

Perry Stone: What to Do When People You Trust Betray You

To betray a trust is to surrender information about a situation or a person to another person. To betray a friendship is to give up a friend and separate from someone who has built a relationship in your life. To betray a marriage is to break a vow that was made between the husband and the wife. Betrayal is very difficult to overcome, as it breaks the trust that bonds relationships.

When a person is betrayed, then the betrayer has surrendered information that was given in trust, operating and exposing his or her friend's heart during the friendship. If a known enemy works against us we have little concern for the enemy's opinions, as the old expression says, "There was no love lost," because there was never a relationship or friendship from the beginning. Throughout his lifetime David experienced the knife of betrayal after several of his closest friends turned against him (see Psalm 55:12-14).

The enigma of Christianity is that for a religion based upon the mixture of mutual love, honor and respect, why is there often a lack of all three among Christian brethren? The answer is found in a prediction Christ gave, warning His disciples of events prior to His return (see Matt. 24:10).

The root cause of betrayal is offense. The Greek word for *offend* is *skandalizo* and means, "to set a trap to ensnare something." We derive the word *scandal* from this word. A scandal occurs when a person or persons betray the trust and confidence of others through words or actions.

Some of America's most noted national scandals are the Watergate break-in under the Nixon administration, the moral failure of President Bill Clinton, and the incident that was

classified by many as a cover-up that occurred when Americans were killed in Libya in late 2012. The longer the press reported the scandals, the more offense they created, especially among those that did not like Presidents Nixon, Clinton and Obama.

When you become offended, unless you check your attitude, forgive and move forward, you will begin a betrayal process. Suddenly that best friend becomes a worst enemy, your cherished memories are willfully erased from the hard drive of your memory bank, and the secrets entrusted to each other are now openly discussed with others using this previously unknown information as a weapon to defend *why* you have a good excuse to remain in your offense.

When offense comes, what is the difference between a person willing to betray and leave a friend and others choosing to stay and save the relationship? The answer is simple. It is the genuine love or affection a person has for the individual who has offended or, in some instances, fallen into a moral failure.

One with true love toward another restrains offenses from becoming betrayals. Consider your own family. You put up with more junk from your children than you would someone else's, and you willingly resist the temptation of throwing your children out when they have rejected your instruction or fallen into sin. You may discipline them, but you will not forsake them (just as God does not forsake His children) because your love is greater than their foolishness and failures. Discipline is not a sign of rejection but of correction (see Hebrews 12:5-6).

In the body of Christ there are doctrinal differences, or various opinions such as the type of music or worship, that often separate denominations. However, we can all agree to disagree on those subjects that have no bearing upon our salvation, justification and eternal destiny.

The Word of God must never be used as a weapon against other men of God. God's Word is like a sword but it must never be turned upon a fellow brother or sister. The Word is a rock, but it must never be used to stone someone who has failed. The Word is also a hammer, but it is not intended to serve as a tool to crucify believers on your cross of doctrinal opinions. The Word is water that is intended to refresh, but it should never be the weapon used to drown out the voice of someone you disagree with. The Word is a fire that God Himself uses to purge iniquity from a person, but it is not intended to be used by a fire-handling Christian who wants to burn someone's hide by quoting verses in hate and bitterness (see 1 John 4:20-21, 1 Cor. 13:1-2 and Mark 11:25-26).

Why did Christ say, "Whenever you stand praying ... forgive" (Mark 11:25)? When you "stand praying," the presence of God exposes your own actions to you, causing you to make a choice of either ignoring the prodding of the Spirit or of following through with right actions. To release others through forgiveness is not an option but a divine instruction. Forgiving others is not just beneficial in this life, but it is the clear path that leads you to eternal peace.

*Adapted from The Judas Goat by **Perry Stone**, copyright 2013, published by Charisma House.*