

Attitude #7 Reconciliation

**Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the sons of God."
Matthew 5:9**

I ask forgiveness from all those I have hurt or dealt with unfairly.

Reconciliation

— A change from hostility to friendship. It is mutual, it is the change produced in both parties who have been at odds with one another.

I think that all of us would agree that despite this being an expectation of the Christian life, it is not always the easiest thing to be a peacemaker. We would also agree that we get plenty of opportunity to be anything but a peacemaker. While we are in this world, we will always have to deal with people, but we are sometimes forgetful that people also must deal with us. There are so many times when we are selfish and self-centered; we want our way without considering the feelings of others. We think all too often that we are right on every subject, and we are not afraid to defend ourselves even when we know deep down that we are wrong.

Our words can be used as a weapon or as a tool. Conflict can start with words and words can be very damaging to our lives and the lives of others. Families are ripped apart and too often stay apart because of something that was said that may or may not have been true and both parties refuse to reconcile and make things right. Too many times people suffer these types of separation for so long until something happens to someone before they had an opportunity to make things right and now it is too late. If we could turn back time and go back and make right what we have wronged, we would all be better off for doing so. In some cases, we can, but in others we cannot.

There are instructions and principles in the Bible that teach us how we are to conduct ourselves in certain situations in life. Some of them speak to how we are to respond to certain situations as well. The Book of Proverbs gives us so much help in so many areas of life and in this area as well. As we look at one of these examples our goal will be to put them to good use in order that we might "respond" correctly when given the chance.

**Proverbs 15:1,2 - A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger. 2
The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out
foolishness.**

1. A controlled response. A soft answer turneth away wrath...

When we consider a "controlled response" most of us can relate because we understand what it is like to respond without any control. Often times we are in situations where we are tempted to respond prior to thinking how the Lord would have us respond. I would describe these responses as more impulsive and hastier than a response that stems from our self control.

The word "soft" is used here to speak of a "gentle or tender" answer; an answer that has the ability to calm a situation rather than make the situation more heated and worse. Solomon also shows us the possible effect of the "soft" answer when he says that it "turns away wrath." In other words, its effect is to stop something before it starts and/or bring calm to something after it has already started.

Proverbs 15:18 - A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife (calms a quarrel).

2. A vengeful objective. But grievous (sorrowful, painful, hurtful) words stir up (increases) anger.

We all know how to use words that others. Our challenge has not always been how to use our words the wrong way; it has been how to use our words the right way. Words can tear down or words can build up and we are all capable of doing both.

We know by the truth of this verse the ability that we have to use hurtful words in order that we might stir the anger of others. Our words are then used as a weapon for hurt and not as a means for healing. As we "stir up the anger" of others with our words there is no way we are bringing any sense of calm to the situation. We are, on the other hand, elevating the situation to cause further damage and harm.

Whenever we see the bible describing the pattern of certain behaviors that lead to a negative and harmful outcome, we should seek to know how we are to avoid and resist these behaviors. In doing so, it will make us better equipped to glorify God and better examples for others to follow.

Proverbs 10:11 - The mouth of a righteous man is a well of life: but violence covereth the mouth of the wicked.

3. A mature discipline. The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright (to be well, to be pleasing)...

If we are going to be peacemakers, we need to use the knowledge that we gain from the Lord and His word for our good and for the good of others so that He might be glorified. Knowledge should never be used for any other reason than these reasons. We should never use knowledge to manipulate others. This type of behavior has been going on for thousands of years and is still going on today.

If we ever get to the place where God is teaching, and we are learning and we ever use that knowledge for self-serving or false gain we are not making good use of what we are learning.

2 Peter 2:1 - But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

This is also a "mature discipline" because knowledge can be a temptation to puff someone up and make them think themselves better than others. This is quite the opposite objective for the mature believer. He sees his knowledge as a tool to better himself and for the good of others so that he might have the privilege of helping along the journey of the Christian life.

2 Timothy 2:2 - And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

4. An unbridled tongue. But the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.

No surprise to us that a truth that was recorded over 2500 years ago is a relatable truth still today. However, most of us do not need historical writing to see the truth of this one statement, although it helps, we have seen enough in our own lives to validate its accuracy.

The mouth of the foolish will be anything but a peacemaker, he will instead be a troublemaker. This statement also coincides with so many other principles of God's word.

Matthew 15:8,11 - This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

This also speaks to the importance of getting the word of God in us that it might consistently come out of us. It will come out of us in our words as well as our actions. There will be no need for reconciliation if we are at peace with others. That is, I would say, in a perfect world;

however, although we will never make our world perfect, we can indeed be instruments to make it better.

The peacemaker will, with *God's* help, bring calm during the storm. He will bring that which is broken together and seek ways for unity rather than causing division. He will always gain the appreciation of others who benefit from him and cause them to do the same.