

Chapter 52—Church Discipline

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 260.1 (EGW)

In dealing with erring church members, God's people are carefully to follow the instruction given by the Saviour in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew. {7T 260.1}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 260.2 (EGW)

Human beings are Christ's property, purchased by Him at an infinite price, bound to Him by the love that He and His Father have manifested for them. How careful, then, we should be in our dealing with one another! Men have no right to surmise evil in regard to their fellow men. Church members have no right to follow their own impulses and inclinations in dealing with fellow members who have erred. They should not even express their prejudices regarding the erring, for thus they place in other minds the leaven of evil. Reports unfavorable to a brother or sister in the church are communicated from one to another of the church members. Mistakes are made and injustice is done because of an unwillingness on the part of someone to follow the directions given by the Lord Jesus. {7T 260.2}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 260.3 (EGW)

"If thy brother shall trespass against thee," Christ declared, "go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone." Matthew 18:15

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible
- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

. Do not tell others of the wrong. One person is told, then another, and still another; and continually the report grows, and the evil increases, till the whole church is made to suffer. Settle the matter "between thee and him alone." This is God's plan. "Go not forth hastily to strive, lest thou know not what to do in the end thereof, when thy neighbor hath put thee to shame. Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not a secret to another." Proverbs 25:8, 9

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible
- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

Do not suffer sin upon your brother; but do not expose him, and thus increase the difficulty,

261

making the reproof seem like a revenge. Correct him in the way outlined in the word of God. {7T 260.3}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 261.1 (EGW)

Do not suffer resentment to ripen into malice. Do not allow the wound to fester and break out in poisoned words, which taint the minds of those who hear. Do not allow bitter thoughts to continue to fill your mind and his. Go to your brother, and in humility and sincerity talk with him about the matter. {7T 261.1}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 261.2 (EGW)

Whatever the character of the offense, this does not change the plan that God has made for the settlement of misunderstandings and personal injuries. Speaking alone and in the spirit of Christ to the one who is in fault will often remove the difficulty. Go to the erring one, with a heart filled with Christ's love and sympathy, and seek to adjust the matter. Reason with him calmly and quietly. Let no angry words escape your lips. Speak in a way that will appeal to his better judgment. Remember the words: "He which converted the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." James 5:20

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible
- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

.{7T 261.2}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 261.3 (EGW)

Take to your brother the remedy that will cure the disease of disaffection. Do your part to help him. For the sake of the peace and unity of the church, feel it a privilege as well as a duty to do this. If he will hear you, you have gained him as a friend. {7T 261.3}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 261.4 (EGW)

All heaven is interested in the interview between the one who has been injured and the one who is in error. As the erring one accepts the reproof offered in the love of Christ, and acknowledges his wrong, asking forgiveness from God and from his brother, the sunshine of heaven fills his heart. The controversy is ended; friendship and confidence are restored. The oil of love removes the soreness caused by the wrong. The Spirit of God binds heart to heart, and there is music in heaven over the union brought about. {7T 261.4}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 262.1 (EGW)

As those thus united in Christian fellowship offer prayer to God and pledge themselves to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God, great blessing comes to them. If they have wronged others they continue the work of repentance, confession, and restitution, fully set to do good to one another. This is the fulfilling of the law of Christ. {7T 262.1}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 262.2 (EGW)

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established." Matthew 18:16

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible
- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

Take with you those who are spiritually minded, and talk with the one in error in regard to the wrong. He may yield to the united appeals of his brethren. As he sees their agreement in the matter, his mind may be enlightened. {7T 262.2}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 262.3 (EGW)

"And if he shall neglect to hear them," what then shall be done? Shall a few persons in a board meeting take upon themselves the responsibility of disfellowshipping the erring one? "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto *the church*." Verse 17

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible
- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

. Let the church take action in regard to its members. {7T 262.3}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 262.4 (EGW)

"But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." Verse 17

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible
- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

If he will not heed the voice of the church, if he refuses all the efforts made to reclaim him, upon the church rests the responsibility of separating him from fellowship. His name should then be stricken from the books. {7T 262.4}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 262.5 (EGW)

No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrongdoer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this instruction has been followed, the church has cleared herself before God. The evil must then be made to appear as it is, and must be removed, that it may not become more and more widespread. The health and purity of the church must be preserved, that she may stand before God unsullied, clad in the robes of Christ's righteousness. {7T 262.5}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 263.1 (EGW)

If the erring one repents and submits to Christ's discipline, he is to be given another trial. And even if he does not repent, even if he stands outside the church, God's servants still have a work to do for him. They are to seek earnestly to win him to repentance. And, however aggravated may have been his offense, if he yields to the striving of the Holy Spirit and, by confessing and forsaking his sin, gives evidence of repentance, he is to be forgiven and welcomed to the fold again. His brethren are to encourage him in the right way, treating him as they would wish to be treated were they in his place, considering themselves lest they also be tempted. {7T 263.1}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 263.2 (EGW)

