

war of the roses

part 3

1 Corinthians 3:1-9

Matthew 18:15-20



This week we continue The War of Roses from 1 Corinthians 3:1-9.

We have been learning how to deal with conflict, or division: conflict in marriage; conflict between friends; conflict in the workplace; and conflict in the church.

In our study we've learned every conflict has a Situation, a Source and a Solution. The Situation is believers acting as unbelievers. The Source is jealousy which results in strife. And the Solution is to glorify God.

This week we will see a clear and godly process for reconciliation.

The pulpit study guide is written weekly by the pastoral staff of Crossroads Community Church. It is designed for small group leaders to use as a discussion facilitation tool during small group meetings. If you would like to join a small group at Crossroads, drop us an email to smallgroups@crossroadswired.com or give us a call at 419-529-0750 – Ext. 109.

Group Study Questions

- Read Matthew 18:15-20.

*“In this passage Jesus gives a clear and godly process for reconciliation.
Two points: Motive & Method.”*

– Tim Armstrong

- So what is [or should be] our Motive for reconciling a conflict?
[Refer Wiersbe's expository outlines]

- Why is this so difficult? [Matthew 18:15a]

- Two things are inclusive in this passage:
 - Brother [any believer]
 - Sin [any sin]

- So why is Jesus so emphatic that any sin by any believer needs to be confronted? [Matthew 18:15b]

- What is the point, or the purpose of confrontation & correction? What is the Motive?

Matthew 18:15-20

¹⁵ “If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸ Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

- Time for a Motive check!
 - What has been your Motive when confronting or correcting a believer?
- Read 1 John 1:9.

- Read Galatians 6:1 & James 5:19-20
- With the correct Motive, does God's Word leave us an option whether we should get involved?

Galatians 6:1
 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.

James 5:19-20
¹⁹ My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, ²⁰ let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

- What's the greatest temptation? Not to get involved.
 - Discuss.
- There are four steps to the Method, or process of confronting and reconciling with a brother outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. Can you identify them?
 1. Confront _____ [18:15a]
 2. Confirm with _____ [18:16]
 3. Confess _____ [18:17a]
 4. Corporately _____ [18:17b]
- Jesus is very specific in telling us the 1st step in the Method for confronting & reconciling with a brother.
 - What is the last word of Matthew 18:15a [ESV]?
 - We are to Confront Personally. Who else should be involved?

- Only *after* the 1st step, do we move to the 2nd step in confronting and reconciling with a brother.
 - From Matthew 18:16 [ESV] we see that we Confirm with Others.
 - Deuteronomy 19:15 verifies that witnesses are used confirm the sin.
 - Why do we do this? To demonstrate love. To gain a brother. What is the risk of not following these steps?

- The 3rd step is to Confess Publically.
 - This can mean everyone or those in leadership.
 - Read Hebrews 13:17 and discuss.

- The 4th step is to Corporately Avoid.

"This step might be the most difficult and the most misunderstood."
– Tim Armstrong

 - What is the reason we are to corporately avoid? Why?

- Conclude by discussing again the Motive of this process for reconciliation.
 - To demonstrate love. To gain a brother.

For Further Study Believer's Bible Commentary¹

18:15 Explicit instructions are given concerning the Christian's responsibility when wronged by another believer. First, the matter should be handled privately between the two parties. If the offender acknowledges his guilt, reconciliation is achieved. The trouble is that we don't do this. We gossip to everyone else about it. Then the matter spreads like wildfire and strife is multiplied. Let us remember that step number one is to **"go and tell him his fault between you and him alone."**

18:16 If the guilty brother does not listen, then the wronged one should take **one or two** others with him, seeking his restoration. This emphasizes the mounting seriousness of his continued unbrokenness. But more, it provides competent testimony, as required by the Scripture: **"that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established'."** (Deut. 19:15). No one can measure the trouble that has plagued the church through failure to obey the simple rule that a charge against another person must be supported by the testimony of two or three others. In this respect, worldly courts often act more righteously than Christian churches or assemblies.

18:17 If the accused still **refuses** to confess and apologize, the matter should be taken before **the local church**. It is important to notice that the local assembly is the body responsible to hear the case, not a civil court. The Christian is forbidden to go to law against another believer (1 Cor. 6:1–8).

If the defendant refuses to admit his wrong before the church, then he is to be considered **a heathen and a tax collector**. The most obvious meaning of this expression is that he should be looked upon as being outside the sphere of the church. Though he may be a true believer, he is not living as one, and should therefore be treated accordingly. Though still in the universal church, he should be barred from the privileges of the local church. Such discipline is a serious action; it temporarily delivers a believer to the power of Satan "for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus" (1 Cor. 5:5). The purpose of this is to bring him to his senses and cause him to confess his sin. Until that point is reached, believers should treat him courteously but should also show by their attitude that they do not condone his sin and cannot have fellowship with him as a fellow believer. The assembly should be prompt to receive him back as soon as there is evidence of godly repentance.

MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997). *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Mt 18:14–20). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

For Further Study **Wiersbe's expository outlines²**

Christ is dealing with “family matters” and He moves now from children to the relationship between brethren. If all Christians were perfect, there would be no need for these instructions, but because we fail and sin, we need to know how to keep the church family happy and holy.

A. Church discipline (vv. 15–20).

The pattern is clear: first a private interview, then bring two or three witnesses, then take it to the church. Note the purpose: “You have gained a brother” (v. 15, NKJV). The motive for church discipline is love: we are seeking to help a sinning brother. Since Christ is in the midst of the church (v. 20), it is also important that the church be obedient and pure. Our attitude should not be that of a policeman out to arrest a criminal, but rather that of a physician seeking to heal a wound in the body of Christ, a wound that will spread sickness and death if left alone.

Verse 18 indicates that the “binding and loosing” ministry has to do with applying the Word of God in matters of discipline. Paul “bound” the offending brother in Corinth in 1 Cor. 5 and “loosed him” after he had confessed (2 Cor. 2). This has nothing to do with the eternal destiny of a soul. Verse 19 suggests that prayer is an important factor in church discipline. Certainly we want to pray for the offender and for ourselves that we might be spiritually able to minister (Gal. 6:1). For other passages on church discipline, see Rom. 16:17, 2 Thes. 3:14, and 1 Cor. 5.

Wiersbe, W. W. (1997). *Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament* (68–69). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.