

THE BIBLE VIEW

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Volume: 940 January 15, 2024

Theme: Getting Along

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Handling Conflicts

Bill Brinkworth

“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. 16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. 17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

Matthew 18:15-17

Everybody has had a problem with somebody sometime. What does the Bible say to do when you are offended?

It does not say to start a smear campaign and tell everybody your side of the situation to get them on “your side.” That usually gets a bunch of people bitter at one another. When you do that and convincingly get others to think you are right and the other wrong, you bring the innocent listener “shame and folly” (Proverbs 18:13) for making him judge a situation without hearing the other side.

The Bible also does not say to hold it all in when another has offended you. That often results in one having a severe case of “bitterness” against that person. Waiting around for that person to come to you and get it right is also not on the Bible’s recommended list of ways to handle problems.

If the person is a Christian, God’s Word says to go to the offender. Many times, that person may not even know they offended you. Going to the person one-on-one will often solve the problem.

When you go to that person, you may discover:

- He did not mean it the way you understood it.
- That you heard it wrong!
- A new way of looking at a matter.
- That you were 100% wrong!

I have often been embarrassed when talking with someone and finding that my being upset at them was not justified. It takes courage to face a person when they have offended you, and

they may not always accept your confronting them. That is why the next step to get the problem solved is found in Matthew 18:17-18.

There may be a time in settling differences between you and another that you may have to bring an unbiased person with you to be a witness in further communications with the offender. Rarely, it may even be necessary to take the matter in front of the church if the Christian is a member of your church.

People shudder at the Bible's way of handling a problem. Most do not deal with the situation correctly. That is why there are so many disgruntled people in churches. It is also why many "... soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:19), and some live with bitterness.

Follow God's advice in solving a problem between one another. Our heavenly Father knows best; He has raised billions of children!

"Love is the doorway through which the human soul passes from selfishness to service and from solitude to kinship with all mankind." — Author Unknown

Don't Let the Carnal Fight the Carnal!

Bill Brinkworth

Like so many Christians even today, Paul faced opposition from other Christians. Some in the churches he spoke at questioned his apostleship, and others accused him of walking in the flesh (II Corinthians 10:2).

No matter the accusation, Paul chose not to fight back. He decided not to fight those who were carnal with his own carnal retorts. He was determined to let his works for the Lord speak for themselves and let the Lord do the rest of the battling (II Cor. 10:4-8).

Most who attend a church may have someone falsely accuse them of something or else have one's feelings hurt at least once. No church is perfect. It is a God-commanded assembly of believers, and it may have mostly Christians in attendance, but none of them are perfect.

Some members of the church family are more carnal than others. They see things from a fleshly perspective, not how God sees them (II Cor.10:5). To make matters worse, they often voice their opinions about other members. When this is done, someone usually gets hurt.

Too many, unfortunately, get wind of what was said about them and leave the church — never to darken the ministry again. My first thought is usually, "Who would be behind such a move of leaving a church for the wrong reasons — God or Satan?" It certainly would not be of God to disobey His commandment (Hebrews 10:24-25) to assemble with other believers, yet people leave churches all the time for the wrong reasons.

There have been times that my wife and I also have had things said about us by other church family members. The false accusations hurt us deeply, but we remembered that we were not in attendance for the accusers but for God. He wanted us to stay, and we did. It was a hard time, and we prayed much about the situation.

We never missed a meeting, and we kept at the work the Lord had for us. Over time, we looked around and noticed that our accusers were no longer in attendance. God does take care of his own, but that does not mean that there will not be difficulties.

Paul stayed and did what God told him to do, and God used him greatly. His accusers names are not even mentioned in the Bible, but Paul is still remembered. Be a “Paul.” Purpose in your heart whom you will serve, and then let the Lord handle the light work!

“Hopefully, you didn’t go to church for ‘feelings’, so don’t leave if they get hurt. You should be going to church to be obedient to the Lord!”

Love Them No Matter What

We are not only to get along with other Christians, but we are to love them.

- *“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13:34*
- *“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.” John 15:12*
- *“For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Gal. 5:14*
- *“These things I command you, that ye love one another.” John 15:17*
- *“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” Romans 13:8*
- *“And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you.” I Thess. 3:12*
- *“But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.” I Thess. 4:9*
- *Also: Heb. 13:1, I Peter 1:22, 2:17, I John 3:11, 23, I John 4:7, 11-12.*

Foolish Words

Bill Brinkworth

Proverbs 18 brings to light behavior tolerated by most but not accepted by God. His Word shows that those types of conduct are foolish.

We see here that foolishness:

- Is not wanting to understand all sides of a matter. The fool is more concerned about doing what feels right or seems the best thing for him to do. This sounds more like the desire today to do what is popular rather than what is logical, moral, fact-related, or helpful.
“A fool hath no delight in understanding, but that his heart may discover itself.”
Proverbs 18:2
- Is making a decision or judgment after hearing only one side of the situation or story. Without knowing all sides of an account and only portions of what is considered, wrong assumptions will be made. Facts are often not the fool’s concern, as they prefer

decisions based on emotions and not truth.

“He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him.”

Proverbs 18:13

- Are words that are often disliked and shameful. Sadly, the speaker may not even realize the derogatory impact of his speech on others.

“A fool's lips enter into contention, and his mouth calleth for strokes.” Proverbs 18:6

- Often comes off one's lips and ruins one's character, respect, and testimony. Many times, it is not even realized that one's worst enemy is one's thoughts and words.

“A fool's mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.” Proverbs 18:7

After reading the wisdom of these four types of foolishness, it should bring to mind the actions and words heard today from prominent speakers, politicians, media outlets, and others. Their statements may be eloquent and contain official-sounding, ten-dollar catchy phrases, but much of what we hear is not wisdom. In God's eyes, much of what is said and accepted is still foolish.

“The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.” Proverbs 15:2