

# The Cruciform Life: Cruciform Faith in the Public Square

Oct. 15, 2017

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,  
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,  
To GROW as followers of Jesus.  
- CG Mission Statement

## Worship: Holiness by Micah Stampley

*(Here is a song to help your group as you worship. Simply play the video and encourage people to use it to enter into a spirit of worship.)*

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Holiness, holiness  
Is what I long for  
Holiness is what I need  
Holiness, Holiness  
Is what you want for me

Faithfulness, faithfulness  
Is what I long for  
Faithfulness is what I need  
Faithfulness, faithfulness  
Is what you want from me

Righteousness, righteousness  
Is what I long for  
Righteousness is what I need  
Righteousness, Righteousness  
Is what you want for me

{Chorus}  
So take my heart and form it  
Take my mind transform it  
Take my will conform it  
To yours, to yours oh Lord

{Chorus}  
So take my heart and form it  
Take my mind transform it  
Take my will conform it  
To yours, to yours oh Lord

Brokenness, brokenness  
Is what I long for  
Brokenness is what I need  
Brokenness, brokenness  
Is what you want from me

## Icebreaker

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How did your experiment go this last week?  
When is the last time you prayed for someone one-on-one? Share a story about how that happened and the result of it.

## Text for Discussion: I Cor. 5:1-12

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Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

## Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

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Church discipline. Too often we act like this means judging non-Christians for not living up to our standards, while turning a blind eye to the destructive behavior of our fellow Christians... which is the opposite of what we are called to do! We are to have high, high standards for ourselves as God's people, prizing character and moral integrity. Out of God's merciful grace, we are to live into the new, holy identity He has already given us. God calls us to serve our city while set apart from it in our lifestyle – gracious, merciful and engaged in the lives of non-Christians, while not holding them to our Christian standards.

Church discipline is a last resort, tearfully administered as a measure of extreme care. Out of love, we cannot allow our fellow Christian to persist in sin. We resist this call to discipleship because it runs counter to our cherished individualism, so it's worth asking whether we truly care enough to hold one another accountable. This means fighting right alongside our sisters and brothers to combat sin, hoping they will do the same for us. For we will never enjoy life as God intended if we're not walking in the way God commands. But if someone gives up fighting, we cannot sit idly by and pretend like it is ok. This isn't a license to be judgmental; it is a call to love one another with integrity.

**Why do we need church discipline?** God is wiser than we are, and He has called us to live as Christ did because it is the path to true human flourishing. If we aren't willing to hold one another accountable, how can we say we truly love each other? To ignore destructive behaviors is to say they don't have consequences, consigning our brothers and

sisters to sin. When we shy away from church discipline, it destroys the church's reputation in the community as well as its personal integrity. Our lack of moral character causes us to lose what makes us an alternative community to the rest of the world.

**What is the purpose of church discipline?** The purpose is restorative, not to seek retribution. The church is a place of healing, not rejection, and church discipline is a last ditch means of communicating how serious an offense is. It is an effort to destroy the offending person's pride and illusion of self-sufficiency. The health of the church community is being contaminated by abiding flagrant and public sin, and discipline is therefore also a means of preserving and protecting the honor of Christ's church.

**What should our posture be in pursuing church discipline?** If we do not mourn in the midst of it, we are not ready to follow the counsel of these verses. We should see the very same weaknesses we are prone to in the failings of others. And so we mourn for them as well as for ourselves. That is why we humbly weep. God wants better for us than to persist in sin or to allow others to do the same. We are to be the most accepting, least judgmental group in town, so secure in the Gospel that we can go out into the world and engage with it. And we should also be a community where people feel so loved and cared for that the thought of being excluded from it would actually be an incentive to change.

## Guiding Question of the Week

*(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)*

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How do you balance the tension of being gracious to everyone outside the church while holding people inside the church accountable for living a life of holiness?

## Questions for Discussion

*(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)*

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### Opening questions...

- Take turns reading through the entire passage – I Cor. 5:1-12. Remind everyone that this passage is about discipline in the church, not for folks outside the church.
- What is the difference between discipline for restoration and discipline for judgmentalism?
- When it comes to judging others do you tend to be too harsh or too lenient?
  - Are you more lenient and tolerant of Christians or non-Christians? Why?

### Digging Deeper...

- Look at I Cor. 5:7-8. Why does Paul say that we need this?
- Look at I Cor. 5:5-6. What is the purpose of this, both individually and corporately?
- Look at I Cor. 5:12-13. What should be our posture in it?

### Application Questions...

- How can we encourage each other to strive toward a life of holiness?
- What is one thing we can do between now and our next meeting to act on the reality of what we explored today?

## Praying for One Another

*(Here are some ideas from the study to help focus your time in prayer as a group. Use by themselves or along with other prayer requests.)*

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- Thank God that he stood in our place on the cross and died for our sins.
- Pray that we would strive toward a life of holiness.
- Pray that our church would be welcoming and gracious to everyone outside of the church.
- Pray for our world and all of the people who are suffering from natural disasters and human tragedies.

## Experiment of the Week

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Read I Cor. 5:11.

Name the 6 behaviors and put them into contemporary language.

These are things we all we all wrestle with. Have group members pair up and go to coffee with another member of the group to have an honest conversation about how both of you wrestle with your specific area.

Pray for each other daily. At the end of the week write a prayer based on your week-long prayer experiment, and send it to your partner. Open your group meeting next week by sharing how you felt when you read the prayer your partner wrote for you.