

THROWING STONES

(Matthew 18:3-7)

If the truth were known about pastoral counseling we would all know that most issues that come up for the pastors to solve are problems that stem from church members being hurt by the brethren. What can we do when people from our own church hurt us? How can we resolve and handle these conflicts?

TAKE IT TO GOD

Psalm 50:15 Don't rush in to confront the offender. We can call upon God not only when outside troubles come but also when our heart and emotions have been wounded from within the church.

Romans 12:19 Resist the human nature of seeking vengeance or retaliation. God is our Father and He knows best for all parties. If your hurt is worthy of punishment to the offender let God do it. It is very possible that your offender has no idea that what they did or said hurt you and never meant hurt.

Psalm 119:165; Hebrews 12:1-3 Something that we all must consider is that many of us are so thin skinned that we get offended by things that are probably very trivial to more mature believers.

I Corinthians 13:1-7; I Peter 4:8; Galatians 5:22 We must remember that God expects that the 'trademark' for every believer will be Godly love in everything we say or do in or out of church.

Matthew 5:23-24 Healing and reconciliation begins with true forgiveness. Remember, forgiveness is not just for the other person, it is for you. There is broken fellowship with God if we are unforgiving.

RECOGNIZE OUR ENEMY

II Corinthians 2:10-11 What great verses to help us remember that our brothers and sisters are not our enemy. The devil loves to drive a wedge between believers and "scatter the flock."

I Peter 5:8 Every time we get upset with our brethren we should recite this verse over and over. Peter knew how Satan loved to mess with his mind and his mouth so he reminds us of the devil's tactics.

Ephesians 6:12 Often times in the heat of a wounded spirit or an argument gone bad we forget that we are not in a warfare of words and emotions but the war we are called to fight is spiritual and eternal.

John 10:10 The mandate and trademark for believers is to "love", but the mandate and trademark of the devil is to kill, steal and destroy. When we engage in a physical battle instead of a spiritual battle we can leave scars, scratches and wounds on people that may last for years and God's program is hurt.

Hebrews 12:14-15 When we have sowed the seeds of irritation, hatred, annoyance or jealousy in our hearts and those seeds are not dealt with "bitterness grows in our hearts."

Proverbs 4:23; 23:7; Matthew 12:34 If we do not guard our heart then that which is in our heart will come out in an ugly way that will undoubtedly not look like the trademark of Godly love.

TAKE PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Psalm 15:1-4 David was a man "after God's own heart." He knew what God was looking for in a Spirit filled life. He knew what it was like to have people "backbite" him, revile him and do evil toward him. He tells us that God is not pleased with that sort of actions against a neighbor or the brethren.

Proverbs 3:5-6 If we move against one who has offended us and utilize "our own understanding" and trust in our feelings are we not judging or assuming something that may not be true, honest or just.

James 4:6 We need to take into account that sometimes our values, standards and upbringing may be so different that our "stand for righteousness" may actually come from a proud heart.

Romans 14:13; 15:1 If we are prone to look for deficiencies and immature behavior in others let's take account of that and ask God to help us pray for others before we take offense or cause offense.