



Reconciliation

Reconciliation is peace with God because Jesus Christ removed the sin barrier between God and mankind by His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross. All believers are reconciled to God the instant they believe in Christ. God was never reconciled to mankind - mankind was reconciled to God. The result of reconciliation is peace which replaces the enmity between God and mankind at the point of salvation. Peace is a technical word for man's response to grace. Peace can never come to you apart from grace. 2 Cor. 5:18; Eph. 2:16; Col. 1:20-21.

"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation," (2 Corinthians 5:18, NASB)

"and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity." (Ephesians 2:16, NASB)

"and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven. And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, engaged in evil deeds," (Colossians 1:20-21, NASB)

The Greek verb ἀποκαταλλάσσω (apokatallassō) means to reconcile or transfer from a status of spiritual death to eternal salvation. The verb emphasizes the fact that only God is the source of reconciliation. Man can do absolutely nothing in reconciliation. Reconciliation sets up the pattern for our lives in that we are helpless and dependent on the grace of God and all that our Lord Jesus Christ has provided for us. Under grace, God has provided everything we need in our lifetime. Under humility, we need to recognize our helplessness and God's grace provision.

This means that there is nothing we can do to gain the acceptance of God. All divine approval is based on grace and what God has done for us. We are all too impressed by what we or others are doing for God. Getting your eyes on other people is not a part of the plan of God. We should be impressed with God and His plan for us.

Old Testament Portrayals of Reconciliation

The Levitical offerings in the Old Testament portrayed reconciliation. All Old Testament teaching is related to the ritual plan of God for the dispensation of Israel. The peace offering teaches reconciliation. Lev. 3:1-2; Lev. 8:15.

"Now if his offering is a sacrifice of peace offerings, if he is going to offer out of the herd, whether male or female, he shall offer it without defect before the LORD. 'He shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and slay it at the doorway of the tent of meeting, and Aaron's sons the priests shall sprinkle the blood around on the altar.'" (Leviticus 3:1-2, NASB)

"Next Moses slaughtered it and took the blood and with his finger put some of it around on the horns of the altar, and purified the altar. Then he poured out the rest of the blood at the base of the altar and consecrated it, to make atonement for it." (Leviticus 8:15, NASB)

The peace offering was a sacrifice of either a bull, cow, lamb, or a goat that had no defect. Thanksgiving was associated with the peace offering. Eating salt represented peace or reconciliation between two enemies. Lev. 2:13.

"Every grain offering of yours, moreover, you shall season with salt, so that the salt of the covenant of



your God shall not be lacking from your grain offering; with all your offerings you shall offer salt."
(Leviticus 2:13, NASB)

The Peace From Reconciliation

Peace is established between God and the believer the moment he or she was reconciled to God through faith in Jesus Christ. There was nothing we could do to establish this peace. We are also given God's perfect righteousness and His eternal life at salvation. We now have an eternal relationship with God that can never be removed by anyone.

The manner in which Jesus Christ reconciles all things to Himself begins in an overt way. When we believe in Jesus Christ for salvation, our faith in Him comes from what we think. When we were still unbelievers and in a state of spiritual death with all of the barriers still in place, all of our thinking was hostile to God. Yet, God the Holy Spirit was able to make the Gospel clear in our minds. He was able to make clear that the only way of salvation was faith alone in Jesus Christ alone.

In Romans 5:1, the Greek noun εἰρήνη (eirēnē) is translated "peace" and is a synonym for reconciliation and emphasizes the saving work of Jesus Christ on the Cross as removing the barrier or enmity between God and man. In Romans 5:10, the Greek verb καταλλάσσω (katallassō) means to change someone from a state of hostility into a state of tranquility and peace, from enmity to reconciliation.

"Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,"
(Romans 5:1, NASB)

"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." (Romans 5:10, NASB)

Reconciliation between God and man must be ratified or validated in every individual case through personal faith in Jesus Christ. Acts 16:31.

