



## **A Practical Guide** **To the Righting of Wrongs**

**Introduction:** Before we consider the people involved in the ways that the Scriptures say that wrongs should be righted, we will give some definitions for clarification.

**The offender** – the one who has done wrong.

**The offended** – the person who has been wronged.

**The observing brother** – the Christian who sees a brother sinning.

**Confession** – the verbal acknowledgement that one has done wrong according to God's standards.

**Restitution** – the act of restoring, or making good (as far as possible) all damage that has been caused in this wrong.

**Repentance** – Godly sorrow for a wrong that results in action according to God given procedures and a return to God and His ways.

**Faith** – the acceptance of God's ways as the only one for Christian living and conduct.

### **I. Basic goals and principles in the righting of wrongs.**

#### **A. Basic goals.**

1. To restore all damaged relationships.
2. To involve the minimum number of people.
3. To examine ourselves and see where and why we have come up short of God's best and to correct the causes so that it will not happen again.

#### **B. Basic principles.**

1. The Christian who first becomes aware of a wrong has the responsibility to initiate and carry out God's given procedures in taking care of it till it has reached a satisfactory completion.
2. The time element involved. One ought to proceed as quickly as possible within the framework of God given procedures.
3. If you are not sure what to do, seek the counsel of a spiritual elder – but do not use any names.



## II. God given procedures for righting wrong.

### A. Within the family of God.

#### 1. When one is the offender.

- a. It must be first set right with God.

"Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; according to the greatness of Thy compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, I have sinned, and done what is evil in Thy sight, so that Thou art justified when Thou dost speak, and blameless when Thou dost judge." Psalm 51:1-4

- (1) Confession to God (I John 1:9).
- (2) Repentance to God (2 Cor. 7:9-11). (I will go Your way.)
- (3) Acceptance of God's forgiveness.
- (4) Restitution towards those who have been hurt.

- b. It must be set right next with those offended.

- (1) Confession to the offended.
- (2) Asking for forgiveness.

#### NOTE:

#### Wrong approaches –

- "I was wrong, but you were, too."
- "I am sorry, but it was not all my fault."
- "I am sorry". (Not enough)
- "If I have been wrong, please forgive me."

#### Right approach –

"I realize I have been wrong in \_\_\_\_\_  
(basic offense). Will you forgive me?"

Do not get into details.



Do not let the devil get you confessing every thought. Many of them have been his arrows – temptation is not sin. It is only those things that have hurt others.

The circle of confession should be only as large as the circle of offense.

(3) Making satisfactory/necessary restitution.

Areas in which restitution needs to be made.

- (a) Anything stolen must be returned.
  - (b) Lies told need to be confessed.
  - (c) Gossip, slander, etc., that has hurt relationships and reputations must be repudiated.
  - (d) Gratitude for favors received must be given.
  - (e) Rebellion against authority experienced in attitudes and actions must be replaced with submissive spirit and actions.
- c. It must be set right with myself. (Sin always damages you – Psalm 32:1-4).
- (4) Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself.
- (5) Seek cleansing from the cause of the sin.

**2. When I am the offended.**

I must seek reconciliation with the offender. Matt. 18:18-35. (Handle the matter the minute it happens, if possible.)

- a. Self-examination. Under the Holy Spirit we must examine ourselves to see if we contributed any way to the wrong that was done. Did I provoke?
- b. Prayerful preparation. Prayerfully we must go to the offender with a committed attitude of forgiveness and reconciliation.
- c. Wise face to face confrontation. A good approach would be, "Have I done something that has caused you to be angry at me?" "Did you forget to return the saw I loaned you?" (Always give them the benefit of the doubt, and promote an attitude that wants restitution.
- d. Finalize the matter. Do not leave until you have done all in your power to consummate the matter by the full restoration of relationship. Pray together.



**3. When I am an observing brother.** (Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20; Matthew 5:9)

- a. Make sure of one's own spiritual condition. Gal. 6:1 seems to indicate only "the spiritual" ought to handle this. This means someone who has been walking with the Lord. Take time to make sure your obedience is up to date.
- b. Approach the party whom you believe is the most likely to initiate God's procedures – have in mind a procedure to suggest to them.
- c. At times, it will be appropriate to go with them in the effort and to participate.

**NOTE:** One needs to be very, very careful, and Spirit led in these procedures. Yet, one cannot avoid one's God given responsibility to be a peace maker.

**B. Without the family of God.**

**1. When one (the Christian) is the offender.**

Follow the same procedures as within the family of God.

**2. When one (the Christian) is the offended and the observer.**

As the offended, you must forgive without any demand from them, or to them. (Matt. 6:12,14,15; Luke 6:35-37; Romans 12:14-21)

As the observer, pray for them - but you have no responsibility to correct their errors:

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS.**

**A. Terrific advantages in righting wrongs.**

1. It humbles a man – a quality necessary for God's blessings.
2. It draws people together to seek and to give forgiveness always draws people together.
3. It exalts God – the power to say "I am wrong", and then to ask forgiveness always exalts God.
4. It results in a good conscience and the destruction of roots that cause habit patterns.



**B. Basic truths (Bill Gothard).**

1. Satan's program of defeat is to cut off lines of communication with those who are keys to the solution.
2. Our lack of love for an offending brother is a far greater detriment to the spread of the Gospel than whatever fault we try to expose or correct in his life.
3. The mark of spirituality is not whether we are able to expose a brother, but are we able to restore.
4. Judging another is sin (Matt. 7:1). Discerning their spiritual condition is a gift (I Cor. 12: 10). The difference between the two is our desire and ability to give steps of correction.

**“The broken relationships of the  
PRESENT go back to the  
UNHEALED HURTS of the PAST”**