

Matthew 18:15-17

Luke 17:3 - “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him.”

What Do We Do If Our Brother Hasn't Repented?

- Treat him with anger, coldness, or unkindness?
- Talk about him with others?
- Report him to the elders or preacher?
- 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.

Matthew 18:15-17

- “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. 16 But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' 17 And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”

Matthew 18:15

- Brother means a fellow-Christian
- Injures you in any way, by words or action
- Go and tell him his fault
 - This was required under the Law of Moses
 - Lev. 19:17 - “You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin because of him.”
 - Would the law of Christ require any less?
 - Seek an explanation of his conduct; if he has done wrong, administer a friendly and brotherly reproof

Matthew 18:15

- This is required to be done alone:
 - That he may have an opportunity of explaining it.
 - That he may have opportunity to acknowledge his offence and correct it
 - That we may admonish him of his error with the least potential for harm to the work of the Lord

Matthew 18:15

- “You have gained your brother”
 - To gain means to preserve or to save
 - 1Cor. 9:19 - “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more”
 - It includes the idea that you have regained him as a Christian brother
 - Luke 17:3 - “Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him”
 - James 5:20 - “Let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.”

Matthew 18:16

- “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'”
- If he spurns or dismisses you, or will not be entreated by you, or will not reform, take witnesses. The purpose:
 - That he might be induced to listen to them
 - That they might be witnesses of his conduct to the church

Matthew 18:16

- The Law of Moses required two or three witnesses
 - Deut. 19:15 - “One witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of two or three witnesses the matter shall be established.”
 - Would the law of Christ require any less?

Matthew 18:17

- “And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”
- The church means the whole assembly of believers.

Matthew 18:17

- 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.
 - Publicans were men who abandoned moral character, and the Jews would have no association with them.

Matthew 18:17

- This means to cease to acknowledge him as a brother. Regard him as self-willed and guilty.
- It does not mean that we should cease to show kindness to him, or help him in affliction or trial
- But it does mean that we disown him as a Christian brother, and view him as other men who are not part of the church.

Matthew 18:17

- This must not be done until all the steps are taken.
- If you don't talk to him first, you don't talk about him with anyone else
- “Well then, I'll just stay away from him and say nothing.”
 - Not if you want to go to heaven...

Matthew 5:21-26

- The Law taught God's children to forsake wrath and anger
 - Psalm 37:8 - "Cease from anger, and forsake wrath; Do not fret-it only causes harm."
- So does the law of Christ
 - Eph. 4:31-32 - "Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God in Christ forgave you."

Matthew 5:21-26

- So does the law of Christ
 - Gal. 5:19-21 - “Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, 20 idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, 21 envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Matthew 5:21-26

- We should not attempt to worship God when we are at odds with a brother
 - Matt. 5:21-24 - “You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

Matthew 5:21-26

- Repair strained relationships with a brother before worshiping
- Just as a husband must treat his wife with understanding if he desires to have his prayers heard
 - 1Peter 3:7 - “Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.”

Matthew 5:21-26

- Do you really believe that your worship to God today is acceptable to Him while you are harboring hostility toward another one of His children?
- Wrong emotions toward others can kill your relationship with God
 - 1John 3:14-16 - “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love his brother abides in death. 15 Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Matthew 5:21-26

- We should be quick to make amends lest uncontrolled anger and grudges cause us to land in the worst case scenario
 - Matt. 5:25-26 - “Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.”
 - Some let anger prompt them to say or do things that cannot be corrected or repaired

How Christians Are To Act

- Rom. 12:17-21 - “Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord. 20 Therefore If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Lesson

- 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, and before you tell any another soul about the matter. **No exceptions!**