

DAY 26

OBJECTIVE: RECONCILIATION

You have heard that it was said to those of old, "You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment." But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. . . . First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

—MATTHEW 5:21–22, 24

[Read chapter 14, stopping at the heading "Asking Forgiveness of One Who Is Offended."]

IN THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT, JESUS FIRST QUOTES THE LAW regulating our outward actions. Then He shows its fulfillment by bringing it into the heart. (See Matthew 5:21–22, 24.) In God's eyes a murderer is not limited to one who commits murder—he is also the one who hates his brother. What you are in your heart is who you really are!

Jesus clearly delineates the consequences of offense in this portion of His sermon. He illustrates the severity of holding anger or bitter offense. If one is angry with his brother without a cause, he is in danger of judgment. Jesus was showing them that not dealing with anger can lead to hatred. Hatred not dealt with would put them in danger of hell. Jesus admonished His followers to seek reconciliation as a top priority in response to offense.

We seek to be reconciled with such urgency, not for our own sakes alone, but for our brother's sake. We can become a catalyst to help him out of the offense. The love of God does not permit us to allow him to remain angry without attempting to reach out to him in restoration. We may have done nothing wrong. Right or wrong doesn't matter. It is more important for us to help this stumbling brother than to prove ourselves correct.

Often we judge ourselves by our intentions and judge everyone else by their actions.

Make a list of any persons with whom you have an offense. By each name write down the time and date when you will go to that person, seeking to be reconciled.

Name Joshua Date 3/5/23 Time 9:30 AM

I don't have as much as I see
I don't have any

Often we judge ourselves by our intentions and judge everyone else by their actions. It is possible to intend one thing while communicating something totally different. Sometimes our true motives are cleverly hidden, even from us. We want to believe they are pure. But as we filter them through the Word of God we see them differently. If you need to be reconciled, good motives are not enough. It's time to go immediately and be reconciled. Will you go?

WRITE A PRAYER...

Asking God to empower you with love and boldness to go and be reconciled to anyone with whom you have experienced offense.

God, empower me. Give me the courage
and boldness to go and be
reconciled with the person that
offended me. In Jesus name
Amen!

DAY 27

ASKING FORGIVENESS OF ONE WHO IS OFFENDED

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.

—ROMANS 14:19

[Read the section in chapter 14 titled "Asking Forgiveness of One Who Is Offended."]

ROMANS 14:19 SHOWS US HOW TO APPROACH A PERSON WE HAVE OFFENDED. If we go with an attitude of frustration, we will not promote peace. We will only make it difficult for the one who is hurt. We should pursue peace through humility at the expense of our pride. It is the only way to see true reconciliation.

On certain occasions I have approached people I have hurt or who were angry with me, and they have lashed out at me. I have been told I was selfish, inconsiderate, proud, rude, harsh, and more.

My natural response has been to say, "No, I'm not. You just don't understand me!" But when I defend myself, it only fuels their fire of offense. This is not pursuing peace. Standing up for ourselves and "our rights" will never bring true peace.

Instead I have learned to listen and keep my mouth shut until they have said what they need to say. If I don't agree, I let them know I respect what they have said and will search my attitude and intentions. Then I tell them I am sorry I have hurt them.

Godly wisdom is having a willingness to yield.

Other times they are accurate in their assessment of me, and I admit, "You are right. I ask your forgiveness."

THE BAPTIST OF SAFARI DEPARTMENTAL STUDY GUIDE

Recall a recent time when you asked someone to forgive you. Briefly indicate the approach you used with them. Circle anything prideful that you used or did.

I asked my husband to forgive me because I was mean to him. But for the way I was acting.

Humbling ourselves will promote reconciliation. Pride defends, but humility agrees and says, "You are right. I have acted this way. Please forgive me."

Read James 3:17 and rewrite it in your own words.

Lord, give me your wisdom that comes from heaven that is pure, peace loving, considerate, and sincere.

Godly wisdom is having a willingness to yield. Godly wisdom is not stiff-necked or stubborn when it comes to personal conflicts. A person submitted to godly wisdom is not afraid to yield or defer to the other person's viewpoint as long as it does not violate truth.

WRITE A PRAYER . . .

Asking God to reveal offenses in your heart and to give you wisdom to approach those you have offended.

Lord, please reveal offenses in my heart. Give me wisdom to approach and make peace with those I have offended. In Jesus' name amen!

DAY 28

APPROACHING SOMEONE WHO HAS OFFENDED YOU

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

—MATTHEW 18:15

[Read the section in chapter 14 titled "Approaching Someone Who Has Offended You."]

ANY PEOPLE APPLY MATTHEW 18:15 IN A DIFFERENT SPIRIT than the one Jesus intended. If hurt, they confront the offender in a spirit of revenge and anger, using the verse to justify their condemnation of the one who has hurt them. But they have misunderstood the reason Jesus instructed us to go to one another. It is not for condemnation but for reconciliation. Jesus does not want us to tell our brother how rotten he has been to us. We are to repair the breach that prevents the restoration of our relationship.

This is the way God uses to restore us to Himself. Though we have sinned against God, He "demonstrates His own love toward [and for] us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). Are we willing to lay down our self-protection and die to pride in order to be restored to the one who has offended us? God reached out to us before we asked for forgiveness. Jesus decided to forgive us before we even acknowledged our offense.

Carefully read Romans 5:6-11, and then respond to the following statements:

My condition when God reached out to me was I was hopeless, depressed, full of anxiety. I was lost! But Christ showed me his love when I was yet a sinner. I am now justified by his blood, and I have been saved.