"They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."" (Acts 16:31, NASB)

The Mechanics of Reconciliation

There are two categories of reconciliation. The first is what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross for all mankind in reconciliation and the second is what Jesus Christ provided through the Cross for all believers at salvation. Reconciliation is our Lord's salvation ministry toward man. In reconciliation, mankind is reconciled to God. God is never reconciled to mankind. This is why you cannot be saved by any other means than faith alone in Christ alone.

Barriers Removed by Christ's Work on the Cross for All Mankind

Each one of the items below shows what God has done for the entire human race. So now there is no barrier, only an invisible line. Man steps across that line and is given eternal salvation by simply believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, because on the Cross all the work for salvation was accomplished entirely by Him. These points are the issue in presenting the Gospel. Sin is no longer an issue. All sin has already been judged. The only issue remaining for the unbeliever is whether to accept the perfect work of Christ on the Cross or to reject His work. Acceptance means eternal life. Rejection means eternal separation from God.

The Barrier of Man's Spiritual Death

A barrier exists between God and man at physical birth because we are all born spiritually dead.



Spiritual death is total separation from God due to our state of total depravity and complete helplessness to do anything about it on our own. Spiritual death is the result of our physical birth.

At the moment of physical birth, God the Father creates our soul and imputes it to our human format soul. The soul imputation results in our first breath whereby we become a living human being, thus signaling that God has a purpose for each member of the human race proven by His gift of physical life. God simultaneously imputes Adam's original sin to the genetically-formed old sin nature producing a physically living, but spiritually dead human being. The old sin nature is the internal source of temptation sin, human good, and evil. The volition of the soul is the source of sin. It is the flawed character possessed by every human being which tempts us to sin. The sin nature is an integral part of every human being which resides in the cell structure of the human body. Romans 6:6 presents the sin nature as the "old self," in Romans 7:5 as "the flesh," and in Romans 7:18 as "my flesh."

"knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin;" (Romans 6:6, NASB)

"For while we were in the flesh, the sinful passions, which were aroused by the Law, were at work in the members of our body to bear fruit for death." (Romans 7:5, NASB)

"For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh; for the willing is present in me, but the doing of the good is not." (Romans 7:18, NASB)

The sin nature was acquired originally by Adam at his fall in the Garden of Eden and is transmitted only by the male sperm that fertilizes the female ovum. The result is both spiritual death and total depravity of all humanity and the sovereignty of the sin nature over human life. Jesus Christ was unique in His humanity because He was born as a result of the Holy Spirit fertilizing Mary (virgin pregnancy leading to the virgin birth). Because no male human contributed any chromosomes, the sin nature was not passed on. Therefore, Jesus Christ was born without a sin nature. Gen. 5:3; Rom. 6:12.

"When Adam had lived one hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, according to his image, and named him Seth." (Genesis 5:3, NASB)

"Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its lusts," (Romans 6:12, NASB)

Each of us must be "born again" to gain any relationship with God. Faith in Jesus Christ is the only means. The barrier of man's spiritual death is removed by our Lord's perfect salvation ministry toward sin for every member of the human race. This is called unlimited atonement. In unlimited atonement, all personal sins of history were imputed to Christ on the Cross and judged by God the Father. Gen. 2:16-17; Rom. 5:12; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 Peter 3:18; 2 Cor. 5:21.

"The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die."" (Genesis 2:16-17, NASB)

"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12, NASB)

"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23, NASB)

"And you were dead in your trespasses and sins," (Ephesians 2:1, NASB)

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God,



having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit;" (1 Peter 3:18, NASB)

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:21, NASB)

The Barrier of Man's Personal Sins

Our personal sins are another barrier between God and man. The imputation of all of our personal sins to Christ on the Cross was a major factor in the removal of all barriers between us and God. The manifestations of this barrier come in the form of personal sins. When tempted by the old sin nature, our volition chooses to sin. Rom. 1:18-32; Rom. 3:9-23; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Tim. 1:14-16. Galatians 6:7 indicates that we make our own misery in life due to our own self-determination.

