



Study E: Reconciling Relationships

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.”
Matt. 5:23,24

Why: Reasons for the study

- Many people have troubled or broken relationships because of sin.
- God desires that our relationships are reconciled and restored.

What: Principles to grasp

- God takes reconciliation so seriously that he doesn't want our worship or service until it is sought.
- Reconciliation means to exchange mutual hostility for mutual agreement and to restore to harmony.
- Therefore, the sin that put a barrier in the relationship must be acknowledged, forgiveness sought and an answer given so both parties know whether or not harmony is restored.
- To accomplish reconciliation, we must ask for forgiveness and receive a response.
- We should initiate reconciliation whether we are the offenders or the offended ones.
- Reconciliation does not always guarantee restoration.

How: Path to a changed life

- To develop a greater awareness of one's contribution to difficulties in relationships
- To step out in faith, risking rejection to be reconciled with others
- To develop a lifestyle of seeking reconciliation
- To realize that God does not excuse sinful responses in relationship to the offender

Helpful ideas:

- Realize this may be the first really hard step of obedience for your disciples.
- Encourage them that they may be surprised by what God and His Spirit will do when they take this step of obedience.
- Take the key items from their personal list and their *Confession Checklist* that are necessary for reconciling. When reconciling with a spouse, this will probably be most of the list.
- Pray through possible fears they may have in pursuing reconciliation.
- Role play how to handle potential difficulties they foresee.
- Assign reading *Reconciling Relationships* before seeking forgiveness.

Tools and additional resources:

- Read *Helping a Disciple Reconcile* (CTD) before the session.
- Read *Helping a Disciple Reconcile for Sexual Sin* (CTD) which gives guidelines when disciples are seeking forgiveness for sexual sins.
- *Making Biblical Decisions* diagram may be helpful when there is fear about reconciling.
- See also, *Steps to Releasing Fears to God (Releasing Fears)*