

# Sermon Notes: Stop Saying Sorry? Start Saying Sorry!

Matthew 5:23-24

**“If you are presenting a sacrifice at the altar in the Temple and you suddenly remember that someone has something against you, leave your sacrifice there at the altar. Go and be reconciled to them. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God...”**

## STOP SAYING SORRY?

We often use the word ‘sorry’ in a unhealthy ways. Many of the times we say ‘sorry’ we do not even mean it. We use the word as a reflex, to smooth things over, because we’re anxious, to sound kind, and sometimes we should not say it because we have not done wrong.

Which of these sorries have you said?

- Sorry, I couldn’t hear you then.
- Sorry, can you repeat that?
- Sorry, but I disagree.
- Sorry, but I have a question.
- Sorry, but I’m booked out and really don’t have time.
- Sorry, I can’t do what you want.
- Sorry, I know I shouldn’t feel this way.
- Sorry [ when you bumped into me ].
- Sorry, can I talk to you?
- I’m sorry you feel that way.
- Sorry, I have to go now.
- Sorry, not sorry!

## STOP SAYING SORRY: WHEN YOU SHOULDN’T OR WHEN YOU DON’T MEAN IT!

*“There are twelve Canadian kinds of sorry: simple, essential, occupational, subservient, aristocratic, demonstrative, libidinous, ostentatious, mythical, unrepentant, sympathetic and real. Once you learn how to properly say ‘I’m sorry,’ you will no longer be trying to become Canadian, you will have rewired your brain to such a degree that you will actually be Canadian.”* - How To Be A Canadian (Even If You Already Are One) by Ian and Will Ferguson:

In our culture females are more likely to say sorry. When girls feel they need to say ‘sorry’ for having a view there is something wrong with our culture. I am genuinely sorry for this. I am sorry when churches have reinforced ideas of male domination that make women feel that their voices are less valuable. You don’t need to feel sorry for having an opinion here. Jesus champions the voice of women.

Victims of abuse are often made to feel sorry - sometimes even for existing. We can find ourselves feeling so value-less that we can’t stop saying sorry when we have done nothing wrong.

Sometimes we say sorry because we’re anxious. Anxiety can make us say sorry when we don’t need to. But please notice that saying sorry for being anxious can make you more anxious!

Some have been taught to say sorry to show respect for other people’s power. Or we introduce things we people won’t like with, “sorry you’re not going to like this but...”

But saying sorry when you shouldn’t makes you seem less trustworthy. It undermines confidence. It devalues you as a person. Please stop saying sorry when you don’t mean it, when it’s not needed. Please stop saying sorry when you’ve done no wrong. Stop saying sorry for existing. You are loved!

## START SAYING SORRY!

*“The readiness of English people to apologize for something they haven’t done is remarkable, and it is matched by an unwillingness to apologize for what they have done.”* - Henry Hitchings.

## START SAYING SORRY BECAUSE IT GROWS SPIRITUAL MATURITY

It is hard to say a real sorry because:

1. It means admitting responsibility.
2. It means admitting you were wrong.
3. It means changing your behaviour.
4. It dents your pride.

Some of us have never really grown up and we NEED to do all those four things to grow spiritually.

When you say sorry, other people may not say sorry back! Or they may not accept your apology and reject you. But that makes it no less important. If they reject your apology, that’s their sin, not yours. Listen follower of Jesus - when you do wrong - admit it. Otherwise you cannot grow.

## START SAYING SORRY BECAUSE GROWS DEEP RELATIONSHIPS

Love means having to say sorry! To say sorry is to acknowledge sorrow. To say sorry is to express sorrow for their hurt.

## WE SHOULD NOT SAY SORRY TO GOD IF WE’RE NOT WILLING TO SAY IT TO PEOPLE

The Biblical word ‘repent’ means to say sorry and change mind. Jesus says we should not expect God’s forgiveness if we are not willing to forgive. In the same way, in Matthew 5:23-24 Jesus is telling us we should not repent to God, unless we’re willing to repent to people.

To go to worship and celebrate a good relationship with God and not strive for a good relationship with others is total hypocrisy. And if you think that saying ‘sorry’ is just words you’ve missed the point - it’s the start of something not the end of it - it begins action.

Which healthy sorry might you need to say?

- I am sorry I hurt you.
- I am sorry I was wrong.
- I am sorry I crossed the line.
- I am sorry I was angry and said wrong things.
- I am sorry I judged you.
- I am sorry, son or daughter, I got that wrong.
- I am sorry I didn’t listen.
- I am sorry I betrayed you.

## YOUR SORRY IS ALWAYS SAFE WITH GOD

Saying sorry to human beings is risky. They may accept it, they may not, they may use it against you, they may punish you for it. But when you come to God to say sorry, you are never rejected, never refused, never judged. You are safe with God. God’s grace covers you. God’s forgiveness gives you a secure base to try new things.

## TRY IT AT HOME:

1. Stop saying sorry - notice when you shouldn’t say sorry.
2. Start saying sorry - say a real sorry to someone today.