

RECONCILIATION

This outline was taught to the Adult Sunday School class of Community Baptist Church by Pastor Jim Loveland in conjunction with studying the Sermon on the Mount. This teaching on reconciliation consisted of ten lessons given on consecutive Sundays from October 17 to December 19, 1982.

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION NECESSARY FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF RECONCILING PERSONAL CONFLICTS.

1. WHY RECONCILE CONFLICTS? EXCUSES WE OFTEN USE.

- a. Reasons why we do not reconcile conflicts:
 - i. It will only make things worse.
 - ii. It will only cause more hurt.
 - iii. It will only cause more embarrassment.
 - iv. Others will not understand.
 - v. "Let a sleeping dog lie."
 - vi. They won't listen.
 - vii. Nothing will ever come of it.
 - viii. I do not want to admit I was wrong.
 - ix. I do not want to be friends again.
 - x. I do not want to say "I'm sorry".
 - xi. It was only a small offense.
 - xii. Things have gotten better.
 - xiii. Nobody's perfect.
 - xiv. "I'll do it someday".
 - xv. "They were the one who was wrong".
 - xvi. "I promise not to do it again".
- b. Biblical Commands to reconcile conflicts:
 - i. In order to restore yourself (and others) to a proper relationship with God.
 1. A personal conflict is a sin. God commands us to love one another and to live in peace with one another (John 13:34, 35; 1 John 1-4; Romans 12).
 2. God will not listen to your prayers if you are harboring sin in your heart (Psalm 66:18).
 3. God will not accept your worship of Him if you have not reconciled things with your brother (Matthew 5:23, 24), because God seeks true worshipers to worship Him (John 4:23, 24).
 4. In order to promote unity among God's people (Ephesians 4:15-29).
 5. In order to become mature in Christ and thereby experience more the abundant life that God wants His children to live (Romans 8:28, 29; Ephesians 4:15-29).

□□.2 HOW TO RECONCILE CONFLICTS

- a. How NOT to reconcile conflicts. Examples of how the 'natural' man handles conflicts:
 - i. Get angry
 - ii. Get even
 - iii. Use violence
 - iv. Yell
 - v. Throw tantrums
 - vi. Gossip

- vii. Put person(s) down
 - viii. Declare "War!"
 - ix. Give silent treatment
 - x. Ignore problem
 - xi. Quit, leave, divorce
 - xii. Lie
 - xiii. Become bitter, unforgiving
 - xiv. Etc., etc., etc.
- b. How TO handle conflicts (General Guidelines) Ephesians 4:15-29.
- i. Acknowledge there is a problem.
 - ii. Speak the truth in love (v.15). As Christians, our goal is to become mature in Christ.
 - 1. When you do not confront someone in love, you end up rejecting them
 - 2. When you do not confront a hurt, it will build up, causing you to explode later.
 - iii. DON'T tell someone else who is not directly involved in the conflict (Matthew 18:15).
 - iv. DON'T send someone else to heal the conflict. Do it yourself, and if possible, do it face to face.

SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE THE INFORMATION NECESSARY FOR RECONCILING PERSONAL CONFLICTS

3. WHEN TO RECONCILE CONFLICTS

- a. When do YOU go?
 - i. When YOU have offended a brother (Matthew 5:23-26).
 - 1. When God convicts you that you have offended your brother (v.23).
 - 2. Remember the importance of doing this (v.24). Review if necessary section 1-2 of this outline.
 - 3. Do this as soon as possible (vs. 25,26).
 - ii. When YOUR BROTHER offends you (Matthew 18:15-17).
 - 1. You take the initiative (v.15). Why (cp. 1-2)?
 - 2. Go alone. Keep this just between the two of you (v.15).
 - 3. If this attempt fails, then follow the instructions of the verse. If this fails, then take it to the Church (v.17).
 - 4. If Church discipline is necessary and the erring brother is (disfellowshipped), then follow instructions found in 1 Corinthians 5 and 2 Thessalonians 3, and do not associate with him.
 - 5. If he repents, forgive him and restore him to fellowship (2 Corinthians 7).
 - iii. When you SEE your brother sin.
 - 1. Examine yourself first to be sure that your brother's sin is not being used by God as a mirror to show you your sin (Matthew 7:1-5).
 - 2. Examine your own heart and know your own vulnerability to do the 'exact same thing' (Galatians 6:1).
 - 3. Go with the intent to restore your brother (Galatians 6:1; James 5:19,20).
 - 4. Do not let the fact that you too are 'a sinner' keep you from helping your brother being restored to fellowship with God (James 5:19,20) and from being more mature as a Christian and from being united with the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:15-29).
 - 5. Be humble in your approach.

