



**Matthew 18:15 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. (KJV)**

### **If thy brother...**

Thayer's Definition: *adelphos* - "From the womb"

- a brother, whether born of the same two parents or only of the same father or mother, having the same national ancestor, belonging to the same people, or countryman, any fellow or man, a fellow believer, united to another by the bond of affection, an associate in employment or office, brethren in Christ

### **Shall trespass against thee...**

"Trespass" - Strong's #264 *hamartano* (ham-arten'- o); perhaps from 1 (as a negative particle) and the base of 3313; properly, to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize), i.e. (figuratively) to err, especially (morally) to sin: KJV-- for your faults, offend, sin, trespass.

- A personal offense.
- Observing someone missing the mark.

The words "against you" do not appear in some manuscripts as reflected by some translations. However, when anyone sins (misses the mark), they bring harm to the reputation of Christ and offends the body of Christ, which is made of all Christians! When David sinned, the prophet said, "Thou has given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme." (2 Samuel 12:14)

The immediate response when we see a brother missing the mark is to think, "He/she hasn't actually offended me, therefore, I'm not responsible." But Scripture makes it every Christian's responsibility when another Christian stumbles. When one member of the body hurts, the whole body suffers. (Romans 12:5) (Gothard)

### **Go And Tell Him...**

Going to an offending brother to restore him has been and always will be God's greatest test of genuine love. The goal is restoration. Only a "spiritual" person can restore one "caught in a sin." (Galatians 6:1)

It is easy to pass judgment in our mind and then forget it. It is also easy to tell someone else in a spirit of genuine concern and hope they will do something about it.

***Galatians 6:1 Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (ESV)***

### **ONE TRUTH**

If God gave me the opportunity to exchange my life for the establishment of one truth among all Christians and I wanted to make my life count to the greatest possible extent, I would choose the truth of Matthew 18 in the spirit of Galatians 6:1.

If every Christian were committed to this principle, three results would transform the church into a dynamic force in our nation and the world. Disloyalty with its gossip and slander would cease and give way to a rich fellowship among sincere Christians; Christians would become a corrective and edifying force to each other with the result that weaker Christians would be strengthened and false teachers would be exposed; and the world would believe that God sent His Son with a message of hope for them.

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### **STOPPING A BAD REPORT**

As soon as we realize that someone is giving us a bad report we should lovingly ask them if they have gone to the person yet.

If yes, we then can ask, "Are you telling me so I can go with you to help restore him/her?" "Do you feel I am responsible to know about this? I would rather not hear it unless I am directly involved."

Another method is given in Proverbs 25:23. It explains that as the north wind drives away rain, so a grieved countenance drives away a backbiting tongue.

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# THOMAS HALE MINISTRIES

# A KINGDOM MULTIPLIER

## ***Tell Him His Fault...***

“I always want to give a good report about you. There is something that I do not understand. Could you explain why...”

## ***Between Thee and Him Alone...***

Here Jesus gives double emphasis to “go to him.” Note that the initial context of conversation is one to one.

## ***If He Shall Hear Thee, Thou Hast Gained Thy Brother***

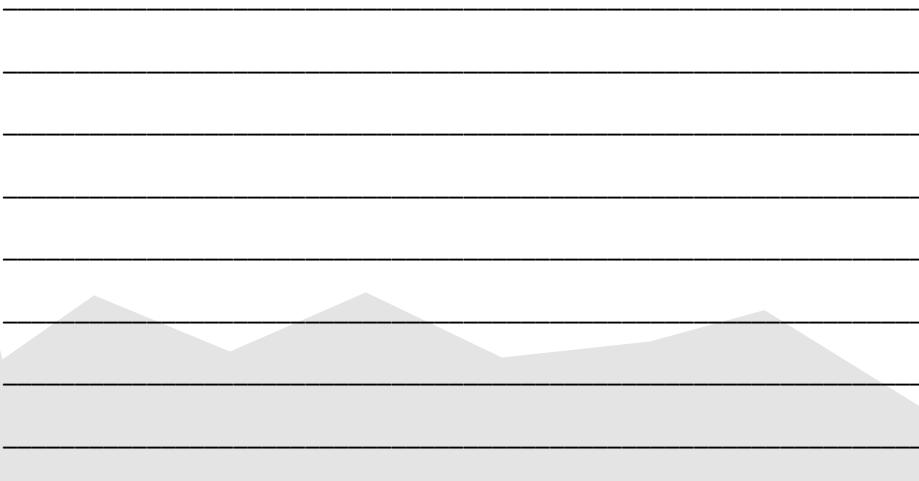
The biblical assumption is that we want to win the brother rather than condemn him. If we go in the spirit and purpose of exposing rather than restoring, we fall into the temptation warned about in Galatians 6:1, "...restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

Thayer's Definition: *kerdaino* - "Thou hast gained"

- to gain, to acquire, to get gain, used of gain arising from shunning or escaping from evil, that is, to win him over to the kingdom of God, to gain one to faith in Christ, to gain Christ's favor and fellowship

*Matthew 5:23-24 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

## NOTES



## THREE PROBLEMS WE CREATE

If we tell anyone else about an offending brother before talking to him, we create three problems.

