

Handling Conflict Biblically

**SKILLS:
PURSUING A SINNER**

Review

- ⦿ Our charge is to pursue and restore believers who are caught in unrepentant sin.
- ⦿ When another believer will not listen to our private appeals for repentance, we should take one or two others with us and continue the private appeal.
- ⦿ The other believers will assist the church by witnessing the call to repentance and adding their wisdom to it.

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 (Matthew 18:19-20, 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.

Compare 18:15 with 18:16

The similarities between the verses show us that the same framework is in place:

Similarity	18:15	18:16
Parties involved	“you” & “your brother”	“you” and “he [your brother]”
Initiative	“go”	“take...with you” (implied going)
End of step	“if he does not listen to you” (18:16a)	“If he refuses to listen to them” (18:17a)

What Else Stays the Same?

We can reasonably deduce that other factors stay the same as well:

- Show him his fault – We must bring objective, compelling, Biblical data to convict of sin.
- In private – We must be careful not to spread knowledge of the sin or of our pursuit.
- You have won your brother – Our goal remains the forgiving restoration of our brother or sister in Christ.

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)

How Fast is Too Fast?

Critics rightfully identify that church pursuit and church discipline either:

- 1) Happen too quickly and are hasty.
- 2) Happen too slowly and serve no purpose.

What is the standard that Christ uses for the progression of church pursuit?

- Refusing to listen

What is Refusing to Listen?

- ⦿ Admitting the sin yet being unconcerned about it
- ⦿ Flaunting one's lack of repentance
- ⦿ Denying well-established facts about the sin with no contrary information
- ⦿ Declining to meet to further discuss the matter may be refusing to listen

What is NOT Refusing to Listen?

- ⦿ Taking time to think about whether a sin occurred
- ⦿ Debating the interpretation of the facts
- ⦿ Declining to meet to further discuss the matter if one feels provoked, antagonized, rashly judged, etc.
- ⦿ Asking for more Biblical proof
- ⦿ Continuing in the sin because one does not know how to escape it

Questions

