

Maintaining Christian Fellowship
Matthew 18:15-20
Wednesday, July 24, 2024
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They would learn many lessons from the Lord, but one of those lessons would be humility. He Himself embodied humility, He demonstrated this to them.

Matthew 17:27

Matthew 18:1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

In Mark's account he allows us to see deeper into what has transpired.

Mark 9:33-34

If we fail to deal with the circumstances, they will bring about discord and divisions within the body, that is the church.

Our Lord has a great love and value for His sheep. **Matthew 18:12-14**

*** We have to learn to speak the truth in love.

This is the secret of Maintaining Christian Fellowship.

Wiersbe ~ "Humility and honesty must work together in producing harmony."

The Lord wants to help us resolve issues or conflicts that can exist between brothers and sisters in church.

"He who cannot forgive breaks the bridge over which he himself, must pass."

~ George Herbert

*** Remember that the intent in bringing correction is always to restore a believer.

1. The Process of Restoration Verses 15-17

2. The Authority given to the Disciples Verses 18-20

1. The Process of Restoration vv. 15-17

v. 15

"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private;

~ We see that in our text, it is the one who has been offended that has to go to their brother or sister that has sinned against you.

Go and show him his fault in private;

Listen to what is said concerning this in the Old Testament. **Leviticus 19:16-18**

Why go and publicize what has happened?

*** In speaking to others about them, or the problem, is it going to resolve anything? Or is it going to cause more problems?

*** Understand this, when you talk about other people, gossip, you are giving a bad testimony not only of your life, but the life of your brother and sister, and ultimately, a bad testimony of our Lord.

~ When all is said and done the only thing that you are doing is demonstrating your immaturity.

~ It is immaturity because in reality you are acting in the flesh and not walking in the spirit.

~ What is it that we are to do when someone is gossiping?

v. 15

Now, when we look to the purpose, it is to win your brother or sister over. That is to restore them because they have sinned.

It is to win them over and be reconciled.

But once again the best way to go to such a one is in humility.

Matthew 18:4 Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Galatians 6:1-2 New Living Translation

I believe that we can see the importance of taking this first step; "in going" to them in humility, with the idea of restoring them, to win your brother or sister over.

v. 16

It is very possible that this can happen. They may not want to listen to you, and reject you, and what you are saying. Don't allow this to upset you and get angrier.

You must remain in that attitude of humility, in prayer, and return to them with a couple of brothers or sisters that are mature in the Lord so they can serve as witnesses.

The Laws regarding the testimony of individuals was established in the Old Testament. **Deuteronomy 19:15**

Please understand that in involving others, bringing in brothers and sisters into such a matter, we would hope that this means greater love in winning them over.

~ It is also so that they hopefully would understand the seriousness of what is being brought to their attention.

v. 17

Now, we can see from this verse that some conflicts are not going to be resolved. This is the time that you now bring it to the church. This is the last step in this process to try to restore this person.

They will be unwilling to repent or ask for forgiveness. When this happens, we see the instruction that our Lord gives us as a church. **and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.**

So, there is no other course of action but to see them as **a gentile and a tax collector**. What does that even mean? This means that they are no longer a part of the church, exclude them.

Titus 3:10-11

New Living Translation

¹⁰ If people are causing divisions among you, give a first and second warning. After that, have nothing more to do with them.

¹¹ For people like that have turned away from the truth, and their own sins condemn them.

Galatians 6:1-2 New Living Translation

I remind you that we are to help one another, but at the same time we need to be broken over sin.

James 4:9-10 New Living Translation

*** If they repent, and ask for forgiveness, that changes everything and they don't have to leave.

1 Corinthians 5:3

Yes, we are to judge those in the church.

1 Corinthians 5:12 For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Do you not judge those who are within *the church*?

In **Matthew 7**, Jesus taught us that we are not to judge the motives of others because it is only God that can do that.

He doesn't want us to be hypocrites in our judgements.

Matthew 7:5

1 Corinthians 5:4-5

So, the church had to deal with this situation.

We see that they assembled **In the name of our Lord Jesus,**
This is the basis of all our assemblies. Not religion.

We see an official assembly of the church to deal with the offense,
following the instructions laid out by our Lord here in **Matthew 18.**

1 Corinthians 5:5

1 John 5:19

**We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies
in *the power of the evil one.***

1 Timothy 1:19-20

We do have the Lord's protection in our lives, but when you find yourself out
of fellowship, out of the church, we have no idea what awaits us.

1 Corinthians 5:11

Paul is not speaking of a non-believer, he is speaking of a so-called believer.
One that declares himself to be a believer, but his actions tell us otherwise.

I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother ~

Literally letting us know that we should not get mixed up with them.
Don't associate with a so-called brother that is under church discipline, one
that has been turned over to Satan.

They need to be denied fellowship. Believers are not even to eat with such a
one, which speaks of an intimate relationship.

2. The Authority given to the Disciples vv. 18-20

v. 18

We see that this authority has been given to the disciples. This is so that we
understand that the church has this authority to do these things.

v. 19

But understand that the said individual has been given various opportunities
to repent. There has been much grace extended. But it is them that are
unwilling to repent.

John 20:23

God will honor the decisions that take place here, that is when they are done
in accordance to what the scriptures have laid out for us.

v. 20

It is God who guides us in making such decisions through His Scriptures and
Holy Spirit. May it be the Lord that is in our midst whenever we have to take
any of these steps.

Application:

1. The first step; humbly go to your brother or sister that has sinned against you privately with the hopes of winning them.
 2. Second step; if they are unwilling to listen take two or three mature brothers or sisters to confirm what has been said.
 3. Third step; if they are still unwilling to listen, tell it to the church.
 4. Fourth step; if they are unwilling to listen to the church, let them be as gentile or tax collector. Cut off that relationship.
- *** Remember the goal here is to restore them.