

Taking Sin Seriously and Dealing with It Biblically (Matt. 18)

Preached by Pastor Phil Layton at Gold Country Baptist Church, August 19, 2007

I want to talk to you today about taking sin seriously. I have been sharing with you for many months now my heart for us to have a right and high view of God in all His attributes, in His holiness, righteousness, wrath, and power and glory. I believe there's a direct relationship between how you view God and how you view yourself and how you view sin. My goal this morning is that we would take God more seriously and as a result that we would take sin more seriously and that we would want to deal with our sin as God calls us to.

We have been studying together how the Bible begins, how all God made was originally very good, it was a perfect world with people who were originally sinless and perfect. It was a world without sin. And we will continue that study of Genesis chapter 2 next week, but as a pastor I'm also acutely aware that we live in a very different world, we live in a world of sin. And I want to give you some very practical help with dealing with sin in our everyday world today. The Lord has impressed on my heart a concern as shepherd of this flock to address this very practical matter this morning of how we are to understand sin and how we are to deal with it.

- Each Friday morning as elders meet to pray, to discuss the needs of the church, and we always begin by spending the majority of the first hour in looking at the Word of God and then discussing and praying in light of it. From time to time, some of the important studies and things we learn there we want to share with you, and this morning is one of those times (and we will do the same in weeks and months ahead)
- I think it was back in June that we began a study as elders on Matthew 18, and although the principles in this passage were not brand-new to us, many churches and perhaps many in our church here may not be familiar with what the scripture says about how individual believers and churches are to deal with sin, and we thought it would be good for us to look at this together to reinforce our understanding of what the Bible says and what we are to be committed to
- That same month when I was in SoCal for my sister's wedding, we visited a church that Sunday and the pastor was preaching on this very passage and it was a very serious and sobering message and time
- Len Bentley will be teaching the adult S.S. class today on sin and depravity, and I want to further focus on why sin is so serious to God
- My heart as a pastor is for people in our midst here who are struggling with sin, I love you and want to help you, and there's few things more fundamental or more foundational than how to deal with sin in your life, and how to help friends entangled in sin.

I. TAKING SIN SERIOUSLY

The Seriousness of Causing God's Children to Sin – v. 6-7

R.C. Sproul writes:

The Bible takes sin seriously because it takes God seriously and it takes human beings seriously. When we sin against God, we do violence to His holiness. When we sin against our neighbor, we violate his or her humanity.¹

Jesus in this context is using a young child as an example of what it means to be converted (v. 3), little kids have a childlike trust and faith, they are simple, they are helpless, they are dependent on others, they have no resources of their own, no means of sustaining themselves, no accomplishments, no achievements to commend themselves. Jesus says that believers need to view themselves the same way, and humbly realize simply that they are spiritually helpless, hopeless, utterly dependent, no works to earn a father's love, etc.

So when Jesus speaks of causing a "little one" to stumble in this passage, He is speaking of Christians, those who are His children by faith in Christ, regardless of their age. What does Jesus think of those who cause His children to sin?

Verse 6 says you would be better off dead, that shows how serious Jesus views sin. In fact, it would be better if you suffered one of the most violent deaths imaginable. Crucifixion was horrible but slow, but drowning with a millstone around your neck would be fast and so barbaric that few if any ancient cultures would ever execute this way. This was offensive unthinkable evil punishment, and that just goes to show how sin, and causing others to sin, is even more unthinkable and offensive to our Lord, far more so.

I wonder if we even have a clue how serious sin is. Do you? Do I?

Verse 7 says "woe to the man through whom the stumbling block comes." The biblical word "woe" was a word you never wanted to hear from a prophet, it was always about something God took very seriously and woes had to do with His judgment or curses.

The Seriousness of Habitual Personal Sin – v. 8-9

The language here refers to things that continually cause us to sin habitually and continually. Jesus takes these very seriously and he repeated this graphic imagery more than once.

27" You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';
28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

29" If your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.

30" If your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off and throw it from you; for it is better for you to lose one of the parts of your body, than for your whole body to go into hell.

We'll cover what this means a little later in the message.

