

Tonight, a brief, introductory discussion on the topic of Dis-fellowship or Withdrawal from the brother or sister in Christ who has become irreverent to the Gospel... The term “fellowship” in the Bible means a shared relationship as brothers and sisters in the blessings of Christ. Wherein we share our lives with one another in the cause of Christ, and draw close to one another for encouragement... Dis-fellowship then, in the breaking away of shared relationship... withdrawing ourselves from the association we had, since the person has withdrawn themselves from lawful association with Christ.

We did not create this process as a way to deal with the guy who won’t change. God, in His infinite wisdom has given us this plan, by which a lost soul may once again be saved. I want to preach a few lessons on this diverse topic, but tonight will simply explain some basic Scriptural truths... along with common excuses why some often don’t obey this command.

Matt. 18:15-17 – As Jesus taught, when a brother sins, our hearts devotion is to effect their restoration to Christ.

- a) We go to them, not to demean, but reprove. Show their faults, and help them repent of that sin.
- b) If not affective, we take a couple more to make sure no fact is left out, in great hopes of obedience!
- c) If nothing, then the whole church, entire local fellowship, gets involved, to effect restoration!!!
- d) If they are impenitent, “let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector”
 - a. “heathen” – a sinful person of the world ... not a member, not a confidant, changed relationship
 - b. A person of the world, that I pray for, treat with respect, but do not yoke my heart and mind to

I Cor. 5:1-2,6 – Here is a member of the church who is sinful and impenitent about it. Guilt is confirmed...

- a) Arrogance allow the relationship to continue as it was, worship, don’t worship, welcome.
- b) “removed from your midst” – not longer considered a member of the church or fellowshiped as such
- c) MORE – “not to associate with” “not even to eat with such a one” --- PERSONAL, not just assembled!
- d) Difficult, yes. Sacrificial, yes. But, **verse 5**, God’s plan to save them. By not accepting lost state!

(someone says, well that was adultery, big sin... smaller impenitent sin, lack of worship, worldly behavior, different)

II Thess. 3:6, 14 – Here brethren were told precisely what to do in the case of a brother “unruly” in any area

- a) “keep away from” – assembly? No, period! If they are “unruly” or live not by these traditions
- b) “do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame” – If you just don’t worship with them anymore, but pretty much associate business as usual, and they feel no shame ... we are wrong!
- c) And, this fellow didn’t commit adultery, he just wouldn’t work! (II Th. 3:10) --- size of sin not the issue.

Easy to read and understand, but NOT easy to do. To sever social relationships, make stands for truth against one you love so dearly or have known for years. But it is about love.... Our friendship or your soul? My way or God’s way?

If we want to prosper as a congregation... you as an individual Christian, we must obey God’s will on this issue!

In upcoming studies I want us to look at the effect on the church and our lives when we don’t obey, for the duration of tonight’s study, let’s examine what may be the top 5 reasons Christians may not be dis-fellowshipping as God commands

- I. **“Haven’t established guilt”** (sometimes an excuse)
 - a. Should I withdraw from them? I know they don’t come to church much, but are they really sinning?
 - b. Well, the lack of confidence in their condition doesn’t mean do nothing **Matthew 18**. This is not some stranger you observe across a restaurant, but your brother or sister in Christ! Get active!
 - c. Sometimes elders announce disfellowship, and people say, “who was that? I didn’t know anything.”
 - d. Rely on trustworthy witnesses -- **I Cor. 1:11** – Listened to Chloe, believed and acted strongly. If someone you trust tells you this person has a problem, start from there and get involved.
- II. **“I’ve seen this process go poorly in the past”** (used as a reason to do nothing)
 - a. Well, so have I. In less mature years I’ve been the catalyst for mis-ordered actions... So do nothing???

- b. **I Cor. 5:1-2** – Maybe they'd seen it go poorly so kid-gloves this time. To do nothing is wrong NOW!
 - c. **5:5** – Remember, not about finding reasons to ignore, but about saving souls. A teenager sitting in this auditorium who utterly disrespects God is absolutely lost. Do you think doing nothing, allowing his to feel comfortable being lost, just because others have handled others wrong will help that poor child?
 - d. Men mess up, but that means go back to God! Do it His way. He knows how to save! (*Judges/King*)
- III. **“What if they respond with anger”** (call me “hateful” “unmerciful” or “you think you are better than me”)
- a. Firstly, anger is not a bad thing. People get angry when truths hit close to home... when they are threatened because they know it is true. Anger is an emotional response and that is not all bad.
 - b. **Num. 16:32,41** – Korah punished by God ... people blamed Moses and Aaron?!?! Instead of fearing and respecting God's judgment, they blame the ones who stood for Truth and warned them
 - c. **I Pet. 3:13-15, 17** – We all believe what Peter is saying, but how many will live it, for Christ's sake, for the sinners needs and benefit???
 - d. **Gal. 1:10** – Paul said, “*am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God*” Good question.
- IV. **“God is love, and cutting off relationships to save them can't be His will”** (emotional reasoning)
- a. This is an unbalanced view of God! God does! Christ does! If impenitent...
 - b. **Rom. 11:22** --- The real question is, why are we living a love NOT like God's love! For souls, not me.
 - c. **I Cor. 5:5** – Disassociation, keep apart from, not even eating.... Is God' plan of LOVE!!! To SAVE!!!
 - d. God doesn't need us to reinvent the import of His love, but to honor it for souls' sakes!!!
- V. **“But they are my own flesh and blood; rules are different”** (parent, child, sibling, grand, etc)
- a. Preachers, elders, many brethren will tell you this... But where is the proof behind reasoning? The proof that God's plan is for a lost person's soul only if not a relative.... In such, God has a better way? Easier?
 - b. I understand supplementation.... God says more about MARRIAGE and PARENT/CHILD in home.
 - c. But when people argue that grown kids, parents, siblings, out of house *That one who has abandoned the faith we continue to eat with them, socialize, associate and keep relationship the same... verse?*
 - d. **Matt. 10:32-33, 37-39** – To change God's plan for the sake of family associations is dealt with by Christ!
 - e. Often times, the people who have the most influence on someone's life are the only ones who will not put them away for the choices in their life God's greatest tools go unused.
 - f. JOSH --- church, no big deal. Parents and Brothers Eye opening! Humbling!
 - g. See it different: If you would dis-fellowship someone you see 3 times per week for their sin to protect your family and save their soul ... but are not willing to do so with family (for the sake of holidays or whatever), who do you really love more? (*The soul of this brother But the flesh of family???*)
 - h. *Family members: you have the power to affect Christ's redemptive plan with more influence, emphasis and power to change than any preacher or elder or church ever could Please help save their souls*

Conclusion: I conclude by asking you to consider four words tonight: “*spirit may be saved*” **I Co. 5:5**

We live in flesh, we interact in the fleshly.... We live in the physical world, and surround ourselves with physical things. But seeing all of that as temporary and passing and eternally irrelevant Consider that “*the spirit may be saved.*”

Do you need to do something tonight in faith so that your “*spirit may be saved.*”

Is it time to enforce God's plan to one you love ... with love, God's love, so that “*his spirit may be saved.*”

Won't you act tonight with no loftier goal for yourself nor others, but that the “*spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.*”