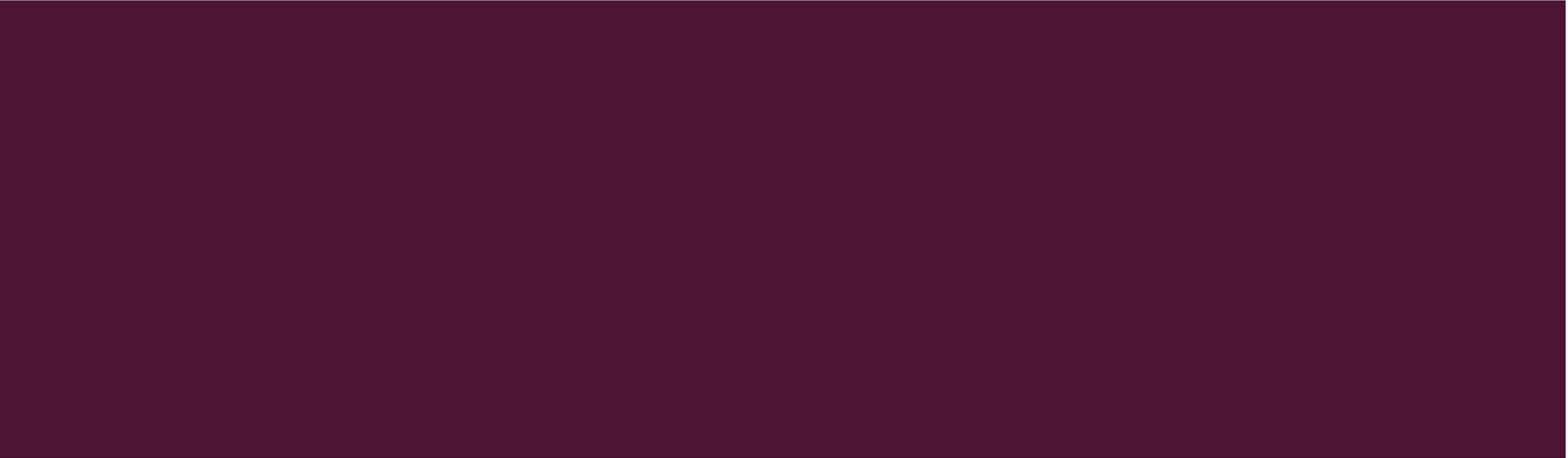


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# CHURCH DISCIPLINE

HELPING GOD'S PEOPLE TOWARD HOLINESS



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*Session 2*

GOD'S GIFT FOR A HEALTHIER,  
HOLIER CHURCH



# DISCIPLINE IS *NOT* DESTRUCTIVE!

- That's how we usually think of it, but not how Scripture presents it
- Rather, it is God's *gift* to avoid or resolve numerous difficulties that often (a) lead to people being lost unnecessarily, (b) stop the church's growth, or (c) lead to its demise
- It's purpose is *always* positive, not negative, even in its most drastic form (1 Cor. 5:5-6)
- It isn't "unloving" – Hebrews 12 – Do we love better than God??
- Our neglect is *tragic*, since practicing discipline could prevent so much damage to the body
- ***But how will it help??***

# 1. RESCUE OF FALLEN BELIEVERS

*“My brothers, if any one among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.” (James 5:19-20)*

*“Brothers, if any one is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.” (Gal. 6:1)*

## 2. DAMAGE CONTROL

*“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Cleanse out the old leaven that you may be a new lump, as you really are unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. . . Purge the evil person from among you.” (1 Cor. 5:6-7, 13)*

### 3. DISCOURAGES SINFUL BEHAVIOR

*“Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. As for those who persist in sin, rebuke them in the presence of all, so that the rest may stand in fear.” (1 Tim. 5:19-20)*

## 4. REFLECTION OF GOD'S HOLINESS

*“It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. . . . For they disciplined us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. . . . Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.” (Hebrews 12:7, 10, 14)*

## 5. PREVENT LOW MORALE

*“Now in these days when the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint by the Hellenists arose against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. . . . And the word of God continued to increase, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests became obedient to the faith.” (Acts 6:1, 7)*

## 6. PROTECT THE CHURCH FROM MISGUIDED PEOPLE

*“As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.” (Titus 3:10-11)*

*“I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.” (Rom. 16:17)*

## 7. PREVENT “WOLVES” FROM DESTROYING THE CHURCH

*“Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert. . . .” (Acts 20:28-31)*

# WHAT A “WOLF” IS & ISN'T

## *A Wolf Isn't:*

1. An immature Christian who needs to grow
2. Someone who disagrees with you
3. A troublesome member who needs constant maintenance

## *A Wolf Is:*

Someone whose attitudes, actions, &/or teachings are *genuinely destructive* & who *refuses correction*

# HOW TO SPOT A WOLF

***Acts 20:30*** – Wolves are:

- (1) always looking for an audience &
- (2) seeking more affirmation than they are receiving.

# CHARACTERISTICS OF A WOLF (DIOTREPHESES – 3 JN 9-10)

1. He had his own agenda for the church
2. He acknowledged no authority but his own
3. He used slander to discredit those who disagreed with him
4. He stopped the good works of others b/c he couldn't control them
5. He “de-churched” anyone who resisted him

NOTE: John has no intention of letting him get away with this.

# SO A “WOLF” IS ONE WHO...

- Creates division & causes confusion
- Seeks to gain a following for him/herself
- Exalts self & having his/her own way at the expense of the peace of the church
- Has no regard for the spiritual welfare of other believers
- Disregards or seeks to undermine the duly appointed leadership of the church

***Someone has to confront the wolf!***

# WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY??

- According to Acts 20, it is the special responsibility of *shepherds*
- Reflects John 10, Jesus' teachings about the "Good Shepherd" who defends the sheep against wolves
- It is *negligence* to allow wolves to destroy the flock w/out confronting them! Many churches are destroyed b/c leaders do nothing – something Scripture doesn't permit