First, we prove to God and the ones that we tell we don't love the offender and, in a deeper sense, we also prove that we don't love the Lord Himself who said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (John 14:15)

Second, we tempt the listener to take up an offense against him and may even destroy a strong friendship that might have existed between them. "A whisperer separateth chief friends." (Prov. 16:28)

Third, we destroy the sincerity of our approach to him and hinder the potential of restoring him. It is for these reasons that Scripture warns, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself; and discover not a secret to another." (Proverbs 25:9)

Perhaps the most important reason to go to the offender first is to check out the facts. When we hear a report and share it with others, it is almost impossible to be accurate in words and in the inflection of our voice.

## Bill Gothard Institute in Basic Youth Conflicts

## STANDARD JEWISH CUSTOM

This procedure was standard Jewish custom; the Dead Sea Scrolls, the rabbis and others demand that one begin with private reproof. Publicly shaming someone unnecessarily was considered sinful, and Jewish teachers stressed the importance of receiving reproof.

Bible Background Commentary



# THOMAS HALE MINISTRIES

## A Kingdom Multiplier

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# Forgiveness

Primary Resource, Total Forgiveness by R.T. Kendall

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## A FAMILIAR TEMPTATION

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**Matt 18:21-35** Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times. " Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like...

The Rabbis taught that forgiveness was limited to three times, taken from the Old Testament book of Amos. Peter was looking for a reasonable end to forgiving those who offended him. It is our nature to be unforgiving! Jesus tells him there is no reckonable end to the number of times we are to forgive an offending brother.

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## A FREQUENT OCCURRENCE

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**Luke 17:1;4-5** Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offenses (*skandalon*) will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! ...If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, 'I repent,' forgive him." The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!"

**Ps 55:12-14** If an enemy were insulting me, I could endure it; if a foe were raising himself against me, I could hide from him. But it is you, a man like myself, my companion, my close friend, with whom I once enjoyed sweet fellowship as we walked with the throng at the house of God. (NIV)

**2 Tim 4:14** Alexander the metalworker did me a great deal of harm. The Lord will repay him for what he has done. (NIV)

**Matt 5:11** Blessed are you when (notice he did not say "if") people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. (NIV)

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## A FANTASTIC PROMISE

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**Matt 6:12** And forgive us our debts, as we (PIN) forgive our debtors. (KJV)

**PRESENT INDICATIVE ACTIVE:** The Present Tense in the Indicative Mood (A statement of fact, present reality) represents contemporaneous action, as opposed to action in the past or the future.

**KEY THOUGHT:** As we are in the act of forgiving those who sin against us, God is forgiving us for our sins!

**Luke 23:34** Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (NIV)

Notice that Jesus did not say, "I forgive you." Asking the Father to forgive them showed that He had forgiven them and released them from their guilt and asked His Father not to punish or take revenge on them. God answered His prayer. Those offenders were among the very ones Peter addressed on the Day of Pentecost and were converted (Acts 2).

God can enable you to forgive those who have hurt you, releasing them from their guilt. You can let them out of your personal jailhouse. Most of us are prone to use silence to punish our offenders.

**Luke 6:37** Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive (*apoluo*), and you will be forgiven. (NIV)

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## WHAT GENUINE FORGIVENESS IS NOT

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- Approval of the Offense

Jesus forgave the woman found in adultery, but He did not approve of what she did. He told her, "Leave your life of sin." (John 8:11)

- The Pardon of the Offense

A pardon is a legal transaction that releases an offender from the consequences of their actions. You can forgive someone who commits a crime against you, but they are not pardoned from their punishment.

- Reconciliation

Reconciliation implies a restoration of the relationship after the offense to what it was before the offense. If your spouse is unfaithful with your best friend, you probably won't be best friends again. That is OK! Reconciliation is not a requirement for forgiveness.

- Denying the Offense

Living in denial is not forgiveness. True forgiveness can only come as we live in the reality of the offense. Love “keeps no record (*logizomai* - a bill) of wrongs. (1 Cor. 13:5). Forgiveness doesn’t deny the wrong; it tears up the record!

- Forgetting the Offense

Forgiveness does not erase our memory. God knows our sins. He chooses to overlook and not bring them to His mind. One cannot forgive and forget. True forgiveness knows the nature of the offense, and still chooses to forgive! Ps 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. (NIV)

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## WHAT GENUINE FORGIVENESS IS

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- Knowing that an offense has been committed and still forgiving them.

**Eph 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (NIV)

**Col 3:13** Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. (NIV)

- Choosing to keep no record of wrongs.

Don’t get historical! Stop rehearsing the offense. Make the choice to tear up the record of wrongs you have been keeping.

- Refusing to punish the offender.

Our human nature cannot bear the thought that those who have hurt us may get away with it! Genuine forgiveness not only forgives the offense but asks God to bless the offender.

**Rom 12:19** Do not take revenge (pull out the justice), my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. (NIV)

- Not telling what they did.

God will not expose my sins, neither should I expose those I have forgiven. Those who are quick to tell their offenses have not forgiven.

