

# Growing Together: Correction

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[ 0 : 01 ] Recording. That's good. Let's give it a go. Alright, well welcome to Sunday School. We are continuing a survey on the beauty of the body.

What does it mean to be a part of God's community? And there is an underlying, if you haven't seen it yet, push towards the value of church membership as identifying with and being involved in a local body.

And we've talked a little bit about how God has called us not just to himself individually, but to himself into a community.

And so part of our identity as Christians is being a part of a body and being part of a community.

We've talked a little bit about discipleship and how we should, as members of the body, expect to grow with one another.

We have talked, Pastor Greg talked last week about also being a part of the body in terms of serving. Serving one another in the body of Christ, including both finding and using our gifts, as well as thinking about how we are interconnected and interdependent in the body of Christ.

[ 1 : 16 ] How to be the people that God wants us to be recognizing. We both need to, we both need others in our lives and also need them in our lives. And so thinking about, as we come to corporate gatherings, one of the things that all believers should ask is, how am I serving my brothers and sisters?

How am I helping them in practical ways, in the ways that I've been particularly gifted or positioned to do? So these have been some of the things we've covered. We've got two more weeks in this class.

Today we're going to talk particularly about the role of correction in body life. And then next week, Peter Almo is going to teach us on evangelism and thinking about how we carry out the Great Commission, again, not just as an individual, but also corporately.

And thinking about how it is that the body being a part of a community is significant in how we do our outreach. So that's where we've been.

That's where we're going. Let me pray as we continue. So, Lord, thank you for this morning and thank you for these dear friends, sisters and brothers who have joined us.

[ 2 : 28 ] We pray that you will be with us this morning as we explore this topic. Help us, Lord, to see the truth of your word. Lord, not only it's truth, but it's goodness. Lord, that we would believe and know that your plans for us as you've called us into your body are good, even when they may be surprising or even when they may be uncomfortable for us.

Lord, be with us this morning as we look together at your word. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. All right. Correction is inherent in the life of a Christian because it is at the very heart of the gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ is that though we have sinned, though we have rebelled against God, though we have forsaken our creator and our sustainer, that we have chosen to go our own way, God has reached out to us to do a work of salvation for us that we could not do for ourselves and to call us to himself.

But that call is a call of not just believe and be saved, but biblically to repent and believe. And inherent in that call is a recognition that our sin is not only offensive to God, but bad for us and bad for our world.

That it is wrong and evil in its most fundamental substantive ways. It is contrary to God's design and plan. And we need correction because that is our starting point ever since Adam and Eve in the fall of humanity in the Garden of Eden.

[ 4 : 20 ] Ever since humanity rebelled against God, we have needed correction because of the presence of sin in our lives. And at the very heart of the gospel is to say we need this.

You guys know this, right? Tim Keller's definition of the gospel is... Not definition. One of the ways that he captures the power of the gospel, let me put it that way, right? Is that you are more sinful than you ever believed. You are worse than you ever thought you would be. But God's love for you is so much greater than you could ever imagine. Right? And so this correction is inherent in the very core of the gospel. And so I want us to start there. Because we live in a world today where we're uncomfortable with correction. We live in a world where we're supposed to live and let live. And oh yeah, every once in a while, societally, we'll hit a place where there's a tipping point.

[ 5 : 19 ] And we think, this is terrible. This is horrible. And you know what? That's right. You know, praise God for some of the issues of sexism and racism that have been raised in our culture recently to expose the evil of sinfulness.

That's a good thing. But what we need to recognize is that it actually should be way more common than just a particular movement in a particular day. And it should be common in the everyday interactions of believers in a church because we believe the gospel. Because we know that we're sinners. And because we ought to have the humility because of our sin to know that we don't get it all right. And we don't even know when we don't always get it right. And that's why we need others. That's why we need others. Just so you know, the handouts I've given you, one is meant to be a note page. The other one is just a list of the texts. And I'm sorry, I have the two-sided version.

[ 6 : 20 ] And they're in the order that we're going to talk about them just so we're not flipping because we're kind of going to be all over Scripture a bit today. So I just gave you that as a cheat sheet. And I'm hoping to have some discussion at the end, but there's a lot to get through.

