

Study Guide: Cutting People Out of Our Lives

This study guide is designed for families, small groups, and Bible study classes exploring the biblical principles surrounding personal relationships, forgiveness, church discipline, and holy separation as outlined in Alan Drake's *Cutting People Out of Our Lives* (from the *Kingdom Leadership Series*).

Overview & Core Principles

Many believers engage in the ungodly practice of permanently cutting off communication and ending relationships over personal conflicts, personality clashes, offenses, or disagreements. However, Scripture outlines that members of the Body of Christ are called to reconciliation and forgiveness. The *only* biblical basis for cutting off a relationship with a fellow believer is an absolute refusal to repent of sin after a clear, compassionate, and step-by-step process of church discipline.

Part 1: Group & Family Discussion Guide

Section 1: Personal Conflicts vs. Holy Discipline

- **The Calling to Unity:** Read 1 Corinthians 12:20–21 and 2 Corinthians 5:18–19. Why is it contradictory for one member of the Body of Christ to say to another, "I have no need of you"? How does cutting someone off over a personal offense undermine the "ministry of reconciliation"?
- **Following Jesus' Role Model:** According to Luke 23:34, Jesus forgave His enemies at the exact moment they were crucifying Him. How does His example challenge the way we respond to people who irritate us, disagree with us, or cause us personal offense?
- **Examining Motivations:** What is the difference between ending a relationship because of a personality clash versus cutting off fellowship due to unrepentant sin?

Section 2: The Biblical Process for Addressing Sin

- **The Steps of Matthew 18:** Read Matthew 18:15–17. What are the four specific steps Jesus outlines for dealing with a believer who sins against you? Why is it vital to keep Step 1 strictly between the two individuals involved?

- **The Goal of Discipline:** In 1 Corinthians 5:3–5, Paul addresses a church member involved in an immoral relationship with his step-mother and instructs the church to "deliver such a one to Satan." What was the explicit purpose of this severe action?
- **Restoration and Forgiveness:** Read 2 Corinthians 2:6–11. Once the disciplined individual in Corinth repented, how did Paul command the church to respond? What did Paul warn would happen if the church failed to forgive and comfort him?

Section 3: Believers vs. Unbelievers

- **Interacting with the World:** Read 1 Corinthians 5:9–11. Why does Paul state that we are *not* to cut ourselves off from immoral unbelievers in the world? What would happen if believers tried to avoid every worldly person who engaged in sin?
- **Dealing with Unrepentant "Brothers":** According to 1 Corinthians 5:11, what specific lifestyle sins, if practiced persistently by a "so-called brother," warrant withholding fellowship (even refusing to eat with them)?
- **Setting Healthy Boundaries:** Read Proverbs 13:20 and Proverbs 22:24. While we do not cut off unbelievers entirely, what biblical boundaries and warnings are provided regarding close companionships with angry individuals or fools?

Section 4: Modern Church Tolerance and Holy Separation

- **The Danger of Leaven:** Read 1 Corinthians 5:6–8. What does Paul mean by the statement "a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough"? How does tolerating sin in a local church body affect the rest of the congregation?
- **Addressing Modern Compromise:** Drake observes that immorality is often tolerated or ignored in modern churches rather than confronted with biblical discipline. Why have modern church leaders chosen tolerance and compromise over holiness and purity?
- **True Separation:** Read 2 Corinthians 6:17–18. How does "holy separation unto God" differ from interpersonal separation driven by personal offenses and disagreements? What leadership qualities are required to restore purity to the Church today?

Part 2: Quiz

1. What was the original statement made by Alan Drake that led his Ukrainian friend to challenge him?
2. According to 2 Corinthians 5:18–19, what specific ministry and message has God committed to believers through Jesus Christ?
3. What is the *only* biblical grounds permitted for cutting off fellowship with a person?
4. True or False: The discipline process outlined in Matthew 18:15–17 applies to both believers inside the church and unbelievers outside the church.
5. What Old Testament scripture is quoted in Matthew 18:16 to establish that "every matter must be proved by the words of two or three witnesses"?
6. What specific sin was occurring in the Corinthian church that prompted Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 5:1?
7. What reason did Paul give in 2 Corinthians 2:11 for forgiving and reaffirming love to a repentant believer?
8. Name two proverbs cited in the text that offer guidance or boundaries on who to avoid as close companions.
9. Which specific list of sins in 1 Corinthians 5:11 disqualifies a "so-called brother" from close fellowship (such as eating together) if they refuse to repent?
10. What type of separation does 2 Corinthians 6:17–18 call believers to practice?

Part 3: Quiz Answer Key

1. **"Jesus, who is our ultimate role model, never cut anyone off."**
2. **The ministry of reconciliation and the message of reconciliation** (reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them).
3. **A believer's refusal to repent of sins** after undergoing the biblical discipline process.

4. **False.** (This process is strictly for believers; Paul explicitly states in 1 Corinthians 5:12–13 that God judges those outside the church).
5. **Deuteronomy 19:15.**
6. **A church member was involved in an immoral sexual relationship with his own step-mother.**
7. **So that Satan would not take advantage of the church**, as excessive sorrow might overwhelm the person and bitterness might take root.
8. **Proverbs 22:24** (do not befriend angry men) and **Proverbs 13:20** (do not keep company with fools).
9. **Immorality, covetousness, idolatry, reviling, drunkenness, or swindling.**
10. **Holy separation unto God** ("Come out from among them and be separate... Do not touch anything that is not pure and clean").

Part 4: Glossary

- **Body of Christ:** The interconnected global and local community of Christian believers, described in 1 Corinthians 12 as one physical body composed of many individual members who depend on one another.
- **Church Discipline:** The biblical procedure outlined in Matthew 18:15–17 and 1 Corinthians 5 intended to confront, correct, and ultimately restore a believer living in unrepentant sin, or remove them from fellowship if they refuse to repent.
- **Leaven:** A biblical metaphor (referring to yeast in dough) representing sin or moral compromise; left unaddressed, a small amount will spread throughout an entire community.
- **Ministry of Reconciliation:** The duty assigned to all Christian believers to restore broken relationships with God and others, reflecting God's act of reconciling the world to Himself through Christ without holding sins against them.
- **So-Called Brother:** A term used by Paul in 1 Corinthians 5:11 to describe a person who claims to be a Christian ("brother") but continues to live openly in habitual, unrepentant sin.

- **Ungodly Person / Tax Collector:** Terms used in Matthew 18:17 to designate the status of an unrepentant believer who has rejected all steps of biblical discipline, signifying that they are no longer to be treated as a brother in church fellowship.
- **Unequally Yoked:** Joining or binding oneself in inappropriate partnerships with unbelievers, or participating with them in sinful, wrong activities that compromise Christian standards.