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Contending FOR THE Faith™

FOR THOSE WHO LOVE THE TRUTH AND HATE ERROR

THE DISCIPLINE OF 1 CORINTHIANS 5:11

Roy H. Lanier, Sr.

A Texas reader wishes to know what 1 Corinthians 5:11 teaches with reference to close friends, and especially with reference to members of one's own family. The verse says:

If any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat.

First, let us notice that Paul makes a distinction between the treatment of people who are not members of the church and those who are members. He refers to a previous letter which he had written in which he told them to have no company with fornicators. It seems that the church at Corinth thought he meant for them not to have anything to do with anyone guilty of such sins. But in this letter Paul explains that he did not mean for this lesson to apply to the people who were not members of the church. If the lesson be applied to people of the world, Christians would have to go out of the world. Such a course of action would force Christians to cut off all business transactions with people of the world. It would destroy all social intercourse with the world. It would take the saving salt away from the world, and it would remove the light of the world so that Christians could be neither salt nor light to the world. Albert Barnes says, "This was the error of the monastic system, and this error has been the occasion of innumerable corruptions in the papal church."

Next, Paul says the Christian is not to eat with a member of the church who is guilty of practicing such sins as he named in this verse. First, let us determine what he means

by eating. There are some who say this refers only to eating the Lord's supper. Others say it means that such a one is not allowed to take part in the "love feasts" of the church. However, I think we need proof that churches of Paul's day practiced such as thing as a love feast in obedience to apostolic teaching. So, we need to determine only whether this refers to the Lord's supper or to an ordinary meal in one's home. Since Paul says his teaching on this point is not to be applied to eating with a person who is not a Christian and the Christian may freely eat with the man of the world, and since the man of the world does not eat the Lord's supper, we must conclude that he is talking about the common meal. It was useless to tell the Christian not to eat the Lord's supper with the fornicator and drunkard of the world, since such worldly characters would not attend worship in the first place; and if they did come occasionally, they would not eat the Lord's supper. It seems to me there is no other conclusion to reach than that Paul teaches the Christian to refrain from eating, or having any social intercourse, with a church member who is guilty of such sins as named.

But what if a woman's husband, son, or daughter, falls from grace, is entangled in and overcome by the world, goes back to wallowing in the mire, must she refuse to eat with members of her own family? Paul made no exceptions. I know of no other inspired writer who made any exception to this rule. I dare not usurp the authority of an apostle or a prophet of the Lord and make one to lighten the load or to make smooth the road for me or for anybody else.

But if someone thinks this is an inhuman and cruel demand to make of people, let us consider the purpose of the law. This verse is in the context of Paul's treatment of a man who had taken his father's wife and was guilty of fornication. Paul demanded that the church come together and act

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Ira Y. Rice, Jr., Founder
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Editorial...

FALSE LOVE

Paul lists the component parts of love (*agape*) in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. In verse 6 Paul wrote that love, “**Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.**” Therefore, whatever the other component parts of love are and no matter how significant and important they are, if one does not rejoice in the truth, those other component parts cannot be as God intended them to be in the Christian’s life. This is the case because without the love of the truth one loses the standard of determining what is right and wrong regarding all things moral and religious (John 8:31, 32; 14:15, 23; 15:10; 17:17; 1 John 2:5; 3:15; 5:3; 2 John 1:6).

The foregoing is especially the case when it comes to loving our brethren in the Lord. To Christians the apostle John wrote, “**By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments**” (1 John 5:2). Thus, when Christians do not conduct themselves toward other Christians according the teaching of the New Testament, no matter how kind their feelings toward them are and how good their intentions may be, they do not love God nor their brethren.

THE HOME AND THE CHURCH

Preceding the church by thousands of years is the home. It began with God joining together in wedlock Adam and Eve to be husband and wife. Thus, the scriptural definition of a home/family is when a scripturally eligible man and a woman enter into scriptural wedlock and live together as husband and wife, whether children are born into the home or not.