So we'll see how far we get. So I want to spend just a few minutes demonstrating to you from Scripture that correction is actually something that you should expect. Because it's in the Scriptures all over the place. When I started looking at this, I thought, oh, this isn't hard to prove from the Scriptures. That we just choose to believe that we just choose to not want this to be true is our problem.

So Proverbs 3.12. For the Lord reproveth him whom he loves as a father the son in whom he delights. And this is actually the verse that's quoted right in Hebrews 12 as the writer of the Hebrews is exhorting the Hebrew Christians to persevere and to recognize that part of the suffering and the trials they're facing is the Lord's discipline in their life to bring them back to him. So Hebrews 12. And so these verses, again, Old Testament and New Testament, we see that these verses point us to the reality that God loves us too much, just like a loving parent loves their children enough to not let them just do whatever they want, whether it's good or bad.

[ 8 : 17 ] But a parent will discipline their kid for their growth and understanding of righteousness and understanding of what is good and right in the world.

So God does that. He exposes our sinfulness and calls us out of it in his disciplining work in our lives. And he does it because he loves us. And he does it because it has a good effect in our lives. It produces. You see what it produces in the Hebrews 12 passage? It produces a sharing in his holiness and a peaceful fruit of righteousness.

Gosh, isn't that what we long for in our lives? But recognize that part of what the scriptures are saying is discipline. The discipline of the Lord is something that we should expect in our lives to be able to produce this kind of fruit.

So it's not only from the Lord, right? But 2 Timothy 3, 16 and 17, well-known verse about the word of God.

[ 9 : 19 ] All scripture is breathed out for God and profitable to encourage us and make us feel better about ourselves and to show us how good God is. Oh, no. Wait, let's read the verse. For teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God, generically, that the follower of God, those who are God's, may be complete, equipped for every good work.

This is what God has given us his word for. And it's going to correct us, which inherently says there are times when we're wrong and we need to be, we need something different than what we have and what we bring to the table.

It's not only the Lord and not only the word, but it's also your leaders. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul's exhortation to Timothy, who was a church leader in Ephesus, was preach the word, be ready in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, and exhort with complete patience and teaching.

And then again, in Titus, this is in the list of the qualifications for an elder. He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and be able to rebuke those who contradict it.

So we should expect correction from the Lord. We should expect correction from the word of God. We should expect correction from our church leadership. And then we should expect it from one another.

[10:57] Right? So I just threw in a couple of verses. You know, the Proverbs 1, whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but he who hates reproof is stupid. I just love the verse. I had to put it in there because it's just because we don't like to be known as stupid, but often we are in this area.

And it's rare that the Bible uses that word. So I just thought that's. But just to recognize that that in Proverbs, we are exhorted to recognize this.

Galatians 6.1. Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in the spirit of gentleness. Right?

The recognition of restoring means there's something to be restored from. There's an inherent correction in that. And then 2 Thessalonians 3.14 and 15, which is a verse that actually I've spent more time on in preparing for this because I haven't seen it before and thought about it quite.

Right? If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person and have nothing to do with him that he may be ashamed. Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

[12:04] There's so much in there. And I'm going to come back to it when we talk about the dynamics of correction and how it works. But recognize how strongly, how strongly deviants from the clear teachings of scripture.

Here it's in the context of the apostles' teaching. Right? The apostle Paul is saying, I'm writing to you this church. And if you reject this, you are rejecting the word of God.

Right? And we always have to be careful because we are not Paul and we don't write inspired scripture. But we do have the scriptures. And when we go to one another, that is actually the basis upon which we can go to one another.

Not, I think you're doing wrong because, well, I think you're doing wrong. But I think you're doing wrong because the word of God, let me show you, let me help you see what is in there. And let me, not on my authority, but on the authority of scripture, call you to turn from it.

Let me warn you about the danger of the sin in your life that I'm exposing and bringing correction to. This is not a typical thing.

[13:22] Right? We are uncomfortable with this. I just want to acknowledge that. And, you know, some of us, you know, if you were here last week and Greg was talking about spiritual gifts, some of you are going to have the gifts of mercy and the gifts of compassion and love and, well, let me reframe that.

