

Redemptive Discipline in the Local Assembly

An In-Depth Look at Matthew 18

by David A. Huston

This article is presented to explain the biblical basis, process, and necessity of discipline in local assemblies.

*“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”
James 4:6*

Since most of the devil’s devices gain power over us due to our pride and feelings of self-worth, the key to overcoming him is to humble ourselves before God and resist his temptations. The Bible says that if we resist the devil he will flee from us. This means that we must stand against him, not in a passive sense—doing nothing and hoping he goes away—but in an active sense, opposing him through prayer and fasting and the Word. When we engage in these spiritual activities, which crucify our flesh and connect our spirit with God’s Spirit, we are humbling ourselves. We are decreasing and Jesus is increasing. That is when the devil realizes he is no longer facing us; he is facing God. And from God he will flee!

Jesus taught on humility frequently throughout the Scriptures and lived every day of His life as the perfect example of humility and submission to God’s will. His disciples, however, did not fully understand the power of humility and thought that strength and position and “being first” were what gave a person power. But in Matthew 18, when they asked Jesus who was the greatest in the kingdom of God, Jesus called a little child to Himself and gave them an answer they didn’t expect:

“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3-4).

In the kingdom of God, humility is the hallmark of greatness. Job, in the beginning, was full of pride. But at the end, he humbled himself before God and God blessed him. The Bible tells us that if we humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, He will lift us up. It is a myth to believe that God must humble us by putting us through harsh and uncomfortable circumstances. We can choose to humble ourselves so that He does not have to bring these circumstances into our lives.

Jesus tells us that to humble ourselves, we must be like little children— uninhibited, idealistic, honest, excitable, affectionate, dependent. All of these are attributes that we should nurture within ourselves. Jesus did not say that we should be childish, but childlike. This is His way of helping us to clearly see what humility is. His initial answer to the disciples' question set the tone for the rest of the chapter in which He defined true humility:

“Whoever receive one little child like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire. Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven” (Matthew 18:5-9).

In this passage, Jesus tells us that we must receive those who are humble, particularly our brothers and sisters in Christ. He also tells us that we should be extremely careful not to be the cause of offense among our brothers and sisters. Paul told the Corinthians that when they cause a brother or sister to become offended, they are sinning against Jesus Christ Himself (1 Corinthians 8:12). Jesus wants us to understand what real humility looks like. If someone sins against us, we must not get offended and say, “I’ll forgive him when he comes to me and apologizes.” We must take the initiative and humbly attempt to bring about reconciliation. If the person sins against us again, we must continue to forgive him up to four hundred ninety times; in other words, it is always incumbent upon us to forgive...if we desire to be humble.

Redemptive Discipline

The Bible gives many examples of how the members of Jesus' body are to relate to one another. James says that we should confess our faults one to another and pray for one another (James 5:16). Paul says that we should pursue peace among ourselves (Romans 12:18). Peter tells us to love one another fervently with a pure heart (1 Peter 1:22). If we wrong a member of the body or commit sin that defiles the body and refuse to confess it, then we will not be at peace and will not be able to love. This kind of conduct breaks our spiritual union with both God and His body. If we do not repent and make things right, we show the Lord that we are not humble and we alienate ourselves from Him. It is not that God pulls away from us—He said He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). Even when we are unfaithful He remains faithful (2 Timothy 2:13). But when we will not obey His voice or submit to His commands, *we* put distance between us and Him and move further and further away from His presence.

This separation happens in the spiritual realm (i.e. “in heaven”), whether we recognize it here on earth or not. Therefore, Jesus instructs, “If your hand or your foot offend you, cut them off, and cast them from you” (v.8). In other words, if one part of the *body of Christ* offends, then you must *cut it off*. Jesus is speaking in allegorical terms. He is dealing with the same subject Paul was addressing in his letter to the Corinthians when he wrote:

“It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles; that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” (1 Corinthians 5:1-5).

This is sometimes called “redemptive discipline,” a subject many believers don't like to think about. But all believers need to understand it. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul was putting into practice what Jesus taught in Matthew 18. Some may think of this as a great cruelty to “excommunicate” a person and that Paul was being hard-nosed and callous rather than showing mercy. But in the eyes of Jesus, cutting off an offending brother is showing great mercy to that brother and to the body. The body is protected from the influence of evil and the brother is delivered over to Satan for spiritual purging in the hope that he will repent, which is his only hope of salvation.

