

Introduction:

- A. The family business of church discipline requires that the family be on the same page about what we are trying to accomplish

- I. The Proof of Church Discipline
 - A. Matt 18:15–20
 - B. Keys of the kingdom (Matt 16:19; John 20:23)
 - 1. We **open** the KOG by letting people into the church and preaching the gospel
 - 2. We **close** the KOG to people by putting people out of the church
 - 3. The keys are exercised (1 Cor 5:4–5)
 - a. In the name of Jesus
 - b. With the power of Jesus
 - c. By the assembled congregation
 - 4. The declaration of excommunication is the **penultimate** declaration concerning the spiritual state of the person.
 - C. Two Broad Categories of Sins which Require Excommunication
 - 1. **Doctrinal Errors**
 - a. Teaching a different gospel (Gal 1:8, 9; cf. 5:10)
 - b. Rebuke in the presence of all (Titus 1:9–11)
 - 2. **Moral Failures**
 - a. I Cor 5—Man sleeping with his stepmother
 - D. Not All Sins are Dealt with According to the Matt 18 Process
 - 1. Some sins are more conspicuous than others and require swifter action (1 Tim 5:24–25)
 - a. Paul confronted Peter publicly (Gal 2)
 - b. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to excommunicate a man in their midst who was sleeping with his step-mother (1 Cor 5)

- II. The Purpose of Church Discipline
 - A. To guard the purity of the church and prevent sin from spreading (2 Tim 2:15–19)
 - 1. If the disease of ongoing, hard-hearted, unrepentant sin is not cut out of the body, it will spread throughout the body (2 Tim. 2:15-19).
 - 2. Excommunication is meant to warn the rest of the congregation through a healthy **fear** of sin and its consequences (Acts 5:11)
 - 3. Excommunication uses a judicious application of **shame** to deter sin in the congregation (Tit 2:7–8; 1 Cor 6:5; 2 Thess 3:14–15)
 - B. To maintain the reputation of Christ and His Church (Jude 22–23; Rom 2:24)
 - C. To bring the Christian to genuine repentance (1 Cor 5)
 - 1. Restoration is the goal (Gal 6:1)
 - 2. If they are unwilling to repent, then the purpose of excommunication is to disabuse them of the delusion that they are an unbeliever so as to force them to see the severity of their sin and that they might hopefully repent (1 Cor 5:4–5; cf. 2 Cor 2:6–8)

III. The Process of Church Discipline

- A. What are we looking for in the restoration of a straying sinner?
 - 1. We are not looking for perfection
 - 2. **A prevailing disposition of genuine repentance**
 - a. Recognition of sin
 - b. Godly Sorrow (2 Cor 7:9–10)
 - c. Ongoing Repentance (Matt 3:8; Acts 26:20)
 - d. Confession of sin and Trust in Jesus for the forgiveness of sins (1 Jn.9–10)
- B. Time Must Be Given for Repentance (Rev 2:21)
- C. Seven Marks of Genuine Repentance (2 Cor 7:9–10)
 - 1. Repentance is God-Focused (Ps 51:4a; 2 Sam 12:13) rather than self-focused (1 Sam 15:30; Gen 4:13)
 - 2. Repentance hates the sin (Ps 32:5; Ps 51:1–3), not just the consequences of sin (Gen 4:14; Acts 8:24)
 - 3. Repentance fully accepts responsibility (Ps 51:3; 2 Sam 24:10) rather than being self-protective (Gen 4:14; 1 Sam 15:30)
 - 4. Repentance is concerned for others (2 Sam 24:17; Phil 2:3–4) rather than blaming others (Gen 3:12; 1 Sam 15:19–24)
 - 5. Repentance patiently accepts the consequences of sin (Ps 51:4b; 2 Sam 24:13–14) rather than impatiently demanding trust and restoration (1 Sam 15:30)
 - 6. Repentance submits to discipline and accountability (1 Cor 10:12; 2 Cor 7:8) rather than criticizing the disciplinary process (Gen 4:13)
 - 7. Repentance is a changed heart that produces fruit (Ps 51:6–12; Luke 19:1–10) rather than an unchanged heart which produces no fruit (Luke 3:7–9)

Conclusion: What is at stake with church discipline?

Questions for Application and Reflection:

1. Is the Matthew 18 process of church discipline an option or a command for the church of Christ?
2. Why does Jesus refer to the church discipline process as an exercise of the keys of the kingdom?
 - a. What is being opened and what is being closed?
 - b. How?
3. What two broad categories of sins are dealt with in church discipline?
4. Do all sins require the 4 steps of Matthew 18?
5. What kinds of sins require an expedited process? Why?
6. What are the three purposes of church discipline?
7. How would you respond to someone who objected to the church discipline process by saying that “it is unloving to excommunicate someone struggling with sin?”
8. What are some indisputable traits of someone “struggling with sin?”
9. Is repentance nothing more than a change of mind? Why or why not? (See Matt 3:8 and Acts 26:19, 20).
 - a. What does Paul assume and demand that repentance produce in Acts 26:19, 20?
10. Why is it important for time to be given for repentance (See Rev 2:21)?
11. Does the bible tell us how much time to give for assessing repentance is someone’s life?
 - a. How does the church go about discerning how much time should be given?
 - b. Why should the elders’ opinion on a timeline be taken into deep consideration by the congregation?
12. What is the difference between godly sorrow and worldly sorrow over sin (See 2 Cor 7:9–10)?
13. What are the seven marks of genuine biblical repentance?