

Introduction

On Monday morning (8/5/19) I got up and went over to my chair, reached over to the top of my laptop, which is where I keep my glasses, picked them up and put them on. I turned on my computer and picked up my phone to turn on the hotspot. There was a problem. I could not read anything on my phone; everything was blurry. I logged into my computer, which was not too difficult since I know where all the keys are. No matter how I tilted my head or moved my glasses, I could not find a place that was not blurry. I thought something terrible had happened to my eyesight during the night. I began thinking about making an appointment that morning to get my eyes examined and to get a new pair of glasses so that I could see again. I could not do my job at work or church without being able to see clearly. This was an emergency. It was urgent that I get my vision corrected. Then, I turned on the light and started across the room. Then, I had a thought come to my mind that I had placed my glasses on the table by my bed before going to bed, not on my computer where I normally keep them. So, I went over to the bed and sure enough there were glasses there. The glasses on my laptop that I had put on were Karen's glasses, not mine. Once I put my glasses on, I could immediately see clearly again. Karen had placed her glasses on my laptop, which she never does. The correction for her eyes is different than the correction that I need for my eyes. Getting the proper correction for our eyes is critical. So, correction in some areas of our life, like our sight, is considered a positive thing.

I watched an interview with Jordan Speith on Friday. He shot 67-64 the first two days and at the time he was leading the tournament. He missed the cut the week before. He brought in Cameron McCormick, his swing coach to work with him, and they made some corrections in his swing. When I played professional golf, when things were not going well, I also paid another golf professional to tell me what I was doing wrong, and more importantly, what to do to correct the problem. Making corrections was directly related to our ability to perform well.

In other areas of our life, we don't like correction or discipline. We don't like to receive it, and we don't like to give it. We don't like people bringing up our faults and our character flaws. Correction has negative and painful connotations. It is painful to both parties. I looked up the word connotation and this is what the online dictionary said. *Connotation: an idea or feeling that a word invokes in addition to its literal or primary meaning. "the word "discipline" has unhappy connotations of punishment and repression.*" But, with our eyesight, we see correction as something very positive, and something that is urgent.

Paul saw the condition of the churches on the island of Crete and he saw that immediate correction was needed. It was urgent. Families had been upset and taken advantage of. The churches had been devastated and suffered great damage because of these false teachers. Paul told Titus that he had left him on Crete to set in order what remains and appoint elders in every city. The elders in the churches were necessary because they are the government of the church. They were the ones that would need to bring correction to what was being taught. They were the ones that watched over and guarded the flock. Getting elders appointed in all the churches was an immediate and urgent action so that the necessary correction in the churches could be taken.

Since the correction that needed to take place was with those leading the churches, it was necessary for the elders to be involved. Paul uses the word, "FOR," seven times in the first chapter. The first FOR was for the reason he wrote the letter (Titus 1:1). It was to build up the faith of those chosen by God. Paul was always trying to build up the faith of believers. The second FOR is for the reason that Paul left Titus in Crete, which was to set in order what remains

and appoint elders in every city (Titus 1:5). It was the elders of the churches that were going to restore order in each church. Paul gave the qualifications of elders FOR overseers must be above reproach (Titus 1:7). The elders need to be above reproach and they must be able to exhort in sound doctrine FOR there were men in the church that needed to be corrected (Titus 1:10). Paul also addressed their motives, saying they were teaching these false things FOR the sake of sordid gain (Titus 1:11). The last FOR was that these trouble makers professed to know God but their deeds were worthless FOR any good deed (Titus 1:16).

Elders were needed to set things in order. Elders were needed to bring correction in the church. Elders needed to be men of character and able to exhort so that they could handle this difficult task. There are lots of bright spots in ministry, but the giving of correction is not usually one of those bright spots.

