

**Handling Conflict Biblically**

**SKILLS:  
PURSUING A SINNER**

# Checkpoints in Conflict Resolution

God has designed certain circumstances to remind us of the burden to live at peace with all men (Romans 12:18).

- ⦿ Communal worship (Matthew 5:23)
- ⦿ Communion (1 Corinthians 11:27-29)
- ⦿ Prayer (Psalm 66:18, 1 Timothy 2:8, James 4:3)
- ⦿ Each day (Ephesians 4:26-27)
- ⦿ Anything done to draw closer to the Lord (Psalm 15:3)

# Review

- When we see sin in another believer, God gives a clear plan for restoring them graciously.
- Just as Christ took initiative to come and save sinners, so we take initiative to care for others.
- Among the values of Matthew 18 are humility, obedience, privacy, Biblical clarity, persuasion and restoration.
- We don't seek brotherly discipline but brotherly restoration!
- Show urgency, but allow time.
- PRAY (2 Timothy 2:24-26)!

# Results of Private Confrontation

What can happen after privately addressing a person's sin?

- ⦿ You might be wrong.
- ⦿ They need time to think.
- ⦿ They reject it outright.
- ⦿ They truly repent.
- ⦿ They give a social apology.
- ⦿ They try to drop the issue.
- ⦿ They don't think it's a sin.

# What Should We Do Next?

Here are the results again, with Biblical next steps:

- ◎ You might be wrong. **Matthew 7:5 / Ephesians 4:15**
- ◎ They need time to think. **Matthew 18:15 / 1 Thessalonians 5:14**
- ◎ They reject it outright. **Matthew 18:16 / 1 Thessalonians 5:14**
- ◎ They truly repent. **2 Corinthians 2:7-8**
- ◎ They give a social apology. **Luke 17:3-4 / Proverbs 28:13 / Matthew 18:15**
- ◎ They try to drop the issue. **Proverbs 28:13 / Matthew 18:16**
- ◎ They don't think it's a sin. **UH-OH! See next slide**

# Disagreements on Moral Judgments

What do you do if your brother does not think he sinned?

- ⦿ Consider the type of sin in question:
  - For matters that do not extend beyond personal piety (or “service to Christ” in Romans 14:18), “accept the one who is weak in faith” (i.e. one whose standards go beyond Biblical commands, Romans 14:1).
  - For one-time questions of interpretation of motives, accept a seemingly genuine claim of integrity and drop it (1 Corinthians 13:7).
  - For accusations involving disputed memories or incomplete perspectives, you might not have enough information to form a clear conviction of sin (“show him his fault”), so let the matter go without harboring a grudge.
- ⦿ Request that the brother state their reasons for the potentially sinful action.
- ⦿ Seek the advice of church elders using non-identifying information to discuss the matter.
- ⦿ Revisit the conversation using clear, compelling, Biblical definitions to frame the discussion.
- ⦿ **REMEMBER, IT’S NOT WRONG TO TAKE TIME TO REACH A UNIFIED RESOLUTION!** (Sins of time are only present when you delay the resolution or you rush through for the purpose of judgment.)

WHAT IF THEY DON'T LISTEN?

# Who Are The “Others”?

- ◎ The main question is what they witness.
- ◎ Two Options
  1. They witness the original sin.
  2. They witness the interaction.
- ◎ Huge Impact
  - If #1 is correct, then no private sin (e.g. marital infidelity without witnesses) could go beyond private confrontation.
  - If #2 is correct, small misunderstandings in private conversation could be made into big distractions!

# Who Are The “Others”?

- ⦿ How do we solve this problem?
  - When is the term “witnesses” used?
  - What is the goal of Matthew 18:16?
  - When is a judicial act taken?
- ⦿ Solution: #2 – They witness the interaction.
  - The previous objection is a valid concern. It must be addressed by the mature handling of the situation that recognizes multiple possible outcomes and keeps the goal of restoration in mind.

# What Do The “Others” Do?

- ⦿ Test your motives, facts and conclusions (Proverbs 20:5, Proverbs 27:6, Matthew 7:1-5)
- ⦿ Pray with you (Matthew 18:19-20)
- ⦿ Plan the conversation (Proverbs 21:5)
- ⦿ Determine the spiritual state of the sinning brother (1 Thessalonians 5:14)
- ⦿ Listen to the sinning brother (Proverbs 18:17)
- ⦿ Make their own independent judgment about the accusation (Matthew 18:16b)
- ⦿ Decide and agree with the other confronters about the certainty of sin and whether the process has accomplished its goal (Matthew 18:15, 19-20)

# Matthew 18:16 – What Do You Do?

- ⦿ Pray (2 Timothy 2:24-26)!
- ⦿ Refine and reexamine your perspective Biblically.
- ⦿ Keep frustration and anxiety away! Your brother needs heart surgery; a distracted, upset, hot-headed heart surgeon will not be helpful!
- ⦿ Make sure that you have given every opportunity for persuasive conviction before expanding the matter (Matthew 18:16a).
- ⦿ Ask for review and input by the “others” prior to another confrontation (Matthew 7:1-5).
- ⦿ By winsome persistence, gain another hearing with the sinning brother (Matthew 18:16).
- ⦿ Express your desire to win restored fellowship, not to win an argument (Matthew 18:15b).
- ⦿ Allow the possibility for further meetings, additional study and the course of time to persuade your brother.

# How Can You Select “Others”?

- ⦿ Those who know and faithfully apply the Scripture (2 Timothy 3:16)
- ⦿ Those who are persuasive and careful with their speech (Proverbs 25:11-12)
- ⦿ Those who are not meddlers, but who express a pure desire to help (Proverbs 16:17)
- ⦿ Those who could not reasonably be accused of a conflict of interest (Deuteronomy 16:19, Proverbs 24:28-29)
- ⦿ Those who think carefully and critically (Proverbs 18:17)
- ⦿ Those who can sympathize with the one trapped in sin (Hebrews 4:15)...
- ⦿ YET someone who is not entangled by the same sin (Hebrews 12:1)
- ⦿ Those who can keep a matter private (Matthew 18:15)
- ⦿ Those whose character and history would be trusted if the matter went further (Matthew 18:16b-17)

# Questions

