

# Matthew 18:15-17

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## Introduction:

- A. It is essential that we understand the Lord's teaching on what to do when we find ourselves at odds with one another
  - 1. We know we are to forgive him when he repents - Luke 17:3
  - 2. What do we do if he hasn't repented?
    - a. Treat him with anger, coldness, or unkindness?
    - b. Talk about him with others?
    - c. Report him to the elders or preacher?
  - 3. Jesus has given us a specific set of instructions on what to do when a brother has wronged us. It is just as clear as the instructions on how to obey the gospel, and just as binding.
- B. Read Matthew 18:15-17 - Describe context and subsequent parable

## I. Matthew 18:15

- A. The word brother means a fellow-Christian; Christians are called brethren because they belong to the same redeemed family, have the same Father, and because they are united by the same feelings, purposes, and destiny.
- B. Sins against you... injures you in any way, by words or conduct. This may be done by injuring the character, person, or property.
- C. Go and tell him his fault.
  - 1. This was required under the Law of Moses - Lev. 19:17.
    - a. Would the law of Christ require any less?
  - 2. Seek an explanation of his conduct; and if he has done wrong, administer a friendly and brotherly reproof.
  - 3. This is required to be done alone:
    - a. That he may have an opportunity of explaining it. In nine cases out of ten, where one supposes he has been injured, a little friendly conversation would set the matter right.
    - b. That he may have opportunity to acknowledge his offence and correct it, if he has done wrong. Many would be glad of such an opportunity, and it is our duty to furnish it.
    - c. That we may admonish him of his error with the least potential for harm to the work of the Lord. This should not be broadcasted. It can do no good. It does injury. It is what the enemies of religion wish. Christ is often wounded in the house of his friends; and the church, as well as an injured brother, often suffers by spreading such faults before the world.
- D. You have gained your brother.
  - 1. To gain means to preserve or to save - 1Cor. 9:19.
  - 2. It includes the idea that you have regained him as a Christian brother.
  - 3. Luke 17:3; James 5:20

## II. Matthew 18:16

- A. If he spurns or dismisses you or will not be entreated by you, and will not reform, take witnesses. The purpose:

1. That he might be induced to listen to them. They should be persons of influence or authority; his personal friends, or those in whom he could put confidence.
2. That they might be witnesses of his conduct to the church - Matt. 18:17.
3. The Law of Moses required two or three witnesses - Deut. 19:15
  - a. Would the law of Christ require any less?

### **III. Matthew 18:17**

- A. The church means the whole assembly of believers.
- B. If he refuses to hear the Church, let him be... The Jews gave the name heathen or Gentile to all other nations but themselves. With them they had no religious interaction.
  1. Publicans were men of abandoned character, and the Jews would have no association with them.
  2. The meaning of this is, cease to acknowledge him as a brother. Regard him as obstinate, self-willed, and guilty.
  3. It does not mean that we should cease to show kindness to him, and aid him in affliction or trial; for this is required towards all men; but it means that we disown him as a Christian brother, and treat him as we do other men not connected with the church.
- C. This must not be done till all these steps are taken. This is the only way of kindness. This is the only way to preserve peace and purity in the church.
  1. If you don't talk to him first, you don't talk about him with anyone else
  2. "Well then, I'll just stay away from him and say nothing."

### **IV. Matthew 5:21-26**

- A. The Law taught God's children to forsake wrath and anger - Psalm 37:8
  1. So does the law of Christ - Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 4:31-32
- B. Jesus addressed the seriousness of anger in our interactions with brethren
  1. We should not attempt to worship God when we are at odds with a brother - Matt. 5:23-24
    - a. Repair strained relationships with a brother before worshipping
    - b. Just as a husband must treat his wife with understanding if he desires to have his prayers heard - 1Peter 3:7
  2. Wrong emotions toward others can kill our relationship with God
    - a. 1John 3:14-16
- C. We should be quick to make amends lest uncontrolled anger cause us to wind up in the worst case scenario - Matt. 5:25-26
  1. Many hot-heads let anger prompt them to say or do things that cannot be corrected or repaired
    - a. Wrong emotions can murder our relationships with man as well
  2. Note how Christians are to act - Rom. 12:17-21

### **Conclusion:**

A. Whether you are the brother who has been sinned against, or the one that has done harm to another, God requires you to go talk to your brother before you come to worship God, and before you tell any another soul about the matter. No exceptions!