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God." (Galatians 5:19-21, NASB)

"and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the faith and love which are found in Christ Jesus. It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. Yet for this reason I found mercy, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life." (1 Timothy 1:14-16, NASB)

"Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." (Galatians 6:7, NASB)

When Christ received the imputation of our sins, He paid the penalty for our personal sins. He removed the barrier between God and man. This was His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross for each and every one of us. As God, Jesus Christ can have nothing to do with sin. Sins were imputed to Christ's humanity and judged by God the Father. This is why the sins of the world were carried "in His body" on the Cross. All personal sins of every human being that ever lived or will live were judged and removed from the barrier. This is unlimited atonement. 2 Cor. 5:14-15; 2 Cor. 5:19; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 2:11; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2.

"For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf." (2 Corinthians 5:14-15, NASB)

"namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19, NASB)

"who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time." (1 Timothy 2:6, NASB)

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men," (Titus 2:11, NASB)

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, NASB)

The Barrier of the Penalty of Sin

The barrier of the penalty of sin was removed by expiation or atonement through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Rom. 5:6, 1 Tim. 2:6, Col. 2:14.



"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly." (Romans 5:6, NASB)

"having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross." (Colossians 2:14, NASB)

The Barrier of the Curse of the Law

The Mosaic Law forms a barrier to mankind because no one is able to fulfill the morality of the Law by our own means. The curse of the Law put each of us in the slave market of sin prior to salvation. We were slaves to sin with no means to escape apart from the work of Christ on the Cross. Our freedom was purchased from the slave market of sin by Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ paid for our freedom by being made a curse for us. This is called Redemption. Eph. 2:15; 1 Tim. 1:8-11; Rom. 3:9-23; Gal. 3:10-11.

"by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace," (Ephesians 2:15, NASB)

"But we know that the Law is good, if one uses it lawfully, realizing the fact that law is not made for a righteous person, but for those who are lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers and immoral men and homosexuals and kidnappers and liars and perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to sound teaching, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, with which I have been entrusted." (1 Timothy 1:8-11, NASB)

"For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."" (Galatians 3:10-11, NASB)

Redemption teaches us that we are redeemed from the slave market of sin by the saving work of Christ on the Cross. Psalms 34:22; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19; Titus 2:14.

"The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned." (Psalms 34:22, NASB)

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7, NASB)

"who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:14, NASB)

The Barrier Between God's Perfect Character and Man's Total Depravity

God is perfect and His perfect righteousness cannot have any relationship with any creature that lacks perfect righteousness. Because of man's imperfect nature at birth and his inability to keep from sinning due to the genetically formed sin nature, the best righteousness that man can ever attain falls far short of God's absolute righteousness (His glory). Rom. 3:23.

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God," (Romans 3:23, NASB)

The barrier between God's absolute and perfect holiness and virtue and man's total depravity is removed by our Lord's salvation ministry toward God called Propitiation. Rom. 3:22-26; 1 John 2:2; 1 John 4:10.



"even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration, I say, of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus." (Romans 3:22-26, NASB)

"and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world." (1 John 2:2, NASB)

"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10, NASB)

In propitiation, God the Father was satisfied with the salvation work of Christ on the Cross. God the Father is never satisfied with any work man can do. If God the Father was satisfied with what our Lord did, then God the Father can be satisfied with us when we are fulfilling His plan, purpose, and will for our lives.

Barriers Removed by Christ's Work Provided for Believers at Salvation

The Barrier of Man's Inability to Understand Spiritual Things

Each of us are born physically alive, but spiritually dead. In that condition, unsaved mankind (the natural man) is unable to understand the spiritual things of God. At salvation, the believer is regenerated by the Holy Spirit which means He creates a human spirit to which God the Father imputes His very own eternal life and perfect righteousness. As believers, we have both soul life and eternal life. 1 Cor. 2:14.

