

## Further Answers to Questions from Sermon August 23

By Ryan Jorgenson

- I have lovingly confronted a very close family member stuck in the habitual sin of an anger and a selfish spirit that defines their overall character on a daily basis (without ever expressing guilt over the sin or repentance) over the last 6 or 7 years. I have expressed my concern over their salvation, which they have professed since they were in their 40's (over 40 years). They responded with denial, anger, and being offended. Where do I go from here? I am deeply concerned that they may not be saved as they are elderly and could pass away at any time.

Your heart and concern for your family member is admirable. Here are a few thoughts to help you consider what to do next.

Do you feel a second or another one-on-one conversation about their sins would be helpful or in vain? If you think it would be helpful, do another one-on-one.

If in vain, then Jesus has given you the next steps of what to do in *Matthew 18:15-20*.

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

As you can see, you need to bring one or two more believers with you, in love, to talk with your family member about their unrepentant sin. These individuals would preferably be those closest to your family member for hopes they may listen to what they have to say. They could be other Christian family members, friends, members of their church, a pastor, an elder, etc.

Once you identify who that person or those people may be, meet with them to present your situation and ask them if they would go along. This is whether they agree with your concerns because they have also seen these actions or at least as a third party to hear both sides, help moderate such a conversation and make their own conclusion once they've heard both sides.

Because they claim to be a believer and even recall a moment when they "professed" faith in Jesus, as you said earlier, you need to go by what they have claimed because you cannot judge their heart in those professions. You should treat them as a believer who has some unrepentant sins and focus on those. When you and whomever else joins you meet with them, you could say something like, *"Family member, you know how much I love you and from that love I have spoken to you about what I see as a pattern of anger and selfishness in your life. I know you have denied these things before but I still believe they are true, so I followed Jesus' direction to bring in another believer to..."*: Now here is where there are two possible situations. Either your third party is an eyewitness of this person's sins OR they are there to weigh both sides and come to a conclusion whether your accusations are true.

If they are an eyewitness themselves OR they end up agreeing with you after you've both presented your sides, they can then join you in your loving call to your family member to own and repent of their habitual sins. The hope in this is they do repent and "you've won your brother over".

Just a heads up, it could also come out that your third party is not an eyewitness, and after hearing your accusations and your family members' defenses that they disagree with your accusations and ask that you please stop accusing your family member.

If the accusations are validated by your third party and your family member still denies them or does not repent, you may consider having a second similar meeting after a period of time of prayer and allowing the Spirit some time to convict your family member. The period of time is not in the Scriptures but sometimes a few weeks or months can be helpful.

If after some time of prayer and your family member has not come to you in repentance, you may either have a second meeting or you need to continue Jesus' process in Matthew 18 and include the elders of the church your family member belongs to (included in "bring it to the church"). Reach out to them and catch them up to the situation. Then ask them if they would be willing to come along with you and the other third party to have the same kind of conversation as before with your family member.

Hopefully, your family member will own and repent of their sin and you've won them over. But if not, the last step is to be conducted by the Elders of their church to potentially bring them to the church members to call him/her to repentance over a period of time. At this point, you allow them to lead the process and you continue to pray.

In this process, it may very well occur to your family member that they are not truly a follower of Jesus, if that is the case. But that is for the Spirit and them to figure out.

As you can see, this process has multiple facets and possibilities, so if you would like more advice beyond what is written here, feel free to email or call me, as I'd be glad to help, or another believer who you feel knows this biblical process well. [ryanj@cfcjax.com](mailto:ryanj@cfcjax.com)

May the Lord help your family member in whatever ways He knows they need, and may He guide you to know what to do in each step.