Correction should be going on all the time in a healthy church. In Proverbs 4:18, the Lord tells us that the path of the righteous is like the light of dawn that shines brighter and brighter. Our path gets brighter and brighter because the Lord shows us things that need correcting, and we repent of those things. God is Jehovah Makedish, which means the God who Sanctifies us. The Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, and our response should be to repent and make corrections. This should go on all the time. When we resist the Holy Spirit, God uses other people in our lives to bring correction. He used Nathan in the life of David to bring correction to him. The Scriptures teach us that if our brother sins, we who are spiritual should go to our brother and correct him. That does not take place much in our churches. In one of the books I recently read about giving account of the flock, the author had a section on the history of church discipline. The early church practiced church discipline. In the protestant reformation, church discipline was restored in many denominations, and was practiced until the 20th century. Today, very few churches practice church discipline. Many people in the church do not understand the responsibility of elders to give account of the flock. Many churches today do not have memberships and there is no context for church discipline. Many people have been taught that we are to be accepting of all people and their behavior and that we are not to judge anyone. We use Matthew 7 that says we are not to judge our brother and therefore we are not to correct our brother. But, that is a misinterpretation of Matthew 7 and it is also violates what Jesus specifically told us to do in Matthew 18. It also violates Paul's instructions to the Corinthians to judge those inside the church and remove the sinner from the church. The church needs some instruction and understanding in this matter so that we can be obedient to what the Head of the Church has instructed and commanded us to do.

In Matthew 7, Jesus is saying that we will be judged in the way we judge others. Therefore, we need to be careful about judging others. Our lives need to be characterized by grace, not judgment. Jesus said in John 3:17 that He did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. We should have our goal to save people, not judge them. The second thing that Jesus says is that we need to examine ourselves before judging others. We need to take the log out of our own eye before we take the speck out of our brother's eye.

(Matt 7:1-5) "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. {2} For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. {3} Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? {4} Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and behold, the log is in your own eye? {5} You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye."

This ties in with what Paul said in Galatians 6:1. He said that when a brother is caught in a trespass or sin, those who are spiritual should restore the person. We have to be above reproach and without logs in our own eyes before we remove specks from our brother's eyes. So, Paul tells people that we are to restore those who are caught sinning. I'll talk more about this later.

(Gal 6:1) "Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted."

In Matthew 18:15-18, Jesus taught more about correcting others. He said, "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private." That does not sound like we are to ignore the sins of our brothers. Jesus commanded us to correct our brothers that sin. Jesus goes on to share the process of bringing correction to others. I will also address that later. The point I want to make now is that we are commanded to give correction to our brothers that sin. The churches in Crete needed lots of correction, and Paul has thought this through thoroughly and has written Titus with his plan of action to set things in order. It began with ordaining elders who were above reproach and who knew sound doctrine. These elders were to exhort with sound doctrine and refute those who contradict.

(Matt 18:15) "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother."

Our text today is about correcting those who had been upsetting the faith of the chosen on the island of Crete. First, we will look at why correction was needed. Second, we will look at what sins should be corrected. Third, we will look at the goal of correction. Fourth, we will look at the process of correction.

Correction In Crete

1. Why Correction Was Necessary
2. What Sins Should Be Confronted
3. Goal Of Correction
4. Process Of Correction

(Tit 1:10-16) "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain. {12} One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." {13} This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith, {14} not paying attention to Jewish myths and commandments of men who turn away from the truth. {15} To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled. {16} They profess to know God, but by *their* deeds they deny *Him*, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed."

1. Why Correction Was Necessary

On the island of Crete, things were in disorder. The churches were in disorder, and the church is God's people. Paul said that families had been upset. The faith of the saints had been upset by the things that were being taught. Paul transitioned into this section by speaking about the ability

of an elder to exhort in sound doctrine and refute those who contradict. There was a lot of false doctrine being taught. Much of what was being taught was done so for the sake of sordid gain. These false teachers were taking advantage of the flock.

(Titus 1:9-11) “holding fast the faithful word which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict. {10} For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, {11} who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not *teach* for the sake of sordid gain.”

In Acts 20:28, Paul told the Ephesian elders to be on guard for themselves and for all the flock. A shepherd’s job is not only to feed the flock, but to watch over the flock and to protect them. In verse 29, he said that savage wolves would come in, not sparing the flock, and that men would arise speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. This is exactly what had happened on the island of Crete. These were savage wolves that had taken advantage of the flock and not spared them. The flocks needed shepherds, which is why Paul left Titus in Crete; he was to ordain elders in every city, so that the flocks would be fed properly and protected.