In Matthew 18, Jesus is saying that if one member of the body transgresses or brings in an irreconcilable offense, then “cut him off.” It is better for the body to enter eternity missing one member than for the entire body to burn up in hell. Jesus then warns, “Take heed that you despise not one of these little ones”—one of these “humble ones.” In other words, even though offenses must come, make sure you are not the one who brings the offense. Why? Because “in heaven” their angels behold the Father on a continual basis. Again, Jesus relates what is happening in the spiritual realm to what is happening in the earthly realm.

Reflecting Heaven on the Earth

Matthew 18 is a window into the heavenly realm through which Jesus teaches us to function properly on earth as the body of Christ. Our purpose on earth is to accurately reflect the reality of heaven. This is why we are to pray, “Your will be done in earth, as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Whatever is going on in heaven we should also want done here on earth. We are earthen vessels. Whatever is going on in the spiritual realm, let us reflect that in this earthen vessel. We are to align ourselves in the flesh with the reality of the Spirit. Only the spiritually-minded will fully understand this principle.

Why must we be careful not to offend those in Christ’s body? Because Jesus says, “The Son of Man has come to save that which was lost” (v.11). When we offend our brothers and sisters, we are standing in direct opposition to the purpose of Christ. We are hindering His fundamental work in the earth, which is to bring salvation to those who are lost. When people are offended, they are not going to be saved. Proverbs 18:19 says, “A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city.” To some people, Jesus is a stumbling block; to some, basic principles of the Bible are stumbling blocks; to some, the cares of this life and the lusts of the flesh are stumbling blocks. As their burden-bearing brothers and sisters, we should not be stumbling blocks. We must instead, with all meekness and lowliness of mind, esteem others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). Then we will be fulfilling the perfect law of Christ, which is loving God and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Paul wrote in Romans 14:13 that no man should “put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.” He then explained the reason for this: it risks destroying the one “for whom Christ died.” Paul also wrote that “when you sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ” (1 Corinthians 8:12). Who would dare to knowingly sin against Christ? He says in the above verses that offending a brother nullifies the effects of the crucifixion of Christ and sins against God Himself. This is a serious offense that many take so lightly!

Matthew 18:12-14 reveals God's attitude toward people which in many ways is the antithesis of our own:

“What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

People are precious to the Lord. He loves people. He died for people. We need to appreciate that. All that Jesus has said up to this point concerning humility, avoiding offenses, cutting off offending members, and His desire to save the lost leads up to verses 15-20:

“Moreover, if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

Jesus first instructs us to talk one-on-one with the offended brother. But if he does not hear, we are then to bring two or three witnesses to the meeting. The purpose in this is twofold: First, the other witnesses may be able to convince the offending brother to acknowledge his transgression. The objective of these encounters must always be redemptive. As Paul instructed, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, you which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness...” (Galatians 6:1). Second, if the offender will not hear, then the presence of the other brethren “establishes the words” and provides additional witnesses to his impenitence. Paul told the Corinthians that he was coming to visit them and was concerned about the reports of improper conduct among some. He told them that each report had to be substantiated by the testimony of two or three witnesses (2 Corinthians 12:20-13:2).

Next, the Lord instructs the disciples that the matter must be brought before the entire assembly, whether it be five or five hundred. If the man will not heed the admonitions of the entire church body, he is to be treated as though he were no

longer a part of that local body. It does not say that he is not actually a part of it; only that he should be treated as though he is a lost soul. It does not say that he is to be treated harshly or contemptuously. We do not treat heathens and tax collectors that way. We are supposed to speak the truth in love to them and “be gentle, to all, apt to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, and that they may come to their sense and escape the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to do his will” (2 Timothy 2:24-26). We are to simply begin treating the offending brother as we would a person who needs to be saved.

Jesus then says, “Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (v.18). According *The Interlinear Bible* by Jay P. Green Sr., the original Greek reads, “Whatever you bind on earth shall occur, being bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on the earth shall occur, being loosed in heaven.” This rendering shows clearly that the Lord was not affirming that He would stand behind every decision of the church, but that the church, which is on earth, must stand behind what He has already decided in heaven. This is the virtual opposite of what it seems to be saying in English. It is not saying that God is going to stand behind us; it is saying that we are required to stand behind God! In this way, there is a logical connection to the previous verse. It is the spiritual explanation of why the person who transgressed will not even respond to the entreaties of the church. We are to interpret this as meaning that he has cut himself off so severely from God that he must likewise be cut off from the body, lest the body become defiled.

