

# **Eating with Family Members Who Have Been Withdrawn From**

1Corinthians 5:11 - “But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner--not even to eat with such a person.”

# Not Preaching On The Following:

- The command for local church discipline
- How to practice withdrawing fellowship
- Who should be disciplined
- Why they should be disciplined

- We are going to study the uncomfortable and somewhat controversial subject of eating with family members who have been withdrawn from.
  - Some have considered this an eccentric scruple of conscience
  - Some do not believe this command is in the Bible
  - Some believe they do not have to keep this command.
  - Some try to rationalize their way out of keeping this command.

# We Will Examine The Following Questions:

- What does the word of God say?
- Can we understand what God has said?
- In what scriptural circumstances is one excused from the command?
- What happens when a follower of God puts family before God's will?
- Can one make an objection to keeping God's command that He will accept on Judgment Day?

# What Does The Word Of God Say?

- All translations of the scriptures available to me (13) say essentially the same thing: do not eat with a brother in sin and under the discipline of the 1Corinthians 5:11 context. This is a matter of doctrine and not a scruple of conscience.

# What Does The Word Of God Say?

- King James Version - “with such an one no not to eat”
- New King James Version - “not even to eat with such a person.”
- American Standard Version - “with such a one no, not to eat.”
- New American Standard Bible - “not even to eat with such a one.”
- Revised Standard Version - “not even to eat with such a one.”
- World English Bible - “Don't even eat with such a person.”

# What Does The Word Of God Say?

- Weymouth New Testament - “With such a man you ought not even to eat.”
- Modern King James Version - “with such a one not to eat.”
- Bible in Basic English - “nor take food with him.”
- Contemporary English Version - “Don't even eat with them!”
- Young's Literal Translation - “with such a one not even to eat together”
- Montgomery's New Testament - “No, with such persons do not even sit at table.”
- Darby's Translation - “with such a one not even to eat.”

# Can We Understand What God Has Said?

- All commentaries available to me (10), written both by brethren and by denominationalists agree. We are not to eat with erring Christians under discipline. It is evident that this is a clear matter of doctrine and not a scruple of conscience.

# Can We Understand What God Has Said?

- J. W. McGarvey
- Michael Willis (Truth Commentaries)
- Eerdman's Pulpit Commentary
- Albert Barnes
- Adam Clarke
- Jamieson-Faussett-Brown
- Matthew Henry
- Robertson's NT Word Pictures
- Gill
- People's New Testament Commentary

# In What Scriptural Circumstances Is One Excused From The Command?

- Only where a clear command exists that directs Christians to maintain familial responsibilities.
- To simply claim family relationship is not a scriptural justification. The burden of proof falls to you to provide a clear passage of scripture to justify a social relationship. This is not opinion, application, or scruple; this is Bible authority. You must supply book, chapter and verse.

# What Happens When A Follower Of God Puts Family Before God's Will?

- 2Sam. 16-17 - Absalom shamed his father, plotted against the king, and lead a rebellion that thrust Israel into civil war that made the nation vulnerable to attack from outside enemies.
  - David's choice - 2Sam. 18:5
  - God's solution - 2Sam. 18:9-16
  - David's response - 2Sam. 18:31-33, 19:1-4
  - Joab's rebuke - 2Sam. 19:5-7
- Nothing good will ever come from putting family before the will of God.

## Can One Make An Objection To Keeping God's Command That He Will Accept On Judgment Day?

- “I have never seen it do any good.”
  - Personal experience is not an acceptable standard for authority.
  - One could just as easily say that taking a stand against the institution did not do any good, since brethren are still firmly divided over it.
  - We would not apply this standard to any other matter of revealed doctrine.

# There Are Reasons Why This Has Not Worked In The Past:

- The local church does not have a close relationship with the disciplined member so from his perspective nothing is lost by being withdrawn from
- The local church waits too long before discipline to the extent that the erring brother is gone too long to miss the break in fellowship
- Not all members of the local church practice the command to avoid eating with disciplined members, thus negating the effect of withdrawing fellowship
- Discipline is not practiced consistently. Partiality negates the effect of discipline and destroys the influence of elders

## Can One Make An Objection To Keeping God's Command That He Will Accept On Judgment Day?

- “I believe the disciplined person might come back to the faith if we eat with him.”
  - This is the equivalent of saying, “Let us do evil that good may come.”
  - 1Sam. 15:13-23
  - I know of a lot of people we could baptize if we had dinners here at the building.
  - I know of a lot of neighbors who would come to church here if we had a softball team
  - How many people could we reach under the guise of trying to teach them if we are willing to set aside clear commands of the Lord in order to do so?

## **Can One Make An Objection To Keeping God's Command That He Will Accept On Judgment Day?**

- “I know that what I am doing is not right, but I can live with it and hope you can, too.”  
– 1Sam 15:24-30

## Can One Make An Objection To Keeping God's Command That He Will Accept On Judgment Day?

- “I know many faithful preachers, elders, and Christians who don't believe we need to keep this command.”
  - All the more reason to hold ones self to a higher standard of behavior and to live above reproach.
- Our priorities are as follows:
  - First - we have a duty to the truth above all other considerations - Titus 1:9-16
  - Second - we have a duty to the local church to do all things for its spiritual well being before we consider our own personal interests - 1Peter 5:1-4
  - Third - Our personal interests come after the first two priorities have been properly discharged

# When Faithful Christians Choose To Set Aside This Command Of The Lord:

- They place family before the will of God
- They place family before the spiritual well being of the church
- They set a poor example before the disciplined family member by laying aside a clear command
- Set up circumstances where conscientious brethren would believe they had been led to sin
- They increase the potential for disruption to the peace and unity of the congregation
- Increase the burden of faithful brethren who are endeavoring to keep the will of God in this matter

## Can One Make An Objection To Keeping God's Command That He Will Accept On Judgment Day?

- “People could sit at other tables and not eat with them.”
  - The command is about PURPOSE, not PROXIMITY.

# Jesus Said:

- Matthew 10:37-38 - “He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.”

# Final Thoughts

- If you truly love the Lord and your disciplined family member, you will manifest this love to both of them by obeying the Lord's will in this matter. God knows what is best for you.
- Just as disciplining an erring child is unpleasant, but necessary to his well being, so is carefully practicing local church discipline uncomfortable, but also essential for the salvation of the erring brother.
- Do not undermine the discipline commanded by the Lord and render ineffective our efforts to restore the erring by ignoring this command.