The Seriousness of Straying Believers in Sin - v. 12-14

If Christ does not will for any of His children, any of His sheep to perish, if Christ loves His sheep so much that He will go after them to rescue them when they go astray, how can we not do the same? How can we who claim to follow Christ stand idly by when we watch others in the church go astray on sinful and soul-destroying paths?

If the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep, can we not at least lay down some of our time for others, lay down some of our comforts and conveniences to help those in need? There's always some risk when you talk to a friend or fellow believer about a spiritual issue in their life that you're concerned about, but the Lord is our example and He has ordained the body of Christ not just to be a club or a social gathering, but a place where we care for and look out for each other in a biblical manner.

The context here speaks of those who are going astray.

This gives some hint as to what verse 15 is speaking about.

II. DEALING WITH SIN BIBLICALLY

1. In Ourselves – v. 8-9

Self-mutilation is not the point, but this *is* self-discipline by drastic measures

Jay Adams calls this principle “radical amputation”

John Owen says “always be killing sin or sin will be killing you”

So much of the way we deal with sin is superficial and is not true repentance. I want you to turn over the note sheet in your bulletin and look with me on the back at this page on true vs. false repentance:

TRUE AND FALSE REPENTANCE

Below is from Stuart Scott, *The Exemplary Husband*, p. 222-23

Shallow remorse can involve:

- Sorrow over getting caught and being found out
- Sorrow over the consequences of sin or of getting caught
- Sorrow over the response of others
- The offering of an apology, saying, “I’m sorry” without ... repentance or change and without asking forgiveness
- Trying to do penance or doing unrelated good things to make the consequences go away, to try to cancel out one’s wrong-doing, or to appease God
- Making at least some justification for the sin committed
- Complaining about the expectation of real change

Repentance involves:

- Godly sorrow over the sin that has been committed because it is an offense before a holy God (Psalm 51:4)
- A full admission of sin and responsibility for the sin and brokenness with no excuses to God or others (Psalm 51:3)
- An asking of forgiveness from God and others who are involved with the perspective that forgiveness is not deserved (Psalm 51:1-2)
- A hatred for the sin and a desire to avoid it completely (2 Corinthians 7:11)

- A plan and enthusiasm to make changes (both away from the sin and toward righteousness), whatever it takes (Luke 3:8-18; James 1:22-27)
- A willingness to accept the consequences of the sin and to see justice done (Luke 23:40-43)
- A desire to be in God's Word and with God's people (1 Peter 2:1-3; Hebrews 10:19-25)

The Bible gives a number of contrasts like this – notably the flesh vs. spirit in Galatians

Galatians 5:19-6:3 (NASB95)

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please.

18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law.

19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality,

20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions,

21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

6:1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.

3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

2. Dealing with Sin In Others – v. 15-17

Cautions:

- **We must first be humble and denying self (v. 4)**
- **We must first be radically dealing with sin in our life (v. 8-9; 7:1-5)**
- **We must first have the right spiritual attitude of love and sincere motive to rescue one going astray or in danger (v. 12-14) and to win a brother (v. 15)**
- **We must consider if the sin is:**
 - o **if this is only a personal offense against me that I can forbear or forgive (v. 21-22)**

Side note on forgiveness: At the end of Matthew 18, Jesus warns about what God will do “if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart.”

The Bible speaks of relational forgiveness or restoration which in some respects is dependent on repentance (ex: Lk 17), but it seems the Bible also talks about a heart attitude of forgiveness that we are to have as well, before and regardless of the response of the one who sins against us

Mark 11:25-26 (NASB95)

25 “Whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

We are not to bear grudges, keep a record of wrongs, be bitter or resentful for personal offenses

1 Peter 3:8-10 (NASB95)

8 To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;
9 not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.

10 For, “The one who desires life, to love and see good days, Must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit.

1 Peter 4:8 (NASB95)

8 Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.

