

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*

Class 9 *Church Leadership*

Class 10 *Church Discipline*

NEXT:

Class 11 Giving and Service

Class 12 *Corporate Worship*

Class 13 *Evangelism*

LIVING AS A CHURCH



Class 10: Church Discipline *Preserving the Unity of the Church*

I. Introduction

The Reformers of the Protestant Reformation identified three necessary requirements for any church to be considered a valid New Testament Church:

- preaching of the pure gospel
- right administration of the ordinances
- **church discipline**

II. Church Discipline: Today's "Uphill Battle"

The decline of church discipline is perhaps the most visible failure in the contemporary church. No longer concerned with maintaining purity of confession or lifestyle, the contemporary church sees itself as a voluntary association of autonomous members, with minimal moral accountability to God, much less to each other..... The present generation of both ministers and church members is virtually without experience of biblical church discipline.

R. Albert Mohler, Jr.
President, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary

- the battle of the individual
- the battle within today's homes
- the battle within society
- the battle of bad exegesis of Scripture

III. The Biblical Nature of Church Discipline

- A. Matthew 18:15-17
 - for fellow Christians
 - lowest level first
 - with the object of restoration
- B. Acts 5:1-11
 - Ananias and Sapphira
- C. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
- D. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8
- E. 1 John 2:19

IV. The Purposes of Church Discipline

- A. To restore the disciplined member to church fellowship
- B. For other Christians to see the dangers of sin
- C. For the health of the church as a whole
- D. For the corporate witness of the church
- E. For the “holiness” of the church to reflect the holiness of Christ

IV. Witnesses for Biblical Church Discipline

- A. From the past:

.....it is the duty of every church member to submit repentantly to the church’s discipline so far as is consistent with the word of God. It is the duty of the church to administer the discipline with prayer and solemnity. It is the duty of the minister to see that the discipline determined by the congregation is duly executed, and he himself as a member of the congregation is subject to its discipline.

Charleston (S.C.) Baptist Association
1774

It has been noted that when discipline leaves a church, Christ goes with it.

John L. Dagg
President, Mercer University (1794-1884)

Church discipline is needed as a deterrent to the moral decline of our time. It used to be said of Baptists because of their congregational polity and tendency to air disputes publicly, “The Baptists wash their dirty linen in public.” One wonders whether the time may fast be approaching when Baptists just “hang their soiled lined out to dry.”

James Leo Garrett, Jr.
Professor, SWBTS (Ret.)

- B. Today:

Present-day Baptist do not, for the most part, stand in the apostolic or Baptist traditions of church discipline, primarily because:

- the blurring of the line between the church and the “world”
- desire for growth in numbers only
- former abuses in church discipline
- pastor as the CEO instead of a true pastor
- polarization/segregation of church members
- the admission of unregenerate church members

- C. Noteworthy:

“We Baptists are many, but not much.”

Dr. J.B. Gambrell
Former President of the SBC, Editor of *Baptist Standard*