

Just because we are not to judge others does not mean we are not to acknowledge and resolve problems. What is the difference between judging someone and acknowledging a problem that exists between people?

The goal of this study is to look at a biblical approach to resolving conflicts as they potentially occur within the family of God. Though the focus here is within God's family, many of the principles will be applicable to life outside the church as well.

People you have wronged

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Why does Jesus say to make things right with another believer before you come to worship God?

What is the role of the altar?

People who have wronged you

Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV)

"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. ¹⁶ But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony 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, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

What is the four stage process for reconciliation when a believer has wronged you?

(Though this focuses on another believer, the principle is applicable with everyone.)

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____

Why should we always approach the person on a one to one basis first?

Why are we inclined to talk to others about a person who has wronged as opposed to talking to the person?

What is wrong with this approach?

What should we do if someone starts to vent to us about another person?

Who is always the one who should initiate reconciliation?

Why is it beneficial to take someone else along if the first approach doesn't work?

Why should an unresolved issue between two believers be taken to the church?

John 17:20-23 (NIV)

"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one. ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 13:34-35 (NIV)

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

What is the problem with holding on to grudges?

We will discuss the meaning of the last step during the next session and what happens if the offender refuses to submit to the church.

Resolving conflict is a significant aspect of learning to submit to one another.

Other believers who are wronging God

Galatians 6:1-5 (NIV)

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. ³ If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴ Each one should test his own actions. Then he can take pride in himself, without comparing himself to somebody else, ⁵ for each one should carry his own load.

Why would we ever confront someone else about their sin? Isn't that being judgmental?

What are some reasons we might not feel comfortable approaching another person regarding their sin?

Why are all these reasons insufficient?

When confronting sin, what should be our basis for our perspective?

Why does Paul stress that we should restore others gently and to watch ourselves so that we won't be tempted?

Romans 12:14-21 (NIV)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*

¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another.*

Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.

Do not be conceited.

¹⁷ *Do not repay anyone evil for evil.*

Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.

¹⁸ *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

¹⁹ *Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.*

²⁰ *On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."*

²¹ *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Dying to self and submitting to others is an all-encompassing commitment.

Which of the above phrases in Romans 12 do you find the most difficult?

Time for personal reflection:

Write down any names that come to your mind that you believe the Holy Spirit is prompting you to talk to.

Make a commitment to connect with that person within the next week or at the earliest time possible.

Matthew 5:9 (NIV)

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.