

Aim:**Refer:****Resources:** Pictures of Pilgrims Progress are available here: <http://www.bunyanministries.org/>

Open your Bibles to Matthew chapter 18 – put a marker in them.

Discuss: What are some things that our friends might do that upset or hurt us?

Read verse 15

If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back.

As humans, when someone hurts us, we are often tempted to tell everyone else about it. But who did Jesus say we should go to first?

Gary Chapman has written some good books about emotions including one about Anger. In his book, he suggests having a special card and keeping it on your fridge, then when you are angry, you can get the card and read it to the person you are angry with. The card says, "I'm feeling angry right now, but don't worry. I'm not going to attack you. But I do need your help. Is this a good time to talk?"

He also explains that if the other person is really angry, or tired, or distracted at that moment, then it probably won't be a good time, and instead you should ask 'when will be a good time to talk?'.

Sometimes people don't even realise how they have hurt others. Talking, might help them realise what they have done and then they can apologise for it. Or you might find out that they are also angry with you about something else, in which case you might now both be able to apologise to each other. Or you might find that they still don't understand.

Read Luke 6:27-28

With God's help, you can still forgive people who hurt you, even if they don't understand and they are not sorry, but you will find that your relationship with people like this is not as close a relationship as it is with people who do understand you.

Read verse 16, 17

But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

Before we do this, there is something else we need to consider. We might discuss this problem with one or two other people we trust – your parents. Sometimes people do things that upset us, but they are not actually sins. For example, someone might feel upset about their friend who has something new. After talking to their parents they realise that their friend has not sinned against them, rather, they are actually feeling jealous about what their friend has.

Discuss how Jesus treated tax collectors. (eg. Zacchaeus)

Verses 18-20 contain some good Bible promises that we can use when praying.

Read verse 20

For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them.

Then read verse 18-19

I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven. I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you.

Remember that when we pray with Bible promises, we are using the Sword of the Spirit. And we also need to pray like Jesus did, that God's will be done. Or another way to say this is "I want what You want, God." Or "...unless you have a better idea, God."

So we can pray, "Jesus, in Matthew 18:19-20, You said that where two or three are gathered, You are with us – thank you for being with us. And you also said that if we agree here on earth then God will do what we ask, so we are asking you to do... whatever it is ...or something better, thank you for answering our prayer. Amen."

Pilgrims Progress continues:

Now I saw in my dream that after a time in prison Christian continued his journey and one whose name was Hopeful joined him. Hopeful also told Christian, that there were many more of the men who would follow.

So I saw that quickly after they were got out of the Fair, they overtook one that was going before them, whose name was By-ends; so they said to him, "What country, Sir? And how far go you this way?"

He told them, that he came from the town of Fair-speech, and he was going to the Celestial City. "I am a stranger to you, and you to me: if you be going this way, I shall be glad of your company; if not, I must be content."

"This town of Fair-speech," said Christian, "I have heard of, and as I remember, they say it is a wealthy place."

"Yes, I will assure you that it is; and I have very many rich kindred there. Almost the whole town is related to me.

And he goes on to tell them the names of some of his relatives. Do any these names mean anything to you?

How would they go travelling on the straight and narrow way?

(See lesson for more details if time)

My Lords Turn-about, Time-server and Fair-speech, also Mr Smooth-man, Mr Facing-both-ways, Mr Any-thing; and the parson of our parish, Mr Two-tongues, is my uncle. I am a gentleman of good quality, yet my great-grandfather was but a waterman, looking one way and rowing another, and I got most of my estate by the same occupation. My wife is Lady Feigning's daughter; she came of a very honourable family.

"It is true we somewhat differ in religion from those of the stricter sort, but only in two small points; first, we never strive against wind and tide; secondly, we are always most zealous when religion goes in his silver slippers; we love much to walk with him in the street, if the sun shines, and the people applaud him."

Then Christian said, "Is not your name Mr By-ends, of Fair-speech?"

"It is not my name, but a nickname that is given me by some that cannot stand me."

"Did you never give an occasion to men to call you by this name," asked Christian?

"Never, never!" Said By-ends, "The worst that ever I did was always have the luck to jump, as I judged, with the present way of the times, whatever it was, and my chance was to get thereby; but if things are thus cast upon me, let me count them a blessing; but do not let the nasty load me with reproach."

Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary says to 'have a by-end' means to have a private end or interest, a secret purpose or selfish advantage in mind. Mr By-ends is a 'Christian' only when it is easy to be one and when it is profitable.

Christian said, "I thought, indeed, that you were the man I heard of; and to tell you what I think, I fear this name belongs to you more properly than you are willing we should think it does."

By-ends replied, "Well, I cannot help it. But you shall find me a fair company-keeper, if you will still admit me your associate."

"If you will go with us," said Christian, "You must go against wind and tide; which, I perceive, is against your opinion; you must also own religion in his rags, as well as when in his silver slippers; and stand by him, too, when bound in irons, as well as when he walketh the streets with applause."

Then said By-ends, I shall never desert my old principles, since they are harmless and profitable. If I may not go with you, I must do as I did before you overtook me and go by myself, until some other overtake me that will be glad of my company.

Now I saw in my dream, that Christian and Hopeful walked faster, leaving Mr By-ends behind. But one of them looking back, saw three men come up to Mr. By-ends. The men's names were Mr. Hold-the-world, Mr. Money-love and Mr. Save-all, men that Mr. By-ends had formerly been acquainted with for they were school-fellows and were taught by one Mr. Gripe-man, a schoolmaster in Love-gain which is a market town in the county of Coveting, in the north. This schoolmaster taught them the art of getting, either by violence, trickery, flattery, lying, or by putting on a disguise of religion, and these four gentlemen had attained much of the art of their master so that they could each of them have taught such a school themselves.

Mr Money-love and Hold-the-world asked Mr By-ends about the Christian and Hopeful who had walked ahead and then they decided to put the question to them: "If a man sees that he will gain something by appearing to become zealous (or passionate) about some aspect of religion, can he do this and be a right honest man?"

Some discussion followed the conclusion being that "the man that gets these by becoming religious, gets that which is good, of them that are good, by becoming good himself." And because, as they thought, no man was able to contradict it, and because Christian and Hopeful were yet within call, they jointly agreed to assault them with the question as soon as they overtook them.

Mr. Hold-the-world asked the question to Christian and his fellow, and bid them to answer it if they could. Then said Christian, "Even a babe in religion may answer such questions. For if it be unlawful to follow Christ for loaves, how much worse is it to use religion to get and enjoy the world! Nor do we find any other than heathens, hypocrites, devils, and their followers, that are of this opinion.

"The hypocritical Pharisees were of this religion; long prayers were their pretence; but to get widows' houses was their intent; and greater damnation was from God their judgment. Judas was also of this religion; he was religious for the bag of money; but he was lost, cast away. Also a man that takes up religion for the world will throw away religion for the world, for so surely as Judas designed the world in becoming religious, so surely did he also sell religion and his Master for the same. To answer the question therefore affirmatively, as I perceive you have done; and to accept of, as authentic, such answer, is both heathenish, hypocritical, and devilish; and your reward will be according to your works."

Then they stood staring one upon another, but had no answer.