



Fresh Start to Freedom

Becoming Relationally Free Series

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FREE TO RECONCILE

“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.”

Matthew 5:23-24 (NIV)

I. FREE TO RECONCILE

A. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO RECONCILE A RELATIONSHIP?

1. The restoration of harmony, “oneness” or right standing with one another in a relationship in which there has been even the slightest breach.
2. Achieved through repentance and the seeking of forgiveness on the part of the “offender” and the extending of forgiveness on the part of the “offended.”
 - a. Colossians 1:19-23 (reconciliation with God)
 - b. II Corinthians 5:14-21 (reconciliation with God)
 - c. Luke 17:3-4 (reconciliation with man)
 - d. Matthew 5:23-24 (reconciliation with man)

B. SEEKING FORGIVENESS FROM ANOTHER PERSON

1. When is it necessary?

- a. When you sense, or **the offended person tells you that you have wronged or offended him/her, and you agree that you were wrong.**

Matthew 5:23-24

- b. When you sense, or **the offended person tells you that you have wronged or offended him/her, and you don't agree that you were wrong.**

Matthew 5:23-24

- 1) In this situation, you do not agree with the offended person that you were wrong. There is, however, still a basis to acknowledge to the offended person that you realize that they were offended and to ask for their forgiveness anyway. In this way, you are demonstrating to him/her that you value relationship with them. At the same time, by asking them to forgive you, you are helping them to obey God (i.e., His command to them is to forgive you).

2) Remember the mandate: “**First go** and be reconciled...” (it doesn’t say, “unless you think you haven’t done anything wrong.”).

- c. **When the Holy Spirit convicts you** that you have wronged the person, or were guilty of a wrong in their presence, **even if they weren’t offended** by you or didn’t think you did anything wrong.

James 5:16

- d. When there is a need to make restitution (i.e., in the case of stolen items or property).

Luke 19:2-10

2. **When is it not necessary?**

- a. When you have committed sins of the heart (i.e., anger, hatred, jealousy, sexual lust, etc.). **These are between you and God!** Confess them to Him.

I John 1:9

- b. When the offended person is repeatedly offended by you and is obviously walking in a spirit of unforgiveness toward you.

See: Point Four - “What if the other person won’t forgive you?”

- c. When you have the willingness and desire to seek forgiveness, but the other person is deceased or you are not able to contact the person. (The spirit of II Corinthians 8:12 would apply)

3. **How to seek forgiveness**

- a. Before seeking forgiveness from another person, be sure that you have already forgiven him/her (as applicable).
- b. Be sure it is clear in your mind what the offense is.
- c. Label your offense as wrong; don’t just say you are sorry.
- d. Keep it simple.
- e. Don’t defend yourself or make excuses.
- f. This is probably not the best time to confront the other person of a wrongdoing on his/her part.

- g. The above should lead to the direct question:

“Will you forgive me?”

- h. If you have not already done so prior to this, confess your wrong to the Lord.

I John 1:9

4. **What if the other person won’t forgive you?**

- a. Remember, **reconciliation only takes place if both you and the other person obey God.**

- b. Do not become offended that he/she won’t forgive you.

- c. Remember, the other person doesn’t hold the “keys” to your forgiveness:

If you have obeyed God by walking in forgiveness toward the other person (as applicable), asked his/her forgiveness, offered to make restitution (as applicable), and confessed your wrong to the Lord, YOU ARE “FREE” AND FORGIVEN by the One who does hold the “Keys.”

- d. With the above in mind, cast your cares on the Lord and commit the “unforgiving person” to Him.

1) Psalm 55:22

2) I Peter 5:5-7

3) Matthew 5:25-26

- e. Other considerations regarding “timing” and “approach” when asking forgiveness from another person.

II. APPLICATION

- A. After reviewing the scriptures referenced in the first part of this session, how would you describe what it means to reconcile with God? What it means to reconcile with another person?

- B. In reference to part “B” of this session, how do you feel about asking forgiveness of another person when you don’t believe you were wrong?

- C.** Does valuing your relationship with the Lord and valuing your relationship with the other person give you sufficient purpose in asking for forgiveness?
- D.** In light of this session, is there anyone that you need to approach and ask for his/her forgiveness? From whom? For what?
- E.** Are you willing to allow Jesus Christ to hold the “keys” to your forgiveness even if the other person won’t forgive you?
- F.** Who would you be willing to contact, that you know and trust, to hold you accountable until you have obeyed the Lord in asking forgiveness of this other person