



# The Tri-Cities Edifier

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## Dealing with Sin Against You

Have we gotten far away from the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18 and Matthew 5:23-27? It seems that if someone sins against you in our day and time, what you do is you go and tell and talk to everyone but the one who has sinned against you. Or if you know someone has something against you, instead of going to them you just put your head down and keep quiet. This is the easy way out but it is the wrong way out of the controversy or sin.

Let's put the passages before us.

*“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY WORD MAY BE ESTABLISHED.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. Matthew 18:15-20*

*“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.” Matthew 5:23-27*

### Some points from Matthew 18:15-20

There is a plan before us that leads to a way to achieve a favorable outcome.

The first step is to have only the two parties meet; the offended and the offender. If there has been a misunderstanding or the person asks for forgiveness, the matter is settled in a very private manner. (verse 15)

If there is no resolution to the problem the number of people who will participate next is still limited so as to not have a big blow up. The person who has been sinned against will ask one or two others to help resolve the situation. It may very well be that the witnesses may be able to point out inconsistencies, fallacies or will be able to aid the one party in seeing what they have done is wrong. The outcome that you want is for sin to be dealt with and dealt with in a godly manner. Attitudes and anger must be kept in check at all times lest the situation grow to an even bigger problem.

If however there is still no resolution the matter is now taken to the church. Now the members of a congregation can try to help. It may be that no one up to this point has been able to help but the right person at the right time is able to bring the situation to an end with repentance and confession.

If however there is still no resolution the sinner is to be as a heathen or tax collector to the members of the church, meaning the members will have no company with them. (2 Thessalonians 3:14) The aim of all of this is “to rejoice over one sheep” that went astray but has been found. (earlier in Matthew 18:10-14) Maybe the last step will at last wake that person or persons up!

### Some points from Matthew 5:23-27

When we remember someone has something against us, our response to resolve this should be immediate and swift. What is against us needs to be dealt with before we come before God. Situations ought not to be given time to fester. If you know something isn't right do your very best to resolve it quickly.

When you think of the two passages together, if both parties are of a spiritual mind, one brother will be heading to the other to discuss what he has against him and the other brother will be headed to meet him knowing the brother has something against him.

None of us should be on a seek and destroy mission but on a restore and be saved mission. None of us should just go crying out to any and everyone who will listen to us about the wrong that has been done to us and no one should just put their head down and ignore their offenses. God's way is right and if followed properly, the situation stands the best possible chance for there to be a happy ending.

Heaven for all!

STACY

## Sometimes the Best Advice is: "DON'T LISTEN"!

Jarrold Jacobs

Do we have a problem with listening too much? Sometimes we hear things said about us that are really none of our business. Why do we listen, and why do we take these words to heart? Solomon teaches us a hard lesson in Ecclesiastes 7:21, but it's a lesson that will help us immensely if learned.

The Holy Spirit inspired the following: "Also take no heed unto all words that are spoken; lest thou hear thy servant curse thee." What a lesson! In a time when we want to hear all, and when social media allows us to hear it, let's go back and listen to Solomon. He reminds us that this isn't always a good idea! "Take no heed" means essentially, don't take it seriously. I've had to tell people (and tell myself), "consider the source!" This is the essence of Ecclesiastes 7:21.

Don't listen, nor take to heart everything that falls out of someone's mouth (or keyboard). An enemy doesn't have your best interests in mind, anyway. Someone may ask, "What if it's a friend saying harmful things?" As someone once told me, "Hateful statements are sometimes made by kind people." We don't always know what a person's disposition is when they say things. You may be the nearest person to criticize when a friend is angry! Someone has said, "He was in the line of fire." Listen, dear one -- "take no heed"!

As I thought about Ecclesiastes 7:21, I also thought about the other side of this "coin." You see, it's true that harmful statements can be made in a moment, and yes, there are times when a person does damage with his sharp tongue (Jas. 3:2, 5-6, 8; Ecc. 5:6; Prov. 26:18-19). Yet, have we ever thought about the fact that perhaps some of the damage could've been lessened if we'd not taken it the way we did? Maybe there would've been no lasting damage done if, after we have heard someone say something, that we remembered the words, "For oftentimes also thine own heart knoweth that thou thyself likewise hast cursed others" (Ecc. 7:22)!

In other words, before we get too offended at what someone has said about us, remember that we probably did the same thing already! Did you mean it, or was your mouth in gear while your brain was in neutral? Were you angry, and this person was just the easiest "target"? Maybe that's what happened to our friend, too. Think the best about people instead of thinking the worst (I Cor. 13:7). See how your life is bettered for it!

I know it is a hard pill to swallow in a society that prefers "information overload," but sometimes, the best advice is: "Don't listen!" You'll be happier when you don't have your nose in other people's business. Furthermore, the one who said something hateful will have some time to calm down, reflect, and repent before things get worse. Isn't this the way we live Matthew 7:12 and 22:39?