

## Turning Scandals into Evangelization

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Good News Ministries

### The Proof the World is Seeking

When scandals hurt us publicly, this can become a good opportunity to evangelize those who witness it. Whether it's an unfair divorce settlement witnessed by the children, or false accusations at work witnessed by co-workers, or priests causing scandal by abusing their vocations and witnessed by the world, Jesus wants us to love these enemies more visibly than anyone else. Why?

A scandal is any publicly known sin that even non-Christians correctly judge as wrong.

Everyone wants proof that God exists and is good, even when they don't believe in him or want to obey him. So, they look to us who profess to be Christian for evidence. In fact, they expect it. They expect unconditional, merciful love and other proof that Jesus can save them from their problems and hurts and fears.

In Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus points out that our heavenly Father is good to both the just and the unjust — to both the victims and their abusers. This is so unfair! We want sinners to be punished, and the more pain they cause, the more pain they should feel as punishment.

However, what makes us different from non-Christians is our love for everyone at all times, no matter what they do. We don't have to live with them, and we should never tolerate the abuses they commit, but we do have to love them — by being publicly merciful to them — if we want to bear witness to Christ and teach the world that God's unconditional, redemptive love is real.

To find out if we believe what Jesus preached, we can ask the Holy Spirit: "Am I a good representative of Jesus? Can the world around me discover that God is real by watching me?"

Loving unconditionally does not mean loving without boundaries. Healthy boundaries need to be established, and people who overstep them need to reap what they sow. We should say "no! Enough!" out of love for ourselves and other victims or potential victims. At the same time, our "no!" can come with great love for the abusers.

This is what it means to “be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.” Perfection in the Bible does not mean committing no sins and making no mistakes. Spiritual perfection means love that is balanced, full, unlimited, and merciful toward all.

During any scandals, as we give our wounds to Jesus for healing, we have an awesome opportunity to show the world who Christ really is and how redemption really works. If we can love the enemies within our families, our workplaces, and our Church, then unbelievers will believe us when we offer love to them also, no matter how sinful they’ve been, and this is where conversion begins.