According to *Thayer's Lexicon*, the word “bind” means “to forbid, prohibit, declare illicit.” It also means “to tie, fasten, or place in bonds” (see Matthew 13:30; 22:13). In other words, it means to deprive of liberty. The word translated “whatsoever” can also be translated “whosoever,” as it is many times in the New Testament. The way it is translated must be determined by the context. If the translator believes this verse refers to binding evil spirits (as some contend) or church-made laws, then he will translate it “whatsoever.” But if it is referring to people, then it ought to be translated “whosoever.”

To paraphrase the first half of Christ's statement: “Whosoever you (as an assembly on earth) declare to be acting illicitly and therefore prohibit from continued fellowship (according to the procedure just described) shall presently be seen to be in spiritual bondage, having already been deprived of spiritual liberty in the heavenlies.” In other words, Jesus is telling us that if we stand behind Him, He will stand behind us. If we enforce on earth what has already happened in heaven, then this person's spiritual bondage will begin to become evident. The worst thing an assembly can do is allow sin to thrive in the church

and just go on acting like everything is okay.

In Matthew 18:21-22, Peter asked the Lord, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times? Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.” In other words, don’t keep track, just keep forgiving. Jesus then illustrates this concept in verses 23-35 about an unforgiving servant. The man owed a great debt to the king that he could not pay. When the king passed judgment upon him he fell on his face begging the king to be patient and promising him that he would pay it all. The king was moved with compassion and forgave him the debt. But soon after, the servant found a fellow servant who owed him a pittance. He grabbed him by the throat and told him to pay his debt, and the fellow servant begged for patience that he might pay him all he owed. But the servant threw him into prison until he could pay his debt. The King got word of this act from some servants and called the servant to him saying, “You wicked servant! I forgave you all the debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?” The king then delivered this servant to the torturers until his debt was paid.

Jesus began this illustration by saying that this is what the kingdom of heaven is like. In other words, He was saying, “This is what is going on in the spiritual realm, and I am going to convey it to you by telling an earthly story.” This is essentially what all of Jesus’ parables are: glimpses into the spiritual realm through the telling of stories. Each is designed to reveal some element of His spiritual kingdom and how we should act in response to that revelation.

At the end of the story, the servant is delivered to the tormentors. His liberty is taken away; he is bound in the prison of torment. Jesus then concludes Matthew 18 with these words, “So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses” (v.35).

We must understand that whether we fail to forgive, trespass against a brother, or engage in sinful practices, the consequences are the same: alienation from God and bondage in a prison of spiritual torment. It is the responsibility each assembly to enforce on the flesh what is already true in the spirit.

Agreement in the Assembly

When Jesus said, “Again I say to you,” in verse 19, He was reiterating what He had just said about binding an unrepentant church member. This phrase makes verse 19 a further explanation of verse 18. He then says, “That if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father

in heaven.” He is saying here that it is the unanimity of the church that makes this happen. The worst thing for the assembly to do is go on treating the offender as though he has done nothing wrong. This has the effect of sanctioning sin in the life of a brother and inhibits the Lord’s work in that person, the local assembly, and the community.

This action is to take place when the members have “gathered together” in Jesus’ name (v.20). The cutting off is not done in our name, because it is not a personal matter between people; it is the work of the church. Whatever the church does in word or deed it is to do in the name of the Lord Jesus. The church is simply bringing the Lord’s heavenly will into fulfillment on the earth. Therefore, He says that when His instructions are followed in His name, “There am I in the midst of them” (v.20). When we act in His will, as His representatives on earth, seeking to fulfill His purpose of redeeming lost souls, then He is going to be there in the midst of us.

According to the apostle, the brother of 1 Corinthians 5 who was engaging in sexual immorality was supposed to have been taken away from among them. Paul wrote that he had already judged the matter, probably because he had received reports of it from at least two or three sources. He instructed them, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus...” (vv.4-5). They were to gather together and act in Jesus’ name. As they did this, the power of Jesus would be present during the proceedings.