"But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised." (1 Corinthians 2:14, NASB)

Creation of a human spirit is called Regeneration. This human spirit allows the believer to understand spiritual things only when the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit. This is part of how God the Holy Spirit teaches the believer the plan of God for his or her life. John 3:16; John 3:36; Titus 3:5-7; 1 Peter 1:23.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16, NASB)

"He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (John 3:36, NASB)

"He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:5-7, NASB)

"for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God." (1 Peter 1:23, NASB)

The Barrier of Man's Lack of Absolute Righteousness

The imputation of God's perfect righteousness at the moment of salvation solves the problem of man's



lack of perfect righteousness. The very best any member of the human race can achieve (apart from the humanity of Jesus Christ) is a far cry from God's absolute and perfect righteousness. God's evaluation of the best man can do is found very clearly in Isaiah 64:6.

"For all of us have become like one who is unclean, And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, take us away." (Isaiah 64:6, NASB)

The imputation of divine righteousness results in Justification. Rom. 3:22; Rom. 4:2-5; Rom. 8:30; Gal. 2:16; Titus 3:7.

"even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction;" (Romans 3:22, NASB)

"and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified." (Romans 8:30, NASB)

"nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the Law; since by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified." (Galatians 2:16, NASB)

"so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (Titus 3:7, NASB)

Justification permits God to love the believer personally without compromising His perfect essence. God is also free to impute grace to that perfect righteousness to sustain us in this life. Matt. 6:33; 2 Cor. 9:8.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33, NASB)

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed;" (2 Corinthians 9:8, NASB)

The Barrier of Man's Position in Adam

All of us are born physically alive and spiritually dead. We already know this is a barrier between God and man. Part of that spiritual death is imputation at birth of Adam's original sin by God the Father to our genetically-formed old sin nature. Our resulting position in Adam as members of the human race is also a barrier. Faith alone in Christ alone for salvation also results in the Baptism of the Holy Spirit where he places us in union with Jesus Christ. This makes us royal family and the heirs of God and is called Positional Sanctification. Therefore, our previous position in Adam was replaced by a new permanent and eternal position in Christ through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. 15:22; 1 Cor. 12:13; Acts 1:5; Rom. 6:3.

"For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive." (1 Corinthians 15:22, NASB)

"For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit." (1 Corinthians 12:13, NASB)

"for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." (Acts 1:5, NASB)

"Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His



death?" (Romans 6:3, NASB)

The Four Parties in Reconciliation

God the Father

The first party in reconciliation is God the Father. God the Father imputed the sins of every member of the human race to the humanity of Jesus Christ on the Cross and judged every one of them. Jesus Christ voluntarily accepted God's judgement for every single sin based on His unconditional love for each of us. The result of this substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross is unlimited atonement. Christ's saving work removed the barrier of personal sins. God the Father was satisfied or propitiated with the saving work of Christ on the Cross. Propitiation removed the barrier between the perfect righteousness and justice of God and imperfect and unrighteous man.

Propitiation allowed God the Father to impute His own righteousness to every believer at salvation and proclaim us justified. Because we were justified, we can now live with God forever. This removes the barrier of man's lack of absolute righteousness. God the Father then imputed eternal life to the believer's human spirit which had been created by the Holy Spirit at salvation which is called Regeneration. This removed the barrier of man's inability to understand spiritual things and inability to understand God's will for his or her life.

Remember, mankind must be reconciled to God. God is never reconciled to man. It is blasphemous to assume that God steps across any absolute line of His perfect attributes to come to man. Man must make that conscious decision of faith in Jesus Christ and cross the line to come to God. God has already provided the means by grace. We must freely believe in order to receive it all as grace from God.

God the Son

The second party in reconciliation is God the Son or our Lord Jesus Christ who is the agent of reconciliation. It was the work of our Lord Jesus Christ that made reconciliation possible. Eph. 2:13-16.

*"But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity."
(Ephesians 2:13-16, NASB)*

During His last three hours on the Cross, our Lord's humanity received the imputation of every personal sin of every member of the human race and was then judged by God the Father. Jesus Christ provided that substitutionary spiritual death as well as the resulting unlimited atonement for every member of the human race. Through His substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross, Jesus Christ provided the means so that God the Father would be perfectly satisfied or propitiated. Because personal faith in Jesus Christ removes the barriers between man and God, our Lord is the agent of reconciliation.