6. Be a true friend, get to know him better so that God will provide the time necessary to encourage him, and the commitment necessary to restore him fully.
7. Speak the truth in love and have the Biblical solution ready to help.

4. HOW AND WHY YOU SHOULD RECONCILE CONFLICTS WITH YOUR BROTHER

(be sure to check your attitude and facts)

- a. How and why you should NOT go.
 - i. Just to tell your brother off.
 - ii. Just to clear the air.
 - iii. Just to get it off your chest, not caring how your brother feels.
 - iv. Just to 'inform' your brother that the problem is his fault, therefore he is totally responsible.
 - v. Just to let your brother (or others) know your side of the conflict.
 - vi. To humiliate your brother, especially in front of others (friends, church members, co-workers, children, etc.).
 - vii. To impose your will on someone else. "This is how I see the issue and how I THINK we ought to handle it."
- b. How and why you should go.
 - i. In true humility and brokenness of your own sin and your brother's sin (Galatians 6:1). Remember also Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8,10
 - ii. In love. Speaking the truth in love and loving yourself and your brother enough to see that your conflict is reconciled so that both of you might be right with God and enjoy your worship of Him (Romans 12:9,10).
 - iii. In true gentleness and respect, considering the needs of others and not only your own (Philippians 2:1-5).
 - iv. Seeking to live at peace with all men (Romans 12:16-18).
 - v. Seek true spiritual restoration to God (cp. 1 John 1:9; 2:1,2; James 4:1-12).
 - vi. Follow these practical points in going:
 1. Examine yourself prayerfully. Until you are truly humbled, don't go; but don't let this become your 'new' excuse.
 2. Pray for God's good and proper timing and place.
 3. Pray for and practice 'good wording'.
 4. Have the Biblical remedy ready to put into action.
 5. Bathe the entire process in prayer.
 6. Leave the situation reconciled.
 7. Be confidential about the conflict and the reconciliation.

5. HOW TO RECEIVE RECONCILIATION

- a. Ways NOT to receive your brother's attempt to be reconciled:
 - i. To have a 'know-it-all' attitude. A 'know-it-all' does NOT listen, his mind is already made up.
 - ii. To think that YOUR sin is no one else's business.
 - iii. To rationalize your sin.
 - iv. To become defensive.
 - v. To get angry. Don't blow up at others when they try to reconcile with you. This will only make others afraid to approach you, thereby hindering YOUR OWN spiritual growth.

- vi. Don't resort to self-pity. Self-pity is nothing less than 'self-worship'. When you pout, act hurt, and appear depressed you expect others to apologize for their rebuke. Then true reconciliation will not take place and YOU will not become more mature in Christ, thereby hurting yourself.
 - vii. Do not rebel against correction: "This is all a bunch of nonsense!" You are only asking for more problems!
 - viii. Avoid 'self-shepherding'. Stop thinking that God does not use others to direct you into the paths of righteousness. Do not withdraw from your Church thinking you and God can get along just fine without the help of other believers.
 - ix. Don't develop a critical attitude: "Who are YOU to tell ME?"; or "What about John Doe?"; or "There are a lot worse things to fuss about!"
 - x. Avoid the "You too!" tendency: "But you sin too!"; or "I saw you do the same thing, but I didn't say anything to you!"; or "Just wait, I'll catch you the next time!"
- b. Here is a suggested list of verse from Proverbs to look up that teach Christians how to receive rebukes, corrections, and attempts at reconciliation: Proverbs 1:5,8,9; 3:7,8,11,12; 9:8,9; 10:17,19; 12:1; 13:10,18; 15:1,5,10,12,31,32; 17:10; 18:2,13; 19:20,25; 27:5; 28:13.
- c. Ways TO receive your brother's attempt to be reconciled:
- i. When asked to forgive someone, then from your heart truly forgive them (Matthew 18:21-35; Luke 17:3,4).
 - ii. When an offense that you have committed is pointed out:
 1. Listen carefully and openly. If what they say is true, then receive it graciously.
 2. Repent. (Stop doing it!)
 3. Ask forgiveness of those (all involved) you have offended.
 4. Be reconciled and leave it reconciled. Don't bring it up again.
 5. Thank your brother for loving you enough to care about your spiritual maturity and for seeking your spiritual welfare.
 6. Always remember that as a Christian you need a forgiving, repentant, and teachable spirit.