

Bait of Satan Part 6. Reconciliation.

Before you start, set up some communion and a portable speaker to play a song.

If you are reading *The Bait of Satan* book, then read Chapters 13 and 14 that go with this week.

Pause in God's presence.

Take communion while you listen to Keith Green's

"When I hear the praises start."

Reflect.

Forgiveness is foundational to reconciliation, but forgiveness is not the same as reconciliation. We can often think that forgiveness is about ignoring an offence. But this isn't what God did to forgive us. The Father sent his son into the world who willingly gave up his life to pay for our sin so that we might be forgiven. Biblical forgiveness is dealing with offence, hurt, hatred and anger from the forgiveness you have received before you deal with the one you have offended or has offended you.

What do you see as the differences and challenges between forgiveness and reconciliation? Which one must we pass on to others, regardless of their response?

In their book *Boundaries*, Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend stated *The Bible is clear about two principles: (1) We always need to forgive, but (2) we can't always achieve reconciliation. Forgiveness is something that we do in our hearts; we release someone from a debt that they owe us. We write off the person's debt, and they no longer owe us. We no longer condemn them. They are clean. Only one party is needed for forgiveness: me. The person who owes me a debt does not have to ask my forgiveness. It is a work of grace in my heart.*

This brings us to the second principle: We do not always achieve reconciliation. God forgave the world, but the whole world is not reconciled to Him. Although He may have forgiven all people, all people have not owned their sin and appropriated His forgiveness. That would be reconciliation. Forgiveness takes one; reconciliation takes two."

Jesus shows us there are three perspectives that we can view reconciliation from.

- Those who *have offended* someone else. Matthew 5:23&24
- Those who have *been offended*. Matthew 18:15.
- Those who *have observed* those who have offended or been offending others and are trapped. Galatians 6:1&2

Read the passages. What stands out to you as the difference between these three reconciliation perspectives?

There are several barriers or excuses to walking in a spirit of reconciliation.

1. **Pride** is a major obstacle to finding freedom from offence. Admitting when we are offended or have offended someone else is not a weakness. It is an act of humility that positions us to be rescued from the enemy's trap and restored to a healthy life.
2. **Deep wounds**. While some offences are less impactful and can be dealt with quickly, others wound us deeply. When this occurs, we can be tempted to give into the lie that the wound is too deep for God.
3. **Death or a major barrier**. Sometimes, the person that we've offended or been offended by has died, or circumstances make reconciliation impossible. We could be tempted to think that God is limited by these barriers, but Romans 14:7-9 tells us Jesus is Lord of both the living and the dead, in other words there is no barrier for him. So, while we can't reconcile with some people we can forgive or ask forgiveness for someone with who reconciliation isn't possible.

Preparing for reconciliation.

It is crucial in seeking reconciliation to recognise we are walking in our identity as sons and daughters of the Father.

Reconciliation is challenging and will require us to grow in God's grace. Whether you have offended someone else, been offended, or observed someone caught in offence, you must draw closer to God in Prayer and ask him for more grace to walk in reconciliation.

How to reconcile.

1. **Identify.** Make a list of who you need to reconcile with.
2. **Quantify.** Are you the one who has done the offending, has been offended, or has observed those trapped in the offence? This makes a difference to your approach.
3. **Pray.** Begin to pray through your list. Ask God to be at work in these relationships. Ask him to release a spirit of reconciliation in you and the person you seek to reconcile with (2 Corinthians 5:19-20). Look for the objections that rise in you as you pray. There may be numerous things you have to hand over to God and ask his forgiveness for.
4. **Approach.** Contact the person you are seeking reconciliation with. It could be a call, text message, or email. Break the ice and connect with them. You can arrange to connect with them in person if appropriate. Be sure to choose a suitable setting.

Create an atmosphere of goodness. Prepare to meet them in a posture of humility. This is not about reminding them of the wrong they have done. Rather, go into the meeting apologetically— take ownership of any wrong things you've done. Be the first to apologise. Even if you're only one per cent in the wrong, take ownership of your one per cent. Remember, it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance.

- **The offender.** Confess to them what you did and ask for their forgiveness. Don't expect them to forgive you at that time. They may, but they may also need time to process what you have said. Give them room.
- **The offended.** Tell them what happened to you in the situation and what you found painful. If you can recognise any bitterness or unforgiveness you have held towards them, ask their forgiveness. Don't demand an apology from them. Allow them the opportunity to respond in their time. This may mean they respond then or another time.
- **Observing those trapped as the offended or offender.** Let the person know you have been praying for them and are concerned they are trapped in something that is destructive to them. Invite them to take what you have said before the Holy Spirit and ask the Holy Spirit to give them his counsel (John 14: 16 and 16:7-9).

Ask.

Spend some time asking for the Holy Spirit's power to walk in reconciliation. Is there someone He is asking you to go on the journey of reconciliation with?

Yield.

What is the Spirit asking you to do? Yield your spirit to him.