



The Gospel of Matthew

Reproof & Restoration in the Church Matthew 18:15-20

“And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.

And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

Truly I say to you, whatever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”

“Again I say to you, that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask, it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven.

For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.”

– Matthew 18:15-20
(NASB)



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Context:

- continues the emphasis on watching one another lovingly and pursuing any who are straying spiritually
- “if your brother sins” – sin in general not sin merely “against you”



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Process of Reproof:

1. Private Reproof

Q: *Why private?*

- shows concern for the individual
- more winsome
- avoids gossip and slander




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Process of Reproof:

1. Private Reproof

Q: *How to confront?*

- humbly – as a fellow-sinner (Matt. 7:5)
- with a spirit of gentleness (Gal. 6:1)




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Process of Reproof:

1. Private Reproof

Q: *Why don't we confront?*

- ignorant of our responsibility
- we don't want to meddle
- we love man's approval




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Process of Reproof:

2. Witnessed Reproof

➤ *"take one or two with you"*

- to endorse the assessment that the matter confronted really is "sin"
- to enhance the seriousness of what is at stake and to illicit repentance




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Process of Reproof:

3. Collective Reproof

➤ *Tell it to "the church"*

- strengthens the pastoral appeal to repent
- makes avoidance impossible
- helps avoid gossip and factions




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Process of Reproof:

4. A Decisive Break

➤ *"as a Gentile and tax-collector"*

- one outside the community of disciples
- cease all ordinary fellowship with the person
- continue to appeal to him to repent




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Ground of Authority:

➤ the church's decision will have been ratified by God in heaven!

- God's ratification is grounded in His promise to answer unified prayer...
- God's answer to prayer is grounded in the presence of Jesus amongst His gathered people



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Conclusion

- Do you belong and are you committed to this community of disciples?
- Are we committed to love one another in this matter of reproof?