

## Matthew 18:15-20: Jesus' Four Step Process of Reconciliation/Mediation

- 1) First step: Have a heart to heart with the offender. If that doesn't work, go to step 2.
- 2) Second Step: Select a couple of mutually trusted confidants and approach the offender again with prayer and conversation. If this step doesn't reconcile the two of you, go to step 3.
- 3) Third Step: Go to the whole church in a spirit of humble trust, asking the whole church for prayer and appealing to the greater unity of the whole body of believers for reconciliation.
- 4) Fourth Step: Still not reconciled, repeat previous steps, yet approaching offender as a 'Gentile or tax collector'. This doesn't mean they are treated with less dignity, or that you may be justified in 'writing them off'. It means starting over on a higher, more creative level.

### Another Process of Forgiveness

- 1) First, admit that offenses have occurred in your life (you have been hurt).
- 2) Assess the damage caused by the offense. (think about all of the effects).
- 3) Prepare and decide to forgive. (Am I prepared to cancel the debt?)
- 4) Rise above, and begin to be clearer about living with respectful boundaries (thinking forward and helping the other by preventing additional offenses.)
- 5) Confront the offense, and after prayer and counsel, confront the offender.
- 6) Seek holiness for oneself. Pray, giving God glory, and seek sanctification.
- 7) Readily be honest and admit one's own faults. Be quick to ask forgiveness of others, and make amends everywhere possible.

### *Christians must live by charity and forgiveness*

Matthew 5:23-24 "Therefore, if you bring your gift to the altar, and there recall that your brother has anything against you, leave your gift there at the altar, **go first and be reconciled with your brother**, and then come and offer your gift.

Mark 11:25 "**When you stand to pray, forgive anyone against whom you have a grievance**, so that your heavenly Father may in turn forgive you your transgressions."

Matthew 6:14-15 "If you forgive others their transgressions, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But **if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father** forgive your transgressions."

Matthew 6:12 & Luke 11:4 "and forgive us our sins, **for** we ourselves forgive everyone in debt to us,"

Matthew 7:2 "For as you judge, so will you be judged, and the measure with which you measure will be measured out to you."

Only Two Times is Word 'Ekklesia' Church used in Gospels!

Matthew 16:18 "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my **church**, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it."

Matthew 18:17 "If he refuses to listen to them, tell the **church**."

Also in both chapters, Jesus invokes 'binding-loosing' authority (forgiveness), as closely related to preventing the fracturing-dividing of His Disciples  
Jesus gives this 'forgiving' authority to apostles and disciples

- 1) To Peter specifically in Matthew 16:19 "I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
- 2) To the 'disciples' Matthew 18:18 "Amen, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Ekklesia-Church word Here is an actual count of the word 'ekklesia' in the whole New Testament: Matthew 2, Acts 23, Romans 5, 1 Corinthians 21, 2 Corinthians 9, Galatians 3, Ephesians 9, Philippians 2, Colossians 4, 1 Thessalonians 2, 2 Thessalonians 2, 1 Timothy 3, Philemon 1, Hebrews 2, James 1, 3 John 3, Revelation 19 (111 times).

### **Was their conflict in the church? Was there ever!**

Galatians 2:11-14 " And when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face because he clearly was wrong. For, until some people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he began to draw back and separated himself, because he was afraid of the circumcised. And the rest of the Jews also acted hypocritically along with him, with the result that even Barnabas was carried away by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not on the right road in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of all, "If you, though a Jew, are living like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?"

Acts 15:1-2 "Some who had come down from Judea were instructing the brothers, "Unless you are circumcised according to the Mosaic practice, you cannot be saved." Because there arose no little dissension and debate by Paul and Barnabas with them, it was decided that Paul, Barnabas, and some of the others should go up to Jerusalem to the apostles and presbyters about this question."

1 Corinthians 1:11-13 "For it has been reported to me about you, my brothers, by Chloe's people, that there are rivalries among you. I mean that each of you is saying, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

Acts 6:1-5 "At that time, as the number of disciples continued to grow, the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews because their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution. So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said, "It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table. Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom, whom we shall appoint to this task, whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." The proposal was acceptable to the whole community,....