

▼ **Redefining Greatness When Christians Hurt You - Part 4**

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- **Read the Passage: Matthew 18:15-35**

▼ **Understand the larger context of “greatest in the Kingdom”.**

▼ Scope: When one follower of Jesus sins against another.

- What about outsiders? - Matthew 5:21-24; Matthew 5:38-48

• What is a follower of Jesus (See “Welcome To Life Church”).

▼ Why do we care about followers of Jesus offending other followers?

- God has more planned for us than simply being good citizens.
- God wants us to join his project of reclaiming this broken world.

▼ Context: Matthew 18:1-14 - “greatest in the Kingdom”.

- Jesus redefines greatness for his followers: Prioritize others!

▼ Humbling yourself is demonstrated in the following ways:

- Welcome other Christians - be approachable.
- Don't cause others to stumble. Deprive yourself if necessary.
- ▼ Don't look down on others. God doesn't want to lose anyone.
  - Don't look down on those whose struggles are different.
  - God doesn't want them to lose them; you shouldn't either!

- See: Matthew 23:11; Mark 9:33-37; Mark 10:32-45; Luke 9:46-48

▼ **See Christians who sin against you from God's perspective.**

- As a follower of Jesus - prioritize God's interests over your own.

▼ Be humble, prioritize others. - Philippians 2:3-5; 1Corinthians 8 - 9

- Be humble with someone who sins against us.
- See the need of believers who sin against us.
- Someone who sins against you has a character problem. God cares about their character and wants to fix it (Matthew 18:10-14).
- Minimize incentive to keep sinning. Maximize incentive to repent.
- Don't look down on them; don't make it easy for others to do so either.

▼ **Confront them in love; follow Jesus' process.**

- If you can forget about it, then forget about it - but only if you can!

▼ This process maximizes the opportunity to repair character.

- ▼ Confronting them personally may not eliminate their temptation to become defensive, but it minimizes it because no one else is involved at this point. It also protects their reputation.
- ▼ What about men & women?
  - A woman spending time alone with a man other than her husband created a suspicion of adultery.
  - Her husband was expected to divorce her.
  - What about abuse? - **Seek safety!**
- ▼ If the offender **repents** - forgive him/her.
  - What does **repent** mean? Is it the same as saying “I’m sorry”?
  - Taking 1 or 2 witnesses shows that it’s not just a personal gripe on your part while still minimizing the damage to the person’s reputation.
  - Telling it to the church is the last resort, but brings the wisdom of the body to bear on the issue. It also potentially exposes behaviors that are systemic rather than isolated.
  - Avoid disputing before unbelievers. - 1Corinthians 6:1-11
- ▼ **Discipline yourself to forgive - practice makes perfect.**
  - Forgiveness means cancelling the debt.
  - ▼ Forgiveness is NOT (courtesy of Tim Mackie):
    - ignoring or forgetting
    - condoning or excusing
    - tolerating or allowing further abuse
    - reconciliation or restoration
    - returning back to the way things were before
    - allowing the offender to escape consequences
  - God has forgiven you more! Forgive, or he won’t forgive you.
  - Matthew 6:5-51, 18:15-20; 1Corinthians 5:1-13; Titus 3:9-11
  - Pray for those who sin against you.
- ▼ **Watch your mouth!**
  - Ephesians 4:17 - 5:7; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 12:22-37
- ▼ **Feed on Jesus**
  - Eat his flesh and drink his blood - John 6:25-71
  - Don’t wait until all this “comes naturally” - dive in!