



TRUTH ON TOUGH TEXTS

EXPOSITIONS OF CHALLENGING SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

WWW.THESCRIPTUREALONE.COM

FROM SOLA SCRIPTURA PUBLICATIONS

ISSUE 101 (July/Aug. 2016)

PRINCIPLES OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

1 CORINTHIANS 5:1–8; MATTHEW 18:15–17

THERE ARE MANY SUBJECTS THAT CHURCHES TODAY AVOID AT almost any cost. Back in May 2008, in fact, *Your Church* magazine reported that 55 percent of pastors can identify one or more topics they will not preach on because it might keep people from coming back. Such topics include: homosexuality, abortion, same-sex marriage, women's role in the church and the home, the doctrine of election, hell, and money. Appallingly, many churches even avoid eschatology because there are so many diverse views of the end times.

There is one subject, however, that is probably the most verboten of all: *church discipline*. Not only is this not mentioned in the vast majority of churches, it's not even a consideration at all. "What could be more unloving?" it is asked. "What could be more damaging to a person than putting him or her out of the church?" But it is precisely such attitudes that have created the most worldly, unholy, culture-driven, and self-indulgent condition the Church has ever known.

The Belgic Confession is well-known as the oldest (1561) of the doctrinal standards of Reformed churches. Consisting of 37 articles, it is recognized as one of the best official summaries of Reformed doctrine. In Article 29, "The Marks of the True Church," we read in part:

The true church can be recognized if it has the following marks: The church engages in the pure preaching of the gospel; it makes use of the pure administration of the sacraments [we prefer "ordinances"¹] as Christ instituted them; it practices church discipline for correcting faults.

What strikes me most profoundly about that statement is that in many churches today *none* of those marks exist. Preaching has been replaced by anything we can think of, the emphasis of the ordinances is sporadic at best, and church discipline is considered "cruel and unusual punishment." Only one conclusion is, therefore, possible: many "churches" are not *true* churches at all.

At the core of church discipline are two issues: *sin* and *holiness*. Besides our two "tough texts," all we need do is also read Acts 5 and 2 Thessalonians 3. These four passages could not be clearer in demonstrating that holiness is demanded and sin cannot be tolerated. Sin must be confronted, condemned, and corrected if the Church is to remain holy.

Why do we consider these passages "tough texts"? The reason is neither exegetical nor historical—the passages are simple and clear. Rather, the reason for difficulty, of course, is *implementation*, the willingness to obey the principles, precepts, and precedents these passages unambiguously provide. Is this difficult? Oh, excruciatingly so! There is nothing harder for a pastor to do, nothing more heart-breaking, nothing that "keeps him up at night" more than this. And it is all the more heart wrenching when other people also leave the church out of misplaced loyalty to a sinning believer. But as we will see, discipline is absolutely essential to keep the body pure.

Another reality in Christendom today that makes church discipline far more difficult even when it is implemented is that the disciplined person just goes down the street to another church and is welcomed with open arms. It is a grave error of leadership that does not investigate where these "new folks" have come from. If there is to be a restoring to fellowship—as we will see, this is the purpose of discipline—it must be a restoration to the original body of believers.

The most graphic illustration of church discipline appears in the most carnal, fleshly, and worldly church on record: Corinth. Our primary text is 1 Corinthians 5:1–8:

It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed, In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven

of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

While that is our primary emphasis, we will later tie it in with the words of our Lord in Matthew 18:15-17:

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. 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. 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.

These texts present six basic principles of church discipline: its necessity, reason, purpose, method, grounds, and result.

The Necessity of Discipline

Why is discipline needed? *First*, we see the *action* that existed in the Church at Corinth. The phrase **it is reported commonly** (v. 1) could also be rendered “it is actually reported,” which demonstrates Paul’s incredulous shock at what he had heard was going on. Worse, it should have been dealt with long ago but was now public knowledge. As one commentator well says, “It [was] so public that it [could not] be concealed, and so certain that it [could not] be denied.”²

The sin was a form of incest, specifically, a man living with his step-mother (not his own mother but **his father’s wife**). Not only was this condemned by God’s law (Lev. 18:6-8; 20:11), but was also condemned even by Roman law (**not so much as named among the Gentiles**). Significantly, Paul was not addressing either the woman or the man, the latter of which at least was a professed believer (cf. v. 11). Rather, Paul addressed the *church* and its toleration of such horrific sexual sin. This leads to the deeper problem.