The purpose, as always, was redemptive: “that the spirit may be saved.” They were to fulfill this purpose by delivering the offender over to Satan. The word translated “deliver” in this verse is the same word Jesus used when He said that the king would deliver the wicked servant over to the tormentors. The word “tormentor” refers to a jailor who tests his prisoners by inflicting pain and distress. What better word to describe the work of Satan.

This delivering over to Satan was to be accomplished through a united commitment to no longer keep company with this man. The results were twofold: 1) the offender was effectively made to see that due to his immorality, which was totally inconsistent with his profession of faith in Christ, he was no longer a welcomed part of the believer’s close-knit fellowship; and 2) the assembly was protected from any further encroachment of evil through this individual.

Paul then reminded them, “Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump?” (I Corinthians 5:6). He told them in the verses that follow that they needed to purge out the old leaven so that they could be a new lump. He knew

that the sin of one person could destroy much good. If that person remained in the assembly, Paul knew that eventually the whole assembly would be corrupted with sin. He also explained what he meant when he told the Corinthian church not to eat with sexually immoral people:

“I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner -- not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore ‘put away from yourselves the evil person’” (1 Corinthians 5:7-13).

Paul stated plainly that we are to judge those within the body of Christ and not those who are outside the body. But, if we are honest with ourselves, in most instances the reverse is true. We tend to look down our noses at sinners and look the other way when it comes to our brothers and sisters. We need to accept the responsibility that God has given us to be our brothers’ keepers and to watch out for their souls. The word “judge” tends to denote a critical, malicious, envious, and sometimes even vengeful spirit. But God wants us to see that if judgment is done in the right Spirit, His Spirit, then it actually reveals His compassion and love. We, however, sometimes let our spirits get out of control and allow bad attitudes and criticisms to fester towards brethren who are in sin and fall short of God’s requirement that we love one another. We slough off the teachings of both Jesus and Paul about judging one another with the one, often misquoted verse, “Judge not, that you be not judged” (Matthew 7:1).

The word “judge” in this verse and in 1 Corinthians 5 is the Greek word *krino*, which can mean many things from condemn to draw a conclusion. It has a wide variety of meanings and is used many times throughout the New Testament. The only way we can determine its meaning in any particular verse is to investigate the context in which it is used. In Matthew 7, for example, Jesus is addressing the spiritual condition of the one who is doing the judging. The person was judging his brother according to Matthew 7:3 (which according to Paul is the correct thing to do), but he was doing it with wrong motive and attitude. He had worse sin in his life than his brother did! Jesus said this man’s sin was a plank whereas the other man’s sin was but a speck. Jesus was admonishing the man to get the sin out of his own life before trying to get sin out of his brother’s life.

Note that in this address, Jesus never condemned the man for judging his brother.

In fact, the whole point of the message was to show the man how to judge his brother more properly and effectively: by getting rid of his own sin. In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul told the church specifically that they “truly [were] unleavened.” In other words, they were in good spiritual condition. They were not in sin. This suggests that they would be able to properly and effectively judge their brother in the spirit and power of Christ.

Righteous Judgment

God wants us to arrive at the same spiritual place as the Corinthian church concerning judging our brothers. He wants us to do it, but he wants us to do it with the right attitude. We can look back to Jesus’ scathing condemnations of the Pharisees for their outward holiness and inward corruption and their precise tithing but lack of mercy, love, and grace. He did not condemn their holiness or tithing; He condemned their attitude toward others. He wanted them to do these things, but He also wanted them to have mercy, love, and grace.

The same is true when it comes to judging our brothers. We can judge our brothers with a right spirit and attitude, but it first requires us to get the sin out of our own lives. Many times we neglect to judge sin in a brother’s life because it forces us to address the sin in our own lives. We ease our consciences by quoting Matthew 7:1 and absolve ourselves from our duty to watch out for another, seemingly according to the Scriptures, and feel justified in “turning the other cheek” (which is really our eyes) away from their misconduct. We go about our business feeling as though we have erred on the side of mercy. We’re so merciful, right? We’re so good. No. There’s none good but God and there is only One whose mercies endure forever. The only way we can convey that mercy and goodness to a dying world and dying brethren is to follow His teachings and be led by His Spirit, not by our flesh, which can easily deceive us. “For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself” (Galatians 6:3).

