

b. Phinehas focused on the particular behavior that was offensive to God and refrained from innuendos and unjustified generalizations. He didn't say, for example, "We didn't think you people were really to be trusted," or "You people are always messing up; when are you going to start acting decently?" Statements like these make resolving a misunderstanding very difficult. They are judgmental statements that give a general assessment of the party which goes beyond the particulars. If it is found that the incident was misinterpreted and the party is innocent of any wrongdoing, they are left to ponder these negative evaluations of themselves. Negative generalizations are common in interpersonal relations. Such statements as "You're always doing that!" or "You never pay any attention to what I say," and "Every time I call you you're too busy to talk to me," etc., are the kind of statements that should be discarded. Generalizations are almost always inaccurate. It is a type of hyperbole used for emphasis that often evokes negative emotions. Too often, misunderstandings escalate into full blown conflicts because of careless communication. Those involved attack each other rather than the problem.

c. Phinehas offered a remedy that was costly to the tribes on the west bank. He said, in effect, "If the land you have chosen is unclean and has influenced you to fall in idolatry, come over and live with us in our land." The attitude was one of desiring the restoration of those in error at any cost rather than a desire to punish them or see them suffer. It is interesting that Phinehas did not threaten