Second, we note the *attitude* that existed in that church, the same attitude, in fact, that was at the root of all the problems there: they were **puffed up** (v. 2). This is *phusioō*,

which is derived from *phusa*, “a bellows.” Just as a bellows swells up as it fills with air, the Corinthians were swollen with pride. In 4:6 they were prideful toward one another, each thinking he was better than the others. In 4:18-19 they were prideful against Paul, that he would not return to Corinth and confront them with their attitudes. In 13:4, their arrogance destroyed any possibility of love for one another. Worst of all, [here in 1 Cor.] they were even prideful of a case of incest that was going on in the church, no doubt thinking they were being open-minded and practicing “Christian liberty.”³

Instead of being proud of their tolerance and so-called freedom, however, they should have **mourned**. This is *pen-theō*, to lament as one would weep over the death of a friend (Mk. 16:10). They should have been appalled at and broken-hearted by such sexual perversion. Instead, they were so caloused by carnality, worldliness, and spiritual pride that not even such blatant sin bothered them.

What does this say to us? It says much! **Fornication** is *porneia*, which originally referred to prostitution, being de-

rived, in fact, from *pornē*, “prostitute” (Matt. 21:31; 1 Cor. 6:15). In later Rabbinical language, which carried over into the NT, *porneia* came to be used for any sexual relations outside of marriage, including: premarital sex, extramarital sex, homosexuality, lesbianism, sodomy, pedophilia, incest, and bestiality. All these, of course, exist in our day, and appallingly some of them are tolerated in our churches. There are professed Christian couples who live together outside of marriage, for example, and there is the growing trend of “gay Christians.” But *any* kind of sexual sin is to be disciplined, not tolerated, much less celebrated.

Consider this: even the word **fornication** is avoided. Instead of **fornication** or even “premarital sex,” we hear phrases such as “discovering one’s sexuality” and “living together.” Instead of “adultery,” we hear “having an affair.” Instead of “homosexuality” (much less “sodomy”), we hear “gay community.” Instead of “pornography,” we hear “art.” Even modern Bible translations soften *porneia* to the word “immorality” instead of what it really means. What’s the difference? According to Webster, “immorality” is simply that which the morals of a particular society does not approve, while **fornication** is the same no matter where it is found.

As we will see, there are other sins that demand discipline, but sexual sin is especially grievous. So, let us each ask ourselves, “Is open sexual sin **reported commonly** in *my* church?”

The Reason for Discipline

In verse 6, Paul offers a graphic analogy from Exodus 12. After applying the blood to the door, the Jewish families ate the Passover Supper. No yeast (**leaven**) was to be found in their dwellings; even the bread was unleavened. While some teachers insist that **leaven** always represents *evil*, that is not the case. In Matthew 13:33, for example, it represents the *good* influence of the kingdom of heaven. The primary meaning of **leaven** in Scripture is its *permeating character and influence*. As Paul tells us, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9). In that context of false teaching, one of the reasons for the terrible danger of such teaching is its permeating influence. If allowed to continue, it will take over the entire church. The same is true of the sexual sin Paul addresses in our text: **Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump** (v.7). The sin of this church member was a piece of leaven that permeated the entire body.

Purge out, then, is *ekkathairō*, to cleanse thoroughly, purify, eliminate, and is an aorist imperative; this *must* be done so the whole lump can be renewed. Verse 8 adds that we must purge out the **old leaven (wickedness and malice)** and bring in the **new (sincerity and truth)**. This parallels what Paul told the Ephesians: “that ye put off . . . the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts. . . . And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24). Sin *must* be purged. Achan’s sin, for example, brought defeat to Israel, and if it is allowed to continue in our midst, it will ruin God’s work.

