

Restoring Others with a Gentle Spirit

Introduction:

1. Before a conflict can be resolved, there are two key principles that we must personally apply to our lives:
 - Examine ourselves.
 - Free ourselves from sin.
2. But once we have done this it may be necessary to talk to others about their shortcomings, so that they might see where they have been wrong and where they need to change.
3. Although we should be willing to overlook minor offenses, there are some problems that will only grow worse if they are not dealt with in a straightforward way.
4. God's Word certainly teaches us that there is often a need to lovingly confront others about their sin. Galatians 6:1
5. How do we discern whether or not the need exists to confront others? In this lesson, we will answer that question.

Confrontation is necessary when you discover that someone has something against you.

1. When this happens, God wants you to take the initiative in seeking peace even if you do not believe you have done anything wrong.
2. If you believe that another person's complaints against you are unfounded, or that the misunderstanding is entirely the other person's fault, you may naturally conclude that you have no responsibility to take the initiative in restoring peace.
 - This is a common, but false, conclusion.
 - Jesus taught the opposite in Matthew 5:23-24. cf. Romans 12:18, 14:19
3. What benefit is there in doing this?
 - It enhances your Christian witness. Luke 6:32-36
 - It allows you to experience greater peace of mind.
 - By carefully listening to others, you may discover sins you were not aware of.
 - You may be able to help them see that their complaints are unfounded.
 - Either way, you will gain a clear conscience. This is crucial for your internal peace and your relationship with God.
 - It demonstrates love and concern for the other person.
1 Thessalonians 4:9-10, 5:11-15
 - If the other person is carrying bitterness and unresolved anger in his heart towards you, this will hinder his fellowship with God and expose him to judgment. Ephesians 4:30-31
 - It can eat at his heart like an acid and leave him spiritually and emotionally scarred.

- Out of love, you should go to that person and do everything within your power to resolve the matter. It may mean confronting your own wrongs or helping him to see there is no basis for the complaint.
4. Of course, you must remember that you cannot force somebody to sit down and listen to you. Ultimately, they must be willing to sit down, talk, and listen. If they refuse to talk, then you must simply commit it to God in prayer.

Confrontation is necessary when someone’s sins are too serious to overlook.

1. Jesus clearly taught this in Luke 17:3. How can we discern when another person’s sin is serious enough to call for confrontation?
2. Listed below are a few questions to ask yourself:
 - Is their sin dishonoring God to others? Matthew 21:12-13; Romans 2:23-24
 - If they are behaving in such a way that others are likely to think less of God, of His church, or of His Word, it may be necessary to confront them and urge them to change their behavior.
 - Is their sin damaging your relationship?
 - Anything that has disrupted the peace and unity between two believers must be talked over and made right.
 - This is pleasing to God. Psalm 133:1; 1 Corinthians 1:10
 - Is their sin hurting others?
 - Another person’s sin mustn’t be overlooked if it is resulting in significant harm to you or others. This can happen in various ways.
 - They may be hurting or imperiling others in a direct way (child abuse, drunk driving).
 - It must be dealt with quickly and firmly, lest others be led astray by the bad example. 1 Corinthians 5:1-13
 - Is their sin hurting or jeopardizing them?
 - It could be doing direct damage, or it could be adversely affecting their relationship with God or other people.
 - Unfortunately, many believers have adopted the world view that everyone should be allowed to “do their own thing.” As a result, some believers will do nothing even when they see a brother or sister ensnared in a serious sin.
 - This is not the kind of love Jesus demonstrated, nor is it consistent with the clear teaching of Scripture. Proverbs 27:5-6, 28:23; Matthew 18:15; Galatians 6:1; 2 Timothy 2:25-26
3. The Bible certainly endorses constructive confrontation, but this is not a license to be a busybody. We should **not** be eagerly looking for opportunities to point out the faults of others. If we are eager, we are probably disqualified from doing so.

Common excuses that people use to neglect confrontation:

1. Matthew 7:1 – *“Judge not that ye be not judged.”*

- This passage does not forbid confrontation, but explains when and how confrontation should occur.
2. Matthew 5:39 – *“Turn the other cheek.”*
 - This passage is teaching to not seek vengeance against those who have wronged you.
 3. *“Who am I to tell someone else what to do?”*
 - While it is true that we have no right to force our personal opinions on other people, we do have a responsibility to encourage fellow believers to be faithful to God’s truths contained in Scripture.
 4. *“Isn’t it God’s job to show people where they are wrong?”*
 - God often uses another person to speak the words that people need to hear so that they will change their course and repent of their wrong actions.
2 Timothy 2:24-26

In Conclusion:

We are commanded in Galatians 6:1 to restore a person who is overtaken with a sin:

- *“Overtaken”* – caught; or surprised; or ensnared
- *“Restore”* – to mend; repair; equip