

How to Ruin the Local Church

January 22, 2023

Galatians 6: 1-3, Various

The apostles' focus was prayer and preaching, Acts 6:4. The battle against evil requires prayer and study. A healthy body excels at loving one another. 2 Cor. 4:1, the ministry of preaching the Word of God is a mercy to us. Jesus examines His church, Rev. 2:1. Our lives as believers are meant to be intertwined, Rom. 12.

How to Ruin the Local Church (13 Ways):

- 1) **Avoid Helping Each Other Spiritually:** Gal. 6:1, it is for the sake of your brother to restore them in meekness. A qualifying reason we can help others is that we are to examine ourselves as well, Gal. 6:3-4. We are to bear one another's burdens, Rom. 15:1. The law of Christ is love. We are commanded to counsel one another, Rom. 15:14.
- 2) **Fail to Listen to One Another:** The humility to receive correction from others is a blessing to those who receive it, Pro. 12:15, 13:1, 15:31-32, 19:20, 23:22, 25:12, 27:6. It takes courage for a brother to give correction to another brother. We are sanctified by the sharing of our lives together in Christ and receiving correction from each other in love.
- 3) **Misuse Your Christian Freedom:** Gal 5:13, using liberty for selfishness. Legalism is making a law or rule to please God that is not in Scripture. License is believing that I can do whatever I want as a believer. Rom. 14: 13-14 speaks of issues of the conscience. Those who believe doing something is sin should abstain. They should also not press that belief upon others when it is a strongly held belief not prohibited in Scripture. Let each one walk in love towards another, lest we bite and devour one another (Gal. 5:15).
- 4) **Fail to Guard Your Thoughts of One Another:** Eph. 4:32, be kind, tenderhearted (have tender guts), forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you. Hope the best of others and speak the best of others as God does when considering us because of Christ. Phil. 4:8-9 tells us what our thoughts should be focused on.
True: facts, truths, not emotions. Dignified: think lofty thoughts, noble, meditate on God's glory. Right: righteous, sincere thoughts, Paul was grateful the Gospel was being preached even when they misrepresented his sufferings, Phil. 1:16-17. Pure: moral, clean, undefiled. Lovely: pleasing, kind, agreeable, pleasant, as found in: Gen. 2:9, Ps. 135:3, Songs 7:6. Commendable: give a good report, a positive view in the area of personal anxiety. If it is excellent and worthy of praise, meditate on it, it believes and hopes all things, 1 Cor. 13:7
Sinful thoughts lead to sinful actions then keep us from loving others. It is rooted in the mind and heart.
- 5) **Gossip Regularly as a Sinful Habit:** 1 Tim. 5:13, Paul addressing how younger widows should act. Avoiding idleness leading to gossip, which is babbling on and on. Gossip is saying something about someone that you wouldn't say in their presence. Or saying something to someone about another that should be said directly to that person. It becomes an addiction. Slander isn't truth about others, gossip is probably true but shouldn't be said to another because it would be hurtful.
Youth gossip and rumor spreading make their way through the whole church and time is spent correcting the problem instead of focusing on the Gospel proclamation.
2 Categories of Gossip:
Category 1: personal gossip: form of murder, revenge, listening to it is sin as well. The hearer should stop the gossip and direct the person to go and speak to the one being spoken of.

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Category 2: ministry gossip: functioning of church when members don't like what leaders are doing. Telling others that you don't agree with the decision. Being a member of the church is highly inconvenient. Ways to avoid gossip: 1) Talk less and listen more, Pro. 10:19, 18:13. 2) Meditate on what I should say, Eph. 4:29, Col. 4:6 speak with grace. Change the heart through the Word of God, Matt. 12:34.

6) **Don't be Concerned about the Bigger Mission of the Church**: Satan wants to derail the spread of the Gospel and tarnish the reputation of the bride of Christ. Phil. 4:1-3, Paul wants two members to work out their difference so that together, effort and labor could be directed towards spreading the Gospel. Good conflict is conflict for truth, the sake of the Gospel, sound doctrine, the sake of unwise sinful behavior. There is conflict based in selfishness, thinking about preferences and desires. 1 Thess. 5:13, Paul commands members to be at peace with one another.