Love covers a multitude of sins, but there are some sins that are serious in nature and need to be addressed for the good and growth of the Christian and the health of Christ’s church

- **or is this sin affecting others or causing more sin (v. 6-7)**
- **is this sin a pattern or of a serious nature (v. 8-9)**
- **if this sin is leading him astray or into danger (v. 12-14)**

A fellow pastor has written:

- a sin is too serious to overlook if it has damaged a relationship we have with someone.
- a sin is too serious to overlook if it is hurting or might be hurting other people.
- a sin is too serious to overlook if it is hurting the person who is in sin and it is diminishing their usefulness to God.

STEP ONE: GO and show him his fault – v. 15

This is the same Jesus who says “all authority in heaven on earth is given unto me. GO and make disciples”

The same Lord with the same authority says in Matthew 18:15 “if your brother sins, GO”

*Notice YOU are to “go” (not another word that starts with “go” – gossip!)

We are not to share it as a prayer request (spiritual-sounding gossip), even if we couch it in terms that make it sound like we’re concerned for them.

*Notice it doesn’t say “go and tell the pastor”

I frankly don’t need or want to have everyone dump every body’s interpersonal issues and observations and sins on my plate. This passage makes clear that is not the normal way to handle issues, YOU are responsible to GO to talk to the person you’re concerned about. You are a part of his body, in most cases, you know him better than I do, you have a relationship with him.

Objection: “But that’s not my personality”

- Jesus doesn’t say, “GO and help your brother, unless you don’t feel like it, unless that sort of thing makes you uncomfortable, unless it’s not your personality.”
- If confronting is something you enjoy doing and is your personality, I would honestly be a little worried about you. If you come up to me after the service and say “Pastor, my spiritual gift is confronting and rebuking” – I’m going to be a little nervous. Jesus does not expect us to enjoy this or be eager to confront sin, but He does call us to love our brother more than our own comfort
- Anything less is disobeying the King of Kings

Go and tell who? Tell your sinning brother

You are to show him his fault? The truth of the Word of God must be brought to bear for the purpose of conviction – the goal is to not have him agree or disagree with you, but to make clear this is an issue between him and God, not between him and you. You want to help him clearly look in the mirror of a specific truth of the Bible in light of his sin and see if he is willing to listen and seek to make right the wrong and change his ways.

Question on v. 15: Should it be “sins” (NASB) or “sins *against you*” (most other translations)

Not all the manuscripts agree, but it’s best to consider both and leave it general to include sins against you as well as sins in your brother that you observe or notice, the same principle applies.²

Galatians 6:1 is consistent with the broader understanding when it says “if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness”

If someone is entangled in sin, he needs to be rescued and restored by those who have the Holy Spirit and are seeking to live by the Spirit rather than the flesh

Question: Who is “your brother”?

Someone you know in the body of Christ, someone in the church that Christ has put in your path and life.

This process does not seem to apply to people outside the church who are not your brother, particularly the later steps 2 & 3 of telling the church and putting them out (if they’re not in a church, how will the church put them out?). The full process of church discipline by definition is for the church.

The implication is that this is a sin you have knowledge of, not some gossip or rumor that people have shared. This is a clear sin, you’re not judging their motives or assuming you know what’s in their heart, but something they did was clearly hurtful to others or it affects the body, or there’s a concerning pattern, and so you want to help a brother or sister you care about.

If someone starts a sentence with “I probably shouldn’t be telling you this, but ...” or “I promised not to say anything but ...” or “so-and-so is going to kill me if he hears I told you, but ...” – it’s usually a good idea to stop that conversation right in its tracks. If there is a sin issue this person sees in another believer, tell this person what the Bible says – it’s his responsibility to talk to the other believer about.

The word “Go” seems to imply it’s best to deal with it as soon as there’s an opportunity, not to let the sinful pattern grow for months or years so that it becomes more entrenched and entangling

The point is don’t go and talk to other people about it, if there is a clear sin, go and talk to your brother or sister who is in sin, and share your loving concern

IN PRIVATE

- or “between him and you alone” (ESV, NKJV)
- or “just between the two of you” (NIV)

This is not a public embarrassment of your brother

Another advantage of a private conversation is that if you don’t have all the facts or haven’t given them a fair chance to explain their side, *you* might end up being embarrassed as well.

