 6: 23-29; 32-33; Prov 7: 21-27; 1 Cor. 6:15-20]

“Sexual immorality is far more destructive than alcohol, far more destructive than drugs, for more destructive than crime.” “To commit sexual sin in a church auditorium, disgusting as that would be, would be no worse than committing the sin anywhere else.

OFFENSE IS MADE WITHIN GOD’S SANCTUARY wherever and whenever sexual immorality is committed by believers. Every act of fornication, every act of adultery by Christians, is committed in God’s sanctuary: their own bodies.”

[NOTE: Here are 3 of many Biblical directives which God gives to empower saints to avoid sexual immorality: 1 Corinthians 7:1-7; 1 Corinthians 9:27; 1 Timothy 2:9]

CHRISTIAN! Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit! YOU ARE NOT YOUR OWN! You Have Been BOUGHT With A Price— With the Precious Blood of Jesus!

THEREFORE: Glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which ARE HIS! Glorify Him in Holiness and in LOVE!

Grace to you! James Bell www.southsidegallatin.org