

HOW TO NEVER NEED CHURCH DISCIPLINE

- 1) *Daily take your heart to God's word for instruction and correction.* Let the Spirit show you your heart and be quick to respond in repentance and faith.
- 2) *Make knowing God your greatest concern and passion in life—to walk in the fear of the Lord and the love of Christ, revering both God's holiness and mercy. Your heart must fear sin greatly and love God's grace even more.*
- 3) *Seek and welcome regular accountability from a trusted, godly friend* that will not just tell you what you want to hear, but love you enough to call you up to God's holiness and grace.
- 4) *Don't just write someone off when they attempt to speak truth into your life* (even if they don't do it very well). Humbly listen and consider what they see in you.
- 5) *See correction as a good and necessary expression of love* (especially when on the receiving end).
- 6) *Be willing to speak the truth in love to fellow believers* out of concern for their good and God's glory (not just to make a point).
- 7) *Make sure your understanding of the gospel is clear and robust.*

There is a popular version of the gospel that is true, but in its brevity doesn't prepare us for to embrace what the Bible says about discipleship and church discipline. It goes like this: *Jesus Christ died for sinners so that if we just believe, we can be forgiven.* That's true but it's not complete.

There is a more robust version of the gospel that goes like this: God is holy and perfectly good. All people created in His image have sinned against Him and deserve death as an expression of His just and righteous wrath. Yet God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross in our place and to rise again to provide forgiveness and eternal life to all who *repent of their sin and turn in faith to follow Jesus as Lord.* Having been justified by faith alone, God gives us the power of His Spirit to live increasingly transformed lives of obedience as His children and representatives on this earth. Our lives are no longer our own. In Christ we have a new direction, purpose, power, and mission for life—and a new family!

When we understand the gospel as beginning a life of discipleship (following Jesus as Lord with growing obedience and likeness to Him), we will see how things like church discipline have a vital role in the church as our new family.