

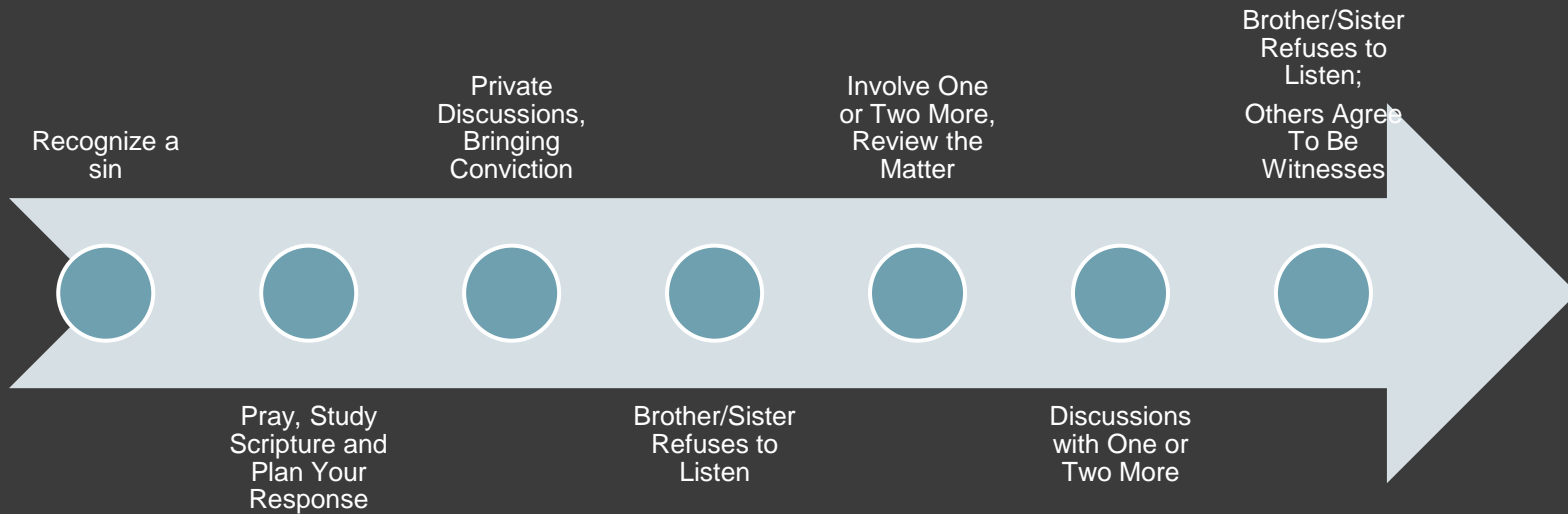
Handling Conflict Biblically

**SKILLS:
PURSUING A SINNER**

Review

- ⦿ When confronting sin, bringing along one or two other people can add gravitas, allow different perspectives to be heard and maintain a sharper Biblical focus.
- ⦿ Each step of the way, we continue pursuing a sinner until they refuse to listen.
- ⦿ We offer gracious understanding when discerning a person's spiritual state.

What Has Happened So Far?



Now What? Matthew 18:17

- Tell it to the church – why?
- Not for gossip and slander, because this sharing of information is authorized by God.
- Not for shunning, because the goal is not changed from previous verses.
- The goal is still to pursue the sinner, seeking their repentance.

Now What? Matthew 18:17

- ⦿ How should we tell it to the church?
- ⦿ Possible options
 - Stand up and say it
 - Post it on Facebook
 - Ask for a special meeting
 - Tell the Elders
 - Tell it one-by-one

First to the Elders

- Eventually, the entire church should eventually be involved in pursuing an unrepentant believer.
- There are good reasons for involving the elders first:
 - Wisdom (Proverbs 11:14)
 - Order (1 Corinthians 14:40)
 - Responsibility (e.g. Acts 20:28-30, 2 Timothy 4:15, 1 Peter 5:2-3)

Tell it To The Church

- ◎ What should be shared with the church?
 - The person who has sinned
 - A general statement of the sin
 - The Biblical cause against the sin
 - An assurance that a slow, Biblical process has been followed and that a numerous people attest to the brother's lack of repentance
 - The goal and genuine possibility of this brother's repentance
 - The instruction to seek that brother's repentance
 - The instruction to keep the matter private within the church body

How Long Does The Church Pursue the Brother?

- ⦿ Until he does not listen!
- ⦿ Many Christians should testify of the sweetness of forgiveness (Psalm 32) and call him to repentance.
- ⦿ Those Christians appeal to the love for God and the Body of Christ in a believer's heart:
 - 1 John 3:9 – Believers do not continue in sin
 - Titus 2:11-12, 14 – God's grace frees us from sin
 - John 15:10 – We abide in Christ's love by keeping His commandments
 - 1 John 2:4-5 – God's love is proven by our obedience

What now?

- ⦿ The elders must lead in this process as the ones who must guard the fellowship of the church.
- ⦿ When the consistent testimony of pursuing believers is that the sinning brother will not listen to them, then the elders must discern that the man or woman's heart is hardened against repentance.
- ⦿ At that point, the person must be treated as an outsider.
- ⦿ Even at this drastic step, we can still pray for our enemies (Matthew 5:44) and beg God for their repentance (2 Timothy 2:24-26).

Wrap-Up

- ① The end of the process can rightfully be called church discipline, in the sense of a judicial act.
- ① The church is agreeing on earth to treat the sinner in accordance with their actions – as an unbeliever.
- ① The hope is that the believer will see how their sins separate them from the church and will thereupon repent.

Questions



- ⦿ What impression do you have with church discipline?
- ⦿ How would you feel about approaching a brother or sister to call them to repentance?
- ⦿ Does this increase or decrease your confidence in pastoral care?