

## Hiding from Confrontation . . .

“Adam, Eve, where are you?” The probing voice of God pierces the evening air, confronting the two pounding hearts hiding in the foliage. Just hours before, all was so perfect, so peaceful—but then they ate the forbidden fruit and that changed everything. They knew they had disobeyed God. They chose to defy His authority. Now they flinch in fear as God’s voice comes near.

As they step out of their hiding, how will God confront the couple? Things could have been so different. He created the first man and woman in a perfect place where He would meet all their needs. If only they had listened to Him! Because of their fatal choice, they forfeited what He had planned. Now what will He say to them? What will be His approach?

As the couple cowers, He proceeds with questions: “Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?” (Genesis 3:11). As if God doesn’t know! Adam shrugs off personal blame and instead puts blame on Eve,

“The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.” God turns and asks Eve, “What is this that you have done?” Do you really think God is unaware? God knows what she has done. He asks her questions to help her confess. Meanwhile, Eve blames the serpent, “The serpent deceived me, and I ate” (Genesis 3:12–13).

**Q:** “If I have a friend who is a Christian but who is continuing to live in sin, am I obligated to confront my friend?”

Realize that you may be God’s agent to help your friend to change and then to grow to be more Christ-like. By caring enough to confront, God can use you to encourage and support different loved ones to overcome habits that enslave them or alienate them from others. At times He will call you to directly but lovingly intervene in the lives of fellow believers who have wandered from the truth and have become ensnared by sin.

*“My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.”*  
(James 5:19–20)

**Q:** “If I have confronted someone for wrong behavior and that person continues to rebuff my words, should I continue to bring it up?”

If no change occurs after repeated attempts to confront someone who is clearly wrong, don’t continue confronting. The Bible says, “Shake off the dust from your feet.”

*“If anyone will not receive you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet when you leave that house or town.”*  
(Matthew 10:14)

## The Four Styles of Confrontation

### 1. The Passive Approach:

*Confronting* indirectly by using silence or nonspecific language to communicate needs and desires

- shuns direct interaction because of fear
- expects others to figure out what is wanted

### 2. The Aggressive Approach:

*Confronting* by overtly attacking the character of the other person in order to gain power

- uses threats and intimidation to get needs met by others at any cost
- feels free to violate the rights of others

### 3. The Passive-aggressive Approach:

*Confronting* by using a power play like covertly ambushing the other person

- uses sarcasm and sniping rather than direct, specific language
- tries to get even later for real or imagined slights

### 4. The Assertive Approach:

*Confronting* by directly affirming the truth that positive change needs to take place

- uses direct, specific language to express factual information
- confronts directly in a way that expresses value for the opinions and feelings of others

*“On the lips of him who has understanding, wisdom is found.”*  
(Proverbs 10:13)

## You Should Not Confront . . . <sup>1</sup>

- When you are not the right person to confront (Proverbs 26:17)
- When it's not the right time to confront (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7)
- When you are uncertain of the facts (Proverbs 18:13)
- When it's best to overlook a minor offense (Proverbs 10:12)
- When your motive is purely your own rights, not the benefit of the other person (Philippians 2:3–4)
- When you have a vindictive motive (Romans 12:17)
- When the consequences of the confrontation outweigh the offense (Proverbs 17:1)
- When the person you want to confront has a habit of foolishness and quarreling (2 Timothy 2:23–24)
- When setting aside your rights will benefit an unbeliever (1 Peter 2:19, 21)
- When confrontation will be ineffective and reprisal severe (Proverbs 9:7)

*“If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”*  
(Proverbs 18:13)

## You Should Confront . . .

- When someone is in danger (Proverbs 24:11–12)
- When a relationship is threatened (Philippians 4:2–3)
- When division exists within a group (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- When someone sins against you (Matthew 18:15)
- When you are offended (Ephesians 4:2–3)
- When someone is caught in a sin (Ezekiel 3:18)
- When others are offended (Galatians 2:11–13)

*“I can do all things through him who strengthens me.”*  
(Philippians 4:13)

## Key Verses to Memorize

*“If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*  
(Galatians 6:1–2)

## Key Passage to Read and Reread

Matthew 18:15–17

## The Key Components of Assertive Confrontation

**Begin** with a positive statement—a sincere compliment.

- “I value our relationship. I appreciate your (name good character traits.)”

**Describe** the unacceptable behavior and how it made you feel.

- “The last three times that we were supposed to leave at 8:45, you arrived late, and we didn’t leave until after 9:00. Truthfully, being late makes me feel not only bad but also disrespected.”

**Present** expectations.

- “I would like for us to go together, but no matter what you choose to do, I have decided to be on time from this point forward.”

**Communicate** consequences with a plan of accountability.

- “In order to be on time next week, we need to leave by 8:45. If you’re not here by then, I will have to leave without you. However, I’m hoping we can leave together.”

## Related Topics . . .

- Communication:  
*The Heart of the Matter*
- Conflict Resolution:  
*Solving People Problems*
- Critical Spirit:  
*Be an Encourager—Not a Critic*
- Reconciliation:  
*Restoring Broken Relationships*
- Rejection:  
*Healing a Wounded Heart*

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### **Confrontation:**

*Restoring Troubled Relationships.*

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For prayer encouragement and biblical counsel call 1-866-570-HOPE (4673).

1. John Nieder and Thomas M. Thompson, *Forgive & Love Again: Healing Wounded Relationships* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 1991), 156–60.



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