The Purpose of Discipline

While this principle is akin to the former one, there is an important distinction. While the *reason* involves the sin itself and its effects, the *purpose* has more to do with the individual’s life. What, then, is this purpose? *Restoration to fellow-*

ship. This cannot be emphasized strongly enough. The purpose of church discipline is not to “kick someone out of the church.” Rather, as Galatians 6:1 declares, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” It is vitally important that we enter this disciplining process in humility (not self-righteousness). The purpose (final end) is to bring the person back to fellowship with God and the church through repentance. As we will see later, in fact, this man was restored to the fellowship (2 Cor. 2:1–11). *That* is always to be our goal.

The Method of Discipline

This is a crucial point. Let us make three observations: the responsibility of the pastor, the responsibility of the church, and the comparison of this passage to our second text.

The Responsibility of the Pastor

When Paul heard of it, he **judged already**, that is, immediately made a judgment. The Greek behind **judged** is the very pointed word *krinō*: “to separate, distinguish, discriminate between good and evil, select, choose out the good. In the NT, it means to judge, to form or give an opinion after separating and considering the particulars of a case.”⁴

This does not contradict Paul’s words back in 1 Corinthians 4:5 (“judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come”), which speaks of *motives*. Here in our text, Paul is dealing with *actions*, whether they are good or bad. Likewise, a pastor must discern. He does not have the authority of an Apostle, but he does have the authority to initiate and lead church discipline. Paul’s attitude was a demand for action, and a pastor must do the same, or he is complicit in the sin.

The Responsibility of the Church

Paul is in no way ambiguous here. The responsibility of the church was to expel this man from their fellowship. They were to gather together as a church to do so. Notice, they weren’t to take a vote, rather they were to dismiss him. Public sin must be publicly judged and condemned. The whole community knew of this sin, so it must be clear to the community that it would not be tolerated. This is precisely the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18, which we will address later. Note the language Paul used.

First, in verse 2, he uses the phrase **taken away from you**, literally: “removed from your midst.” This challenged them that they were responsible to act.

Second, in verse 5, Paul says, **Deliver such a one to Satan**. As long as we walk with the Lord, we have special protection from Satan. But when dismissed from the fellowship in the church because of sin, we are “fair game” for the enemy. God could allow Satan to attack the body so the offender would return to God, or even allow their death according to 1 John 5:16 (“There is a sin unto death”⁵). In verse 7, Paul says **purge out** (*ekkathairō*), which, as noted earlier, means to cleanse thoroughly, purify, eliminate. In verse 13 he then adds the directive to **put away** (*exairō*), literally, “remove the evil man out of yourselves.”

Third, verses 9–10 are extremely significant and especially hard for people to accept. Paul says **not to keep company** with them, **not even to eat** with them. In eastern culture, eat-

ing with someone implies close fellowship, and Paul says we must not have such fellowship with those under discipline. Why? Because sin “rubs off.” It’s a communicable disease. Yes, we will have *contact* with the world, as Paul implies in verse 10, but we are not to *company* with it. Paul did not mean for them to be gentle. Remember that the early church was not gentle with Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5:1–11. If they will not repent of their sin, they must be dismissed and cut off from fellowship. Note these words of Harry Ironside:

Somebody might say, “The way to keep him is to keep him in the circle, let him sit down with you at the Communion table; do not be hard on him, try to win him back, throw your arms of love about him and sympathize with him.” The unrepentant man will be hardened in his iniquity if you do that. Put him outside in the Devil’s domain, let him know he has forfeited all title to a place with the people of God—that he has been put back into the world where Satan rules. When he finds himself abhorred by men and women who love Christ, when he finds his sin is a stench in the nostrils of Christian people, he may break before God.; If . . . he has really been born again, he will break. If he has been a false professor, he will plunge deeper and deeper into evil things.⁶

Please note again Paul’s demand for action. Just like the pastor, if the church does not act, it is a partaker of the sin.

The Comparison With Matthew 18:15–17

Here is our Lord’s fascinating reference to the future **church** to be born on the Day of Pentecost. Some feel this refers to the Jewish synagogue, but the word is not *synagogē*, but rather *ekklēsia*. Plus, Jesus never gave guidelines for conduct in the synagogue. Furthermore, verses 18 and 20 could never refer to the synagogue because people would not gather in Jesus’ name. Jesus gives us four distinct steps.