The concept, beginning, and conduct of the home was restored by Jesus for the Christian Age to last until the end of time (Gen. 2:20-24; Mat. 19:4-6). Since marriage and the home can and do exist without the members thereof being Christians, only when the husband and wife are faithful members of the Lord’s church will they possess the proper concern for God’s will governing every constituent element comprising the home that people should (Col. 3:17). Thus, when every person in a family is a Christian, then each family member is also a brother or sister in Christ. Not only do they have the responsibility of conducting matters peculiar to the home as God’s will teaches, but they are equally concerned with what God teaches regarding their conduct in Christ.

When a family is composed of Christians, two God-ordained institutions are now involved together. God has assigned to each institution an organization, works, and responsibilities for each member of each divine institution. Further, there is not a commandment from God to the church that contradicts or makes null and void any commandment God bound on the family and vice versa. Thus, in obeying

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the commandments pertaining to the church one is never required to violate or omit any of God’s commands for the home or vice versa.

When Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus admonishing fathers to bring their children “**up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord**” (“**but nurture them in the chastening and admonition of the Lord**”—*ASV*, 1901), that di-

rective included the Bible’s teaching about the home and the church. Paul’s comments to father’s reminds us of his words to the Ephesian elders. Regarding his work with church at Ephesus he said, “**I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you, but have shewed you, and have taught you publickly, and from house to house**” and how he had “**not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God**” (Acts 20:20, 27). Indeed, would this teaching not include what the

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as a body to “**deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus**” (1 Cor. 5:5). Here are two expression for study: (1) The destruction of the flesh. (2) The spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

There are many wild speculations as to what is meant by destruction of the flesh, but we may rule out all that imply that Satan would do anything to get the man to go back to the church. Paul often uses the word “**flesh**” to mean man’s carnal nature (Rom. 8:6-9). And since Satan is the ruler of the world, to deliver one to Satan is to cast him out of the church, back into the world where he is denied the blessings of the fellowship of the saints. Being guilty of such sins, he is no longer worthy of such blessings. And if he is allowed to continue to enjoy the fellowship of the saints, the world will have no respect for the church and its message. Not only will it have this effect on the world but continuing to treat the sinner as a saint will cause the young and weak saints to follow the example of the one who is guilty of such sins. So, I believe this expression simply means to deny the sinner the fellowship of the saints that he may resolve to destroy his carnal nature by repenting of his sin and returning to the fellowship of God and His people.

Next, the sinner in the church is to be put out of the fellowship that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus—the day of judgment. This action is not to be taken to get revenge, or merely for the sake of punishing the man. It is to be done in order to save him. Of course, it is to be taken for granted that everything has been done to bring the man to repentance before this action is taken. Putting him out of the fellowship and refusing to eat with him is extreme action and is to be used as the last resort. When all else fails, cut off all spiritual and social fellowship. If one not a member of your family is guilty of such sins, you should greatly desire his restoration to the fellowship of the Lord and his people. How much more should we desire the restoration of a member of our own family! And if the one guilty of such sins would feel keenly the denial of social fellowship of the members of the church, how much more keenly would he feel the denial of the fellowship of his own family! If a good Christian woman and wife were to set her husband’s meal on the table for him,

but refuse to sit at the table and eat with him; if his children who are Christians should refuse to eat with their father; if they were to tell him, “When you get right with the Lord by repenting of your sins and asking God to forgive you, we will be glad to eat with you,” this would likely have a greater power of persuasion than such action of all the rest of the church put together.

Yes, this is extreme; this is drastic; but if all other efforts fail to bring a man to quit his sins, and if this will get the job done, is it not worth the effort? Paul did not say all are to refuse to eat with the sinner except his family. Paul did not say that all the church at Corinth except the father and family of the sinner were to refuse to eat with the man eat guilty of fornication, He said, “**With such a one no, not to eat. Put away the wicked man from among yourselves.**” It is worthy of notice that the reviler, extortioner, and the covetous are classed with the fornicator and drunkard. We have difficulty in classing the covetous man with the fornicator, but there are several lists of sinners in which they are classed together (1 Cor. 6:10; Col. 3:5).

Few churches today give any thought to the discipline of sinners in the membership. It is almost a forgotten commandment. Elders should think of what they are going to tell the Lord in judgment when they give account of the souls under their care whom they did not deliver to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit might be saved (Lanier, Sr., Roy H., *20 Years of the Problem Page, Vol. 1*. Abilene, TX: Quality Publications, 1984, pp.135-137. Used by permission).

