

ADVANCED BIBLICAL COURSE



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What to Do if Your Brother Sins Against You?

MATTHEW 18:15-35

Often, in our Christian relationships a brother or sister grieves, or sins against someone else, or against me. We see it and try to act as though it didn't happen. The devil, "*the accuser of the brethren*" continually reminds me. We build up a barrier. It soon becomes a major issue, and we build up a barrier between ourselves and that person. Then we are out of fellowship with that person. The whole work of God suffers as a result. To brood over an issue can poison the whole mind and life of an individual. Eventually it begins to fill our horizon.

I CHRIST'S PROCEDURE – VERSES 15-17

- ◆ The all-important factor
 - Christ wants a pure Church.
 - We must maintain the unity of the Spirit – at any cost.
 - We must maintain the love of the fellowship at any cost. He who sees his brother sin and keeps silence is equally in fault with him.
- ◆ The biblical procedure
 - Calm down first.
 - Forgive them before you go.
 - Seek an opportunity through prayer – then...
 - Approach him/her alone – go to him privately, just he and you. This guards his reputation; and makes it easier for him to repent. Go personally. Don't write or phone. Letters normally cause more trouble than good. A letter can be misread or misunderstood. It sometimes conveys a tone, which the writer never intended. Face-to-face is better.
 - Confront them with their fault – state your basis.
 - Be gentle – your motive is to “win your brother back again;” not to make a fool of him or to simply expose him.
 - Be specific – don't beat around the bush. Don't take your frustrations out on him. Don't bring up his past failures. Just that one sin. Don't judge.

- Humble yourself – don’t act superior. Let him know that you understand that this could have happened to anyone, including yourself.

Galatians 6:1, *“Brother, if any person is overtaken in misconduct or sin of any sort, you who are spiritual (who are responsive to, and controlled, by the Spirit) should set him right and restore and reinstate him, without any sense of superiority and with all gentleness, keeping an attentive eye on yourself, lest you should be tempted also.”* Don’t pass judgement. Matthew 7:1-2, *“Do not judge and criticize and condemn others, so that you may not be judged and criticized and condemned yourselves. For just as you judge and criticize and condemn others, you will be judged and criticized and condemned, and in accordance with the measure you use to deal out to others, it will be dealt out again to you.”*

- Be loving – go in love, remembering that *“love covers a multitude of sins.”* (1 Peter 4:8)

- Seek to win them back, not drive them out.
- Pray before you go.
- Pray while you are there.
- Pray after you leave.

◆ If they don’t listen, take one or two witnesses

- **Your choice of witnesses.**

Those that are spiritual. Those that stand for the truth. Those that will not be biased and will not seek to vindicate friends. After all, you could be wrong. You might be misled or misinformed.

- **The reason for witnesses.**

To help the process of reconciliation. They can create an atmosphere where we can both see ourselves as others see us.

◆ Then take your case before the Church – let them decide prayerfully

The hallmark of a disciple is love. John 13:35, *“By this shall all men know that you are My disciples if you have love one to another (if you keep on showing love among yourselves).”*

In this atmosphere, saturated with prayer and Christian fellowship, personal relationships may be righted. The Church’s judgement is to be love and truth, not the letter of law.

◆ If he still doesn’t respond, excommunicate him

You can no longer treat him, or regard him, as a fellow believer and true follower of Jesus Christ. But you must still love him and seek to win him back. Never slander him. Make it easy for him to repent and return.

II CHRIST'S PROCLAMTION – VERSE 18

If the Church follows Christs pattern, He endorses the decision and outcome.

- ◆ If the offender repents, Christ forgives and accepts.
- ◆ If the offender has to be excommunicated, He supports that decision.

III CHRIST'S PROMISE – VERSES 19-20

- ◆ As we agree, He is in our midst.
- ◆ As we agree, He works. We should agree for the offenders restoration.
- ◆ Prayer must go hand in hand with discipline. Matthew Henry: “Pass no sentence which you cannot in faith ask God to confirm.”
- ◆ We are to forgive always verses 21-23.