7) **Fail to Guard Your Marriage**: Eph. 5:22-25, 33. Three Duties of the Married: 1) Duty to one another. V22-23, wives are to be cherished by husbands and be submissive to husbands. See also Tit. 2:4. Husbands and wives are to provide each other physical intimacy, 1 Cor. 7 and to communicate, talk, and respect one another. 2) Duty to Christ. V22, as to the Lord in submission to Christ. A refusal to obey the rules of marriage is a refusal to worship God. 3) Duty to Church: Eph. 5:18-21, is the gathering together of the body for worship.

5 Reasons that Married Believers have a Duty to the Church:

1) Marriage reflects the power of the Gospel, Rom. 1:16-17, Eph. 4:17.

2) Marriage in church creates homes for the Gospel, places for inviting unbelievers.

3) Marriages in church reflect rejection of worldly philosophy: husbands and wives, in submission to one another.

4) Marriages in the church aid in sanctifying the whole church with built in accountability.

5) Marriage in the church reflect the reputation of the church -that Christ is Lord.

8) **Consider Yourself More Important than Others**: Phil. 2:1-3, esteem others better than yourself. Be of a humble mind showing Christlikeness and having a proper estimation of yourself. Humility is 1) Heavenly Clothing: act godly. 2) Truest Nobility: being a servant of all. 3) Sign of Genuine Salvation: hating pride. 4) Is a Root of All Obedience: all disobedience is rooted in pride. 5) Answer to Every Sin I Struggle With. 6) Is the Hallmark of Christlikeness: Phil. 2:5-7, humility lowers expectations being joyful/thankful of what is given to us by God.

9) **Create Chaos and Unnecessary Burdens for Leaders**: 1) James 1:19-20, 21-22; receive the implanted preached word of God. Be doers and not hearers only. There is no righteousness in man's anger, V20. 2) 1 Thess. 5:12-13, know the leaders, regard them highly in love and don't withdraw yourselves from the church and live in peace with others 3) Heb. 13:17, leaders give an account for the souls of the members. Joy doesn't come from being difficult or un-submissive.

10) **Slowly Disengage from Church**: Heb. 10:24-25, consider one another to stir up love and good works. Even more as the Day of the Lord's return draws near. Be careful not to view ourselves and the church separately. Rom. 12:5, let us be all in together for the Gospel.

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- 11) **Keep Real Relationships at Arms-Length**: Rom. 12, relationships in the body of Christ are meant to be close and personal, V10, 13, 15, 18. Causes of arms-length relationships: 1) Fear of Being Vulnerable. 2) Fear of Change. 3) Desire Perfectionism. 4) Self-Importance- only about you in life. 5) Seeing spouse as being enough. Impacts of Close Relationships: 1) Others need you. 2) Relationships are sanctifying to the church.
- 12) **Complain About Everything I Don't Prefer**: Progression of complaining: 1) Complain to yourself, then, 2) Complain to your spouse, then, 3) Complain to everyone else. The church of Smyrna would not understand complaining in light of spreading the Gospel and persecution. We must stay focused and pursue Col. 1:28.
- 13) **Fail to Actively Seek Maturity and Sanctification**: passive listening is not the path to spiritual maturity – be a doer not a hearer only, deceiving yourself, James 1:22. Eph. 4:1-3, walk worthy of the calling of which we called, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace. Setting our hearts on the truth of Scripture is the key.

Further Discussion and Application

How do we define gossip from Eph. 4:25-32? What does it look like? What does it sound like? What does “let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth” mean? How can we show love to others by meditating on God’s Word and having something gracious to say at all times to another?

How does focus on bringing glory to God help us walk in the Spirit each day? If we are focused solely on the glory of God, how will we treat one another and look out for one another? How can we serve the Lord if we are at odds with others? What should we do if we are prone to think negatively about other believers? What do our thoughts and actions reveal about our heart towards the Lord and others when we seek to devour and bite at other Christians?

How can we help others in their sanctification? How can regularly inviting others over for prayer and bible study or joining a small group help with our and others’ sanctification? How does it build the body of Christ?

We must see that our hesitant behavior, our complaining spirit, and our selfishness cause us to pull away from the church after we have disobeyed the Lord and sought our own desires. Humility is the antidote to pride. What does the Lord expect of His people and their love towards His church?