Not compassion and love because I think correction is compassionate and loving too. You may have the gift of mercy and this may be really hard for you. Some of you may have the gift of discernment or the gift of prophecy.

And this is actually way too easy for you. In that you have a clear sense of what's going on wrong with everyone around you most of the time and wondering, how much do I say?

Okay. So in light of that, 1 Timothy 5.1 is an interesting insight. Timothy exhorts, or Paul exhorts Timothy, do not rebuke an older man, but encourage him as you would a father and younger men as brothers.

It's just an interesting recognition that the dynamics of our relationships are important about the tone that we can take. There still can be appropriate correction between any two people in the body of Christ.

[14:34] But there's a contextual sensitivity that I think Paul is exposing here that I think just points to a gentleness and a thinking about appropriateness and aptness.

You know, if I, as a 48-year-old man, I'm sitting with, you know, a 24-year-old guy who's coming in and telling me about his life, I might have a position, a particular kind of relationship in that context to speak with a certain kind of freedom or directness.

If I'm talking to a 65-year-old man who's walked with the Lord for 40 years, I might take a different tack. It doesn't mean I'm not going to address it, but I might think about how to do it aptly.

And there are times when, at the end of the day, I'm saying, there's still correction happening. But it was interesting. And then I just want to remind us, 1 Peter 4.8, Above all, keep loving one another

earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins.

Right? One of the dangers of starting to talk about correction is that we swing from the one pendulum where we live on, which is tolerance.

[15:48] How dare you speak in my life? You don't know me. I can't, you know, you can't tell me what to do. You know, who died and made you king? Like, sort of, all the ways in which our culture resists this at all.

And we swing to the other end. And we think, I am now the holiness police in my body. I am now, in this church, going to enforce righteousness and purity in all ways, everywhere.

And thankfully, the scriptures help us to see, no, that's not actually. That's not actually what we're supposed to do. That there are lots of sin that can be covered over in love.

Offenses against us. And covered over doesn't mean completely ignoring it. What it does mean is recognizing the context of this person's life, thinking through, being compassionate in their content, in the things that they're facing and going through, recognizing strengths and weaknesses.

A sharp word from one person might require rebuke. The same word coming from someone else might need to be received with a little bit more patience and grace.

[16:58] We need to recognize that there's a human element here of relationship that we need to be very careful about in terms of how we do this.

And yet, part of what we're saying is correction is meant to be a normal part of the Christian life. It is what God is doing with us.

It's what God's word is doing with us. It is what our leaders are meant to be doing for us. And it's what, in fact, we are called to be doing for one another. Hey, brother.

Hey, sister. I see this in your life. Am I seeing it right? Is that really what's going on? Is that really what you want to be doing? Let's look at this passage together.

I don't think the Lord is pleased with this behavior. Don't do this. Turn away. Pointing people to the gospel to say, If you feel stuck in sin, let me help you out of it.

[18:00] If you are hardened in your sin, let me warn you about the foolishness and destructiveness of it. If you're struggling with sin, let me bear your burden with you.

But to engage with one another along those lines. At the deep risk of being self-promoting.

I preached a sermon back in June on correction in our series on Proverbs. I'm pretty sure it's on the website. And there's a lot more there about practical advice about how to go about this.

And some of the how to give correction, how to receive correction, how not to receive correction.

Proverbs had a lot to say about how we don't receive correction well. And just exposing that.

So I'm just going to, rather than spending the rest of our time there, I actually want to shift into the corporate dimension and deal with what is typically talked about in terms of church discipline.

[19:00] But I want you to see that it's meant to be a part of our everyday life. And when we get to this sort of corporate expression of it, it's the end result of what should be and what God has called us to be as an ongoing dynamic in our everyday lives.

This is why it's good to have other believers in our life, by the way. This is why the beauty of the bodies that we have other people close enough to our lives, people who are behind the curtain of our performance facade, our Sunday morning, don't I look good, which we all bring to the table.

