

First Baptist Church of Progress Village
A Church Called Tov: Chapter 3
Todd E. Hammond, Senior Pastor
September 3, 2025

Based on books: A Church Called Tov & Pivot by McKnight & Barringer

I. Toxic responses to criticism / accusation.

Matthew 20:24-28 (NLT2) *When the ten other disciples heard what James and John had asked, they were indignant. But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

“When an allegation arises... what the pastor or leadership does first will reveal the culture... confession and repentance indicate a tov culture; denial and defensiveness signal toxicity.” (p. 41)

A. Deny

1 Peter 5:1-3 (KJV) *The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.*

B. Deflect

“Denial... a defensive posture against ‘those who would attack our church’ reveals toxicity.” (p. 41)

C. Discredit

Matthew 12:22-24 (KJV) *Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.*

D. Disguise

John 3:19-21 (KJV) *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.*

II. TOV responses to criticism / accusation.

A. Finding and telling the truth.

1. Speak God's **Word**. – Use the words God would use to define, describe, and destroy sin.
2. Be **specific** and succinct, honest and direct.
3. Take unconditional and comprehensive **responsibility**.

Genesis 3:8-13 (KJV) *And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden. And the LORD God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou*

shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the LORD God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.

4. Express **genuine** remorse and humbly ask forgiveness.

Psalm 51:1-19 (KJV) *Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest. Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.*

5. Submit to **change**.

6. Make appropriate **restitution**.

7. Seek full **reconciliation**. *"The goal of reconciliation is to restore a sinner to fellowship, not a leader to power."* (p. 44)

B. Proper application and empathy of Scripture.

1) Go to the **offender** directly.

Matthew 18:15 (KJV) *Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*

2) Take **witnesses**.

Matthew 18:16 (KJV) *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*

3) Take it to the **church** body.

Matthew 18:17 (KJV) *And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.*

BEFORE ANY OF THAT, JESUS SAID THIS

Matthew 18:1-6 (KJV) *At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,*

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

Victims of sexual, physical, or emotional abuse should not be expected to be able to follow Matthew 18:15-17, but rather Matthew 18:1-6.