**Eph 4:29-31** Do not let any unwholesome (*sapros* - rotting fruit) talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of

redemption. Get rid (airo - to lift, to weigh anchor and sail away) of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. (NIV)

- Treating the offender with kindness and compassion.

**Eph 4:32** Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (NIV)

Genuine forgiveness treats offenders with kindness and compassion.

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## HOW DO I KNOW THAT I HAVE FORGIVEN?

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- Joseph and total forgiveness

**Gen 37:3-11** Now Israel loved Joseph (17 years of age) more than any of his other sons because he had been born to him in his old age, and he made a richly ornamented robe for him. When his brothers saw that their father loved him more than any of them, they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him. (NIV)

- Joseph had much to be bitter about

**Gen 37:23-28** So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe—the ornate robe he was wearing—and they took him and threw him into the cistern. The cistern was empty; there was no water in it. As they sat down to eat their meal, they looked up and saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead. Their camels were loaded with spices, balm and myrrh, and they were on their way to take them down to Egypt. Judah said to his brothers, “What will we gain if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites and not lay our hands on him; after all, he is our brother, our own flesh and blood.” His brothers agreed. So when the Midianite merchants came by, his brothers pulled Joseph up out of the cistern and sold him for twenty shekels of silver to the Ishmaelites, who took him to Egypt.

His brothers committed a wicked and evil act by selling him into slavery. He was falsely accused by Potiphar’s wife and imprisoned because of it.

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## THE EXAMPLE OF JOSEPH

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- He kept the offense as private as possible

**Gen 45:1** Then Joseph could no longer control himself before all his attendants, and he cried out, “Have everyone leave my presence!” So there was no one with Joseph when he made himself known to his brothers. (NIV)

This is what God does for us. Micah 7:19 You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea. (NIV)

- He was in the power position and refused to strike back

**Gen 45:3-4** Joseph said to his brothers, "I am Joseph! Is my father still living?" But his brothers were not able to answer him, because they were terrified at his presence. Then Joseph said to his brothers, "Come close (not condescending) to me." When they had done so, he said, "I am your brother Joseph, the one you sold into Egypt! (NIV)

- He wanted them to forgive themselves and not feel guilty

**Gen 42:21** They said to one another, "Surely we are being punished because of our brother. We saw how distressed he was when he pleaded with us for his life, but we would not listen; that's why this distress has come upon us." (NIV)

**Gen 45:5** And now, do not be distressed (pain, torture) and do not be angry with yourselves (a form of self-hatred) for selling me here, because it was to save lives that God sent me ahead of you. (NIV)

- Joseph let them save face

#### With Himself:

**Gen 45:7-8** But God sent me ahead of you to preserve for you a remnant on earth and to save your lives by a great deliverance. So then, it was not you who sent me here, but God. He made me father to Pharaoh, lord of his entire household and ruler of all Egypt. (NIV)

#### With Their Father:

**Gen 45:9** Now hurry back to my father and say to him, 'This is what your son Joseph says: God has made me lord of all Egypt. Come down to me; don't delay. (NIV)

- Joseph forgave them for a lifetime

Seventeen years after forgiving his brothers, their father died.

**Gen 50:15-21** When Joseph's brothers saw that their father was dead, they said, "What if Joseph holds a grudge against us and pays us back for all the wrongs we did to him?" So they sent word to Joseph, saying, "Your father left these instructions before he died: 'This is what you are to say to Joseph: I ask you to forgive your brothers the sins and the wrongs they committed in treating you so badly.' Now please forgive the sins of the servants of the God of your father." When their message came to him, Joseph wept. His brothers then came and threw themselves down before him. "We are your slaves," they said. But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives. So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them. (NIV)

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## CONCLUSION

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- Forgiveness is not an option

Matt 18:32-35 Then the master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger, his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured until he should pay back all he owed. "This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother from your heart." (NIV)

Forgive, and you shall be forgiven, release others, and you will be released.

- Thoughts to reflect on

"When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free." - Catherine Ponder

"Forgiveness does not change the past, but it does enlarge the future." - Paul Boose

"Forgiveness is the cleansing fire that burns away old regrets and resentments." - Jonathan Lockwood Huie

"I can forgive, but I cannot forget, is only another way of saying I will not forgive. Forgiveness ought to be like a canceled note, torn in two, and burned up so that it never can be shown against one." - Henry Ward Beecher

"To be a Christian means to forgive the inexcusable because God has forgiven the inexcusable in you." – C.S. Lewis

"Forgiveness is not about forgetting. It is about letting go of another person's throat...Forgiveness does not create a relationship. Unless people speak the truth about what they have done and change their minds and behavior, a relationship of trust is not possible. When you forgive someone, you certainly release them from judgment, but without true change, no real relationship can be established...Forgiveness in no way requires that you trust the one you forgive. But should they finally confess and repent, you will discover a miracle in your own heart that allows you to reach out and begin to build between you a bridge of reconciliation...Forgiveness does not excuse anything...You may have to declare your forgiveness a hundred times the first day and the second day, but the third day will be less and each day after, until one day you will realize that you have forgiven completely. And then one day you will pray for his wholeness..." – William P. Young, The Shack