CAUTIONS:

- Gather the facts
- Is this issue a speck or a log? (Matt. 7)
- Don’t be hypocritical
- Check your motives

Your motive should not be to “tell him off” or “give him a piece of your mind” – make sure your heart is right and sincerely concerned for their well-being

IF HE LISTENS TO YOU, YOU HAVE WON YOUR BROTHER

Note that the goal is restoration – winning a brother

It’s not that we love to rebuke, it’s that we love to restore a brother and sister.

Someone has called this “operation rescue”

#1 OBJECTION TO BIBLICAL CONFRONTATION

But didn’t Jesus say the second greatest commandment is “to love your neighbor as yourself”? Everyone in America knows it’s not loving to confront someone, right?

Let’s look at the commandment Jesus says was the 2nd most important.

Leviticus 19:16-18 (NASB95)

16 **'You shall not go about as a slanderer among your people**, and you are not to act against the life of your neighbor; I am the Lord. 17 **'You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart; you may surely reprove your neighbor**, but shall not incur sin because of him. 18 **'You shall not take vengeance**, nor bear any **grudge** against the sons of your people, **but you shall love your neighbor as yourself**; I am the Lord.

Notice we are not to go around slandering others, as v. 16 says. Verse 17 says we are to talk about their sin – to the one who sinned. And of course we should always talk to God first and seek our own hearts and make sure our heart and motive is not wrong, make sure we're not angry or bitter or holding a grudge towards one who has sinned.

But we are not to talk to others about “can you believe what so-and-so did” – we are to talk to so-and-so. It says “reprove” him, or “rebuke” (NKJV, NIV) or “reason frankly” (ESV)

And notice carefully how v. 17 starts “You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart” – instead of hating him, you are to help him by rescuing, restoring, even reprovng and rebuking. You're showing him where he has erred with the goal of restoration. The very clear implication is that if you don't do that, you are showing HATE to your neighbor, not love. The end of the verse also suggests that we can incur sin ourselves if we don't do this.

So when verse 18 says “you shall love your neighbor” this is the context – love must be tough sometimes, and true love is willing to do what's very uncomfortable. If you are not willing to help and lovingly confront a brother or sister in serious sin, then you do not truly love him, according to God's Word. Of course this is obvious as a parent, if we spare the rod, we show that we hate our children. Lack of physical discipline shows a lack of love for the one who needs it. It's not kind to let rebellion and sinful attitudes and actions in our young ones to go unchecked.

Jesus said this commandment is the second greatest in all the Bible, and along with loving God with all our being, sums up the whole law and the prophets. I fear that modern Christianity by and large is neglecting what Leviticus 19 means by loving our neighbor, and the church is more spiritually anorexic and sin-sick as a result of sin not being dealt with.

How do you know “if he listens to you” as Matthew 18:15 says?

Could it be that he or she didn't listen because I came in the wrong spirit, that my attitude or arrogance made him defensive?

Was it in the spirit of love and Galatians 6 and genuine concern, or was I being a jerk or judgmental? Have I been patient and seeking to be Christlike towards this person? Remember, Christlike does not mean ignoring serious sin – Jesus was kind and loving to the woman caught in adultery, but He also told her “go and sin no more.”

There may be some issues that are beyond your knowledge of scripture to address – this is where you need to study to determine biblical principles that would apply to the situation. There may come a point where you’ve done what you can and you urge your brother to get counseling from a pastor. It’s very hard for a counselor to help someone if that person doesn’t think he needs help – it always works best if the brother or sister is the one coming for biblical counsel and seeking help.

If the sinner refuses, doesn’t listen, won’t seek help or admit their problem, continues in that sin, you can always try and go again to him, of course bathing everything in prayer and sincerely seeking the best of your brother or sister.

At some point – and the text doesn’t say how long – it may differ from situation to situation, but at some point it becomes clear that this brother is not listening to you.

What do you do? Ask yourself the questions again; is this a one-time offense that only affected me, and can I forgive in my heart and give to the Lord and forbear? Or is this a pattern in this person’s life that is harmful to him or others? Is the reason this keeps bothering me, is it because of my pride or my personal offense against me? Or is my motive sincerely focused on my brother, not myself, am I loving him? Is this a clear and serious sin that is adversely affecting the person’s family and/or church family?

