

A large dove is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, against a warm, golden sunset sky. Below the dove, two hands are reaching upwards, palms open, as if in prayer or seeking help. The sky is filled with soft, glowing clouds and several smaller birds flying in the distance. The overall mood is one of hope, peace, and spiritual yearning.

Freedom  
from  
the Religious  
Spirit

**Part Seven:**  
*When justice  
and mercy meet*

Only when we have  
"removed the log from  
our own eye" are we are  
ready to help someone  
who is caught up in sin.

Sometimes our willingness  
to overlook an offense,  
and risk being wounded  
becomes the door for  
repentance for the  
offender.

**38 “You have heard that it was said,  
‘AN EYE FOR AN EYE, AND A TOOTH  
FOR A TOOTH.’**

**Matthew 5:38–41**

39 “But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

40 “If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your coat also.

41 “Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two.

When Habitual sin exists in a community of saints, we are obligated to maintain a posture of forgiveness, but are also responsible to confront it in a spirit of reconciliation.



1 Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, *you who are spiritual, restore* such a one *in a spirit of gentleness*; *each one looking to yourself,* so that you too will not be tempted.

**Galatians 6:1**

19 My brethren, if *any among you*  
strays from the truth and one turns  
him back,

**James 5:19–20**

20 let him know that *he who turns*  
*a sinner from the error of his way*  
will save his soul from death and  
*will cover a multitude of sins.*

The church should be the  
safest community in the  
world for the weary,  
abused, rejected, and  
despised ones to come find  
rest, safety and healing.

It can only be so if we  
maintain a standard of  
loving based on Jesus'  
example of love toward  
us.

The Good Shepherd does not allow wolves in sheep's clothing to harm his sheep.

**15** “If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

**Matthew 18:15–20**

16 “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.**



17 “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 collector.

18 “Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven.

19 “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.

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

## 4 Steps to reconciliation

1. Go in private with all hope and intention to help turn this one back toward Jesus.

**17** As iron sharpens iron, So a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

**Proverbs 27:17**

- Make sure you have  
the facts straight.

- Go humbly, speak  
softly.

**15** A soft answer turns away wrath,  
But ***a harsh word stirs up anger.***

**Proverbs 15:1**



- Ask questions; seek  
to understand.

- Seek out the  
Christ-in-them.

- Remove all judgment from the conversation
- Avoid finger pointing and shaming.

<sup>6</sup> **Faithful are the wounds of a friend,** But the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.

**Proverbs 27:6**

## 4 Steps to reconciliation

2. Bring a couple of others who have seen the same behavior and try again.

This is not a group that  
have been convinced to see  
things as you do. They  
should be **eyewitnesses** to  
the same behavior.

Gossip is when we confess the sins of others with no intention of taking responsibility to address them in private.

<sup>9</sup> He who *covers* a transgression *seeks love*, But he who *repeats a matter* separates friends.

Proverbs 17:9

If there are no other witnesses, then we are at step 3 (mediation or involvement of church authority).



<sup>17</sup> The first *one* to plead his cause  
*seems* right, Until his neighbor  
comes and examines him.

**Proverbs 18:17**

15 but *speaking the truth in love*,  
we are to *grow up* in all aspects *into*  
*Him* who is the head, *even Christ*,

**Ephesians 4:15**