

# Expression of Grief

by St. Polycarp of Smyrna

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*St. Polycarp exhorts the Church to abstain from covetousness and to be chaste and truthful, emphasizing the importance of self-governance and the need for repentance.*

**Topics:** "Christian Discipline", "Church Leadership"

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## Description

St. Polycarp of Smyrna expresses deep concern for Valens, a former presbyter, urging the congregation to abstain from covetousness, practice chastity, and truthfulness, while avoiding all forms of evil. He emphasizes the importance of self-discipline and leading by example, warning that failure to do so can lead to defilement and judgment. Despite his disappointment in Valens, Polycarp commends the rest of the congregation for their faithfulness and encourages them to show compassion and bring back those who have strayed, in order to build up the body of believers.

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## Transcript

I am greatly grieved for Valens, who was once a presbyter among you, because he so little understands the place that was given him [in the Church]. I exhort you, therefore, that ye abstain from covetousness, and that ye be chaste and truthful. "Abstain from every form of evil." For if a man cannot govern himself in such matters, how shall he enjoin them on others ? If a man does not keep himself from covetousness, he shall be defiled by idolatry, and shall be judged as one of the heathen. But who of us are ignorant of the judgment of the Lord ? "Do we not know that the saints shall judge the world ?" as Paul teaches.

But I have neither seen nor heard of any such thing among you, in the midst of whom the blessed Paul laboured, and who are commended in the beginning of his Epistle.

For he boasts of you in all those Churches which alone then knew the Lord; but we [of Smyrna] had not yet known Him. I am deeply grieved, therefore, brethren, for him (Valens) and his wife; to whom may the Lord grant true repentance! And be ye then moderate in regard to this matter, and "do not count such as enemies," but call them back as suffering and straying members, that ye may save your whole body. For by so acting ye shall edify yourselves.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/st-polycarp-of-smyrna/expression-of-grief/>

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