

# **BCC's Policy of Grace AND Truth**

A Biblical Principle for Churches Setting Moral Policies

**Jesus was both doctrinally conservative and socially tolerant (both/and... NOT ...either/or):**

***John 1:14** - The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of **grace** and **truth**.*

**Jesus commanded obedience to the highest possible standards of morality for His Followers: Purity of even thought & will:**

***Matthew 5:17** – “Do not think I have come to get rid of what is written in the Law or in the Prophets. I have not come to do this. Instead, I have come to fulfill what is written. <sup>18</sup> Heaven and earth will disappear before the smallest letter disappears from the Law... <sup>19</sup> Do not ignore even one of the least important commands. And do not teach others to ignore them. If you do, you will be called the least important person in the kingdom of heaven. Instead, practice and teach these commands. Then you will be called important in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>20</sup> Here is what I tell you. You must be more godly than the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. If you are not, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven... <sup>27</sup> “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ <sup>28</sup> But here is what I tell you. Do not even look at a woman in the wrong way. Anyone who does has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

**Yet Jesus demonstrated the most gracious possible response to non-believers living in lifestyles of sin:**

***John 8:3** - The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman. She had been caught committing adultery. They made her stand in front of the group. <sup>4</sup> They said to Jesus, “Teacher, this woman was caught sleeping with a man who was not her husband. <sup>5</sup> In the Law, Moses commanded us to kill such women by throwing stones at them. Now what do you say?” <sup>6</sup> They were trying to trap Jesus with that question. They wanted to have a reason to bring charges against him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. <sup>7</sup> They kept asking him questions. So he stood up and said to them, “Has any one of you not sinned? Then you be the first to throw a stone at her.” <sup>9</sup> Those who heard what he had said began to go away. They left one at a time, the older ones first. Soon only Jesus was left. The woman was still standing there. <sup>10</sup> Jesus stood up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Hasn’t anyone found you guilty?” <sup>11</sup> “No one, sir,” she said. “Then I don’t find you guilty either,” Jesus said. “Go now and leave your life of sin.”*

**Jesus taught the process for Church discipline and excommunicating unrepentant members living in lifestyles of sin:**

***Matthew 18:15** - “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. <sup>16</sup> But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ <sup>17</sup> If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as*

you would a pagan or a tax collector. 18 “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

**Paul taught the process for Church discipline and excommunicating unrepentant members living in lifestyles of sin:**

**1 Corinthians 5:1** - *It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that even pagans do not tolerate: A man is sleeping with his father’s wife. 2 And you are proud! Shouldn’t you rather have gone into mourning and have put out of your fellowship the man who has been doing this? 3 For my part, even though I am not physically present, I am with you in spirit. As one who is present with you in this way, I have already passed judgment in the name of our Lord Jesus on the one who has been doing this. 4 So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present, 5 hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh,[a][b] so that his spirit may be saved on the day of the Lord. 6 Your boasting is not good. Don’t you know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new unleavened batch—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old bread leavened with malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote to you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people— 10 not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. 11 But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister[c] but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. 12 What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? 13 God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.*

**Paul taught to fully restore penitent church members:**

**2 Corinthians 2:5** - *If anyone has caused grief, he has not so much grieved me as he has grieved all of you to some extent—not to put it too severely. 6 The punishment inflicted on him by the majority is sufficient. 7 Now instead, you ought to forgive and comfort him, so that he will not be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. 8 I urge you, therefore, to reaffirm your love for him. 9 Another reason I wrote you was to see if you would stand the test and be obedient in everything. 10 Anyone you forgive, I also forgive. And what I have forgiven—if there was anything to forgive—I have forgiven in the sight of Christ for your sake, 11 in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.*

**Conclusion:** Christians must learn to be “full of grace and truth” like Jesus Christ: Neither condemning nor condoning; both fully truthful about the highest standards of Biblical morality and yet fully gracious towards those caught in sin.