

Course Outline

Class 1 *Unity*

Class 2 *Church Membership*

Class 3 *Preaching*

Class 4 *Prayer*

Class 5 *Ordinances*

Class 6 *Church Governance*

Class 7 *Church Fellowship*

Class 8 *Discontentment Within the Church*

NEXT:

Class 9 *Church Leadership*

Class 10 *Church Discipline*

Class 11 *Giving and Service*

Class 12 *Corporate Worship*

Class 13 *Evangelism*

LIVING AS A CHURCH



Class 8: Discontentment within the Church *A Test of Unity*

I. Introduction

Discontentment is uncomfortable.

Our response to discontentment can work for or against God's purposes.

Discontentment with a church is sometimes good, sometimes bad.

II. Bitter Fruit from Poor Response to Discontentment

A. Discontentment can lead to complaining and grumbling

Do everything without complaining or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a crooked and depraved generation, in which you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life.

- Philippians 2:14-16a

Do not grumble against one another, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.

- James 5:9

B. Discontentment can lead to discord and division

C. Discontentment distracts us from what really matters

III. Addressing Discontentment

We address discontent, not a list of things to do, but understanding how the gospel transforms our response.

Here are some possible guidelines for addressing *all* discontentment, not just what is obviously sinful:

- A. Pray for God's mercy and His priorities
- B. Examine and understand our desires; confess and repent of those that are sinful

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?
Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?
You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel...
- James 4:1-2b

There is an unfortunate connection between discontentment and circumstances. Instead, let's put our hope in God.

- C. Seek out and be filled with a passion for God's glory

General advice: regular prayer, fellowship, time in the Word

Advice specific to discontentment within the church:

- Love those with whom you are discontent through prayer, service, etc.
- "In humility, count others more significant than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3)
- Consider the peace that is yours in Christ
 - Colossians 3:15
 - Titus 3:3-5

- D. Discipline ourselves to be careful with our words:

How you talk about discontentment can make it easier or harder for everyone to keep in mind the things of God.

"For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ."
- Philippians 2:21

Are you seeking to advance your own reputation, or the reputation of Christ?

IV. Specific Areas of Discontent within the Church

1. My church isn't meeting my needs.
 - Joy comes through serving Christ; this is the object of a spiritual gift----not our personal gratification.
 - Gifts are primarily for the edification of the local church ----not to develop/exercise our gifts and skills.
2. I have a hard time liking some church members.
 - pray; examine; seek God's glory; discipline
3. I have a disagreement with the church leadership.
 - next week's discussion

V. Conclusion

"But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it."
- I Timothy 6:6-7