(Acts 20:28-30) “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. {29} I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; {30} and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

Notice the words that Paul uses to describe these men in Crete. He said in verse ten that they were rebellious men, empty talkers, and deceivers. First, they were rebellious men. These were men who were not subject to rule. They were not under authority and refused to be under authority. Remember the Greek word for submission is *hupotasso*, which means under proper order and arrangement. These men were out of order and not under authority. When you have rebellion, you have chaos. When a wife is not submitted to her husband, she will focus on doing what she wants to do and the family will not be unified. When the children are not submitted to their parents, there will be disobedience, disregard of family rules, and disrespect of parents. Rebellion brings chaos, and parents cannot allow this. To have order in the house, the parents must lovingly discipline their children.

In the church, when people disregard the pastors and do their own things, there is disorder. When the congregants are not submitted to the pastors of the church, there is going to be chaos and disorder. Many times people think that they know better than the pastor and they disregard his instructions. Many people have had bad experiences with churches and pastors and do not have a lot of trust or respect for pastors. They have a really difficult time submitting to authority because of their past experiences. I tell people that they need to find a church where they trust the pastors, and then to submit to them. If you do not trust the pastors at your church, you are probably in the wrong church. God tells us to obey our leaders and submit to them, as those who give account (Heb 13:17).

There were men in Crete who were causing trouble in the churches. These were rebellious men, and rebellion is a behavior that cannot be tolerated; it must be corrected. They had brought chaos and disorder, and Paul has left Titus in Crete to set in order what remained. These men needed to be silenced and to be severely reprovved. Correction was needed to set things in order.

Paul said these rebellious men were empty or vain talkers. They did not mean what they said. They talked about things that were not important. In Ephesians 4:29, Paul said that only things that edify and build up others should proceed from our mouths. These men spoke about a lot of things that did not edify, build up, or that were profitable. They were just vain words. Paul gives a few examples of what they said. He quotes the poet, Epimenides who lived six hundred years earlier, and he said, "Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons." Epimenides said the Cretans were proverbially depraved. This certainly did not build up the Cretans. These were words of condemnation. These were words that tore down and upset people. Paul said that a prophet said this. Prophecy is to exhort, edify, and comfort. These things that were being prophesied or said to the church did not exhort, edify, or comfort.

Paul also said they paid attention to Jewish myths and the commandments of men who turn away from the truth. Teachers in the church need to teach the word of God, not myths or the commandments of men. We need to turn people to the truth, and encourage people to get into the word of God. These men were doing just the opposite, turning people away from the word of God.

Last week someone told me about a church they visited in another state. The pastor did not use any scripture in the message. That is empty and vain talking. One of my daughters and her husband have been looking for a church. The army moved them to a new base and they were looking at churches. They had a hard time finding a church that used much scripture. The pastors were telling lots of stories, but not teaching much of the word of God. That is empty and vain talking.

Paul also said they were deceivers. The Greek word is phrenapatice (Strong's G5423), which means a mind misleader, seducer, or deceiver. They made people think certain things so that they could take advantage of them. They deceived because they had false motives; they wanted to financially profit from the flock. These men needed to be corrected. They needed to be silenced because they were upsetting whole families. Paul said that they not only needed to be silenced, but they needed to be reprovved severely. The flock needed to be protected from these savage wolves. Elders were needed to bring correction and set in order the churches.

Paul ends the account with a few more words about these men that needed to be silenced and reprovved. He said they profess to know God, but by their deeds they deny Him, being detestable and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. These were wolves dressed like sheep. Their actions denied Christ. The life of a believer is supposed to represent Christ. The life of a believer is supposed to be radically different than an unbeliever. Notice what John wrote about the difference between unbelievers and believers. The one who practices righteousness is righteous, but the one who practices sin is of the devil. John said that the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious. The actions and deeds of these men on Crete were worthless and were denying Christ.

(1 John 3:7-10) "Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; {8} the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. {9} No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. {10} By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother."

