

I Hurt Someone. What Do I Do?

We all know how hard it is to ask for forgiveness. Many people mistakenly believe that forgiveness includes telling people we have forgiven them. This belief likely springs from Matthew 5:23-24. As a result, some resist or refuse to forgive people because they cannot face the person(s) who hurt them. Upon close examination, this verse speaks to us when we have hurt others.

If you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; first, be reconciled to your brother. Matthew 5:23-24

Leave and Go

If you “remember” that “your brother has something against you” (meaning **you** have hurt them), Jesus directs **you** to go to them. If you know or sense that somehow, willfully or even unintentionally, you have hurt a brother through obvious or subtle rejection, offense, dishonoring, or mistreatment, Jesus places the responsibility of reconciliation on you. Jesus said, “leave,” and “go be reconciled.” You have peace with God through the blood of Christ, but that will not give you peace with others, especially when you have hurt them.

Do not rationalize or justify your behavior to ignore the Holy Spirit. Trust God and ask for forgiveness to have peace within yourself and with others.

What If They Will Not Be Reconciled?

You are not responsible for their response, only your obedience. God is doing unseen work in both of you, which may take time.

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men.
If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Romans 12:17-18

Love is the Fulfillment of the Law

- Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore, love is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:10
- Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor. Romans 12:9-10
- Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Romans 12:17-18
- Let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this, the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 1 John 4:7-11
- Giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited. 2 Corinthians 6:3
- Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or the church of God just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of many, so that they may be saved. 2 Corinthians 10:31