

Love is Discerning

2020-06-03 Pastor Sharon Tidd

Read and reflect on Mark 10:17-22. What do we learn about the young man from this story? Verse 21 tells us Jesus “looked at him and loved him”. How was Jesus’ love shown? How did the young man respond to Jesus’ love? What was the end result?

Read and reflect on Hebrews 12:4-12. What does this passage teach about God and how He expresses His love for us? How are we to respond?

In your experience, how has God’s discipline compared with the discipline (instruction, counsel, correction, chastisement, training) you’ve received from your parent/s? How (in what form/s) has God’s discipline been experienced by you? What are the goals of God’s discipline? Is it helpful to reflect on those goals when you are being disciplined by Him?

How does this passage demonstrate the discerning nature of God’s love? How do God’s discernment and discipline work together to bring about Christian maturity?

Read and reflect on 1 Corinthians 5:1-6. What sin is Paul confronting here? How has the church apparently responded to that sin? How should they have responded, according to Paul? What is the goal of the discipline Paul recommends here? Is this appropriate? What would be the result if this sin were never confronted by the church (verse 6)? What role is spiritual discernment to play within the church? What happens when it is not sought or applied?

Read and reflect on 2 Corinthians 7:2-11. In this passage Paul experiences his love for the church at Corinth; the church that he had disciplined in 1 Corinthians 5. How is Paul’s love expressed here? How does he affirm the believers in Corinth?

What appears to have caused Paul turmoil and distress? How was he relieved when Titus arrived? Is it surprising that Paul had feelings of regret after sending his disciplinary letter? How did the Corinthian Church first react to his letter? What did that lead to in the end? What did godly sorrow produce for the Corinthian believers?

Can you think of a time when you were disciplined by a fellow believer or church leader? How did you respond initially? Did that change with time and reflection? What was the end result? Were you grateful?

Have you ever been in a position where you had to discipline a fellow believer? What role did spiritual discernment play in that? How did the believer respond? Were the goals of that discipline realized? What emotions did you grapple with through the process? How did God use that experience to teach you?

Read and reflect on 2 Corinthians 2:5-11. What action does Paul now urge toward the sinning man? Why the change? What do these actions speak to? Why is this important? Why, in particular, is forgiveness now urged? In light of Paul's statements here, do you think the man has repented? Why or why not?

Read and reflect on Galatians 6:1-2. What are we to do when a fellow Christian falls into sin? What does Paul mean in addressing "you who are spiritual"? Might that include you? If not, why not?

In practical terms, what would it mean to "restore gently"? What would it NOT mean?

What caution does Paul give here? Why? What might this mean in practical terms ... if the sin were drunkenness, gambling, marital unfaithfulness, verbal or physical abuse, porn addiction, shop-lifting, slander, gossip (or any others you might think of)? What steps could be taken to avoid being tempted? If, in the process of seeking to restore a brother or sister, you find yourself tempted, what should you do?

Carrying another's burdens is said to "fulfill the law of Christ" (verse 2). What is the 'law of Christ'? (see John 13:34; Galatians 5:14, James 2:8 for clarification)
How does loving discernment help us apply the command of verse 2?

What are some inappropriate reactions to a brother or sister's sin? What are the appropriate reactions that Paul is looking for here?

Read 2 Timothy 2:23-26. How is church discipline captured here? What is involved? What is to be avoided? What is the intended outcome? What do these verses imply about the manner in which genuine love confronts?

The context of this passage is disagreements. How do you tend to respond when other believers express opinions or perspectives that are in opposition to your own? Does it line up with the Lord's teaching in this passage? If not, what should you do?

Read and reflect on Philippians 1:9-11. What is Paul's prayer for the Philippian believers? Why is it important that a believer's love abound in "knowledge and depth of insight"? What difference does that kind of discernment make as we seek to love each other? According to James 1:5-6, what is the source of knowledge and depth of insight? How do we tap into it?