Paul mentions that these men are defiled in their minds and consciences. A person's conscience reminds the person to do what is right according to how it has been calibrated. If a conscience has been calibrated on something other than God's word, then the conscience will not give a true reading of right and wrong. If a conscience has been defiled, the person has repeatedly gone against what their conscience has told them is the right thing to do. Therefore, it is important that our minds be renewed according to the truth, and that our consciences are pure, not defiled. If we reject a good conscience and defile it, Paul said that we can suffer shipwreck in our faith (1 Tim 1:19). In Romans 13:1-7, which is about authority, God says that we need to submit to our authorities because of wrath, ie. the consequences, and also for the sake of our conscience. Rebellion and defiled consciences go hand in hand with each other. These rebellious men on Crete, who were upsetting people, had defiled their consciences. They did whatever they felt like doing, showing no restraint at all in what was right and wrong, and defiled their consciences. These men needed to be silenced and reprovved severely for the faith of the chosen.

(1 Tim 1:19) "keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith."

(Rom 13:5) "Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake."

2. What Sins Should Be Corrected?

I believe the prevailing attitude in the church should be grace, not judgment or criticism. We should not go hunting for the sins of others. We should be looking for opportunities to encourage and build up others. At the same time, we are called saints and are to live holy lives. We are also commanded to go to our brother when he is in sin. So, what sins must be addressed and what sins do we extend grace? Those are very difficult questions that churches have wrestled with for two thousand years. Paul wrote in Romans 8:14 that "all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." This is a really important time to be led by the Spirit of God. We need discernment, wisdom, courage, and the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Here are some considerations about what sins need to be addressed. First, your relationship has a lot to do with the level of sins that you address. Karen and I address things with each other that we would not necessarily address with others. We discuss how we could have said something differently, or how the timing may not have been good. I highly value her input into my life. I am a godlier man because of Karen's words of correction in my life. I think she is a godlier woman because of the words of correction that I have given her. Our relationship gives us that right to speak into one another. At the same time, if either one of us was constantly picking on the flaws of each other, it would not be a healthy relationship. We seek to encourage and build up one another, but we share things with each other when necessary. Relationship is a key factor.

Many years ago, I was playing on the National Golf Association tour in Arizona. One of the golfers in the Bible Study group was traveling and living with a woman. I thought it was a terrible witness, and that the man should be confronted about it. I did not have much relationship with the man, other than seeing him on Wednesday nights at our weekly study. Some people were not comfortable with me confronting the man about this sin. But, I felt comfortable with confronting him.

About ten years ago, the youth leader at a church we were part of, who was single, was living with a woman. I did not know the youth leader at all, but there were nearly 100 youth in that group, and it was a terrible witness. I went to the elders of the church, and I said that they needed to confront the man or I would. Again, I did not know him, and they had relationship with him. It was better for them to do it than for me, but I felt that the situation needed to be addressed.

Another consideration is the magnitude of the sin. In 1 Corinthians 5, there was a man in the church who had his father's wife. Paul was outraged that they had not dealt with the sin. The whole church apparently knew what was going on. Therefore, for the sake of the whole church, it needed to be dealt with. Ignoring the sin was going to leaven the whole loaf, so Paul exhorted them to clean out the leaven and remove the man from the church. So, the man should have been disciplined, and after Paul's letter, the church did exercise church discipline.

In our text today, the magnitude was severe. Many families had been upset. Many families had been taken advantage of by the greedy teachers. These teachers needed to be corrected, and the sooner the better. Churches all over the island of Crete had been hurt by these men. So, correction was in order.

3. Goal Of The Correction

Paul began his letter to Titus by telling him why he wrote the letter. His purpose was for the faith of those chosen of God (Tit 1:1). These false teachers were upsetting the faith of the believers, and Paul wanted them silenced and severely reproved so that the faith of the chosen would be built up and restored. In verse 13 Paul said to reprove them severely so that they be sound in faith. Sound faith produces godliness, and the fruit of these false teachers was not godliness

(Titus 1:1) "Paul, a bond-servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the faith of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness,"

(Titus 1:13) "This testimony is true. For this reason reprove them severely so that they may be sound in the faith."

Paul was concerned about the health of all the saints. He had a corporate view and correction was needed for the sake of all the believers. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul told the Corinthian church to remove the leaven or the whole loaf would be leavened. Again, he was concerned about the whole church, and he was willing to remove the one person for the welfare of the whole church. Because of the things being taught and shared, things were in chaos. Paul wanted things set in order. God is a God of order, not chaos. So, another goal of the correction was for order. In homes where there has not been good disciplining of the children, there is lots of chaos. Children are disobedient, rebellious, disrespectful and things are chaotic. When the parents discipline the children, order is restored in the house. The same thing is true in a church.

