



A Guide to Confession or How Wrongs Are Righted

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not so short that it cannot save; neither is His ear so dull that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, so that he does not hear."

Isaiah 59:1,2

"If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear." Psalm 6:18

"So shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

Matthew 18:35

INTRODUCTION

Before we consider 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 wronged.
- The observing brother** – the Christian who sees a brother sinning.
- 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.



BASIC SCRIPTURES

Matthew 5:23,24; Matthew 6:12,14,15; Matthew 18:1-35

I. Basic Goals and Principles in Righting Wrongs.

A. 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.

B. Basic Goals

To restore all relationships in the quickest time possible, while involving as few people as possible.

II. God Given Procedures for Righting Wrongs

A. Within the Family of God

1. When you are the offender.
 - a. It must be 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. (II Corinthians 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 am sorry, but if only you had not..." (sharing blame)
- "I am sorry, forgive me.", (not enough)
- "If I have been wrong, I'm sorry."

Right Approaches:

- "I see that I have been wrong in _____.
- (Name basic offense) Will you forgive me?

IMPORTANT!

It is not necessary to get detailed in your confession, just name the basic offense. The devil would want you to confess every thought.

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

c. **Making satisfactory/necessary restitution. Areas in which restitution needs to be made.**

- 1) Anything stolen must be returned.
- 2) Lies told need to be confessed.
- 3) Gossip, slander, etc., that has hurt relationships and reputations must be repudiated.
- 4) Gratitude for favors received must be given.
- 5) Rebellion against authority experienced in attitudes and actions must be replaced with submissive spirit and actions.

d. **It must be set right with yourself. (Sin always damages you - Psalm 32:1-4).**

- 1) Accept God's forgiveness and forgive yourself.
- 2) Seek cleansing from the cause of the sin.



2. When you are offended.

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

- a. **Self-examination.** Under the Holy Spirit you must examine yourself to see if you have contributed in any way to the wrong that was done. Did you provoke?
- b. **Prayerful preparation.** Prayerfully you 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?" (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 you are the observing brother.

(Galatians 6:1, James 5:19-20, Matthew 5:9)

- a. Make sure of one's own spiritual condition. Galatians 6:1, seems to indicate only "the spiritual" ought to handle this. This means some one 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.

NOTE: You need to be very careful, and Spirit-led in these procedures. Yet, you cannot avoid your God-given responsibility to be a peacemaker.



B. Without the family of God.

1. When you (the Christian) are the offender.
Follow the same procedures as within the family of God.
2. When you (the Christian) are the offended and the observer.
As the offended, you must forgive without any demand from them, or to them. (Matthew 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 drawing 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.

1. It is possible to genuinely love someone, and still be bitter and resentful. This builds walls between people and without them realizing it.
2. Forgiveness is not a feeling, but an act of obedience. Get things right – even if it hurts.
3. The way you react when hurt, can help determine what your basic root problem is.
 - 1) Anger – revenge – bitterness
 - 2) Self pity and withdrawal
 - 3) Fear of rejection and failure.

"The broken relationships of the Present go back to the UNHEALED HURTS of the Past."