

Doctrine of Division

1. The Lord Jesus Christ predicted that His followers would bring division to the world for the gospel message calls upon people to repent.
 - *Matt 4:17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*
 - *Matt 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.*

2. The cause for much hostility and hatred against the followers of Christ is a stand for the principles and practices of righteousness.
 - *Matthew 5:11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. 12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.*

3. Opposition to the gospel is found without the Christian community and within the body of Christ.

Opposition without the congregation.

- *Saul of Tarsus. Acts 9:1 And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, 2 And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem.*
- *Herod the King. Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth his hands to vex certain of the church. 2 And he killed James the brother of John with the sword. 3 And because he saw it pleased the Jews, he proceeded further to take Peter also. (Then were the days of unleavened bread.)*

Opposition within the congregation.

- *Alexander the coppersmith. 2 Timothy 4:14 Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works: 15 Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.*
- *Diotrephes. 3 John 9 I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. 10 Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.*

4. When a stand is taken for righteousness within the congregation it creates a division for the purpose of approval.
 - *1 Corinthians 11:18 For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. 19 For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.*
5. In the divine economy the Lord wants to know who will stand firm for righteousness.
 - *1 Corinthians 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*
 - *Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*
 - *Philippians 1:27 Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*
 - *Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved.*
 - *1 Thessalonians 3:8 For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.*
 - *2 Thessalonians 2:15 Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle.*
6. A sectarian spirit and divisions within the body of Christ are not pleasing to the Lord. They do not form part of His revealed will.
 - *1 Corinthians 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.*
7. Division within the body of Christ is a sign of fleshly behavior.
 - *1 Corinthians 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?*
8. While the revealed will of God may be violated, the secret will of the Lord, referring to His divine decree, cannot be violated.

- *Deuteronomy 29:29 The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.*
 - *Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:*
9. The Church has a responsibility to stand in judgment upon itself. The church is instructed to mark those who cause division within the fellowship and withdraw fellowship with them.
- *Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. 18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.*
 - *Philippians 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)*
10. The church has a responsibility to judge those who are teaching them to live and act contrary to *Scripture* and to withdraw from them.
- *1 Timothy 6:3 If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 4 He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, 5 Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.*

By way of application consider two teachings that are worthy of being judged and condemned.

- Christians should not marry or eat certain foods. *1 Timothy 4:1 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*
11. In exercising judgment the church is to be fair, balanced and righteous.
- *Proverbs 18:13 He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.*
 - *John 7:24 Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.*

12. The guidelines to be used in judging a matter in Matthew 7:1-2 has reference to the spirit that is to guide the heart. *“Judge not, that ye be not judged. 2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.”* Those who judge others with a harsh and critical manner and without grace shall find themselves being dealt with in the same manner.
13. That Matthew 7:1-2 does not prohibit all forms of evaluation of a matter is clearly seen in Matthew 7:5 which reads, *“Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.”* Since it is possible to be able to help another person, some form of critical evaluation must be able to take place.
14. In writing to the church of Corinth Paul clearly tells the congregation to judge matters among themselves and not allow the worldly courts to get involved in spiritual matters.
- *1 Corinthians 6:1 Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? 2 Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life? 4 If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge who are least esteemed in the church. 5 I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.*
15. The practice of shunning is an acceptable form of church discipline, though it seems harsh.
- *2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.*
 - *2 Thessalonians 3:14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*
16. The purpose of every form of church judgment and discipline is to bring shame and change to the life of the believer.
17. Failure to exercise righteousness judgment upon attitude and actions on ourselves and on others is failure to show love or respect for God.
18. It is hard for the church to be obedient to the commandment of Christ in matters of Church accountability for many reasons.
- There is found in the church the philosophy of the world to *“Live and let live.”*
 - To be accountable involves a painful process.
 - Pride is touched when the soul is held accountable for attitude and actions.
 - Self feels its own sinfulness and a feeling of being a *“hypocrite”* surfaces.