

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 - the ending of conflict or renewing of a friendly relationship between disputing people or groups, the making of peace between enemies.

There are two general areas of life where reconciliation takes place. There is, if we choose, when we are reconciled to God through the work of the cross where Jesus died for our sins. This reconciliation takes place when we are made aware of and acknowledge (confess) our sin against God, ask God to forgive us and receive Jesus Christ as our Savior. (**Romans 3:23, 5:12, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9,10,13 John 1:12**)

Justice demands the punishment of sinners. The death of Christ satisfies justice and reconciles God to us. This reconciliation enables him to pardon and save us. There is nothing that a person can do in and of themselves to earn the pardon of God for their sins. It is God's finished work on the cross and the sinner's response to that work that enables us to have our sins forgiven and become the children of God.

Psalms 32:5 - I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity (guilt, punishment) of my sin. Selah

Secondly, now that we are reconciled to God it is our duty to be reconciled to others. To refuse to be reconciled to others when given the opportunity is willful disobedience that God cannot and will not bless. All of us need the help of God to humble ourselves and admit when we have been wrong and done someone wrong and make that wrong right. God always blesses obedience and when He has led us in any area of the Christian life to step out in faith and follow His word, He will always give us the strength, wisdom, timing and ability to do it.

But how can we avoid being offensive? How can we begin to make better decisions in order that the need for reconciliation is more the exception and not the norm?

James gives us some very practical instruction:

James 1:19 - Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

1. To who it is - Wherefore, my beloved brethren

Whenever we see an instructive verse in the Bible that addresses its intended audience as "brethren," as believers, we have the opportunity and the ability to fulfil that instruction. You will never see an instructive expectation in the Bible that we cannot fulfil with God's help.

2. How to hear - let every man be swift (speedy, quick) to hear

There is one sure way for us to experience change in the Christian life and that is when we become and continue to be good listeners. When we are eager to hear for the sake of learning God will see to it that we learn. Many of us have been guilty of hearing only enough of a thing to set us in the wrong direction when we should have chosen to hear more. Half truths and partial facts do not always lead to safe decisions and successful conclusions.

When we are going through the difficulties in life, we need to be cautious of being too analytical and thinking that we know for sure all that there is to know about a situation. Addictive behavior often looks for things that are wrong and uses those things as a reason to use.

Psalms 85:8 - I will hear what God the LORD will speak: for he will speak peace unto his people, and to his saints: but let them not turn again to folly.

The psalmist made a commitment to listen to God. He knew that when he was sensitive to the voice of the Lord, he would hear from Him. He also knew that when he listened he would benefit from what he heard....**speak peace unto his people.**

Proverbs 1:5 - A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:

Solomon describes this kind of hearing as a "lifelong" hearing. We will always have the need to learn more in the journey of the Christian life because there will always be new challenges on the road of our journey.

Proverbs 8:33 - Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not.

3. How to speak - slow to speak

Proverbs 17:27 - He that hath knowledge spareth his words: and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit.

Solomon said that when we "have" knowledge we will spare our words. We see another benefit of gaining knowledge; it is not so much as what knowledge equips us to say but also what it equips us not to say. How many offenses could be avoided if people did more listening and less talking?

Proverbs 29:11 - A fool vents all his feelings, But a wise man holds them back.

Proverbs 10:19 - In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, But he who restrains his lips is wise.

Proverbs 15:1 - A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

Those that love to hear themselves talk do not consider the harm they can do to themselves and to others.

4. How to respond - slow to wrath (anger, agitation of the soul, violent emotion)

Ephesians 4:26 - Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

All of us have been angry; it is an emotion that we have been created with. The difficulty is not in the fact that we will be angry, the difficulty lies in the challenge of not sinning when we get angry. In other words, Paul says you are allowed to be angry, but you are encouraged to refrain from sinning when you are angry. Paul also comments regarding the extent of our anger - **let not the sun go down upon your wrath:**

In this, Paul warns us of the danger of lingering anger that can grow and fester into regrettable actions. When you are provoked and/or offended he instructs us that we are to, before the end of the day or at a reasonable time, calm our spirits and be reconciled to the offender. Anger in itself is not sinful, yet there is the danger of it becoming so if it be not carefully watched and speedily suppressed.

Perhaps we should pose the question to ourselves that God posed to Jonah:

Jonah 4:4 - Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

Proverbs 15:18 - A wrathful (angry, burning anger, rage) man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth (to cause quietness) strife (dispute, quarrel).

Listen up, hush up, simmer down!!!