—Deceased

[The questions and answers appearing in 20 years of the Problem Page, Vols. 1 & 2 originally appeared in the now defunct Firm Foundation journal wherein bro. Lanier, Sr., was the editor of “The Problem Page” for many years. His articles circulated far and wide in that venue for many years before bro. Lanier’s son, Roy, Jr., placed them in book form over 35 years ago (at this writing) and they remain in print. The public has, therefore, had access to them in book form for over a third of a century. —Editor]

“DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO”

Roelf L. Ruffner

“If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:26).

I believe I would do almost anything for my family. I work two jobs to provide for them. I hope I would lay down my life for them. But I refuse to disobey God to be pleasing to them. Jesus meant it when He said that a Christian must **“hate”** or love them less than they love Him.

How many times have you witnessed a Christian who tolerated unscriptural divorce and remarriage (Mat. 19:9) among their relatives? Some even **“twist the Scriptures”** (2 Pet. 3:16) to find a supposed loophole for their adulterous loved ones to squeeze through.

Others have relatives who have apostatized from **“the faith”** (Jude 3), following false teachers/false doctrine. Yet they claim they have warned them of their transgression but continue to fraternize with them. The message they are sending them is loud and clear—**“Do as I say, not as I do”** (cf. Mat. 23:1-4). Is this not tolerating what the Lord finds intolerable? **“For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away...”** (Mal. 2:16).

We have only to go to the Bible to find examples of those who struggled over family and fellowship. Some obeyed God and others did not. **“For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope”** (Rom. 15:4).

ABRAHAM AND ISHMAEL

God had promised Abraham an heir through his wife Sarah (Gen. 17:15-19). However, when a child did not come to Abraham and Sarah, they wrongly decided to help God out. Sarah gave her servant Hagar to Abraham as a concubine to produce an heir. Hagar gave birth to Ishmael by Abraham. Yet, there was a constant battle between Sarah and Hagar. After the birth of the promised child Isaac, Sarah insisted that Abraham send Hagar and Ishmael away. **“Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac”** (Gen. 21:10). God supported Sarah because Isaac was the true heir of God’s promises to Abraham not Ishmael. Although this was not necessarily a case of withdrawal of fellowship, Abraham followed through and **“cast out the bondwoman and her son”** (Gal. 4:30). Would we have obeyed God as Abraham did? Despite Abraham’s love for Ishmael, he obeyed God (Gen. 21:11,12). Would we have done what Abraham

did and obey God?

ELI AND HIS SONS

Eli was the high priest at the tabernacle of the Lord at Shiloh and judge of ancient Israel. His two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were priests in the tabernacle who corrupted the sacrificial worship of God by stealing meat from those offering animal sacrifices. They also committed adultery with the women who worked outside the entrance of the tabernacle. Eli knew of his sons’ sins and finally confronted them but did not bring them to justice as the judge of Israel. He preferred his sons over God.

Wherefore kick ye at my sacrifice and at mine offering, which I have commanded in my habitation; and honourest thy sons above me, to make yourselves fat with the chiefest of all the offerings of Israel my people? (1 Sam. 2:29 – emphasis mine, RLR.).

God warned Eli through young Samuel that judgment was coming to him and his family (1 Sam. 3:13).

Because Eli failed to obey God and judge his sons, his family was cursed by God and the nation of Israel was almost destroyed. In a battle with the Philistines, his sons were killed, the Ark of the Covenant was captured, and after hearing the news Eli fell backwards and broke his neck.

How many Christians choose their friends and relatives over the Lord? Like Eli, they warn them of their sins but fail to obey God’s Word and continue to fellowship them.

DAVID, AMNON AND ABSALOM

Every student of the Bible knows of David’s adultery with Bathsheba and his subsequent murder of her husband Uriah. The prophet Nathan rebuked David and warned him of the consequences of his sins.

Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun (2 Sam. 12:11).