Step 1: one-on-one confrontation. In light of what Paul says, the pastor goes to the offender. There is also a personal application here to individual believers; if one Christian has a problem with another, they should go to them and work it out. In either case, the Greek behind **tell** is *elegchō*. This is the same word used for “reprove” in 2 Timothy 4:2. In Classical Greek, both Plato and Aristotle used *elegchō* for “the logical exposition of the facts of a matter for the purpose of refuting the (usually sophisticated [i.e., false]) argument of an opponent.” The word then developed the “principal meaning of convince, refute.”⁷ That meaning is essentially the same in the NT. So strong is this word, in fact, that Greek scholar Richard Trench writes: “It means to rebuke another with the truth so that the person confesses, or at least is convinced, of his sin.”⁸ In his commentary on Ephesians, John Calvin adds, “It literally signifies to drag forth to the light what was formerly unknown.”⁹ What a vivid picture! We must drag error kicking and screaming into the light to expose it. If the person is unrepentant, however, we must go to the next step.

Step 2: take **one or two . . . witnesses** (such as another elder or a deacon). God established this law in Deuteronomy 19:15 so that an accusation could be confirmed. This protected against slander. The design here is that these witnesses can examine the situation objectively and without bias. But if the offender is still unrepentant, there is another step.

Step 3: take the matter to the **church**. The whole assembly is to be made aware of the situation. The church as a whole tries to restore him (again, that is the purpose). Please remember: we are doing everything possible to bring him back to God. But, if still unrepentant, we must go to the final step.

Step 4: put him out of the church. He must be treated as an outsider (**heathen and publican**). Does this mean we can never talk to this offender? We've already seen Paul's strong language to not fellowship with him, but we are to continue to admonish him, as in 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15: "And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother." It would, of course, be unchristian to "snub" him, so when we do come in contact, we should be gracious and friendly but encourage and admonish him to repent and return.

The Grounds for Discipline

Returning to 1 Corinthians 5, what are the offenses for which discipline can be initiated? Before we look at these in detail, we first need to consider a foundational attitude.

The Principle

At the root of this problem is the necessity of being separate from the world. Verse 9 tells us that Paul wrote a previous letter (no longer in existence) to be *separate* from those who sin. But verse 10 makes it clear that we will come in *contact* with the ungodly people of this world. The only way we could avoid that would be to leave the planet. So, his exhortation deals with *conformity*, not *contact*. We are *in* the world but not *of* the world. **World** is the common word *kosmos*, which in this context refers to the world system, the attitudes, actions, desires, values, priorities, and goals of the world.

But notice verse 11. Paul is even stricter about being separate from Christians who commit the same sins. Why? *Because sin in a believer's life is even more hideous*. It excludes them from the church and even restricts social contact and fellowship. In fact, verses 12 and 13 make it clear that we must be far more concerned about sin in our churches than sin in the world. We can't keep the *world* pure, but we most certainly can keep the *church* pure.

The Application

Paul then lists six grounds for church discipline, all in verse 11. We will also note a seventh spoken of elsewhere.

First, there is **fornication**. As noted earlier, this is *porneia*, which refers to sexual impurity of any kind. In addition to that discussion, I've seen many cases in my years of ministry: pastor/secretary, deacon/another's wife, pastor's teenage daughter/boyfriend, and, yes, even incest. Such cannot be tolerated.

Second, there is **covetousness**. This is the sin of greed and dishonest gain. It is committed by someone who has all he needs (because God promises to supply that) but is so greedy that he will do anything to get what he wants. He's a deceiver for gain. Related to this is the next sin.

Third, **idolatry**. This refers to the worship of false gods. Not only does this still occur literally in many cultures, but also figuratively when people give first places to the "gods" of money, possessions, fame, and pleasure.

Fourth, there is **extortion**. This speaks of those who swin-

dle and rob others of what is theirs, one who "squeezes" money out of others.

Fifth, we read of **railing**. The Greek *loidoria* refers to a person who practices reproachful, insulting language, harsh or bitter words, and abusive speech that is meant to vilify others' character and wound their feelings. In short, a "character assassin" cannot be allowed to remain. The same is true for one who sows discord and contention in the church (as well as disrespect and challenge to authority). James tells us about the danger of the tongue (Jas. 3). It can destroy God's work quicker than anything else.

