Matthew 5:21–24 NLT
“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell. “So 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 that person. Then come and offer your sacrifice to God.”

Idiot: The original word in Greek is raka and it is much stronger than idiot. It is a term of abuse or an insult about one’s intelligence; a term of contempt.

Reconcile: This also carries a stronger meaning. It means to change from enmity to friendship, to restore to harmony, or to be at peace with.

Proverbs 14:9 NLT
Fools make fun of guilt, but the godly acknowledge it and seek reconciliation.

5 Components of a Good Apology**

1. **Expressing regret:** The person you offended wants to know, “Do you understand how deeply your behavior has hurt me?” You need to say you're sorry and what specifically you are sorry for.

2. **Accepting responsibility:** You must accept responsibility for what you did or said and acknowledge that it was wrong.

3. **Making restitution:** For some people this is extremely important. Be sensitive about this and realize that they may not be able to feel satisfied until they feel you have made up for your offense. Be careful not to fall into the extreme of continuing to “owe” them.

4. **Expressing the desire to change:** For some it is important that they hear your desire to change or the lesson you learned from your offense.

5. **Requesting forgiveness:** At some point it is appropriate and important for you to request forgiveness. We can apologize, but we can’t control whether or not someone forgives us.

**Adapted from:** *When Sorry Isn’t Enough: Making Things Right With Those You Love*, by Garry Chapman and Jennifer Thomas
Responses to Consider Ahead of Time

1. **Flat:** There’s not much (if any) conversation on the other side.

2. **Heated:** They respond in anger.

3. **Gracious:** “I forgive you!” and “I’m sorry too!”

4. **Confused:**
   a. “I don’t understand why you’re doing this. I deserved it, but if it makes you feel better, then okay.”
   b. You can let them know you’re not being self-indulgent; you’re being obedient to God and trying to act in love toward them.

Format of Your Apology

1. Make it Verbal. Apologize over the phone or face to face.

2. DON’T write down the apology in a written letter, e-mail, text, social media, etc.

3. Written word can be intercepted by the wrong person or published and altered in a way you don’t want.

4. Don’t have the person’s contact info? Pray about it. God will make it happen.

Word of Caution

**BE CAREFUL!** Be very careful with your apology if it is toward a person with whom you had a previous romantic relationship (and if one or both of you are now married).

- You **must** to hear from the Lord regarding this.
- Consider your motive.
  - Are you really sorry, or do you want an excuse to reconnect?
  - Did you really do something wrong, or are you being drawn back to an abuser?
- If you’re married, you need to discuss this with your spouse.
- This should NOT be done face to face. **Do this over the phone with someone in the room with you to hold you accountable.**
- Conversation MUST be short and to the point and cannot go any further than the apology. Apologize. End conversation. Delete number.

Apologizing doesn’t always mean you’re wrong and the other person is right. It means you value your relationship more than your ego.