

# WHAT IT MEANS TO BE THE CHURCH



## Lesson 9: The Path of Restoration

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- I. **The context for the path of restoration:** The Lord calls the members of His church to live together as a spiritually healthy family.
  - a. Christ directed His followers to relate to each other as fellow family members who have one Father—**Matthew 23:8–9**.
  - b. God designed the local church to function as a family where each member views one another with value and respect—**1 Timothy 5:1–2**.
  - c. The Lord directs believers to minister to one another in the same way a healthy family cares for its members—**Matthew 23:8–9; Romans 14:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11**.
  - d. A healthy family provides loving discipline in order to promote maturity in the life of each member—**Hebrews 12:5–10**.
- II. **The purposes for the path of restoration:** There is a personal and a corporate purpose for the path of restoration, also known as church discipline.
  - a. The personal purpose focuses on restoring a believer to a place where that individual can continue to mature in Christ—**Galatians 6:1–2**.
  - b. The corporate purpose focuses on the local church reflecting the character of God—**1 Corinthians 5:6–7**.
- III. **The process of the path of restoration:** Christ provided the four step process to follow when church discipline becomes necessary—**Matthew 18:15–17**.
  - a. The path of restoration begins with a private reproof—**Matthew 18:15**.
  - b. The next step, if necessary, involves two or three going to the erring believer—**Matthew 18:16**.
  - c. If the erring believer continues in sin, the next step involves informing the church for the purpose of getting them to pray for and appeal to the individual—**Matthew 18:17a**.
  - d. If the erring believer continues in sin, the fourth step requires that the church family disassociate the unrepentant believer from the church fellowship—**Matthew 18:17b**.
- IV. **Biblical examples:** The types of sinful behavior that warrant implementing the path of restoration include moral sin, personal conflicts, divisiveness, false teaching, and disorderliness—**1 Corinthians 5:11; Matthew 18:15; Titus 3:10–11; 1 Timothy 1:18–20; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 11–14**.
- V. **The heart of restoration:** The Lord desires to use family members (believers) in each other's lives to restore one another in a spirit of humility—**Galatians 6:1–2**.