Sixth, Paul includes **drunkenness**. This is just as much a problem today as it was then. Nothing should control us except the Spirit of God (Eph. 5:18).

Seventh and finally, there is "false teaching." While Paul doesn't express it here, he does so elsewhere. In 1 Timothy 6:3-5, he says "withdraw thyself" from those who teach false doctrine. Even stronger is 2 Timothy 3:1-5; we are to "turn away" (*apotrepō*), that is, avoid or shun, "blasphemers" and several other sinful individuals. Neither heresy nor apostasy can be allowed. This can creep subtly into a church. For example, I heard of one church where a Sunday School teacher was speaking about his "visions." I had a man who was propagating keeping the Mosaic Law. More common is rebellion against the preaching of the Word, disputes and arguments, and the spreading of "personal opinions" out of a prideful heart. We are to shun these and discipline them if they are in the church. Why? Because, as noted earlier, the "leaven" of false teaching (Gal. 5:9) has a permeating influence on the entire church.

Why These are Important

Ponder something for a moment. Why are these grounds for discipline so serious? It is because of who they affect.

First, **fornication** and **drunkenness** are sins against *one's self*. In other words, they affect us personally. They reduce us to the level of an animal with no control of our own lust.

Second, **covetousness**, **extortion**, and **railing** are sins against our *fellow men*, that is, they affect others. We are then *exploiting* others instead of *helping* others.

Third, **idolatry** and "false teaching" are sins against *God*. While all sin, of course, is ultimately against God, these are especially offensive, for they affect Him and His work. He is no longer authoritative or first place in our lives.

These Refer to Everyone

Ponder one other thought: these grounds for discipline refer to *everyone*, pastor and people (shepherd and sheep). "Do you mean a pastor could also be disciplined?" you might ask. Absolutely! This is a safeguard and is clear in 1 Timothy 5:19-20: "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." Someone might just get mad at the pastor and make an accusation, so an accusation of biblical error must be *proven* before witnesses and *substantiated* by evidence. So, he has the right to face his accuser, the right to have witnesses present to hear and accusation. And there must be more than the word of one person to prove guilt. But, again, this is a safeguard. Pastors can fall into immorality. They can become dictators. They can be guilty of sins of the tongue and

can get caught up in “shady financial affairs.” That is why they must be “above reproach” (1 Tim. 3:2).

The Results of Discipline

The results of church discipline are three-fold:

We Must Withdraw Ourselves

Another text that comes into sharp focus on this matter is 2 Thessalonians 3:6: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.” “Disorderly” is *ataktos*, a military term that carries the idea of slackness as soldiers not keeping in rank. What must we do to those who “break ranks”? Paul says we must “withdraw” (*stellō*) from them, that is, avoid them.

But again, this command is one of the least practiced today. Why? Undoubtedly because it would drastically reduce the number of church members. Just think: what if a pastor initiated church discipline for one of these reasons in the average church today: sexual immorality, covetousness, idolatry, extortion, gossip, slander, abusive speech, drunkenness, or false teaching? How many would remain?

Many argue, “Oh, we don’t want to offend!” But sin offends Christ! We’d better discipline or we become a part of the offense. Based upon that, therefore, there are two other results of church discipline.

A True Believer Will Return

The man spoken of in 1 Corinthians 5 *did* repent and was restored to fellowship (2 Cor. 2:1–11). It’s interesting to observe that this was about a year-and-a-half later. It seems reasonable that this is a *general* guideline, that if someone is going to return, it will be in this time frame. (Recall that David took a year to return after his sin with Bathsheba.) And as noted earlier, it is essential that the person return to the church where they were disciplined, not some other church.

If the person does *not* repent, however, he was never a true believer. In the context of false teachers, the Apostle John wrote: “They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if

they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 Jn. 2:19). An unknown author has well said: “Discipline a sheep and it will come back to the fold bleating to be let in; discipline a hog and it will turn around and try to root down the alley, eating tin cans and garbage all the way.”

The Church Will Be More Powerful

Because the early church practiced church discipline (Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5:1–11), God’s power was upon it. In a few short years it shook the very foundations of the Roman Empire. Our churches can be powerful, but not without discipline. Oh, let us not allow sin in our churches! We must purge it from our lives and therefore our congregations.

