A large flock of sheep is being herded by several shepherds in a dusty, open landscape. The sheep are in sharp focus in the foreground, while the shepherds and the background are slightly blurred by dust. The lighting is warm and golden.

# Defending Doctrinal Distinctives: Elder Rule and Church Discipline (Part 2)

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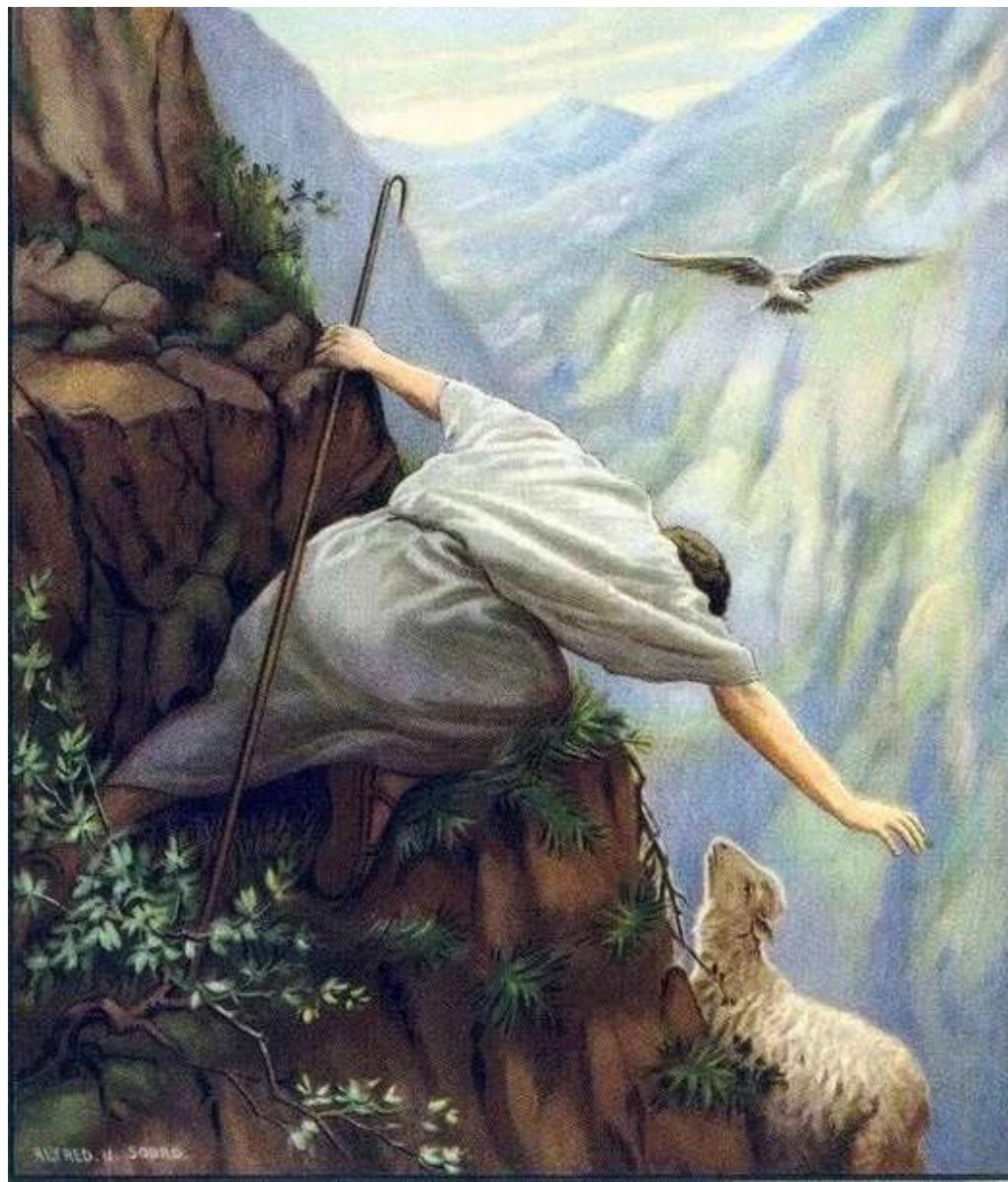
“For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light;  
And reproofs for discipline are the **way of life**”  
(Proverbs 6:23, NAS95, with emphasis)