When looking at the goal of correction, we must look at a couple very important verses that deal with the goal of correction. First, we will look at Jesus' command to go to our brother when he sins. He said, "If he listens to you, you have won your brother." The goal is not to hurt, tear down, or condemn our brother, but to win our brother. We are not trying to chase our brother away, but to win him. What is winning our brother? Winning our brother is restoring him to fellowship with God and with others. Sins break the fellowship with God and with others, so helping a brother repent of his sins restores our brother.

(Matt 18:15-18) “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.”

In Galatians 6:1, Paul talks about the goal of correction. He said, “if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness.” The goal is to restore our brother to God and to other people. In verse two, he said that we are to bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. The law of Christ is to love our brother. (See John 13:34-35.) Our goal in correction is to restore people to God and to others. It is to win our brother, not to alienate him further.

(Gal 6:1-2) “Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; *each one* looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. {2} Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.”

4. Process Of Correction

There are two processes that I want to briefly talk about. The first process is about setting things in order, and it is from our text. Paul wanted Titus to ordain elders in every city. The first thing to do to establish order is to establish the government. So, Paul gave Titus the qualities to look for when ordaining elders in the churches. Once elders were in place, the second step of action was to silence and reprove these men who were causing troubles. Once the problem was stopped, the third step is to restore the lives of those who had been hurt. The elders were to teach sound doctrine and to help people begin to live godly lives. The rest of the letter to Titus is about setting the individual lives in order.

The second process that I want to talk about is the process of correction. The best place to look is at Jesus’ instructions. Let’s read Matthew 18:15-17.

(Matt 18:15-17) “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. {16} But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.** {17} If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”

Jesus’ instructions to us are that if our brother sins we are to go correct him, and if he listens we have won our brother. The correction process should involve as few possible as necessary. It begins with a person confronting another person about his sin in private. This has nothing to do with being a pastor or leader. This correction process is required of all of us. In some of the books that I have read on church discipline, they list this as the second step of correction. They begin with self-correction, which I have already mentioned. I start the discipline process when Jesus starts it, when a brother sins, when he has disregarded the Holy Spirit. In the first step, the goal is to win our brother and restore him to fellowship with God and others.

If the brother does not repent during the private confrontation, we are to go to the next level, where we take one or two witnesses with us and go to him again. Most scholars say that these witnesses are witnesses of the second phase of church discipline. They also say that these witnesses need to verify the facts with the man. I disagree. I do not believe that you go to the first level without being 100% certain of the sin. You do not go to the second level of correction without being 100% certain about the sin. This is not the time to verify the sin. Verification of

sin should be done before any correction is done. You may go to a brother and ask about something to try and verify it, but correction and verification are two different things. Jesus' reference of Deuteronomy 19:15 about bringing one or two witnesses is referring to witnesses of the sin, not the corrective process. Deuteronomy 19:15 specifically states that a single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed. There must be two or three witnesses that have confirmed the sin. There are some sins that I confront a person about, but I do not go to the second level because it is his word versus my word. I just drop the matter and leave it in God's hands. God disciplines those He loves, and I trust God to do it. I also believe that Solomon was correct in Proverbs 26:11 when he said, "As a dog returns to his vomit, so a fool repeats his folly." This person will probably do the same sin over again, and this won't be the only opportunity. The one or two other witnesses are already aware of this sin and all of these witnesses are to confront the brother. If he listens and repents, the correction process is over. If he does not listen, then the corrective process goes to the third stage.

(Deut 19:15) "A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed."

The third stage is to bring the matter before the church. It is only at this stage that the elders of the church need to be involved. There is nothing said in the first two stages that tell me that a pastor needs to be involved. If someone wants counsel about what to do, then they should go and get counsel from the pastor. But, the responsibility lies with those who are witnesses of the sin, and it is highly likely that the pastor was not one of the witnesses. But, at the third stage, it must be brought before the whole church. Therefore, it becomes a pastoral issue at that time. If the matter is brought before the church and the wayward brother listens, then it ends. However, if the brother does not listen, then he is to be as a Gentile or tax collector. The term Gentile or tax collector means someone who is an outsider and not part of the congregation. We pray for Gentiles and tax collectors. We want them to come to Christ and to be saved. We reach out to them and serve them in hopes of winning them to the Lord. We encourage sinners to come to church to hear the word of God.