And, you know, shoot, I get it. We don't want to air all of our dirty laundry all the time. But the reality is that we need people in the body of Christ who are behind the curtain, who see us as we really are and who are able to help us.

And this is part of how God has designed us. So then as we move into the corporate part, there are a couple of key passages. You guys are probably familiar with this.

But this is what happens when, as sin takes root and embeds itself in a particular person's life, how being a part of the body of Christ, how God has designed us to come around such a person and to help them in that context.

[20:25] The first passage that is well known is Matthew 18. Does someone want to read that for me so I can take a breath? Peter, thank you. 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. 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.

If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Okay. So, this is one of those passages that helps us think through.

And part of what I want you to see is what I was just describing about the everyday life of the church and how correction would be a normal part. This is what Jesus is exhorting us to in the step one and even in step two.

[ 21 : 29 ] It's, hey, if you see your brother in sin, go and talk to him. You know? Please don't come tell the pastor, hey, Joe's sinning and I think you need to go fix it.

It's really unhelpful. Go to your brother and say, hey, brother, what is this? And again, do it with humility, do it with graciousness, do it with love.

But go and talk to them. But it's also interesting that the scriptures here, and Jesus recognizes our weakness. He knows our sinful hearts.

And that one of the first things, you see it in the Garden of Eden, one of the first things we do when we're caught in our sin is we deflect and blame, shift, and somehow try to deny that we have a problem.

Right? And so Jesus says, if you go to your brother, and obviously this is brother and sister, just so we're all clear. If we go to our brother, sister, and Christ, and we correct them, and they receive it, what does it say?

[ 22 : 35 ] You've gained him. You've restored him into fellowship. You've recognized, man, we are together in this pursuit of Christ and of living a life for his glory.

And as this person is turning from sin to Christ, you've gained a brother. What a wonderful blessing. What a wonderful thing. Right?

But then Jesus is so wise to recognize, but if he doesn't, you don't say, oh, well, I tried. That's enough. Say no.

Bring someone else. Not to gang up on him. Not to increase or heap on shame. But bring someone, hopefully the most appropriate person, someone who's close, someone who knows, that sort of thing, if at all possible.

Bring someone else. Bring someone else. So that the other person who you're bringing correction to doesn't think, oh, this is just Jeff's opinion. Jeff thinks this is a terrible thing.

[ 23 : 40 ] And, you know, I disagree with him. So, forget that. You know, you bring someone else and Jeff and Daniel are coming to me and I'm like, oh, that's not just Jeff's thing.

I thought Jeff didn't like me, but I guess he does. And Daniel likes me too. But they're both saying the same thing. Right? There's a weightiness to bringing others in.

It goes all the way back to Deuteronomy. And Deuteronomy 19 talks about establishing something by more than one witness, by two witnesses. And it's wisdom so that we don't fall into witch hunts and fall into, again, taking on the mantle of I alone will be the sole enforcer of all holiness and righteousness in our body.

Which is not helpful. Right? But it is recognizing that when two come, there's a weightiness to it. And, again, Jesus is so gracious to recognize if he refuses to listen to them, then tell it to the church.

And that is bring it to the body. Bring it to the larger community and expose. Because one of the things that sin loves to do is to hide. We love to hide our sin.

[ 24 : 58 ] And part of the purpose of exposing it, just like in a wound when there is infection and it's festering under, part of what you do is you open it up and you expose it so that there may be healing.

The exposure in the larger body is not for the purpose of heaping shame on someone, but it is for their healing.

Although, really interestingly, did you see, look back up to 2 Thessalonians 3.

So striking. Take note of that person, have nothing to do with him, that he may be ashamed. I don't know if you've done any reading about shame and righteousness, shame and truth, and how the Western culture for hundreds of years has been about righteousness and about sort of being right or wrong and that sort of thing.

And how sort of typically culturally in the Eastern, in other cultures, non-Western cultures, shame has been a much larger dynamic of culture.

[ 26 : 08 ] And one of the things that I think is very interesting today is that our culture is shifting and is a weird mix of truth and honor, shame and unrighteousness or condemnation.