If it is, then as you pray and seek your own heart and seek God’s will in scripture, you need to be willing to continue to do what the scripture says.

STEP TWO: TAKE ONE OR TWO MORE WITH YOU

Again, it does not say tell the pastor and say “pastor, you handle it, that’s your job” Jesus is the head of the church and He is clearly saying here that your responsibility is not over, you are to continue to show you love and care for your brother enough that you seek additional help from other church members if the situation warrants.

Usually, an elder / pastor should not be aware of these situations until STEP 3 (verse 17), when it’s reached the level that it’s necessary to tell it to the church, beginning with the church leadership. If you haven’t followed Matthew 18 properly for steps 1 & 2, and you come to one of us elders, we’re going to do instruct you to follow steps 1 & 2. *Your* sin in disobeying Matthew 18 is the sin we have first-hand knowledge of, and if you refuse to obey Jesus, we may have to confront *you* for your sin.

1 Timothy 5:19-20 (NASB95)

19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except on the basis of two or three witnesses.

20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

Who should be part of those you bring along for step two as witnesses?

Galatians 6 indicates that the *spiritual* ones are ideal to restore someone caught in a trespass. How do you know if they're spiritual – just a few verses earlier, Paul describes the fruit of the spirit vs. flesh, so this is the natural context for what spiritual means

Mature believers not only make good witnesses, but can bring balance with their discernment, and can vouch for the spirit in which you came, can help discern the response of the sinning brother, can confirm or correct your assessment of the situation.

The end of Matthew 18:16 indicates the main purpose is to confirm the facts and make sure there is clear sin and that this is not a he-said / she-said thing or interpersonal dispute.

At the end of verse 16, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 19 – here's the whole context from the O.T. law He quotes from:

"A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed. "If a malicious witness rises up against a man to accuse him of wrongdoing, then both the men who have the dispute shall stand before the Lord, before the priests and the judges who will be in office in those days. "The judges shall investigate thoroughly, and if the witness is a false witness and he has accused his brother falsely, then you shall do to him just as he had intended to do to his brother. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. "The rest will hear and be afraid, and will never again do such an evil thing among you." (Deuteronomy 19:15-20, NASB95)

Objection: I don't feel comfortable bringing one or two others

That's why Jesus says in verse 20, that He will be in the midst, He will be with you in that difficult time. It's as if He anticipates our human tendency not to want to obey this chapter, that He assures us that where you come in my name, representing me, doing what I call you to do, I will be with you and I will bless your obedience.

This verse is usually quoted as an encouragement for when you have a really lousy turnout for prayer meeting, but the context is actually biblically confronting a brother in sin.

I remember a time that me and another mature brother in the Lord had to do this with a guy who was huge – taller than me and about 150 pounds heavier. My friend was really short, and it was intimidating, but we needed to fear God more than man and we needed to be obedient. Even though the outcome wasn't pleasant, even though the conversation wasn't fun, there was a peace I had in my conscience before the Lord that I had been obedient and I left the results in His hands. That's what we need to do.

STEP THREE: TELL IT TO THE CHURCH

Again, the timeframe is not specified, but now it goes up another notch. The church leadership should then be informed and involved. We believe that if the refusal to listen and repent continues, the elders as leaders of the church would be the appropriate ones to carry out the heart-wrenching task of step three where the situation warrants, at the appropriate time.

After prayerfully pursuing God's will regarding public discipline of someone in the church, the elders must investigate the facts to determine that there is clear and continued sin and that the sinner is not repentant, the witnesses can testify that steps one and two were followed biblically and also that the sinner continues in stubborn unrepentant sin. The elders may communicate with the sinner, urge him to repent, and communicate that if he doesn't, the next step in Matthew 18 is that Jesus says "we must tell it to the church."

The church does not need to be told all the details or specifics, but Jesus does say the church is to be told.

