

GOD'S PLAN



WHY THE CHURCH?

SCAN THE QR
CODE FOR THE
FULL SERMON



WEEK 7

HOW TO BIBLICALLY DEAL WITH PROBLEMS IN THE CHURCH

Matthew 18:15-20

This powerful teaching takes us into Matthew 18:15-20, where we discover God's blueprint for handling conflict within the church family. The message reminds us that as believers, we're not perfect people but saved sinners learning to walk together in grace and truth. When disagreements arise—and they will—we're called to follow a specific pattern: first, approach the person privately with the goal of winning our brother or sister, not winning the argument. If that doesn't work, we bring in one or two mature believers to provide perspective and prayer support. If the issue still remains unresolved, we involve the church body. Throughout this process, we're challenged to examine our own hearts, asking whether we're operating in the flesh or walking by the Spirit. The contrast between the deeds of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5 serves as a powerful diagnostic tool for our spiritual health. What makes this teaching especially relevant is its honest acknowledgment that even Spirit-filled believers can slip into fleshly responses when hurt or offended. The key is learning to pause, get vertical with God before going horizontal with others, and remember that our unity as believers is one of the strongest witnesses to a watching world. This isn't about being church police or exposing everyone's faults—it's about protecting the body, preserving relationships, and ultimately reflecting Christ's love in how we treat one another.

DAY 1: The Ministry of Reconciliation

Reading:

Matthew 18:15-17

15 "If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed. 17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21

18 Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, 19 namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. 20 Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Devotional:

God has given us the ministry of reconciliation—not just with Him, but with each other. When conflict arises, our natural inclination is to avoid, gossip, or attack. But Jesus provides a different path: go directly to your brother or sister in private. This isn't about winning an argument; it's about winning your brother. Before you approach, examine your own heart. Are you vertical with God before going horizontal with others? The goal isn't to prove you're right, but to restore relationship. Remember, you were once foolish, disobedient, and deceived until God's kindness appeared. Extend that same grace to others. Your willingness to pursue reconciliation demonstrates Christ's love to a watching world and protects the unity of His body.

DAY 2: Gentle Restoration**Reading:*****Galatians 6:1-5***

1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted. 2 Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. 3 For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself. 4 But each one must examine his own work, and then he will have reason for boasting in regard to himself alone, and not in regard to another. 5 For each one will bear his own load.

Proverbs 15:1

1 A gentle answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 27:6

6 Faithful are the wounds of a friend,
But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

Devotional:

When someone is caught in sin, the spiritually mature respond with gentleness, not harshness. Think of a broken bone being carefully set back in place—this is the picture of biblical restoration. A gentle answer turns away wrath, while harsh words stir up anger. Faithful are the wounds of a friend who speaks truth in love, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy who won't tell you what you need to hear. Before confronting another, check yourself: Are you walking in the Spirit? Are you looking to your own vulnerabilities? Approach with humility, knowing you too could be tempted. The goal is healing, not humiliation. Restoration requires patience, prayer, and a heart that genuinely seeks another's spiritual welfare over personal vindication.

DAY 3: The Power of Agreement in Prayer**Reading:*****Matthew 18:18-20***

18 Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven. 19 "Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. 20 For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Acts 6:1-7

Now at this time while the disciples were increasing in number, a complaint arose on the part of the Hellenistic Jews against the native Hebrews, because their widows were being overlooked in the daily serving of food. 2 So the twelve summoned the congregation of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable for us to neglect the word of God in order to serve tables. 3 Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. 4 But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." 5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch. 6 And these they brought before the apostles; and after praying, they laid their hands on them. 7 The word of God kept on spreading; and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

Devotional:

When two or three gather in Jesus' name, seeking His will through His Word and prayer, He is present in their midst. This isn't about demanding what we want, but discovering what heaven has already permitted or prohibited. Like a symphony coming into concert with the conductor's score, we align ourselves with God's revealed truth. The early church faced real conflicts—even between different cultural groups—but they resolved issues through prayer, godly wisdom, and Spirit-led decisions. Notice they didn't hide their problems or let them fester. Instead, they addressed concerns openly, sought God's direction together, and found solutions that honored everyone involved. When we prioritize God's Word, united prayer, and genuine fellowship over personal agendas, we experience His presence and guidance in powerful ways.

DAY 4: Walking by the Spirit, Not the Flesh

Reading:

Galatians 5:16-26

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh. 17 For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law. 19 Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. 25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. 26 Let us not become boastful, challenging one another, envying one another.

Romans 8:5-14

5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so, 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead

will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. 12 So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— 13 for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

Devotional:

Every believer faces a daily choice: walk by the Spirit or gratify the flesh. The flesh produces obvious fruit—anger, jealousy, disputes, factions, and division. These destroy relationships and damage the church's witness. But the Spirit produces love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These qualities build up and heal. The flesh has been crucified in Christ, but like a severed snake, it still moves and can still bite. Moment by moment, we must choose to yield to the Spirit's leading rather than our immediate emotional reactions. This requires constant vigilance and dependence on God. When conflict arises, pause and ask: "Am I responding in the flesh or the Spirit?" Your answer will determine whether you contribute to division or reconciliation.

DAY 5: Love That the World Will Recognize

Reading:

John 13:34-35

34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

1 John 4:7-21

7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. 8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. 9 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. 10 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. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us. 13 By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us, because He has given us of His Spirit. 14 We have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world. 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. 16 We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. 17 By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. 18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. 19 We love, because He first loved us. 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

Ephesians 4:1-6

1 Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing tolerance for one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

Ephesians 4:15-16

15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Devotional:

Jesus gave His disciples a new commandment: love one another as He loved them. He then declared that the world would know we are His disciples by our love for each other. Our relationships within the church serve as the greatest apologetic for the gospel. When we handle conflict biblically—approaching privately, speaking truth in love, seeking restoration over vindication, and walking in the Spirit—we demonstrate Christ's transforming power. The world expects Christians to fight, gossip, and divide just like everyone else. But when we respond differently, pursuing peace and unity while maintaining holiness, we shine as lights in the darkness. This doesn't mean avoiding hard conversations or ignoring sin. It means addressing issues God's way, with His heart, for His glory. Your commitment to biblical conflict resolution isn't just about your relationships—it's about the church's witness to a watching world.