



of such a rebuke, let us strive not to make assumptions about the motives of our brother or sister (cf. Pro. 18:13). During our discussion we must continually keep our emotions in check, or we might find ourselves easily going into a rant and venting about why we're the victims (cf. Pro. 29:11). If we'd take a moment to ask ourselves how we would like

to be approached if we'd offended a brother, then we'd make great strides in reaching out to our brethren. A considerate, thoughtful, and compassionate approach that seeks to dispel any notion of malicious intent will lower the defenses of our brother or sister and, consequently, they will be more receptive to what we have to say. Yes, "contentions are like the bars of a citadel", but the Lord has promised that we can overcome evil with good (cf. Rom.12:21).

We cannot afford to let annoying tiffs escalate into bitterness and malice simply because we did not tell our brother or sister how they hurt us (cf. Pro.17:14). Such attitudes are toxic and will inevitably seep out into the rest of a congregation. Knowing the danger and the damaging, soul-killing consequences, what else is there left for us to do but to go, and *win* our brother?



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## Welcome Visitors

We are so glad that you joined us today.  
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● Let us know if you have any questions.

ISSUE

13.47

BULLETIN OF  
THE OLSEN  
PARK CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

# Faithful Sayings

November 20  
2011



## Services

Sunday: 9:30 AM  
10:20 AM  
6:00 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

## Elders:

Pat Ledbetter  
Jeff Nunn  
Kyle Pope

## Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Steve Dixon  
Pat Goguen  
Jack Langley  
Neil Ledbetter  
Brady McAlister  
Walker McAnear  
Lance Purcell  
Rusty Scott

## Evangelists:

Kyle Pope  
Jason Garcia

## Win Your Brother

By Jason Garcia

So long as we are here, there will be conflict. It is inevitable. Personalities clash, feelings are hurt, people are offended, and don't always agree with one another. Before any of us were ever born, the Lord knew He would establish a church—a people for Himself, called from all over the world. This church would be immensely diverse even within its localized congregations. Though people may be added to the church from the same country, city, or town, they are going to have different ideas and different ways of thinking. When conflicts arise because of differing opinions and judgments, how are we to react? What if things escalate to the point of bitterness or even malice toward a brother or sister? Certainly we cannot afford to harbor such things in our hearts and still be acceptable to God (cf. Eph. 4:31-32). If we offend one of our brothers or sisters, then reconciliation must be sought *immediately*. The task can be daunting, and the Scriptures confirm saying, "A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a citadel" (Prov. 18:19 NASB). So where do we begin? How can we make things right once more without making matters worse?

## 1. Keep a Compassionate Heart.

When our feelings have been hurt it can be difficult to maintain a compassionate and loving heart toward the one who has injured us. Nevertheless, this is the first and most crucial step to reconciliation. Without it we cannot hope to approach our brother in an acceptable way—one that will cause him to be more receptive to what we have to say. The difficulty

of detaching ourselves emotionally from an issue that has directly affected us is nothing new. We might be angry with a brother, but we must control that anger for **“the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God”** (Jas. 1:20). Our willingness to forgive must far outweigh the anger we may have over an issue, for this is the example set before us in Christ just as Paul instructs, **“whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you”** (Col. 3:13). We can and should have a compassionate, forgiving attitude toward all people, and especially those who have wronged us, just as the Lord had toward His enemies—you and I. If we succumb to anger, however, more strife can be expected: **“For the churning of milk produces butter, and pressing the nose brings forth blood; so the churning of anger produces strife”** (Pro. 30:33).

## 2. Have Courage.

There is something else we will need—courage. Unfortunately, so many brethren make the mistake of trying to wait things out. Both parties may acknowledge a conflict, but neither is willing to do anything about it, or they have tried only to come to a stalemate, and then become unwilling to make any further contact. So they become apathetic or convince themselves that the conflict will eventually be forgotten or work itself out naturally. When has this ever been true? How does waiting out a conflict harmonize with the Lord’s instruction? He’s very clear in communicating how urgent these matters are when He says, **“Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before**

**the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering”**

(Matt. 5:23-24). We cannot afford to delay making things right with our brother or sister. If they demonstrate an unwillingness to speak with us, then they should know they have put themselves at odds with our Heavenly Father just as John teaches, **“If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen”** (1 Jn. 4:20). Yes, it will be difficult to talk with those with whom we have conflicts, but the fact that it will be difficult does not excuse us from addressing it. No one expects a time bomb to suddenly stop ticking on its own, or weeds to uproot themselves, or festering wounds to heal without treatment—so why apply the same thinking to our conflicts? Yes, it will take much time and effort to diffuse tempers, uproot bitterness, and heal relationships; but the sooner we begin the process the sooner it can be resolved.

## 3. Use Care in Our Words.

Once we have set our hearts right, reigned in emotions and mustered the courage to approach our brother, we must consider carefully, and *prayerfully* what exactly we’re going to say. We can have the right attitude and the determination to resolve an interpersonal conflict, but become so enamored with the goal that we forget to use any tact in our approach. We may express our concern for our brother, or explain what they’ve done to

hurt us, without giving any thought to how we might be perceived. Though we come with the best intentions and sincere desire to make things right, if we do not take a moment to express our motives, then we leave room for misinterpretation. Scripture gives us sound advice teaching, **“A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger”** (Pro. 15:1). We must make sure that our brother or sister knows that we are coming to them out of concern for his or her soul, or concern for our relationship, because we love them and want what’s best for them. The simplest way to express this is by *telling* them. If we jump right into a rebuke of their behavior, or even hint that we’re accusing them of something, then they may perceive us as self-righteous, mean-spirited. If we ever find ourselves on the receiving end