The bottom line is this: When a local assembly fails to purge itself of sin, unforgiveness, offenses, and other disunifying forces, the evil will never go away all on its own; it will only spread and sap the church of its spiritual power. As the Lord said to Joshua, “O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you” (Joshua 7:13). God did not tell Joshua or Paul to wait on Him to purge the body of an offending member. He told them to do it!

One great truth we can derive from this passage is the great protection from evil we enjoy by being faithful to God’s Word and to our local assembly of brothers

and sisters in Christ. Remember that being in Christ disarms the wicked one from touching us (1 John 5:19).

Receiving the Offender Back

The intended result of delivering an offending brother into Satan's prison is the church receiving him back into fellowship once he has repented. The Corinthian church is also an example of this. Paul wrote, "This punishment which was inflicted by the majority is sufficient for such a man" (2 Corinthians 2:6). *The New English Bible* says, "The penalty on which the general meeting has agreed has met the offense well enough." Now, Paul says, the man must be forgiven and comforted; they must confirm their love toward him, lest he be swallowed up in his sorrow.

The church has the power to release such a man from Satan's prison by welcoming him back into fellowship. This is only in response to the spiritual reality of his repentance and acceptance back into fellowship with the Lord. If this man had not repented and reestablished his relationship with Christ, the church would not have accepted him back into the assembly. But it was "loosed" in heaven, and so the church was to enforce God's will here on earth.

This resulting act of acceptance by the church requires a right spirit from the church also. If the people in the assembly have a critical, condemning, unloving spirit toward the brother after they had cut him off, there will be no love or forgiveness in their hearts to welcome him back. The church in this situation is much like the prodigal son's older brother. The Father is welcoming back His wayward son with open arms, but what is our attitude? Do we think he should pay even more than he already has? Are we envious over the celebration in heaven for him when we have been faithful all along and get no "fatted calf killed" or "ring put on our finger?" Or are we humble, meek, and willing to follow the Father's lead as obedient sons?

Humility is the Key

The key to all that we have discussed in this article is humility. If we humble ourselves in the sight of the Lord, He will lift us up. Not necessarily in position or honor in this life. But one day He will lift us up to an eternal place from which we will never descend. That is better than fame, fortune, comfort, security, or anything else this life can offer to stroke our pride and make us feel our self-worth. We must realize that we have no self-worth apart from the precious blood of Jesus that washed our sins away. It is His blood alone that gives us everlasting value. Without

it, we are but the dust of the earth.

When we allow humility to work in our lives, we will not be easily offended, we will not offend others, we will be obedient to the will of God and His plan, and we will eliminate the devil's hold on our lives. If we reject humility, we are rejecting God. Jesus said, "Learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart" (Matthew 11:29). God's Spirit is lowly and humble. We serve a God who humbles Himself to consider the things of the earth, a God who is abounding in grace. The word "grace" literally means to stoop down to pick something up. God had to stoop down to pick us up. He draws close to a humble heart because it is like Him. It is His Spirit working. If we reject humility, we reject God working in our lives. If God's Spirit is not working in our lives, what hope do we have?

The Lord, however, will use the works of Satan to try the faith of the believers, to see if we can be deceived or made to compromise. In Luke 22:31-33, Jesus said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Later, when Jesus was arrested and crucified, Peter was put through a severe test. Was Jesus really the Messiah? Should I follow this man even if it means being arrested and executed? The devil was certainly the one who tempted Peter to deny Jesus three times. He was certainly the one who grated at Peter's flesh until Peter threw in the net and "went fishing," signifying his going back to the old life before he knew Jesus. But as soon as he heard that the Lord was standing on the shore, he plunged into the sea, swam to shore, and took on the Lord's challenge to "feed His sheep." Peter passed the test, not because he didn't fail, but because he turned around after his failure and came back to Jesus. He humbled himself.

Even if we have failed God in the past, turned away from Him to seek pleasures and comforts of this life in discouragement or disillusionment, we can humble ourselves and return to Him for forgiveness. He is faithful if we are willing to confess our faults to Him. His grace is sufficient if we are humble enough to admit our insufficiency. When we are weak, that is, when we recognize and admit our weaknesses, then, and only then, are we strong.

Note to the reader:

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