

## “Go show your brother his fault” - Matthew 18:15-20

Pastor Burt Garwood – April 30, 2017

Jesus gave us a step before Matthew 18. READ: Matthew 7:3-5. These verses are focused 100% on you and how you’ve contributed to the problem before you ever confront the other person. Assuming that you’ve accomplished step one from last Sunday, let’s jump in...

**Step 1:** Overlook minor offenses. *“It is to a man’s glory to overlook an offense.”* (Proverbs 19:11)

- This means you aren’t sweating the small stuff. You put the best construction on the actions of others, assuming they have the best of intentions and your best interests in mind.
- You might say to the other person, “Just wanted to connect with you to see if I’m off base with what I heard you say. Taken one way, it could really hurt. Did you mean it that way? Because I don’t really think you did.”
- Overlooking an offense can also look like this: “No worries. No biggie. I forgive you.”

Do not confuse overlooking an offense with cheap grace.

- Cheap grace says, “Not a problem”, while the other person keeps on sinning and wounding you. But that’s not holding someone accountable to their wrongdoing, it isn’t repairing anything.
- The words “I forgive you” are extremely important for the other person to hear, because they originate from our Father-God and they open the gates of heaven to let God’s Holy Spirit work the grace and forgiveness that only Jesus can truly give...as it’s spoken through us. So, make sure that if you’re going to overlook an offense, that you say something like, “We’re good. I forgive you. Grace abounds.” READ: James 5:20.

When wondering whether to overlook an offense, ask: Is it dishonoring God? Has it damaged your relationship? Is it hurting other people? Is it hurting the offender? If you answer yes to any of these, it’s important that you move forward to gently confront them.

Some people have a hard time confronting. They don’t like to make waves. They just want everyone to be happy. They don’t have a backbone. They want to be liked by others. They don’t have the guts to confront. But most importantly, they don’t understand the importance that God places on humans holding each other accountable for sin as God’s representatives.

People quote this verse to avoid confronting: *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged.”* (Matthew 7:1)

- When said by itself, this verse is taken completely out of context. This verse was the setup for what we looked at last week, and that was judging another person without first looking at our own sin.
- People quote this verse and say, “Isn’t it God’s job to show people where they are wrong?”
- Jesus didn’t tell us not to confront. He taught us how to confront. (Matthew 7:1-5 and Matthew 18:15-20)

Galatians 6:1 *“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.”*

- The purpose of confrontation is not to judge them, but to gently restore them.
- Indifference is the opposite of love. When we allow someone to continue in their ways, they are hurting their relationship with God and with others.
- God isn’t calling us to be “hands off.” We are in relationship together to hold each other up, build each other up, and keep each other from falling.

**Step 2:** If it can’t be overlooked, then talk to the person in private. READ: Matthew 18:15

- Elements of effective confrontation: Pray ahead of time. Choose the right time and place. Put the best construction on the issue. Talk in person, face to face. Use a gracious tone of voice and friendly body language. Be objective: use facts, not opinions or conclusions. Use the Bible carefully. Don’t preach. Apply God’s law so they see where they’ve fallen short. Apply God’s grace to offer a message of forgiveness.
- Your job is to speak the truth in love. God’s job is to change people.

**Step 3:** When do you involve others? READ: Matthew 18:16

- You can’t just confront them once and then involve others. You might have to talk with them alone, just the two of you, several times over a period of time. When this doesn’t work, then you bring in others. Others are brought in to help mediate, encourage goodwill, clarify facts, and generally guide the discussion.

**Step 4:** When do you involve the church? READ: Matthew 18:17

- Ask your small group leader for help. Or call me and we can process this together.
- Telling the church doesn’t mean we’re sending out a congregation-wide email airing your dirty laundry.
- It means you’re being intentional about involving the one place that can help people understand the true essence of an apology, forgiveness, grace and restoration...because these things originate with God the Father in heaven and are carried out through his church on earth (Matthew 18:18).
- Your attitude this entire time should be to win your brother over relationally, not win the battle. To glorify God, and bring your brother closer to Jesus through this process.

Treat them as you would a “pagan or tax collector.” Matthew 18:17

- How did Jesus treat pagans or tax collectors or sinners? He loved them enough to tell them the truth and hold them accountable. He won them with his gentleness, love and his gracious attitude.
- You treat the other person like Jesus treated sinners: That means you do whatever you possibly can speak the truth in love and to win them for Christ.