"Verily I say unto you," Christ continued, "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Verse 18

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible
- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

{7T 263.2}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 263.3 (EGW)

This statement holds its force in all ages. On the church has been conferred the power to act in Christ's stead. It is God's instrumentality for the preservation of order and discipline among His people. To it the Lord has delegated the power to settle all questions respecting its prosperity, purity, and order. Upon it rests the responsibility of excluding from its fellowship those who are unworthy, who by their un-Christlike conduct would bring dishonor on the truth. Whatever the church does that is in accordance with the directions given in

God's word will be ratified in heaven. {7T 263.3}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 263.4 (EGW)

Matters of grave import come up for settlement by the church. God's ministers, ordained by Him as guides of His people, after doing their part are to submit the whole matter to the church, that there may be unity in the decision made. {7T 263.4}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 264.1 (EGW)

The Lord desires His followers to exercise great care in dealing with one another. They are to lift up, to restore, to heal. But there is to be in the church no neglect of proper discipline. The members are to regard themselves as pupils in a school, learning how to form characters worthy of their high calling. In the church here below, God's children are to be prepared for the great reunion in the church above. Those who here live in harmony with Christ may look forward to an endless life in the family of the redeemed. {7T 264.1}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 264.2 (EGW)

God's love for the fallen race is a peculiar manifestation of love—a love born of mercy, for human beings are all undeserving. Mercy implies imperfection of the object toward which it is shown. It is because of sin that mercy was brought into active exercise. {7T 264.2}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 264.3 (EGW)

It may be that much work needs to be done in your character building, that you are a rough stone, which must be squared and polished before it can fill a place in God's temple. You need not be surprised if with hammer and chisel God cuts away the sharp corners of your character until you are prepared to fill the place He has for you. No human being can accomplish this work. Only by God can it be done. And be assured that He will not strike one useless blow. His every blow is struck in love, for your eternal happiness. He knows your infirmities and works to restore, not to destroy. {7T 264.3}

265

Chapter 53— "Consider One Another"

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 265.1 (EGW)

You will often meet with souls that are under the stress of temptation. You know not how severely Satan may be wrestling with them. Beware lest you discourage such souls and thus give the tempter an advantage. {7T 265.1}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 265.2 (EGW)

Whenever you see or hear something that needs to be corrected, seek the Lord for wisdom and grace, that in trying to be faithful you may not be severe. {7T 265.2}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 265.3 (EGW)

It is always humiliating to have one's errors pointed out. Do not make the experience more bitter by needless censure. Unkind criticism brings discouragement, making life sunless and unhappy. {7T 265.3}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 265.4 (EGW)

My brethren, prevail by love rather than by severity. When one at fault becomes conscious of his error, be careful not to destroy his self-respect. Do not seek to bruise and wound, but rather to bind up and heal. {7T 265.4}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 265.5 (EGW)

No human being possesses sensibilities so acute or a nature so refined as does our Saviour. And what patience He manifests toward us. Year after year He bears with our weakness and ignorance, with our ingratitude and waywardness. Notwithstanding all our wanderings, our hardness of heart, our neglect of His holy words, His hand is stretched out still. And He bids us: "Love one another; as I have loved you." John 13:34

- King James Version
- American Standard Version
- Webster's Bible
- American King James Version
- Darby Bible

- World English Bible
- Young's Literal Translation

. {7T 265.5}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 265.6 (EGW)

Brethren, regard yourselves as missionaries, not among heathen, but among your fellow workers. It requires a vast amount of time and labor to convince one soul in regard to the special truths for this time. And when souls are turned from sin to righteousness, there is joy 266 in the presence of the angels. Think you that the ministering spirits who watch over these souls are pleased to see how indifferently they are treated by many who claim to be Christians? Man's preferences rule. Partiality is manifested. One is favored, while another is treated harshly. {7T 265.6}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 266.1 (EGW)

The angels look with awe and amazement upon the mission of Christ to the world. They marvel at the love that moved Him to give Himself a sacrifice for the sins of men. But how lightly human beings regard the purchase of His blood! {7T 266.1}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 266.2 (EGW)

We need not begin by *trying* to love one another. The love of Christ in the heart is what is needed. When self is submerged in Christ, true love springs forth spontaneously. {7T 266.2}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 266.3 (EGW)

In patient forbearance we shall conquer. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toilers that the welfare of Israel is promoted. A word of love and encouragement will do more to subdue the hasty temper and willful disposition than all the faultfinding and censure that you can heap upon the erring one. {7T 266.3}

Testimonies for the Church Volume 7, p. 266.4 (EGW)

The Master's message must be declared in the Master's spirit. Our only safety is in keeping our thoughts and impulses under the control of the Great Teacher. Angels of God will give to every true worker a rich experience in doing this. The grace of humility will mold our words into expressions of Christ-like tenderness. {7T 266.4}