

MEDDLING IN OTHER PEOPLE'S AFFAIRS

Galatians 6:1 ... "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."

The word "meddle" or "meddling," may not be familiar to you. The dictionary defines it as: Interfering in the business of other people.

Normally, I side with the principle that what you do in your life is none of my business. If your neighbor drinks himself into a drunken stupor every night, and he ignores your gentle warning that he could be making a mistake, he still has that right as long as he does not hurt others. But, if your drunken neighbor abuses his wife or children, someone must meddle to protect them. You are justified – required, actually – to be involved in the lives of your minor children, because they often lack the wisdom to avoid making serious mistakes. You must meddle in the life of your eight-year-old son who believes that skipping school is acceptable. You must meddle if your thirteen-year-old daughter plans to sleep with her boyfriend. People often make bad choices that hurt others. That requires someone to intervene...or, meddle.

When a believer – a follower of Christ – makes (or plans to make) a bad decision, we are required to intervene, as illustrated in today's verse. The Living Bible expresses this same verse as: "Dear brothers, if a Christian is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help him back onto the right path, remembering that next time it might be one of you who is in the wrong." Please note that nothing in this verse speaks about judging another believer. Judging, which is forbidden, means that you publicly condemn a person who has sinned. When you gently and privately confront another believer with their sin, and use the Bible as your evidence, you are guiding them away from their sin. We are instructed to do that.

The instruction to restore a believer does not work with non-believers because there is nothing good to restore them to. Plus, non-believers lack the power of the Holy Spirit to help them make better choices. If you have a friend or loved one who is not born-again, and that person is making bad choices, your first goal is lead them to Christ, who will then send his Holy Spirit to be their guide. You can counsel that new believer, but it is the Holy Spirit who will ultimately transform his or her life.

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