Not long after David’s repentance (2 Sam 12:13), Nathan’s prophecy began to be fulfilled. David’s eldest son, Amnon, tried to seduce his half-sister Tamar. When she rejected his advances, he raped her and threw her out of his house. David learned of Amnon’s crime and was **“very wroth”** (2 Sam. 13:21), but did nothing about it. According to the Law of Moses, Amnon should have been tried and stoned to death (Deu. 22:28,29).

For two years, David, King of Israel and its judge, did nothing about this crime. Absalom, Tamar’s brother, took

matters into his own hands and had Amnon assassinated. He then fled to the safety of his pagan grandfather, King Talmai of Geshur. By trickery, Joab made David return Absalom to Jerusalem after three years. David had nothing to do with him for two years and ignored bringing justice to this murderer. Joab finally arranged for Absalom to see David and the two are reunited. All seemed to be forgotten. But, for the next four years, Absalom undermined his father's authority and plotted a rebellion against him. That rebellion came and Absalom proclaimed himself king of Israel and disgraced himself and his family. He died a rebel's death, run through with a spear, and hanging from a tree by his hair.

David refused to deal with the crimes committed by his own sons. This toleration of sin and the failure to fulfill his roles as father, king, and judge, nearly destroyed his family and himself. Instead, we read these heart wrenching words of regret and sorrow.

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son! (2 Sam. 18:33).

Many bemoan reports that the younger generation are leaving the church. Liberal critics claim it is because the church is "too conservative" and the young are rebelling against sound preaching and teaching. Perhaps the opposite is true. The younger generation may observe that we preach the need for "church discipline," for example, but we do not practice it when it comes to family and friends.

Have we become infected with the false spirit of toleration and subjectivism which has taken over most of America? Pseudo-Christianity says we must tolerate sin in our loved ones because they are "family." But New Testament Christianity's love has us judging others by the Word of God (John 7:46; 12:48), warning them of their sin, and then withdrawing from them if they refuse to repent (Mat. 18:15-17). Yes, it is difficult and heart breaking! But at times in obeying the Lord such is necessary. **"And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple"** (Luke 14:27). Are we unwilling to bear our own crosses?

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"THE BABY STILL DIED"

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

It is easy for us to overlook the consequences of wrong doing. We think that because there has been forgiveness and the guilt of sin is passed, that the fruit of the sin should no longer follow.

I remember vividly learning this truth when a student at Freed-Hardeman College. Several of the students had violated the rules of the college and had made public confession of the wrong they had done. When I learned that the administration still planned to expel them, I went to the president of the college and expressed my disapproval. I will never forget the answer brother Dixon (the late H. A. Dixon—*Editor*) gave to me. "Jenkins, you remember the story about David and Bathsheba? David repented and God forgave him." Then brother Dixon added, "But the baby still died."

There it was. Sin had both guilt and consequences. God had decreed that part of the punishment for David's sinful acts which had brought shame on all Israel was the death of the illegitimate child. The guilt of sin had passed, but the consequences of sin had to be faced.

What parent has not faced this situation? A child has done wrong, and has sincerely expressed his sorrow. The parent tends to think he should also remove the punishment the child was aware of before his disobedience. Such could not be farther from the truth. To do such would keep the

child from understanding how God deals with us.

The prophet Jeremiah looked at Israel and described the dire circumstances in which Israel found itself.

From the least of them even to the greatest of them, every-one is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely...this people has slid back in a perpetual backslide. They hold fast to deceit, they refuse to return...No man repented of his wickedness. Were they ashamed when they had committed abominations? No! They were not at all ashamed, nor did they know how to blush (Jer. 6:13; 8:5, 12).

Even though they eventually repented in Jeremiah's day, they still had to face the consequences of sin. They had to go into Babylonian captivity.

Sin has its consequences even though the guilt is removed. Don't ever forget the story of David and Bathsheba. "The baby still died." ♦♦

*"I saw tomorrow look at me
From little children's eyes, And
thought how carefully we would teach
If we were really wise."*

—Author Unknown

DESTITUTE OF DISCERNMENT

David P. Brown and Kenneth D. Cohn

A discerning brother who is a long-time missionary in one of the low countries in Europe emailed your editor and co-owner Kenneth Cohn charging us with being “divisive and self-condemnatory” in our 2019 March and May issues. However, before continuing, it should be noted that this discerning brother considers it a righteous act for him to condemn us by labeling us as “divisive and self-condemnatory” while practicing on us the very thing that he thinks he sees in us. It seems to us that this discerning brother is destitute of discernment; he exhibits a serious lack in discerning the message of our articles, nor does he discern the implications of his explanation of his charges. In this article, we will take his email message and analyze it critically in order to demonstrate that he indeed is “Destitute of Discernment.”

