

**Go To Your Brother... (4-6-07)**  
**by Howard Bruce (Glendale, Arizona)**

**Howard Bruce writes:**

Do some of us fail to understand our God and the Holy Bible and how we should repent when we have sinned against our fellow man? In Matthew 18 is the way God wants us to repent. Starting in verse 15, 16, and 17, God tells us His way to handle our problems, but some ministers and brethren think if they just pray to God to forgive them, that's all that is needed. **“Not So”**, we must go to the person we have sinned against or that person will never know we have repented and the person or church will still hold a grudge against the one that sinned.

If this were done, we would all know how and why our Seattle Church was destroyed. Also, unless this is done that person or persons is still a sinner and will never see God or be in God's Kingdom. Please repent and be sure of your salvation. Amen.

**Laura Lee writes:**

Yours is a very good letter and I will add to what you have already said. -- Do people fully understand what repentance means to everyone in the body of Christ? Many people sit there and wonder why there are so many splinter groups and no one seems to get along. Well here is the reason: "Most people never want to talk about the problem and those who do are told it is not necessary to discuss anything." Another major, major problem within the body of Christ is that most people have the attitude that: "If you do not believe as I believe then it is the highway for you buddy."

Because we print a **newsletter**, we have found ourselves in the middle of many problems, many of which we print so all might learn something from what is actually going on here among God's people. Let's use David Ben-Ariel as an example, because anyone reading this **newsletter** should know what that is all about. David Ben-Ariel has been an email friend and brother to us for many years and has sent us many items to consider for print. We certainly never agreed with him in regard to all that he ever sent to us for consideration to print, but we also never told him to leave us alone because we don't see things as he sees things. I Laura have always been the editor of this **newsletter** with Darwin's approval and urging and the great amount of help that he also puts toward this effort. I have printed **articles** by Dianne McDonnell since 2001 and I have even written a few **articles** with similar topics to hers over the years. Any woman who writes or speaks of the law of God is teaching or preaching, which ever way you want to look at it. When David Ben-Ariel finally got around to reading some of the **articles** we printed in regard to women speaking, David had an absolute fit over the whole thing and told us in no uncertain terms that he no longer wanted anything at all to do with us. There is no following of Christ in that kind of an attitude. God's people are to grow in grace and knowledge. That means that we don't know everything right now, so we best be working together on whatever level we are able to work with each other. The David Ben-Ariel problem does not have to happen, but it does happen over and over again. This attitude is clearly laid out in Isaiah 65:5 "(people with the attitude as displayed by David Ben-Ariel say) Which say, stand by thyself, come not near to me; for **I am holier than thou.** (God says) These are a smoke in my nose, a fire that burneth all the day." If you are a person who has this attitude, do not hold on to it, get rid of it, because God does not think much of it and if God doesn't like it, it is not going to be in His Kingdom.

I am sure some thought, oh why did they print what they did in regard to Arlan Weight? Well, we didn't want to print it, we would much rather have had Arlan come to us and try to work it out privately, but he didn't want to and he still does not want to. Arlan has the attitude that we should just forget that he has lied to us on numerous occasions, that he sided with a woman who called us names and admitted to using cuss words during Sabbath Services while he sat right there and heard it all directly from her. We told her it was wrong for her to call us names and use cuss words during Sabbath Services and Arlan in writing told us we should never have said anything to her about the matter. Arlan after hearing the woman call us names and admit to using cuss words during services never said a word, but got up that Sabbath and went to start his own Sabbath Services so that the woman who called us names and used cuss words during services would have a place to attend Sabbath Services starting the very next week. Do you yet see the problem? What Arlan got printed for was in no way a Christian practice that should be covered up and never spoken of, although I am sure he would see that differently than we do. We did try on numerous occasions to talk to Arlan about this and straighten it out even going to his house as in Matthew 18:15-17. Arlan still didn't want to discuss the matter with us and we were told that very night at Perkin's Restaurant that we are no longer welcome on Arlan's property, so we won't be going there again. Arlan's wife for some reason believes that we did something to Arlan when in fact Arlan is the one that sinned against us. As far as I can see, it is one big mess, because only some of the people (I and Darwin) want to talk about and work out the problem and the other person (Arlan) does not want to talk about any of it. I am sure that many of you have hit these road blocks. Here is what God has to say about these kinds of

matters: Mt. 5:23-24 "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, **and there remembers that thy brother hath ought against thee**; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; **first be reconciled to thy brother**, and then come and offer thy gift."

The word "reconciled" in verse 24 is Strong's #1259 and means to renew a friendship. I do not see how any friendship will ever be renewed with out conversation or conversations. So for anyone who is reading this and has contact with Arlan Weight, it would be great if you could convince him that the right thing to do would be to put forth the effort that is needed to renew a friendship with us and that that will take conversation or conversations to do that. Under the present circumstances that exists because he (Arlan) does not want to work out these problems, we cannot allow him back in here for Sabbath Services at this time. According to scripture Arlan does have a responsibility to come and reconcile with his brethren when he knows we have ought with him.

The funny part of this is that the woman who called us names and used cuss words during services is welcome to attend here yet, as she understands that calling us names and using cuss words during Sabbath Services is wrong and will not be allowed here.

The Bible is clear that one should not allow people who sin during the course of Sabbath Services to come in. If a person does not repent to you and God for the sins they have committed against you then they should not be allowed back until such time that they do. With that all said, it is not a sin, if you don't like a persons grammar, if you don't like what they give for an opinion on any given subject, if they don't agree with you (after all, you might be wrong), and for cause is not a sin, along with various other things. When you see controversial doctrinal issues which have complexly confusing sides to them such as calendars, Passover, Pentecost, divorce and remarriage, women speaking and any number of other doctrinal confusion that is out there, these are no reason to cut people off and never speak to them again. Our [newsletter](#) does allow space for all sides of these issues to be discussed in the [letters section](#). By seeing these different points being brought up, the idea is that everyone wins, because everyone can learn and express themselves. If you cut others off from you then how will anyone ever come to be of one mind with God, as the goal is and as it will be in the Kingdom of God. After all there is only one right way on anything and everything and that is God's way. God is not the author of doctrinal confusion, man is. God gave us a Bible, but many people are not reading it or studying it as they should be.

