

Read: Matthew 18:15-20

Talk to Each Other in Love

Matthew 18:15 (EHV)

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his sin, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have regained your brother.

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

“Mah-ahm!!!” Mom knew that voice. Something had happened down the hall. Ruth’s brother said something mean. Ruth’s sister responded with something unkind. There was no way Ruth was going to let that mean word or unkind act go unnoticed. So she cried out, “Mah-ahm!!!”

Soon the kids would be standing in front of mom. Each child would present their side. Each child would try to avoid getting in trouble for what they actually did or said. Each child would argue louder and louder over the top of the other . . . until finally, Mom hands out consequences. Now, *both* children go away angry at each other and Mom.

What mom would want to be in that situation? Yet how often do we shout for “Mah-ahm!!!” when someone sins against us? We do not react calmly. We do not try to talk to the person who has wronged us. Instead, we get angry. We yell. We respond strongly and try to find someone who will hand out consequences on the sinner, all while conveniently forgetting that we are sinners too. If someone is not available to hand out consequences, we go and tell everyone how bad, rude, or unkind that person is without talking to them about how they have sinned against us.

Is that how God wants you to treat someone who has wronged you? No! Jesus encourages you, “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his sin, just between the two of you.” Jesus says nothing about going off, yelling, or telling on everyone else. Instead, he wants you to show love by calmly helping someone to see their sin.

Why does Jesus want you to do that? He wants you to *regain* them—to bring them back by helping them turn back from their sin back and follow Jesus. You see, Jesus loves them and cares for their soul as much as he loves and cares for yours. In love, Jesus came to forgive the sins of even the worst person you can think of, which means he came to forgive your sins, my sins, and the sins of those who wrong you.

The next time someone sins against you, what will you do? You could yell, “Mah-ahm!!!” Or you can remember how Jesus loves you and has forgiven you. Then, talk to that person out of love for their soul that they might enjoy Christ’s forgiveness too.

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 Younger Children

- How do you sometimes react when someone is mean to you?
- Who should you talk to first if someone is mean to you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Explain what it means to *repent*.
- What does it mean to *regain your brother or sister*?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Why is it important to first talk to the person who sinned against you rather than talking to your friends or family members?
- Demonstrate how Jesus's love and forgiveness for you can motivate you to speak with love and forgiveness to someone who has wronged you.

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, in love you have forgiven my sins though I do not deserve it. Help me to forgive the person who sins against me. Help me to love them as you love me that I may bring them back to you. Amen.

Hymn: CW 304:1,2 – Jesus Sinners Does Receive

Jesus sinners does receive; oh, may all this saying ponder
Who in sin's delusions live and from God and heaven wander.
Here is hope for all who grieve—Jesus sinners does receive.

We deserve but grief and shame, yet his words, rich grace revealing,
Pardon, peace, and life proclaim; here their ills have perfect healing
Who with humble hearts believe—Jesus sinners does receive.