Why? So that they can be involved in the rescue operation. If one part of the body suffers, it affects the rest of the body, so the person is named and some general reference to their sin so that the whole body can be concerned and praying for and seeking to help where they can. The point of this is not to hurt someone's reputation, it is to help them.

The goal is restoration. The reason the church is informed is because the sin is now so serious that as many people as possible are called upon to pray for this brother, and if they know him they are to plead with him lovingly to repent, because the next verse says "If he refuses to listen to the church" – implying some will not listen to such pleading to repent.

What if he continually refuses to listen to the church, won't come to repent or seek help and counseling, won't turn from his sin, if he is still hard-hearted and stubborn in his sin, then what?

STEP FOUR: PUT HIM OUT

The text says "let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector"

Some translations have the word "pagan" instead of Gentile, which captures the idea. You are to treat him as an unbeliever.

Remember Jesus is speaking to a Jewish audience about those they would not have fellowship with, those not welcome in the religious activities. They must be removed from the midst of the church

1 Corinthians 5 (NASB95)

1 **It is actually reported that there is immorality among you**, and immorality of such a kind as does not exist even among the Gentiles, that someone has his father's wife.

2 You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so **that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst.**

3 For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus,

5 I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough?

7 Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed.

8 Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

9 I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people;

10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world.

11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler—not even to eat with such a one.

12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within the church?

13 But those who are outside, God judges. Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.

Paul had a lot to say about church discipline:

2 Thessalonians 3:6-16 (NASB95)

6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you keep away from every brother who leads an unruly life and not according to the tradition which you received from us.

7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example, because we did not act in an undisciplined manner among you,

8 nor did we eat anyone's bread without paying for it, but with labor and hardship we kept working night and day so that we would not be a burden to any of you;

9 not because we do not have the right to this, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you, so that you would follow our example.

10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone is not willing to work, then he is not to eat, either.

11 For we hear that some among you are leading an undisciplined life, doing no work at all, but acting like busybodies.

12 Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to work in quiet fashion and eat their own bread.

13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary of doing good.

14 If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

15 Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

16 Now may the Lord of peace Himself continually grant you peace in every circumstance. The Lord be with you all!

1 Timothy 1:19-20 (NASB95)

19 keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith.

20 Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, so that they will be taught not to blaspheme.

1 Timothy 5:20 (NASB95)

20 Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.

Titus 3:9-11 (NASB95)

9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless.

10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,

11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

When you treat someone like a Gentile, is it permanent?

Gentiles could become a part of the Jewish believing community by repenting, by becoming proselytes and submitting to the law and leadership of Israel. And of course in the N.T. community, it was not about rituals it was about repentance.

This in fact is the goal – restoration through repentance

The Purposes of Church Discipline/Restoration

1. To glorify God by obedience to His instructions for the maintenance of proper church government. (Matthew 18:15-20; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:20; 6:3; Titus 1:13; 2:15; 3:10; Revelation 2:2,14-15, 20).
2. To maintain the purity of the church and her worship (1 Corinthians 5:6-8; 1 Corinthians 11:27).
3. To vindicate the integrity and honor of Christ and His religion by exhibiting fidelity to His principles (2 Corinthians 2:9, 17).
4. To reclaim offenders. (Matthew 18:15; 1 Corinthians 5:5; Galatians 6:1).
5. To deter others from sin (cf. 1 Timothy 5:20).
6. To prevent giving cause for God to set Himself against a local church (see Revelation 2:14-25).

The material above has been adapted from Daniel E. Wray's book, *Biblical Church Discipline* (Edinburgh: The Banner Of Truth Trust, 1978).

¹Sproul, R. C. (1996, c1992). *Essential truths of the Christian faith*. Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House.

² In the parallel in Luke 17 it speaks of sins against you, and forgiveness: "If he repents, forgive him" – if the sin was against you certainly fits here since you are told to forgive him, this seems to be a personal offense where relational forgiveness is needed, whereas in Matthew 18, the text and context does not limit it to personal offenses and relational forgiveness. The end of Matthew 18:15 doesn't seem limited to interpersonal forgiveness, it simply says "if he listens to you, you have won your brother" – whatever the sin is or whomever it involves, he responds and you have won a friend.