



Titus 3:8-11

Truth #9 - Church health depends upon Church discipline

Doctrine #9 - The doctrine of Church Discipline

Principle #9 - Learn to accept correction

It has been said that the strength of any relationship is based not just on *agreeing*, but on *disagreeing*. Just because two people *disagree* doesn't mean that they don't care for each other. Thus, disagreement is not hate; it's disagreement. Disagreement does not have to be ignored in order to have a healthy relationship with someone. In fact, ignoring a disagreement can often create a fracture in a relationship. But resolving a disagreement does not necessarily mean 'agree to disagree' - especially when it concerns matters of importance.

1. How was the apostle Paul exhorting the Cretans to deal with the disagreements being raised by some false teachers according to Titus 3:9?
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2. Were these disagreements happening within or without of the church?
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There are some disagreements that are based on falsehoods which need to be corrected especially when they are held and promoted by those we care about such as friends and family. These disagreements could be matters of belief or perhaps lifestyle choices.

3. What kind of activity did Paul describe as ‘excellent’ and ‘profitable’ in Titus 3:8?
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Godly Leadership Involves Managing Conflict

If God has called you to be a shepherd in a church - a pastor, a small-group leader, a team leader - you are also called deal with inevitable conflicts. We should not allow our romantic notions of ‘church’ blind-side us to disagreements and conflicts within our church, small group, or team.

4. As a shepherd within a church, what is the best strategy for dealing disagreement and conflict?
 - a) Ignore it and hope it goes away all by itself.
 - b) Pray that God smites those who disagree with you.
 - c) Go privately to the other individual at an appropriate time and place and ask if you could clear the air between you both.
 - d) Crawl up in a corner with blanky and cover your head with it.
 - e) Demand that they leave the church/small-group/team for daring to disagree with you.
 5. How did Jesus say that a disagreement should be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-17?
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6. Based on Paul’s requirements for an elder included in Titus 1:9 what role were elders to play in church conflicts over (false) doctrine being promoted?
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7. Who was responsible for implementing Titus 3:10?

Growing as a Christian Requires Being Corrected

Have you ever prayed for God to help you grow as a follower of Christ? Have you prayed for God to correct you?

8. When a believing friend or church leader attempts to correct you, you should-
- a) Get offended ~~and leave the church~~ and *sense God is moving you on to another church.*
 - b) Defend yourself by pointing out that they are wrong with several long text messages to prove it.
 - c) Listen to what they are saying. Thank them for taking the time to share this with you. Show your appreciation for their care. Make their points a matter of prayer as you continue to ask God to help you to follow and serve Christ more effectively.
 - d) Storm off in a huff and slam the door behind you as you do for dramatic effect.
 - e) Listen to them and remain silent (tears would be permitted) then leave that exchange and proceed to tell everyone you know what a pack of heartless hypocritical your church leaders are.
9. According to Proverbs 17:10, what kind of person accepts correction?
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It takes humility to receive needful correction. This in itself is one of the essential characteristics for Christian growth. It often takes courage to deliver needful correction. Courage is one of the essential characteristics for leadership growth. For any church to grow it requires a balanced culture of humility, courage, and wisdom.

The Doctrine of Church Discipline

But there are times when, despite the courage and wisdom and church leaders, some people who are wilfully defiant and disobedient to the Scriptures will not receive needful correction. It is at this point that church discipline is called for.

10. How does Paul describe such people in Titus 3:11 and how does he say that the church should respond in Titus 3:10? (Compare this with 1Cor. 5:11.)

11. The goal of church discipline by leadership is to -
- a) punish and humiliate the one who refuses to be corrected.
 - b) show who's boss.
 - c) bring people to needful repentance and restoration.
12. What would happen to a church if its leaders never exercised needed church discipline? Discuss.

Correction is a component of church discipline. It is achieved through (i) teaching the Word of God, (ii) encouraging believers to obey and apply the Word of God, (iii) exhorting (a call to active obedience), (iv) rebuking disobedience, and (v) disfellowshipping the wilfully disobedient and defiant until they repent and can be restored.

Prayer

Lord God,

Help us to grow. Where we need correcting, do it gently. Use us to also help others to grow. Fill us afresh with Your love and Your Spirit. In Jesus' Name we pray,

Amen.