And it's a fascinating dynamic for us to recognize. But I read 2 Thessalonians 3 and my first response was, wow, it's actually, the Bible is saying that someone who is being publicly, their sin is to such a degree that it's being publicly, brought publicly to the church. They actually ought to be ashamed of their sin. That's actually part of the purpose of this. And I had this cultural reaction of, whoa, I never want to bring shame on someone. That's always a bad thing. And interestingly, the Bible says, no, actually, sin is something to be ashamed of. Not to be buried by. You're not meant to be buried by that shame. You're not meant to be crushed by the condemnation that often comes with that feeling of shame. But to recognize that sin is shameful.

[ 27 : 18 ] It denies the glory of God. It's destructive in our lives and in the lives of others. We ought to be ashamed of it. And when we expose it, there is some of that.

And we ought not to, as much as we don't want that to be our spirit of wanting to shame someone, we want to recognize that a loving exposure of sin may bring shame to the one who's being exposed.

Now, I just want to say, we need to do this very carefully because our hearts are so wicked. We love to sit in the judge, jury, and executioner seat.

And if we are loving someone and they're not responding, it's easy for us to get frustrated. And it's easy for us to somehow want to, it becomes a battle to win or it becomes a battle to prevail that your view is right.

There's so many ways in which we can do this poorly. And so we want to be on guard against that. But not to the degree that we don't do it. If you're a member here, you know that we do this in our congregational meetings.

[ 28 : 31 ] There have been times when we have brought people to the church to say, this is someone who we want to bring to your attention. We have told it to the church for your prayers, for your encouragement, so that you can come around them.

Again, the goal of this, you see it all the way through the map, the goal of this is that you may win him back or her back, that you would turn this person back to wholehearted following of the Lord and obedience.

You're calling them to repent of their sin and return to the gospel that they believe. You know, again, the second Thessalonians passage, don't regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother.

This is what we're doing. We're saying, don't do this, don't continue. Because at the end of the day, if you do not turn, this is the last step in the process, verses 17.

At the end, if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Now, what does that mean? What that means, the best understanding of it, I believe, is to read that as saying, your profession of faith has been so compromised by your behavior and your unwillingness to take hold of the gospel in repenting from that sin and seeking to change that we no longer have confidence that you are a Christian.

[ 30 : 03 ] That's a weighty thing to say. We are not declaring ultimate, you are not a Christian. We don't have that power. But we are saying, the profession of faith that you have, we can no longer, we can no longer affirm.

And as we talk about membership in this church, becoming a member is covenanting together to pursue following Christ together. And if someone comes to a point where they say, no, I love sin more than I love Christ.

And if we have been patient, and if we have been persistent, and if we have been loving, and if we have been helpful, and there has been due process along the way, and we bring this to, and we get to this point, we say, we still love this person, but we can no longer treat them as a believer.

We can no longer fellowship with them. And that's really hard for us. It's really hard for us. It's hard for us because it's public, and because it affects every nature of our lives.

Every aspect of our lives and our relationship with this person. I want to go on and look at the other verses quickly. Titus 3.10, Warn a divisive person once, then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.

[ 31 : 29 ] This is the second time we've seen this phrase, have nothing to do with him. Then when we get into the 2 Corinthians 5 passage, it's a long passage, but I want you to see that it is a, well, let me read it so we can look at it together.

The 1 Corinthians 5. Obviously, there is a kind of sin going on that was publicly known in the church. He says, It's actually reported to you that there is sexual immorality among you, and the kind that is not even tolerated among the pagans.

For a man has his father's wife, and you are arrogant. Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though I am absent in the body, I am present in spirit.

As if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name, there's a random B in there, assembled in the name of Lord Jesus, and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 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.

Then 6 through 8 is using an imagery to talk about cleaning out the leaven. It's a whole Old Testament passage about purity, and the purity of God's people that literally had to do with leaven in the bread, but it was a symbol of their spiritual purity, and their wholehearted obedience to the Lord.

[ 33 : 02 ] But it's very clear, you've got to clean it out. You can't tolerate the leaven, because it's going to destroy what you have. And then he goes on in 9, I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people, not at all meaning the sexually immoral of this world, or the greedier swindlers or idolaters, since then you need to go out of this world.

