

God's Word on Governing

A Study
Through Discussion

Part VIII: Government Among Equals

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VIII. GOVERNMENT AMONG EQUALS

- Ought I to chide my neighbor?
- Do I have to listen to him, too?
- What are my responsibilities to participate in the 'government' of those over whom I have no express authority, such as friends, neighbors, classmates, etc.?

Consider our “jurisdiction” in these cases:

1. Neighbors: Leviticus 19:17-18

When a "neighbor" (fellow-worker, next-door neighbor, fellow club-member) offends you, do you nurse it in your heart?

What does it mean in such a case to “love your neighbor as yourself”?

Why may intervention sometimes be hazardous? Futile?
Prov.17:12; Prov.27:22; Prov.20:3

2. Friends: Proverbs 27:5-6,17; Psalm 141:5

Do you have friends with whom you lovingly give or receive rebuke when it is needed?

Have you in the past been "honed" by this sort of inter-change? What effect did this have on you?

What two things did David pray for? (Ps.141:5. Not the sentence about the wicked.)

"Friendly reproof is a duty we owe to one another and we ought both to give it and take it in love."

-Matthew Henry

3. Some who are close to you: Luke 17:3-4; Luke 6:42

What options does Jesus allow? (Luke 17:3-4)

Can you describe a correct and an incorrect way of obeying the Luke 17 passage? (Luke 6:42)

4. Fellow believers: Col.3:16; Eph.4:25.15; II Thess.3:14-15; James 5:16; Math.18:15-20

What equipment is the preparation for the teaching and admonishing role?
(Col.3:16)

What gives us the right and duty to speak the plain truth to each other?
(Eph.4:25)

What should characterize our truth-telling? (Eph.4:15)

To what extent might the sanctions Paul associated with his letter apply to the implementation of modern day intra-church instructions? (II Thess. 3:14-15)

What anticipatory measures might facilitate the church maturing process toward which the last three Pauline governing instructions are aimed? (James 5:16)

What rules of judicial procedure exist for dealing with offenses within the church?
(Matt.18:15-20)

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.'

-Matt.
5:9

A qualifying word: It is not sufficient simply to read or even to study these principles. The standards held up for believers are not attainable without supernatural aid. The learner needs to have begun discipleship by personally and prayerfully inviting the Master to become, for him or her, Redeemer and Governor of all things (Romans 10:9).

He sends to you a Comforter who will guide your quest into truth (John 16:7-13). Not merely a teaching process, but a training process is required -- a training which is intended to occur within the fellowship of believers. The dynamics are described in Ephesians 4. Yet unless the Comforter has come to you, they will not be understood. Through the aid of the Spirit they must be spiritually discerned. I Cor. 2:12-16.

As you conclude this Session VIII, will you prayerfully ask of him who is Author of these teachings, Comforter of those of us who are being stretched, and Judge to whom we are accountable for all our stewardship -- that He might guide and prompt us as we seek to be doers of the word?

"Let the righteous smite me in kindness and reprove me! It is oil upon the head; do not let my head refuse it."

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Psalm
141:5