In my mind, the church discipline exercised at this time does not mean that we shun them in the way that some churches or Hollywood has shown. The church's attitude is to try to win them to the Lord. At the same time, unbelievers are not included in the Lord's Supper. These unrepentant people are to be counted as unbelievers. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul to remove the man from their midst. He also said that he had judged the man and delivered him over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh. Paul did not put a curse or spell or anything like that. There is a spiritual covering over believers that have submitted to God's leaders in the church. Those who refuse to submit to their authorities are out from under this protection. When Paul delivered this man over to Satan, he was saying that the man was no longer under the protection of the leaders and was vulnerable to attacks by Satan. Many people today do not understand spiritual covering and its implications. If believers understood this, they would not be forsaking the assembling of the saints. They would be running to the churches and get under proper covering.

(1 Cor 5:2-5) "You have become arrogant and have not mourned instead, so that the one who had done this deed would be removed from your midst. {3} For I, on my part, though absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged him who has so committed this, as though I were present. {4} In the name of our Lord Jesus, when you are assembled, and I

with you in spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, {5} *I have decided* to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

The elders were going to have a tough job. How were they going to silence the men? How were they to severely reprove them? First, the elders are the government. The pastors determine who will preach and teach and who will not. A number of years ago a man in a church I was pastoring invited another preacher to preach at our church. The problem was that he did not consult me about it. He had no authority to invite someone to speak at our church. He was out of order, and I told him that he had no right to do this. I could have cancelled the guest speaker, but I allowed him to come. It is the elders that manage the preaching and teaching schedule, and the Lead Elder should be the one that makes the final decision. So, the pastors at the various churches in Crete were going to first have to take charge of the preaching schedule.

Second, they had to severely reprove these men. To me, this meant individual confrontations in all of the cities. The elders needed to establish the facts. They needed to know exactly what had been taught. They needed to know what the Scriptures said about these matters, and then to refute the false doctrines. If the men listened and repented of these false teachings and other things, then they could remain. However, if they did not repent, they would need to remove them from the congregations. The elders could not allow these men to continue to upset the faith of those chosen by God.

I have had people that did not believe in the trinity come to our church. I have had to silence them and forbid them to teach or pray over people. I have had people that were members of cults come and try to minister to our people. I have told them that they were welcome to come and listen, but they were not allowed to spread their false teachings. I have had some of the same men of the circumcision come and try to preach the Law in the church, putting people under guilt and condemnation. I have had to silence and reprove them severely. I have had to forbid them from coming to our meetings. The elders in Crete had to do these things. It would be interesting to look at the diaries of these men to see exactly how they handled all of these matters.

Conclusion & Applications

Despite the negative connotation, correction in the church is healthy. It is healthy on an individual level as the Holy Spirit washes our garments and irons our wrinkles. It is also healthy on a corporate level. The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. There will be peace, righteousness, joy, and order when there is correction in the church. Let's pray.

Father, I pray that you will help us to be humble and contrite in spirit. Help us to live lives of repentance. Help us to respond to the gentle corrections that You give us. Lord, I would rather You whisper to me rather than use a rod, and I believe that goes for all of us. Help us to have soft hearts that are receptive to Your correction. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Introduction (Titus 1:1, 1:5, 1:7, 1:10, 1:11, 1:16, Pr 4:18, Matt 7:1-5, Gal 6:1, Matt 18:15-18, Titus 1:10-16)

- 1. Why Correction Was Necessary** (Acts 20:28, Heb 13:17, Eph 4:29, 1 John 3:7-10, 1 Tim 1:19, Rom 13:1-7)

- 2. What Sins Should Be Corrected?** (Rom 8:14, 1 Cor 5)

- 3. Goal Of The Correction** (Tit 1:1, 1:13, 1 Cor 5, Matt 18:15-18, Gal 6:1-2, John 13:34-35)

- 4. Process Of Correction** (Matt 18:15-17, Deut 19:15, Pr 26:11, 1 Cor 5:2-5)

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