But 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 an idolater, or reviler, or drunkard, or swindler, not even to eat with such a one.

For what do I have to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge? God judges those outside, purge the evil one, evil person from among you.

So there's a lot here, but part of what I want you to hear is the weight that Paul brings. This sin is public. It is being tolerated by the congregation.

It is clearly wrong, so clearly wrong that even the culture recognizes it, although that's not the standard. That's not why it's wrong.

[ 34 : 20 ] We don't let the culture dictate what's a disciplinable offense, but we recognize that he's saying, even people who don't know God know how wrong this is.

Gosh, how much should you who do know God understand how wrong this is? Some of the other distinctions that he makes here, I'm not talking about judging the world for being sinful people. We know that. That's not my, in fact, there's 13. God will do that. God is the judge. But for those of us in the body of Christ, for those who name the name of Christ, we actually are to exercise discernment, to judge, to make decisions.

Judging is a strong word, right? And all we can think of is Matthew 7, 1. Judge not lest you be judged, right? That just comes to our mind. We're like, well, how can I do that? Well, interestingly, all right, you've got to put Jesus' words in context.

Do not think that you are in the position of sitting in ultimate judgment on other people's lives. That's what Jesus is saying. But there's a much more nuanced view of this, and this is where you see it most clearly.

[ 35 : 32 ] As brothers and sisters, we actually are to think about and lovingly recognize and evaluate what's going on in the lives of those around us whom we love, who are part of our body.

We are actually to judge them. And when it's clear, and when it's sustained, and when it's unrepentant, the consequences are serious.

We are to put them out. He says, to deliver them over to Satan, which I think means we are removing them from the normal means of grace within the church, and as a member of the body of Christ, we are delivering them over to the world, to the domain outside the church, in hopes that they may see how barren the world apart from Christ really is.

So that they may see the foolishness of continuing in sin. So that they may turn back and be restored. So that they're, though in their body they may reap the consequences of their sin, their spirit will be renewed as they are removed for a time from the fellowship of believers.

And they may come back in humility and in repentance. recognize that...

[ 37 : 00 ] Yes, Jeff. I just wondered if maybe you could talk a little bit about the language in verse 11 when Paul says if anyone is guilty of at Patsy Patsy just because I think that needs a little clarification because if we think about the Sermon on the Mount and Jesus taking great pains to communicate how we're all guilty of these things so we're all in which we need some clarification.

Yes. Yes. No. I completely agree. And there's anything in my notes that I'm going to say and I... Yes. So here's where in the history of the church as we have thought and as people have talked about how do you seek to do this?

Right? Paul just kind of gives a litany of things and says well if you do these things you're out. Right? That's our first reaction in that. And then you take Jesus and you overlay that into the heart and you think whoa man like well shoot aren't we all then disciplinable and cast out because we know the dynamics of our heart even if we don't cherish it even if we don't act on it we recognize like wow like there but for the grace of God yo I I am a sinner who will continue to have hatred and anger and lust in my heart at times.

Right? So the Christian life is not one of perfect perfection or of perfect obedience the Christian life is one of growth and righteousness and growth and righteousness includes the ongoing recognition of our sinfulness a confession of it as sin a repentance from it which is a choosing to turn away from it rather than cherishing it and a pursuit of righteousness growing in those things we talk about progressive sanctification right?

[ 39 : 13 ] This is real in the Christian life we are to grow towards godliness we should expect to do that but it does not mean perfection but what it does mean is when we fail we admit it we recognize it we go to the cross to find the forgiveness that we desperately need and we also go to the cross to find the power to forsake sin and to pursue righteousness and when we bring things to this level right sins that reach the corporate level of discipline are outward are serious and are unrepentant okay I stole this from Jonathan Lehman he has a book over on the bookstall called Church Discipline it's a great little book it's got a great summary of all these things but as we think about these so outward I can't sit in judgment of someone else's heart I can say I've heard you say these words I can say I've seen you do these things I've seen you express these attitudes