“He is on the **path of life** who heeds instruction,  
But he who ignores reproof goes astray.”  
(Proverbs 10:17, NAS95, with emphasis)

“He whose ear listens to the **life-giving reproof**  
Will dwell among the wise.”  
(Proverbs 15:31, NAS95, with emphasis)

“My brothers, if any among you strays from the truth and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death and will COVER A MULTITUDE OF SINS.”

(James 5:19-20, LSB)



# Lesson(s) Outline

- Week 1: Elder Rule (Last Week)
  - God's Authority & Design (SOF 5.6)
  - God's Designated Shepherds (SOF 5.7)
  - The Example of Jesus
  - Who We Follow
  - How We Follow
  - The Role of the Shepherd (4 fold)
  - Elder Rule vs. Elder Led
  - Q&A

# Lesson(s) Outline

- Week 2: Church Discipline (This Week)
  - Q&A from Last Week
  - The Design of Discipline (SOF 5.10)
  - The Grounds of Discipline: Belief & Behavior
  - The Purpose of Discipline: Spiritual Health
  - The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart
  - Q&A

## Q&A

***How is feedback given to elders, and how are they held accountable?***

- Elders are *accountable to God* for both the souls of people (Hebrews 13:17) and the content of their teaching (James 3:1).
- Elders are *accountable to one another* in serving in plurality with shared authority (1 Peter 5:1-7).
- Elders are *accountable to members* of the local church. As brothers in Christ, elders are subject to - and should be examples of - church discipline (see Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Timothy 5:19-21)

# Q&A

## ***How does authority and plurality work with biblical elders?***

- Elders are equal in *authority*, but different in *role / function*.
- There is no biblical distinction between the title ‘pastor’ and ‘elder’.
- There are pastors worthy of ‘double honor’ due to their particular labor in preaching and teaching (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Shared leadership is an established biblical pattern, from Moses and the elders of Israel (Exodus 18), to Jesus and the 12 disciples (Mark 3:14-19) to the Apostles and elders in local churches (Titus 1:5).

## Q&A

### ***Why is the office of elder limited to males?***

- 1 Timothy 2:12-14 clearly defines God's design and intent, appealing both to the creation mandate and to the fall.
- Male headship is limited to marriage and church leadership; it does not indicate that every male is head over every female.
- It is reflective of both the Trinitarian nature of God (1 Corinthians 11:3) and the Gospel (Ephesians 5:32). *As such, it is no small or secondary matter.*
- Remember: biblical leadership is entirely different from worldly leadership; it is sacrificial, servant leadership (Matthew 20:26-28)

## Q&A

***Where does the idea of a presbytery overseeing multiple churches come from, and is this biblical or at least permitted by the Bible?***

- The role and authority that both the Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 11:28, Titus 1:5) and the Apostle John (1-3 John) had over multiple churches serve as a descriptive example.
- While this can provide some guidance and accountability to local churches, God's design is the autonomy and authority within the local church.

## Q&A

### **How should we regard other churches with different (and unbiblical) church governments?**

- God has made His design for His church simple: if you have the ministry of the word, biblical elders (and deacons), and the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper, you have a church.

*“...the New Testament offers more instruction regarding elders than other important church subjects such as the Lord’s Supper, the Lord’s Day, baptism, or spiritual gifts.”*

(Strauch, Alexander. Biblical Eldership: Restoring the Eldership to Its Rightful Place in the Local Church, p.13)

# The Design of Discipline

*We teach the importance of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20) worked out in the training of men for the work of the ministry (2 Timothy 2:2), as well as through the mutual accountability of all believers to each other (Matthew 18:5-14). In this regard, we teach the need for discipline of sinning members of the congregation in accord with the standards of Scripture (Matthew 18:15-22; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15; 1 Timothy 1:19-20; Titus 1:10-16).*

(Calvary Community Church SOF 5.10)

# The Grounds of Discipline: Belief & Behavior

**Sinful (i.e. heretical) belief**, e.g. 1 Timothy 5:19-20, Titus 1:10-16

**Sinful behavior**, e.g. 1 Corinthians 5:1



# The Purpose of Discipline: Spiritual Health

“Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ, our Passover lamb, also was sacrificed.”