God reaching out to me demonstrated His mercy and love.

The reason He reached out to me was to be reconciled.

What God accomplished in reaching out to me was He justified me by His blood and saved me from
law's by wrath.

Even though He reached out to us, we could not be reconciled to the Father until we received His word of reconciliation.

We are to repair the breach that prevents the restoration of our relationship.

In the New Testament, the disciples preached that the people had sinned against God. But why tell people they have sinned? To condemn them? God does not condemn. "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17). Rather it is to bring them to a place where they realize their condition, repent of their sins, and ask forgiveness.

WRITE A PRAYER...

Repenting and asking God to help you reconcile with anyone you have offended or who has offended you.
Lord I am sorry and I repent of all of my sins in my life. Help me reconcile with anyone who has wronged me in Jesus name. Amen.

DAY 29

THE BOTTOM LINE

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

—ROMANS 12:18

[Read the section in chapter 14 titled "The Bottom Line."]

IF WE KEEP THE LOVE OF GOD AS OUR MOTIVATION, WE WILL NOT fail. Love never fails. When we love others the way Jesus loves us, we will be free even if the other person chooses not to be reconciled to us.

Jesus says, "If it is possible," because there are times when others will refuse to be at peace with us. Or there may be those who demand conditions for reconciliation that would compromise our relationship with the Lord. In either case, it is not possible to restore that relationship.

God says, "...as much as depends on you." We are to do everything we can to be reconciled with another person as long as we remain loyal to truth. We often give up on relationships too soon.

Jesus said, "Blessed are the *peacemakers*, for they shall be called sons of God" (Matt. 5:9, emphasis added). He did not say, "Blessed are the *peacekeepers*." A peacekeeper avoids confrontation at all costs to maintain peace, even at the risk of compromising truth. The peace he maintains is not true peace. It is a touchy, superficial peace that will not last.

Love never fails, never fades, and never comes to an end.

A peacemaker will confront in love, bringing truth so that the resulting reconciliation will endure. He will not maintain an artificial, superficial relationship. He desires openness, truth, and love. He refuses to hide offense with a political smile. He makes peace with a bold love that cannot fail.

THE BAIT OF SATAN DEVOTIONAL STUDY GUIDE

How effective a peacemaker are you? Below are some qualities of peacemakers. Put yourself on the line with an x.

Peacemakers are...

Loving

Quick to listen

☒ I am ☐ I need to be ☒ I am ☐ I need to be

Patient

Slow to anger

☒ I am ☐ I need to be ☒ I am ☐ I need to be

Forgiving

Slow to speak

☒ I am ☐ I need to be ☒ I am ☐ I need to be

Open

Obedient

☒ I am ☐ I need to be ☒ I am ☐ I need to be

Vulnerable

Hearing God

☐ I am ☒ I need to be ☐ I am ☒ I need to be

Truthful

Humble

☒ I am ☐ I need to be ☒ I am ☐ I need to be

Jesus demonstrated all these qualities. When the Spirit of the Prince of Peace indwells us, we have the power to be all of these things. He is not willing that any should perish. But He will not compromise truth for a relationship. He seeks reconciliation with true commitment, not on superficial terms. This develops a bond of love that no evil can sever. He has laid down His life for us. We can only do likewise. Love never fails, never fades, and never comes to an end. It seeks not its own. It is not easily offended. (See 1 Corinthians 13.)

WRITE A PRAYER...

DAY 29

Asking God to fill you with His love for others—especially for your enemies and for those who could offend you.

Lord, fill me with your love! The
kind of love mentioned in 1 Corinthians 13.
Help me especially love my enemies!
Those that could or have offended
me! In Jesus name Amen!

DAY 30

TAKING ACTION

*Therefore, to him who knows to do good
and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

—JAMES 4:17

[Read the epilogue, "Taking Action."]

NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT! ASK THE LORD TO REMIND YOU OF offenses you have hidden, forgotten, or denied. Ask the Holy Spirit to walk you through your past, bringing to mind the people with whom you have an offense.

When you know that your heart has been cleansed of past offenses and is strong and settled, stand firm and resist Satan's bait in the future.

Be ready to pray and ask forgiveness. Prepare to go to them in humility to ask forgiveness and to be reconciled. Use the prayer in the epilogue as a guideline for your prayer.

As you prepare to pray, jot down your responses to the following statements:

During this thirty-day devotional program, the most important thing I have learned is learn to forgive and ask for forgiveness when offended.

When tempted by the bait of Satan, I will resist him and he will flee! I need to stand strong and recognize the baits of Satan.

DAY 30

The next step I need to take personally in order to resist offense with people is to be quick to forgive and love other like Christ loves us unconditionally.

One person I need to immediately ask for forgiveness is my husband.

One reason I need to keep a spiritual journal is it helps me recognize areas in my life that need improvement and it helps me to refer back to it if I ever need to be reminded.

In regard to offenses, I need to pray daily that my heart is free of offense.

When you know that your heart has been cleansed of past offenses and is strong and settled, stand firm and resist Satan's bait in the future. Read about the whole armor of God in Ephesians 6:10-18. You will be an overcomer and will defeat the enemy!

WRITE A PRAYER...

Thanking God for the specific protection He gives with each piece of spiritual armor He has provided for you.

Thank you Lord for protecting me heart!
Thank you for the spiritual armor
you have given me! In Jesus
name Amen!