

# God Hates the Sower of Discord Among the Brethren

Pr 6:16 These six *things* doth the LORD hate: yea, seven *are* an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness *that* speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren.

## Introduction:

1. Sowing discord is causing strife or contention.
2. The opposite of sowing discord is unity and peace
3. Satan loves discord in a church because he loves to destroy the unity of God's people
  - a. A church is a body and we work together as members of the body to get the job done.
  - b. If Satan can cause discord in a church then the work does not get done and it is a bad testimony to the community and the worship is not all that it should be
4. Jesus said that a house divided cannot stand and so no wonder that Satan would try to get in and cause discord
5. He can use a disgruntled church member to cause the discord
6. Persecution makes true churches purer and stronger but when someone sows discord from within, then a church can be torn apart

## I. CORINTH - AN EXAMPLE OF DISCORD IN A CHURCH

### A. *Description of the Factions*

1Cor 1:10 Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them *which are of the house of Chloe*, that there are contentions among you. 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

1. The Corinthian church was a church in disarray
2. They had divisions and factions - it would be bad enough to have two factions at each other's throats but they had four factions
  - a) *After a service at the church at Corinth you could stand around outside and hear people talking. "Well, I like all the preachers, but Paul is the best. He's a teacher and understands the OT and it's great doctrines. Paul was the one who led me to the Lord and I'll always be on his side." A few feet away you would see another group and walk over near them. "Well, Paul is ok but he's not much of a preacher. He is mainly a teacher. I like Apollos. He is a spectacular preacher. He is a cultured man, his language is so ornate and his delivery is so exciting. I'll take Apollos any time." Nearby is a third group. "Peter really stirs me up. He cries and hollers and stomps and spits. He is so enthusiastic and moves me to action." This is the emotional group. The other group would rise up and say, "We belong to Christ." This group thought that they had a corner on Christ. They were filled with pride. This is like the church I heard about. They called it "Jesus Only" and put a sign out front. The wind blew that night and blew off the first three letters of the sign. Then it read, "Us Only." Some people have that attitude. Like the man who decided that he was the only one who was right and he kept looking for the true church. He moved from church to church and just couldn't find a church that suited him. So finally he started his own church and called it "The True Church." Someone asked him how many people he had at*

*The True Church. He replied, "There are just two of us, my wife and me, and sometimes I'm not sure about her."*

3. Make sure that you are following Jesus and not me
4. Don't be more loyal to a preacher than you are to the Lord
5. "Is Christ divided?"
  - a) *Has Christ been divided and different parts handed out to different people?*
  - b) *Human nature enjoys following human leaders*
  - c) *Instead of emphasizing the message of the Word, the Corinthians emphasized the messenger.*
  - d) *They got their eyes off the Lord and onto the Lord's servants and this led to contention.*
6. Paul called them "brethren" to emphasize their unity and remind them that they belonged to one family
7. Paul wanted them to be perfectly joined together

## **B. Factions are an Indication of Carnality**

1Cor 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? 4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal? 5 Who then is Paul, and who *is* Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

1. Factions indicate that there is immaturity in the church membership
2. Children squabble and fuss at each other
3. Adults work together to get the job done

## **C. Factions Mean that We are Not Working Together**

1Cor 3:6 I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. 7 So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. 8 Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

1. The factions were causing envying and strife and divisions
  - a) *When there is discord then it is difficult to keep the main thing the main thing.*
  - b) *Teaching God's Word, administering the ordinances and spreading the gospel*
2. Paul, Peter and Apollos were just workers in God's garden - They were not to be followed or worshipped
3. Different jobs for God's workers
  - a) *God's workers have different jobs - some plant and some water - important jobs*
  - b) *We don't all have the same tasks in serving the Lord*
  - c) *God gives different skills and abilities to different people*
  - d) *Not much would be accomplished if we all had the same talents and abilities*
4. Dependence of Jobs
  - a) *My success is dependent on someone doing his task*
  - b) *If Paul does not plant, then all the watering in the world does no good*
  - c) *If Apollos does not water then all the planting in the world will not matter*
  - d) *Do your job in church well because it may influence how well someone else does his job*
  - e) *Your task is an important link in the chain and if you fail then it will cause others to fail*
5. Success in the tasks
  - a) *God brings forth the fruit - God gives the increase*
  - b) *All the planting and watering in the world will do no good unless God gives the increase*
  - c) *We are workers together - vs 9*

## **II. CAUSES OF DISCORD IN A CHURCH**

### **A. The Tongue - Ja 3:5-8**

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! 6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. 7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: 8 But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