“But those who are outside, God will judge. REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES.”

(1 Corinthians 5:6-7,13 LSB)

A little sin infects the whole congregation,  
and will only grow if not addressed.



# The Purpose of Discipline: Spiritual Health

“Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, going into detail about visions he has seen, being puffed up for nothing by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.”

(Colossians 2:18-19, LSB)

Body parts that do not submit to the Head (Christ)  
are a cancer to the whole body.



# The Purpose of Discipline: Spiritual Health

“Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must test himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup...But if we judged ourselves rightly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, **we are disciplined by the Lord** so that we will not be condemned along with the world.”

(1 Corinthians 11:27-28, 31-32, LSB, with emphasis)

Proper practice of the Lord’s Supper begins with His individual discipline of us.



# The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart

## Pre-Step: Individual with God

“All Scripture is God-breathed and profitable for teaching, for **reproof**, for **correction**, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be equipped, having been thoroughly equipped for every good work.”

(2 Timothy 3:16-17, LSB, with emphasis)

Church discipline is - and must be - consistent with and in accordance to God’s word.



# **The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart**

## **Pre-Step: Individual with God**

**“Blessed is the man whom You discipline, O Yah,  
And whom You teach out of Your law;”**  
(Psalms 94:12, LSB)

God's daily teaching and discipline of us  
is foundational to individual  
and corporate spiritual discipline and health.



# **The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart**

## **Step 1: Individual**

“Now if your brother sins, go and show him his fault, between you and him alone; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”

(Matthew 18:15, LSB)

“Brothers, even if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, each of you looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

(Galatians 6:1, LSB)



# The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart

## Step 2: With Others

““But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.”

(Matthew 18:16, LSB)

This follows the pattern established in the Old Testament (see Deuteronomy 19:15) and is designed to share the burden of biblical love.



# **The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart**

## **Step 3: To the Church**

**“And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church;”**  
(Matthew 18:17a, LSB)

Because God has appointed elders who are accountable to God for the souls of their people (Hebrews 13:17), it is advisable to have the elders inform the local congregation.



# The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart

## Step 3: To the Church

“And if anyone does not obey our word in this letter, take special note of that person to not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame.

And yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.”

(2 Thessalonians 3:14-15, LSB)

See also 1 Corinthians 5:9-11. The goal here is restoration as the seriousness of sin is conveyed.



# **The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart**

## **Step 4: Removal**

**“...and if he refuses to listen even to the church,  
let him be to you as the Gentile and the tax collector.”**

**(Matthew 18:17b, LSB)**

We love unbelievers and desire their salvation, even while not treating them as part of God's family of believers.



# The Method of Discipline: The Shepherd's Heart

“By this we know that we love the children of God,  
when we love God and do His commandments.”

(1 John 5:2, LSB)

Remember, the Lord disciplines those He loves (Hebrews 12:5-10), and if we love those who are His, we carry out His discipline His way with those we love in Him.



# Q&A

- How are you at cultivating a teachable spirit in your own life?  
Consider Proverbs 9:7-10, 15:31, 27:5-6, Psalm 94:12, 141:5
- How have you seen church discipline exercised? What has been the fruit of it?
- Other questions?

# Q&A

- **Elder Q&A Next Week**
  - Topics covered so far:
    - Hermeneutics and Expository Preaching
    - The Nature of the Bible
    - The Trinity
    - Sovereign Election
    - The Gospel of Repentance and Faith
    - Believers Baptism by Immersion
    - Elder Rule and Church Discipline
  - **Please speak with one of the elders personally or email [pastordave@calvaryem.org](mailto:pastordave@calvaryem.org)**

# Recommended Resources