Please be advised that some of his comments make no sense whatsoever, so remove your hat to better facilitate the scratching of your head.

He begins with this comment:

It condemns on the basis of arguments that would also condemn Christ, David, and yourselves.

John 8:10, 11

When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, **“Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”** She said, **“No one, Lord. And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”**

Jesus was born under the law (Gal. 4:4). According to the law, this woman should have been stoned to death. Yet Jesus did not condemn her to death. He disobeyed a commandment of God!

Now, let our discerning brother’s last few sentences in the previous quote sink in a moment. Jesus disobeyed God. This discerning brother is accusing Jesus of sin (John 8:46)! Brother Cohn made it clear in his article in the May 2019 issue that we must keep all the commandments of God. Failure to do so is sin. Yet the Bible in speaking of Jesus had this to say: **“For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin”** (Heb 4:15, also 2 Co. 5:21, 1 Pet. 2:22, 1 Jn. 3:5). Someone is wrong. The scriptures and this discerning brother cannot both be right, and in this case both cannot be wrong. Either the scriptures are wrong, or this discerning brother is wrong. We know which one we will go with!

John 8:1-11 records the account of the woman taken in adultery. She was presented to Jesus by certain scribes and Pharisees. They asked Him what He would do with her since the law of Moses prescribed death as the punishment for

those guilty of adultery (Lev. 20:10). Best we recall, it takes two to commit adultery. Where was the man? Jesus said to her accusers, **“He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first”** (John 8:7). The **“without sin”** meant the same kind of sin. (It is likely that the man in the adulterous affair was one of her accusers.) They all walked away. Jesus said to her, **“Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?”** (John 8:10). Such a transgression required witnesses (Deu. 17:7). There were now none. Jesus, under the law, could not condemn her either for He was not a witness. He did not transgress the law of Moses.

Our discerning brother further writes:

In an email, brother Cohn, with regard to his teaching on “Self-defense” stated: “If you ever visit the Spring Church of Christ, you will be among many who carry concealed weapons with the approval of the elders. In fact, one deacon has said that we are the most heavily armed church since the Alamo.” Thank you for warning me. I shall NEVER visit the Spring Church of Christ! Do you remember what happened at the Alamo? Even if you think Christians may carry concealed weapons in case they need to shoot someone, surely you must acknowledge that among the many articles you have published through the years, some of them taught false doctrine.

He is referring to bro. Cohn’s articles “Guns and the Bible” appearing in the Nov/Dec 2015 issue of *CFTF*, and his follow-up article “Guns and the Bible Redux” appearing in the Jan/Feb 2016 issue of the paper. The Redux article was in response to his objection to what bro. Cohn had written in the first article. We wonder why he is bringing up those articles. If he believed bro. Cohn was teaching false doctrine then, he should have opposed him then. Yes, many members of the Spring church are licensed to and do carry concealed weapons, but we do not know of even one member who thinks that anyone needs to be shot. Regardless of the position we may take on the use of deadly force, we do not see why that compels us to acknowledge the teaching of false doctrine in this paper. Apparently, we are not as discerning as this discerning brother to see all the false doctrine he believes is taught by the paper.

He further writes:

Your May 2019 issue is inexcusable. **“Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things”** (Romans 2:1). I fully understand that this passage is often misused. But it certainly applies to you in this case! Except for one brief sentence, your issue does not even deal with the question at hand, namely: How does one deal with circumstances where one command of God overrides another command of God?

According to your issue, such a condition never exists. That is itself false teaching. **“Have you not even read this, what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he went into the house of God, took and ate the showbread, and also gave some to those with him, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat?”** (Luke 6:3, 4). Again, this teaching of Jesus can be misapplied. But that does not change the truth of it. Jesus expected that they should have learned something from what David did. How would the approach of your May 2019 issue deal with David and the high priest? They disobeyed a commandment of God! They did so in order to obey another commandment that in this case displaced it.