1. The tongue - is a fire that no man can tame
  - a) *How many friendships have been ruined by the tongue?*
  - b) *How many churches have been split... by gossip?*
  - c) *How many reputations - ruined by careless words?*
  - d) *How much hurt has been caused by false accusations?*
  - e) *How many lives adversely affected by a "slip of the tongue"*
2. Fire in a fireplace provides warmth and light and enjoyment. But fire that is out of control is dangerous and deadly. For example... On October 8, 1871 in a barn in Chicago, a cow owned by Mrs. O'Leary accidentally kicked over a lantern. That lantern fell into some hay, the hay caught on fire and from that the fire spread...and when the fire was over, over 100,000 people were left homeless...17,500 buildings were destroyed...300 people died...and it cost the city over 400 million dollars...Just because of one spark.
3. When you are tempted to gossip - Ask yourself; is it true?
  - a) *Someone can say something about me and it can hurt my ministry even though it is not true.*
  - b) *It doesn't have to be true to hurt me.*
  - c) *Someone can say something about you and it can ruin your reputation and testimony even though it is not true*
  - d) *Be careful repeating something that you heard because it just might not be true - look up rumor and gossip in kerux*
4. When you are tempted to repeat something - Ask yourself; is it kind?
  - a) *Something may be true but not kind*
  - b) *If it is not kind then the only reason to say it is to hurt somebody.*

5. When you are tempted to repeat something - Ask yourself - does it edify?

a) *Does it build the person or tear him down*

b) *Many people would never set fire to a man chained to a stake. They would never clap their hands in approval at the shrieks of those who were being torn apart by lions in the coliseum. But these same people would assassinate friends, neighbors, and fellow church members by untruths, gossip, tale bearing, vicious and evil words. Sometimes it is a half-truth which is worse than a whole falsehood. Most all of us have felt the sting of unkind words.*

6. Follow the Bible grievance procedure in Matt 18:15

**Mt 18:15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.**

a) *This is the grievance procedure of the Bible*

b) *If you have a problem with someone in our church - go to the person and try to handle it privately.*

(1) That will keep it from tearing our church apart

(2) Most disagreements can be handled at this stage.

(3) People don't start choosing up sides and discord is kept to a minimum

7. J. Vernon McGee told of an incident that occurred in one of his pastorates. A man came to him and said, "I want to tell you about a certain situation." He told McGee about a certain man who was involved in a particular sin. The man wanted to do something about it. He said, "You ought to bring this up before the board and if they can't handle it, then it should be brought up before the church." McGee answered, "Fine, that is the way it should be done. What night can you come?" "Oh!" the man said, "I don't intend to come."

You're the pastor you are the one to handle it." McGee answered, "You are right. I am the one to handle it. I am the pastor. However, you will need to be present to make the charge." "Oh, I don't want to do that," he said. So McGee told him, "If you are not willing to sign your name to the charge, we will forget it." And they forgot it, because the man refused to back up the charge with his name.

## **B. Pride - Prov 13**

**10 Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.**

1. Many problems have been caused by pride
  - a) *Pride was the sin of Satan and led to a third of the host of heaven being ousted from heaven*
  - b) *Pride filled the heart of Cain when he killed Abel*
  - c) *Pride led Korah, Dathan and Abiram to rebel against Moses*
  - d) *Pride spurred Saul on in his relentless campaign against David*
  - e) *Pride drove Haman*
2. Many church fights come about because someone gets his pride hurt
3. Things didn't go his way -so he got mad and caused problems
4. When the church votes for something and you vote against it - don't get angry - go along with it - don't sabotage it.
5. One preacher was going to send out a bunch of letters to people in the community inviting them to come to church. The church voted for it and one guy voted against it. Later on when it was time to fold those letters and stuff them into the envelopes and stamp them guess who was down in the workroom helping the pastor do that work. Right - the guy who voted against it.
6. Someone doesn't get recognized and their pride got hurt.

## **C. Selfishness - Phil 2:1-5**

**1 If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of**

one mind. 3 Let nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

**D. False Doctrine - Acts 20:28-31; 2 Tim 2:16-17**

Ac 20:28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. 30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. 31 Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

2Ti 2:16 But shun profane *and* vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. 17 And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus;

1. Outside trouble
2. Inside trouble

**Conclusion:**

1. George Whitefield, the great preacher of the late 1700s was a great example of trying to get along with one's enemies. Whitefield and Wesley disagreed over the doctrines of grace but Whitefield was careful not to create problems in public that could be used to hinder the preaching of the gospel. Someone asked Whitefield if he thought that he would see Wesley in heaven., Whitefield replied, "I fear not, for he will so near the throne and I will be at such a distance, I shall hardly get sight of him."
2. Do all you can to cooperate and work together with others in church

3. A church in a small town in Tennessee has a sign in front that says: Left Foot Baptist Church. One day, a newcomer to the town asked about the derivation of that name. This is the story he was told. Apparently, years before, the local church had been caught up in the practice of foot washing. However, an argument broke out among church members over which foot should be washed first. And the group insisting on the left foot taking precedence finally withdrew and split off to organize its own church and named its congregation: Left Foot Baptist Church. Even though the story brings a smile to our faces, further contemplation leads to this painful conclusion: over such trifling matters, conflict often leads to division in the family of God.

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