

The implications of these (and other) Scriptures is clear. The members of Christ's body have an obligation to care for and to love each other. If love seeks the best interests, the highest well-being, of the loved one, then there is no conflict between the objective of love and the objective of discipline. Christ loves His people, yet He chastens them and reproves them for His glory and their highest well-being. And the members of Christ's body are grieved and exercised when they see their fellow members doing things that are detrimental to their best interests and well-being, that drag the honor of Christ in the dust, and that offend a gracious and loving God.

2. The first function of government as applied to the church -- protection from heretical teaching and harmful behavior -- and the duty of church officers to exercise this function.

The operation of this first function may be seen in a number of Scriptures:

I Timothy 1:18-20 -- "This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may fight the good fight, keeping faith and a good conscience, which some have rejected and suffered shipwreck in regard to their faith. Among these are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have delivered over to Satan, so that they may be taught not to blaspheme."

II Timothy 2:16-18 -- "But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and thus they upset the faith of some."

II Timothy 4:1-4 -- "I solemnly charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and will turn aside to myths."

Titus 1:10-13 -- "For there are many rebellious men, empty talkers and deceivers, especially those of the circumcision, who must be silenced because they are upsetting whole families, teaching things they should not teach, for the sake of sordid gain. One of themselves, a prophet of their own, said, 'Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.' This testimony is true. For this cause reprove them severely that they may be sound in the faith."

Acts 20:28-31 -- "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. I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from