I cannot tell you what is in your heart but I can't ask you what's in your heart and if you tell me no I won't give up this immoral relationship because realize that Colossians 3 tells you that Jesus is your life and they say I know but I want this more than more than Jesus then I'm not judging them on what I think is in their heart I am now making a judgment based on what they have told me about what their position is Jeff are you I genuinely did not ask this question so that I'm sure you did but you're an elder so speak please I appreciate it obviously as we sin as Christians and as we confess our sin the guilt of sin is on sin and so in a sense we're not guilty of that we're not paying at least for the guilt of that sin but if we stand in the sin and we're confronted by our church family in this case and we say no you're wrong and I stand in

I think that helps me make sense of this language here which of course is a translation anyway so who knows but I think in that sense we have to say okay if you're not repenting and you're not taking this to Jesus then it's on you and that's a bad place to be right on you and so we're going to have to eventually disassociate ourselves with you in that case right the tricky part of that is we have to be very careful about our definition of sanctification here because for a true believer our confession is not the our repentance is not the basis of our forgiveness it's the work of Christ it's the basis of our forgiveness but an ongoing denial of that forgiveness an ongoing forsaking of what Christ has done in freeing us from sin brings us to a point where we think I don't know how you can say that you believe the gospel and still cling to this sin and that's where right so I want to nuance it but yes

I think that's right that's a helpful picture I want to get through just two more things and then we can open this up one is I want to just talk briefly about what's the purpose of this right we've already talked about it some the primary purpose of correction is to bring is restoration the primary purpose of this is so that someone would see their sin and return to Christ and be restored to the fellowship of the saints and be brought in the second purpose is that there is a sense of warning to the church there is a public display of this behavior these attitudes this forsaking of Christ is not acceptable this is not what it looks like and that's a warning to believers there is a protection of the purity of the church there is a sense of you may not continue in this we may remove you from our church membership because we as a body have been called to be witnesses for Christ and when you behave in that way you deny

Christ and therefore we cannot we need to protect the witness of the church and ultimately it's for the glory of God's name we all know how much we are suffering the evangelical church in America is suffering from those who claim the name of evangelical and yet are completely unrighteous publicly and unrepentantly about their behavior right now the world does not have a place for

restoration they don't know how to like it's either condemnation or hypocrisy that like there's no there's not a lot of room for a healthy process but recognize how much the name of Christ suffers in America because of the unrepentant sin of their of the leaders the other thing I just wanted to say is okay what do we what do we mean when we get to the end when we're saying have nothing to do with them do not even eat with them treat them as a tax collector or a sinner what does that actually mean and again part of what I part of what I wanted you see first of all part of what we're saying when we're saying that is

[ 44 : 52 ] I can no longer interact with you as someone who shares the fellowship of Christ with me because your behavior and your resistance to response and to change makes me think that it draws enough question that I cannot I can no longer what does that actually practically look like well it would look like a couple of things in our church we would remove you from places of service you may no longer do stuff right members come and we expect you to serve and we're going to remove you from those things it certainly means you may not take communion we will instruct you to not take communion because again if we go to first Corinthians 11 if anyone eats or drinks in this in an unworthy manner there's actually a very clear instruction there but here do not even eat with them some have taken that to mean you can't take the

Lord's supper I think it means more than that but it certainly means that you should not if the church is saying your behavior is of such a state that we cannot confirm your profession of faith you shouldn't take communion just like an unbeliever shouldn't take communion because it is an expression of faith in Christ and taking hold of the repentance and taking hold of the work of Christ for our salvation it means that our relationships need to change it does not mean that we have to completely shun them and never speak to them on the street but it also means we don't just hang out with them and have a casual beer on Sunday afternoon and watch the football game or you know have play dates and ignore these things it doesn't mean that we don't have interaction but when we have interaction with these with these those who have been who are under this discipline who have been removed the whole basis of our relationship needs to change so that we look at them and we say will you turn from your sin will you come back to Christ

I love you please come back to Christ it may involve in our church a restriction from being a part of a small group it may involve a restriction from coming to corporate worship those are discernment issues that we would probably apply on a case by case basis because at one level we want these people coming to hear the word of God so that there's an urging to repent but there's also a pretty significant you know with small groups small groups are meant in our church primarily for the gathering of believers it's not exclusively so but that's primary whereas our corporate worship service we want other people to come so that would be a case by case application that we would probably work through but we but it's a possibility and part of it is that the whole goal of this is to help this fallen brother or sister recognize the gravity of their sin if we have gotten here there have already been many conversations please turn back please don't continue in this please see how great a salvation

