

Dear Friends,

May is my anniversary month. Last week I began my thirty third year helping people at Alpha. I've been asked to speak at a small church for a few weeks and this last week I taught on forgiveness and next Sunday I'll teach on reconciliation.

Helping people work through difficult relationships has been a major part of our work at Alpha. So many people today would rather get divorced than try resolving problems in their relationships only to have the same problems with someone new. As I have mentioned before, I briefly talked with a person who had been divorced 11 times before coming to salvation. "Looking for love in all the wrong places!"

Definition of Reconciliation – to cause two or more people or groups to become friendly again after an argument or disagreement.

Conflict can be caused by opposing opinions or principles including what the Bible teaches, child rearing, dress codes, music styles, Covid vaccine, wearing masks, and politics! Shall I continue?

Both Jesus and Paul teach the process and importance of reconciliation.

Biblical steps of reconciliation set forward by Jesus

Mat 18:15-17

1. If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother!! (no triangulation allowed and confrontation goes much better if you have already forgiven)
2. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.
3. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church.
4. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. (In Jesus' day they were taught to avoid Gentiles and tax collectors.)

Paul teaches that we, as born again people, are obligated to minister reconciliation to a lost world!

2Corinthians

5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

5:18. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and **gave us the ministry of reconciliation;**

5:19 that is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

Even with forgiveness and reconciliation consequences don't necessarily just go away. The Old Testament is full of people who do wrong and seek forgiveness but bear the effects of their sin. God forgave King David for terrible sins but also said conflict would remain in his family throughout his life. I've seen the same things happen in peoples lives today. I Samuel 5:22 **Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice!**

Thank you for your caring for people struggling in conflict and seek help at Alpha! I also want to thank you all for praying for my Mother's Day message! It went much better than I had hoped. Please continue to pray for Debi and me as we seek to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Richard

Alpha Counseling Services
20730 Bond Road/ Poulsbo, WA 98370
(360) 779-3624 /alphapoulsbo.org
May, 2022