

When a church pursues holiness

Matthew 18:15-20

READ Matt 18:10-20 and Acts 5:1-14 and **LISTEN** to Pastor Craig Baxter's [sermon](#).

Throughout our study of Ephesians we have noticed that the church has been saved out of the world and therefore must be fundamentally different to the world so that it can make a difference in the world. The more the church is like the world the more it loses its witness. However, the more the church is like Christ in all holiness and righteousness the more effective the church will be in the world. This places a crucial obligation upon the church to train its people in righteousness while keeping the church accountable to the same through the grace of church discipline.

Main lesson: In order for the church to make a difference in the world it must pursue holiness through church discipline.

Questions:

1. Church discipline is the process a local church undertakes to address sin within its congregation as outlined in Matt 18:15-20. Have you been in a church that has performed church discipline? Why might a church be reluctant to do this?
2. From the following verses give reasons why it is necessary for a church to carry out church discipline. If possible, feel free to add to this list.
 - A. Acts 5:1-14
 - B. Rev 2:20-23
 - C. 1 Cor 5:7 (in the context of 5:1-7)
 - D. Heb 12:6

E. James 5:19-20

3. A. How should the parable of the Lost Sheep in verses 10-14 of Matthew 28 inform our view of church discipline?
 - B. What is the ultimate goal of church discipline and how would you respond to the accusation that church discipline is unloving?
4. Who should be church-disciplined and for what sins and transgressions should someone be confronted? See Matt 18:15; 1 Cor 5:12; Gal 6:1.
5. Explain in your own words the four-step process outlined in Matt 18:15-17. Why might this particular process be used?
6. **Challenge question:** What do vv. 18-20 mean in relation to church discipline and how might this encourage a church who is reluctant to obey Christ by doing it?
7. What has been the most important take away from this lesson? Would you be willing to confront a brother or sister in their sin? Why or why not?

STOP AND PRAY:

Praise: God who is glorious in all His majesty and perfect purity

Thank: God for the love, care and protection the local church is to show to each other

Pray: that you would be willing to risk a relationship by pursuing loving correction