Dr. J. D. Watson

Pastor-Teacher, Grace Bible Church
Director, Sola Scriptura Publications

NOTES

- ¹ See TOTT #75 (Jan./Feb. 2012), “The Lord’s Supper: Memorial or More?” on our website, or chapter 50 in the book, *Truth on Tough Texts: Expositions of Challenging Scripture Passages* (Sola Scriptura Publications, 2012), 487–96.
- ² Albert Barnes, *Barnes’ Notes on the Bible* (electronic edition, public domain), comment on 1 Cor. 5:1.
- ³ J. D. Watson, *A Word for the Day: Key Words from the New Testament* (AMG Publishers, 2006), 128.
- ⁴ Spiros Zodhiatus, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: NT* (AMG, 1992), entry #G2919.
- ⁵ See TOTT #59 (June 2012), “What Is the Sin Unto Death?” on our website, or chapter 42 in the book, *Truth on Tough Texts*, 412–20.
- ⁶ *Lectures on 1 and 2 Corinthians* (electronic edition), comment on 1 Cor. 4:6–16,
- ⁷ Colin Brown (Ed.), *The New International Dictionary or New Testament Theology* (Zondervan), Vol. 2, 140.
- ⁸ *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Hendrickson, 2000), 29–30.
- ⁹ *Calvin’s Commentaries: Ephesians* (electronic edition, public domain), comment on Eph. 5:11.

BOOKS FOR GOD’S GLORY AND BELIEVER’S GROWTH

Please see our blog for more information about all our titles, including more about content, sample chapters, endorsements, and ordering information: <http://SolaScripturaPublications.blogspot.com/>

Salvation Is of the Lord: An Exposition of the Doctrines of Grace By a Former Arminian
Sovereign Grace Pulpit: The Doctrines of Grace from the Sermons of Charles Haddon Spurgeon
Winds of Doctrine: A Survey of Contemporary Theology
The Forgotten Tozer: A. W. Tozer’s Challenge to Today’s Church
A Taste of Heaven on Earth: Marriage and Family in Ephesians 5:18–6:4
A Light Unto My Path: An Exposition of Psalm 119
The Swan Song of the Old Shepherd: An Exposition of Psalm 23
Truth on Tough Texts: Expositions of Challenging Scripture Passages
Upon This Rock: Studies in Church History and Their Application
The Doctrines of Grace from the Lips of Our Lord: A Study in the Gospel of John (Wipf & Stock Publishers)
We Preach Christ: The Bible Story (booklet)
A Word for the Day: Key Words from the New Testament (AMG Publishers)
A Hebrew Word for the Day: Key Words from the Old Testament (AMG Publishers)

BLOGS

NEW: *Sola Scriptura Publications:* Info and ordering [Sola Scriptura Publications](#)

Tas Membranas: A Blog for Sound, Solid, and Scriptural Books [Tas-Membranas.blogspot.com](#)

Expositing Ephesians: The Christian's Wealth and Walk [ExpositingEphesians.blogspot.com](#)

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

John Calvin for Today [JohnCalvinForToday.blogspot.com](#);

Christ in Community [ChristInCommunity.org/](#)

TRUTH ON TOUGH TEXTS

A Ministry of
Grace Bible Church
P.O. Box 235
Meeker, CO 81641
[www.TheScriptureAlone.com](#)
dwatson@thescripturealone.com
A F.I.R.E. Church
[www.FireFellowship.org](#)

This monthly publication is intended to address Scriptures that have historically been debated, are particularly difficult to understand, or have generated questions among Believers. We hope it will be an encouragement and challenge to God's people to carefully examine and discern Truth. While the positions presented here are based on years of careful biblical research, we recognize that other respected men of God differ.

If you have a question that perplexes you, please send it along so we might address it either in a full length article or in a "Reader Questions" issue. Other comments are also warmly welcomed, and letters to the editor will be published.

This publication is sent free of charge to anyone who requests it. To aid in the ministry, donations will be greatly appreciated, but never demanded. If you know someone you think would enjoy TOTT, please send along their address.