

RECONCILIATION:

A CHANGE FROM ENMITY TO FRIENDSHIP



A marriage relationship cannot survive without regular, ongoing reconciliation. Spouses tend to hurt each other in one way or another on a routine basis. The infraction might be minor, but if unresolved, it may build division and separation in the relationship. While forgiveness is an integral part in reconciliation, there also must be steps toward reconciliation by the “offending” party. It may be a simple “I’m sorry” for something minor or it may be an ongoing process to recover from a serious offense. Reconciliation necessarily involves two parties and each must do their part to remove the enmity or hostility between them and establish or restore a close relationship.

Matthew 5:23-24 records Jesus stating that reconciliation with another person is so important that if someone has a problem with us, we are to seek reconciliation before we give our offerings to the Lord. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians that Christians are to be *ambassadors of reconciliation*. Reconciliation is important to God and it must be an integral part of the marriage relationship.

When one spouse offends the other, intimacy is injured or broken and reconciliation and forgiveness are required to restore intimacy in the relationship. It requires that the offending spouse be humble and willing to ask for forgiveness, and that the offended spouse be honest and open about the hurt, but also willing to forgive. Burying the hurt does not build intimacy in the marriage; both spouses must work together to ensure intimacy is maintained in the relationship. If one is hurt, he or she needs to speak up, in love.

Do you need to reconcile with your spouse? Is there a sin or hurt that has come between the two of you? Do you need to confront a sin in love? Or do you need to repent and ask for forgiveness for something you’ve done to hurt your spouse? Be an ambassador of reconciliation, don’t let wrongs done to one or the other build, seek forgiveness or give forgiveness - whatever is need to change from enmity to friendship with your spouse.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

Articles to check out:

How to Move from Forgiveness to Reconciliation by Steve Cornell - www.thegospelcoalition.org

The Steps to Reconciliation by Richard Ezell - www.lifeway.com