If we were as discerning as this discerning brother, perhaps we would know what he is talking about. He seems to be saying that one command of God can override another command of God, thereby placing God at odds with Himself. He says to teach otherwise is false teaching. In support of his premise, he mentions the case of the disciples of Jesus plucking grain on the Sabbath and rubbing it in the hands to remove the chaff. Some of the Pharisees said this was not lawful under their traditions. Jesus reminded them that David and his followers entered the house of God and ate the showbread which only the priests were authorized to eat. The point being made by Jesus was that David did something that was unlawful, but the Pharisees would not criticize David, yet Jesus’s disciples did something that only violated the traditions of the Pharisees, yet they criticized Jesus. One commandment of God did not, does not, and never will set aside another commandment of God as our discerning brother erroneously assumes. It is difficult to accept that those who label themselves gospel preachers would believe and teach that in order to keep one command of God we must, at times, disobey another command(s) of God.

Our discerning brother concludes with the following:

Such situations can cause great consternation on the part of one who is sincerely striving to please God. Wisdom is required. Sometimes wrong decisions are made. When and how to extend fellowship, when and how to withdraw fellowship, how to deal with false teachers who have NOT BEEN disfellowshipped, how to deal with someone who has been unjustly disfellowshipped, involves the applications of various Biblical commands and principles that have bearing on the situation. **“Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned”** (Tit. 3:11).

At present I am struggling with the application of this command with regard to you. Does continuing to be on your mailing list mean that I accept all or anything that you teach?

What situations cause our discerning brother, who is sincerely striving to please God, so much consternation? Why not just apply the various Biblical commands and principles that have a bearing on 1) when and how to extend fellowship, 2) when and how to withdraw fellowship, 3) how to deal with false teachers who have NOT BEEN disfellowshipped, and 4) how to deal with someone who has been unjustly disfellowshipped? Our discerning brother, who charges us with being divisive (a charge that he has not proved from the scriptures), wonders whether remaining on our mailing list means that he is in violation of Titus 3:11. If he can prove from the scriptures rightly divided that we are being divisive per Titus 3:11, why is he having such a hard time in rejecting us? Oh, but he is rejecting us! But he has not proved his case from the scriptures. Perhaps this falls into his category of “unjustly disfellowshipped” (2 The. 3:2).

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New Testament teaches regarding all aspects of Christian living in the home and the church? Certainly it would have included the indispensable principle of “first things first,” emphasized by our Lord in Matthew 6:33.

In David Lipscomb’s commentary on *Second Corinthians and Galatians*, edited with additional notes by J. W. Shepherd, the following was written concerning Paul’s remarks pertaining to the Corinthians obedience caused by the apostle’s rebuke of them because they refused to discipline the incestuous person noted in 1 Corinthians 5. Of Paul’s remarks in 2 Corinthians 2:4b we read:

True love for any person makes one seek to deliver the loved ones from wrong. Sometimes people uphold their husbands, wives, children, and friends in a wrong course, and say they do it from love. This is not true and helpful love. Love says get them pure and right before God, and insists on the discipline needed to purify them. Not to do this is to encourage them in their own ruin. A selfish determination to uphold one’s family

or friends in a course of wrong is not love. It is really hatred, in a Bible sense of the word (*A Commentary on the New Testament Epistles*, Volume 3, Gospel Advocate Company, Nashville, TN, 1976, p. 37).

For many years the Lord’s people have failed to consistently, on a case by case basis, regularly practice corrective church discipline—especially withdrawing Christian fellowship from those brethren who are out of fellowship with God. Refusing to engage in the scriptural acts necessary to correct rebellious impenitent sinful brethren constitutes supporting said sinful brethren and encourages impurity in the church. Their lack of faithful action drowns out what they say and erases what their pens write to the contrary. Indeed, no one sees such inconsistency more clearly than those rebellious impenitent brethren who need corrective church discipline to bring them, if at all possible, to repentance.

—David P. Brown, Editor

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