

SEEKING THE STRAYS

MATTHEW 18:15-20

A true penitent must go on from faith to faith, from strength to strength; he must never stand still or turn back. True repentance is a continued spring, where the waters of godly sorrow are always flowing. 'My sin is ever before me'.

-Thomas Brooks

I. The Process of Discipline

II. The Power of Discipline

Into the Bible:

1. The first part of this passage in Matthew 18 deals with conflict resolution as Jesus sees it. Notice that it starts with a Christian brother (or sister) who sins against you—not frustrates you, aggravates you, offends you, or irritates you. From the very first step the purpose of confronting the issue is evident (v.15)—what is it? How does forgiveness play into this situation? Notice how Jesus follows right after with an admonition about forgiveness in Matthew 18:21-22.

2. By step 3 of the process, it has moved into church discipline. Has the purpose now changed? If we are to treat someone who refuses church discipline as a “pagan or tax collector”, what does that entail? Think of how the Jews treated these groups in Jesus’ time.

(II Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15)

3. If we do not view God as a divine vending machine, how do we understand the passage in verse 18-19? How does the presence of God change things in our desires and our prayers? How does the role of the Holy Spirit (John 16:13) apply in this situation?

For Families:

4. Talk with your children about the difficulty and importance of forgiveness.