

# Following Christ in the Real World When Christians Offend You

Would Jesus look at you and say, “Now that’s reality Christianity”?

*Matthew 5:13-16*

*“You are the salt of the earth...[and] <sup>14</sup> “You are the light of the world...let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.*

## 1. Your life is supposed to make a statement about God.

Would anyone watching what you do in life be able to tell that you are a follower of Christ by simply watching your actions?

## 2. Your Attitude Makes a Statement about God.

*Matthew 5:13-16.*

*Pastor: “You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder.*

***People: If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’***

*Pastor: But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment!*

***People: If you call someone an idiot,***

*Pastor: You are in danger of being brought before the court.*

***People: And if you curse someone,***

*Pastor: you are in danger of the fires of hell.*

***People: “So if you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple***

*Pastor: and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you,*

***People: leave your sacrifice there at the altar.***

*Pastor: Go and be reconciled to that person.*

***People: Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.***

- Jesus has just told us that we can’t separate our attitude about that guy from our act of worship.
- And you can’t separate your attitude about that guy from your love of God.

Reality statement: There will always be people in the church who disagree.

Question: When I disagree, what attitude will I choose?

Tension: to pull in opposite directions.

Conflict: to strike against each other. (to attack)

Why do we turn tension into conflict?

- Immaturity
- Insecurity
- Selfishness.

How do you know if you have a conflict problem?

- Are you nursing an internal grudge.  
Anger (orgē): a slow, simmering, inward burn.
- Do you devalue them?

“As soon as you start dividing [people] into jerks and non-jerks you’re lost.” (Henri Nouwen)

- Does your attitude hold you prisoner?
- Are you refusing to resolve the relationship?  
*“Be reconciled.”*

**3. Your response makes a difference.**

- Deal with your attitude first.
- Face the conflict even if you can’t resolve the tension.
- Choose to live the life of love.

“I have learned that God is not the enemy of my enemies. God is not even the enemy of God’s enemies.” (Martin Niemoller)

God loves *that guy!*

**So What?**

Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are the humble.  
Blessed are those whose hearts are pure.

Question to ask yourself: Does that describe me?

Today's Translation: New Living Translation  
John Bray, July 9 & 10, 2011

To listen to this sermon again go to  
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[www.NowWhatJohn.com](http://www.NowWhatJohn.com)

## Now What? Resources for Reflection & Growth

To set the stage for this time, read Matthew 5:1-10 so that you will be reminded about the kind of life God chooses to bless.

Read Matthew 5:16. How do you feel about your life being the example by which people judge God?

- Identify one or two things that other people can see, which might be signals that you are a true follower of Christ.
- Can you identify a behavior, that people can see, which may not be such a positive signal?

Before we dig into the scripture about reconciliation, consider something about how your history has shaped your present.

- How did your parents deal with disputes? How has that shaped you (positively or negatively)?
- What's the best advice you have received about dealing with anger?
- Now read Matthew 5:21-24.

Jesus has just told us that we can't separate our attitude about *that guy* from our act of worship. Why do you think attitude is so important?

- Read the following: John 13:34-35; John 15:10-13; John 17:20-23; 1 John 4:20.
- Jesus' disciples had been together with him (the author of love) for three years by this time.
  - Why do you think he had to emphasize the importance of love?
  - Why do you think the tension of disagreement so often results in conflict, argument, anger, hard feelings or stubbornness?
  - What do you think this says about us?

The sermon identified Four Signals that might indicate you have a *conflict* problem. Which show up in your life?

Jesus said, "Go and be reconciled to that person." John said that reconciliation is not just settling the issue. What do you think *reconciliation* means? How is it more than problem solving?

On page 2 John suggests three ways your response makes a difference.

- Why do you think all three are important?
- Why do you think the order may be important?
- What do you think it means to "live a life of love"?

What practical step do you need to take before next week so that your worship experience will be Christ-honoring?