

**Read: Matthew 18:15-20**

## How to Talk to People About Their Sin

### **Matthew 18:15-17**

“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

Every single one of us at some point, when we were fighting with someone, went to get an adult.

Kids often go yelling for Mom or Dad when their brother hit them or their sister wouldn't share her stuff. At school, if kids get called a name or someone tries to change the rules of the game at recess, they go get the teacher. They want an adult on their side.

The Bible is saying kind of the same thing here when it comes to us and people who are members of our church family. If someone sins against you, that means if someone hurts you or is sinning in a way that is really harmful, you should let them know that it hurt or how their actions could affect their faith. Don't text them. Do it in person. Because if they listen and are sorry, you can happily hug them right away! But what if they don't listen and refuse to ask for forgiveness? You need to get someone else to go with you. And if that doesn't work, then you go to the leaders of the church.

Sometimes it works, which is awesome! We get to tell people that Jesus forgave all of their sins and God sees them as his perfect children. Sometimes, though, it doesn't work. And that's the hardest thing in the world. Some people are blind to how badly their sins are impacting themselves, the people around them, and their church family. They refuse to listen. They refuse to turn to Jesus. When that happens, the church family will still pray for them and be friendly when they see them, but then they set boundaries that send a clear message, “You are not close with Jesus and living apart from him could mean living apart from him in heaven.”

This isn't about tattling on someone so that you look good or that the other church members feel like they are better than other people. We don't enjoy it when other people are in trouble. Instead, Christians talk to each other this way about sin because sin is serious. It separates people from God, and we want to make sure that other people know that their sins are a way that Satan is using to tempt them away from following Jesus.

But here's the good news: [Jesus said,] "Where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." Even when we have hard conversations and deal with sad things, God is still with us, guiding our discussions and helping us say and do hard things out of love for other people.

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- Why is it so easy to tattle on other people?
- When you tattle on them, what are you hoping will happen?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- What has happened when you've tattled on somebody?
- Why does it often feel good to tattle on someone? How can we love them instead?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Whose job is it to confront someone who is sinning against God?
- When we talk to people about their sin, is it easier to want them to get in trouble or to love them? Why is that?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear God, please help us to handle things calmly when people sin against us. Help our church to love people enough to tell them hard things. Help people show us our sins too, so we don't get arrogant. Amen.