

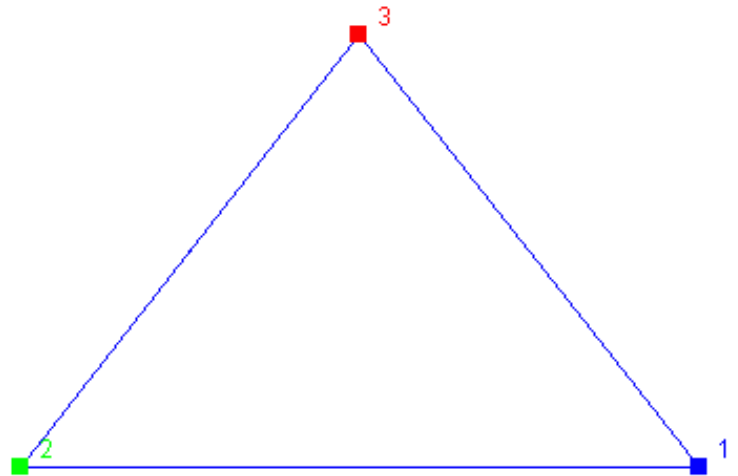
Triangles – How to stay out of them

Q) What are they?

Rather than going directly to an individual who offended them people go to and involve others, often looking for sympathy, direct involvement, winning others to their side, etc. When people come to you about issues, problems they have with other people and you listen to, entertain, get involved, repeat, you are now part of a triangle.

A triangle has 3 sides:

- Anytime you involve more than two people you have a triangle.
- Anytime you listen to something not involving you directly you create a triangle.
- Anytime you share a problem you have with another not involved you create a triangle.



Q) Why is this harmful?

Matthew 18:15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

Proverbs 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, but *he who repeats a matter separates friends.*

Examples I have seen:

People have difficulty with worship leader so they go to the pastor first (or to the leader above them) instead of talking directly to the worship leader.

Person becomes offended and seeks the counsel of another Christian and repeatedly hash over the issues with them but will not talk directly to the person who offended them as scripture instructs.

Wife (Husband) complains of issue with spouse to their parents (or others). Couple makes up and relationship is back to normal. Parents (or others) take sides. Their kid is always right! They were not part of reconciliation and still hold ought against their son or daughter in law. Relationship is strained for years!

“You are the pastor. I should be able to share anything with you.” Someone being your pastor is not a license to treat them as your personal garbage can. Pastors should not be involved in triangles either. Any counsel that does not direct you to fulfill Matthew 18:15 and deal directly with that person is unprofitable and unscriptural!

Avoid triangles

Triangles are the beginning of gossip, slander, strife and division.

Excuses people use for:

1. I need “Prayer counseling”, and wisdom to deal with. I have no one else to talk to. True counseling will lead you to fulfill Matthew 18:15.
2. “I only listen” – You are still guilty. Overriding principle: *It is none of your business!*

Wisdom says

Don't share your issues with others not involved - *It is none of their business!*

Everybody I know who has participated in triangles will claim good intentions, but I am sadly convinced some people refuse to learn and participate in triangles to irreparably destroy friendships, marriages, businesses and/or churches.

Do you really think you will bring a solution with your method rather than God's?

Galatians 6:7–8 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

How to avoid:

Kindly instruct the person sharing with you that the matter does not concern you and that according to scripture they are to go directly to the individual involved.

What one pastor does: Takes the person by the hand, walks over to the other person it involves and says, "This person has something they need to share with you", and then walks away.

1 Timothy 5:13 And besides they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.



Dangers of listening:

- Prejudices you
- Put you in a position of judgment you are not called to
- Wastes emotional energy
- Causes you harm and often blame

Proverbs 26:17 He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own *is like* one who takes a dog by the ears.

Too many Christians feel their superior Mercy gift is so needed to save the day and other people they can disobey what Jesus commanded us.

What a Triangle looks like when it gets out of control