Are you saddened by the state of the Church of God? If your brother or sister came to you at one point because they had a problem that involved you, so you know about it, go to them and reconcile with them. If you have gotten mad at someone for any reason and just quit talking to them or cut them off for any reason go to them and tell them what the problem is, because they probably don't know what the problem is. There are many people who have cut me off in my life time and I don't have a clue why they did. The one's I suspected didn't want contact with me any longer I went to find out what I did to them only to be told to leave them alone or they wouldn't even speak one word to me. I cannot work out a problem with people who won't speak to me or tell me what I did to them to make them cut me off. There can be absolutely no reconciliation (renewal of friendship) with anyone if one of the parties is unwilling to reconcile (renew the friendship) and I have to tell you that if the party who is unwilling to reconcile (renew the friendship) does not change their heart on that matter, they will not be in the Kingdom, because only those who are willing to get along and work with all people will make it into the Kingdom and if you aren't doing that now, then it is not going to happen by fiat when Christ returns.

I have gone to people via Matthew 18:15-17 only to be told that it isn't necessary and we should just be friends and brethren by pretence. God doesn't want people who pretend to be His friends but really can't stand him and neither do I. If people do not learn to reconcile with each other, they will not be in the Kingdom and that is the bottom line here. And again, if either of us have ever done anything wrong to any of you, please come to us as in Matthew 18:15-17. We are willing to apologize to you when we are found to be wrong. We do not know if you do not tell us.

If someone comes to you as in Matthew 18:15-17, do not just brush them off or make it sound like they have no complaint. Listen to them and try to work on it. Sometimes I hear people say that they don't have to listen to the person coming to them with a Matthew 18:15-17 matter if that person is angry. Read the verses, there is nothing in those verses that gives you a way out when you are confronted with any kind of a problem between you and another person. If however the person is coming to you in anger, this is no time to defend yourself as this will only make the matter worse. First start by listening to what the other person is telling you is the problem. If you did what they say you did, then apologize without excuse or reason. You might be surprised how that way of doing things just melts all anger away. Once there is conversation or conversations leading to reconciliation and at a point in the future you can when given the right opportunity tell your friend your reason or excuse for what you did if you have one and that will go a long way in helping your friend to understand and love you more, however do not push this point until you feel your friendship is able to withstand it. If on the other hand, someone comes to you and you did not do what they are saying you did, take a deep breath and do your best to prove to them in whatever way you can, that you did not do it. Try not to get too angry or upset over a false accusation.

Many people claim these verses say to take 3 witnesses with you in Matthew 18:16, but it says to take one or two witnesses with you, not three. These witnesses are not there to take sides or to gang up on the person you are going to. They are there to establish every word that is spoken between the two parties. If you do not have a witness to take with you, a tape recorder will definitely establish every word between the parties. Obviously any witnesses you do take are going to be your friends and maybe not the other persons. The point of verse 16 is to establish what is being said, because what is said at this meeting will determine whether the matter is to be taken to the church as in verse 17. These are to be witnesses who are able to establish every word that is said and make judgments as to whether the matter can be resolved or if it needs to be taken in front of the church. If your brother or sister is still brushing you off at this point then taking the matter to the church is the next step.

Many times when a person has a problem with another person they not only do not go to the person they have a problem with one on one, but they discuss the matter and the person with all or many of their friends. Just who do you think your friends are going to side with? In Matthew 18:15-16 God says to keep this matter private and that you are not to go public with it **unless** or **until** no reconciliation takes place after doing verse 15 and verse 16. When will people understand that privacy in the initial stages of reconciliation is important.

A good example in favor of privacy in the first 2 verses is evident in corporation churches when the minister decides on his own that you are on your way out the door but generally not for sin. The first thing they do is start rumors about the person they are about to throw out, this gets everyone else to thinking that they are bad people. Once the rumors are started then the other people in the congregation will not ever listen to the one being thrown out nor will they ever come to them to ask what happened, for they already believe they know because they heard the rumors from the trusted ministers and deacons. If you don't think the ministry does this within the corporation churches of God then you are living in a wooden barrel with the bunghole closed. People in our congregation were told that we could come back to services any time we wanted to because we were not disfellowshipped. When the ministers wife Rhonda Luecke told this to a person who asked her directly, she neglected to tell the person that we were suspended from services and definitely could not attend any time we wanted to. When Darwin tried to correct this error with the person who told us we could come to services anytime because we were not disfellowshipped, the person would not hear one word Darwin said to him. Ministers, deacons and their wives do not lie, according to many, yet it happens over and over again. Suspension from services is the same as disfellowshipment, they just don't announce when suspension happens as they do with disfellowshipment.

So privacy is important in verse 15. Once you do verse 16 you are starting to open those involved up to a non private venue if you do not choose your one or two witnesses carefully and in verse 17 the whole matter goes public. God wants us to reconcile with each other, that is why it needs to be done in private. However there are many heartless people out there who do not want reconciliation so in that case God allows for the matter to be made public as a warning to others so they are better able to discern who the brethren really are and so people will try to reconcile privately. So all brethren should work toward reconciliation with all people. You do need to learn how to do this now, because you will need this skill in order to enter the Kingdom of God.

Mt. 18:15-17 "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 has gained thy brother, but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."