Christ has done for you please don't trample that and leave it behind and forsake it for this and when we've had all those conversations we are now bringing the weight and it is going to be uncomfortable and it is going to potentially provoke shame and they will you know again go back to Hebrews 12 no discipline feels good at the time it will hurt and people will feel hurt by it and unfortunately there's been enough abuse of church discipline that there's a whole bunch of people running around having been treated terribly by churches that haven't gone through a patient loving process but there are also people going around with a chip on their shoulders saying my church didn't didn't handle me well when I was in complete rebellion and sin against God and they think that and they're still carrying a grudge against the church because of it and we need to recognize that it's a complex thing out there but we ought not to be afraid of continuing to seek to embrace the pattern of correction in the church one quote from a commentator in light of this there could be this is what it looks like there could be no question that is of course you would do these things it would be no question of speaking to such a person in the street or of excluding the normal courtesies due to acquaintances but not to friends associates or to close colleagues the the language of first Corinthians and the language of treating them as tax collectors and sinners is significant enough that there's a there's a there's a real shift that should happen in relationships this is very counter cultural this is very uncomfortable for us it does mean that we look at our friends and we say the most important thing about you the most important thing about you is your relationship with

Christ and no matter how much I love you in all the other ways I can't just overlook that and enjoy the rest of you because I love you too much process should go we've already talked about this carefully should go personally we should never assume that Matthew 18 can be carried out over Twitter or text message or even over the phone if at all possible it should be done discreetly as much as possible until it gets to a public level it should be done with discernment it should be done deliberately there are times when it needs to go quickly there are times when it needs to go slowly but it should not be done rashly I guess is how I would say all right Peter one thought I don't believe that there's a conflict there

[ 52 : 08 ] I think context is very important in scripture and a mix of followers and believers and unbelievers and seekers and people what's this all about and he's speaking largely about man's relationship to God and that separation that exists between man and God which is hugely important and should obviously inform our understanding of the gospel and inform our understanding of our relationship to Christ and to God but if we're then going to compare it to what Paul is saying to the Corinthian church it is I want to just remind I think it's hugely different that Paul is specifically talking to a known consistent sin so I just wouldn't want people to walk away thinking there's some sort of contradiction there and expectation yeah yeah no in fact the best way to see it is that 1 Corinthians 5 picks up right at the end of the Matthew 18 process that they're they actually are complementary but you can't you can't overlay them completely because they're at different stages of the process and in a different yeah

Matt one last comment and even you know Matthew 7 at the beginning do not judge just a couple paragraphs down they are commanded to judge the fruit the behavior right right being compatible with God good God relationship or not so even in that same context yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah so as we pursue having a loving body and a body that's growing and living out all the God has called us to as being a part of his body I hope you will see that this pattern of correction both on an individual level and then at a corporate level is actually a gift from God it is something that God has designed for our good it is not always fun it is one of the harder parts of relationships just like conflict always is and yet the promise that it produces good fruit and that it actually is good for us and a display of God's glory is pretty consistent in the scriptures and so

I want to commend you to it if you have questions I'll be down here it's almost 10 o'clock so I want to let you go and get you upstairs for the service let me pray real quick Lord thank you for this time we pray you'll help us as we go to worship you in spirit and truth in Jesus name Amen thanks you all I'm sure I'm glad I was here oh I'm glad you were too aww aww aww aww aww aww aww hopefully there were five days they came to call for a day that's when did they take things or no they didn't they were bang bang bang on the back door and it woke me up and aww so scary I didn't think but the kids it was a young kid so it's like five six plus six I think he just wanted to come in he couldn't say I want to come in I want to come in but I I didn't really realize that at three o'clock in the morning I'm getting that you called the party at five police cars oh goodness I'm sorry Elizabeth yeah I'll bet so you I'll be there if you want to but Thank you.