God the Holy Spirit

The third party in reconciliation is God the Holy Spirit. The unbeliever has only a body and a soul and thus cannot understand the Gospel or any spiritual principles. Therefore, the Holy Spirit must make the Gospel understandable to the unbeliever when it is presented by a believer. The Holy Spirit acts as a human spirit, making the spiritual principles of the Gospel understandable to the unbeliever. This is extremely important in understanding how presenting the Gospel to the unbeliever does not depend on



the perfect delivery of the one witnessing, but on the perfect character and power of God the Holy Spirit.

God the Holy Spirit creates a human spirit for the imputation of eternal life to the believer at salvation. This is called Regeneration. The believer can now understand spiritual principles or Bible doctrine. The Holy Spirit also places every believer in union with Jesus Christ at the moment of salvation. This is called the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Every Church Age believer is able to access the very power of God in their spiritual lives through the filling of the Holy Spirit.

Mankind

The fourth party in reconciliation is mankind who is the beneficiary of reconciliation. Mankind is reconciled to God through the saving work of Jesus Christ on the Cross. Mankind is always the recipient of reconciliation and as such must be the one to approach God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The Believer's Ministry of Reconciliation to Unbelievers

All Church Age believers have a personal ministry of reconciliation toward the unbeliever. This ministry is taking every opportunity to present the Gospel of salvation to unbelievers that we encounter in our advance to spiritual maturity. Because every believer has gained the peace that results from reconciliation, we are to share that grace gift to the unbeliever. This personal ministry is not optional. God has commanded every believer to witness to the unbeliever. We have a responsibility toward those who are not yet reconciled to God to invite them to do so and share God's eternal life through faith alone in Christ alone. 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Eph. 6:15.

"Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Corinthians 5:18-21, NASB)

"and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE;" (Ephesians 6:15, NASB)

We were reconciled to God at salvation solely as a gift of grace from God. This reconciliation provides each of us the daily opportunity to go to others and invite them to be reconciled to God through faith. In giving the Gospel to the unbelievers we meet, we depend completely on God the Holy Spirit to make the salvation message clear rather than any salesmanship gimmicks we may have. It is grace all the way!

Reconciliation is totally the work of God and the function of Christ bearing our sins on the Cross. Reconciliation emphasizes the perfect essence of God as well as the eternal security of the believer. Since we have been reconciled to God and possess His perfect righteousness, there is nothing we can do, think, or say to cancel God's perfect and absolute work of reconciliation. Jesus Christ's perfect substitutionary spiritual death on the Cross for all of mankind's sins provided reconciliation. Through faith alone in Christ alone, we gain that reconciliation for ourselves. Eph. 2:15-16; Rom. 5:8-11.

"by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity." (Ephesians 2:15-16, NASB)

"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."



Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation." (Romans 5:8-11, NASB)

The phrase "the two" in Ephesians 2:15-16 refers to Jews and Gentiles. The phrase "in His flesh" indicates that God the Father could only impute man's sin to the humanity of Christ on the Cross. Jesus Christ's deity cannot ever have contact with sin.

When you believe in Jesus Christ, you are given a new purpose in life – God's purpose to replace your purpose. You are also given a message, a ministry, and a title of ambassador for Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter who you were before salvation or how talented you were, or how famous, or rich. The ministry of reconciliation is designed in exactly the same way that reconciliation itself was designed. It was designed to be solely the work of God, not the work of man. Man's ability is never the issue. 2 Cor. 5:20.

"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God." (2 Corinthians 5:20, NASB)

Since we have been given the ministry of reconciliation, this means that every believer must accurately understand exactly how they were saved and what the Gospel means. We are to understand that the only issue is Jesus Christ, and then we can declare this. Our responsibility is to make the issue clear, which you can do once you understand what Christ did for you.

So once you understand the doctrine of reconciliation, your witness will be effective because God the Holy Spirit will do the work, using the doctrinal facts you communicate to others. Every believer is to be a carrier and communicator of Bible doctrine. Jesus Christ did the work, we are reconciled to God the Father, the Holy Spirit reveals it, and we are merely the recipients. 2 Cor. 5:19.

"namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19, NASB)

Note that God was "reconciling the world to Himself," not just the elect. This is unlimited atonement. Christ did not die spiritually just for the elect - He died for all mankind - every member of the human race. Reconciliation is an important basic doctrine. In living our spiritual lives and growing in grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ, we become oriented more and more to God's grace plan for us and we begin to understand the importance of Bible doctrine in our scale of values. We must always put our relationship with God before relationships with other people.

The Believer's Ministry of Reconciliation to Other Believers

God has established the basis of unity among believers in reconciliation. God the Holy Spirit has established the basis of unity among believers by regeneration because He gave all believers His very own eternal life. God the Father established the basis for unity among believers by imputing His perfect righteousness to all believers. God the Holy Spirit has established the basis for unity among believers by entering each believer into union with the person of Christ.

Since all members of the royal family of God have been reconciled to God at the moment of salvation, it follows logically that all members of the Body of Christ should be reconciled to each other. We have been reconciled to God by the work of Christ on the Cross. Therefore, we should use what has been provided in grace by being reconciled to each other through the filling of the Spirit after salvation.



Consistent intake and application of Bible doctrine through the filling of the Holy Spirit will begin to eliminate personality conflicts because we take on more and more of the thinking of Jesus Christ. It is this grace thinking that produces unconditional love between people that depends solely on the integrity of the believer - not the worthiness of those near us. 1 Cor. 2:16.

"For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE WILL INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16, NASB)

Reconciliation toward each other means there is no place for personality conflict in the Christian way of life. You are not to form opinions about antagonisms that occur between two other Christians. Whenever personality conflicts exist between two Christians, one or both are completely out of line. They both need to confess their sins biblically to God the Father by using 1 John 1:9 and through God's grace, being restored to the filling of the Holy Spirit.

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9, NASB)

When you advance toward spiritual maturity, more of your conflicts with others will be eliminated because you are using God's thinking to solve the problems - not your own. God does not cause personality conflict in the Christian life. All problems are caused by arrogance which leads to such thinking and behavior as jealousy, bitterness, fear, hatred, self-pity, guilt, gossip, slander, and maligning. Therefore, when you find yourself in conflict with another believer, look to your own life first because you are most likely out of fellowship. Remember, no matter how obnoxious a person may be, you should be able to handle it under the filling of the Spirit with God's grace thinking or simply thinking Bible doctrine that you have been taught.

Once you believe in Christ, personality conflicts are inexcusable in the Christian way of life. No one can learn Bible doctrine and have a personality conflict with their pastor. Personality conflict is usually irrational. Whenever you have a personality conflict with someone else, this is a warning that there is something wrong with your spiritual life. Personality conflict is nothing more than God's testing of your spiritual maturity. The greatest personality conflict in history was the attitude of people toward Jesus Christ while He lived on earth - especially while He was on the Cross.

Summary

Reconciliation is the fact that Jesus Christ was judged for our sins on the Cross which removed the barrier between God and man. This barrier removal provides for man's reconciliation to God through faith in Christ. The application of reconciliation to our spiritual lives is the fact that, for believers, barriers between man and man will be removed as believers advance in their spiritual growth. This advance to maturity and fulfillment of God's plan for each and every one of us is God's plan and purpose for our being here on earth.

The application of reconciliation also means preserving unity among believers. When each believer was placed in union with Jesus Christ by God the Holy Spirit at salvation, this is called Positional Sanctification. This new position in Christ removed all barriers between believers. As we each grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, we begin to experience this new position, called Experiential Sanctification. This living our lives as unto the Lord is the means of creating and maintaining unity among believers.

Therefore, the entire human race is the recipient of reconciliation. Since no barrier now exists, any unbeliever can step over the line and enter into a relationship with God and be reconciled to God



through personal faith in Jesus Christ. The only possible remaining barrier that remains is the continual unbelief of the unbeliever. This is the only thing that Christ could not die for on the Cross. All they have to do is simply believe in Jesus Christ. The work for salvation has already been accomplished. Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:8-9; 2 Cor. 5:19; Col. 1:20.

"They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."" (Acts 16:31, NASB)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8-9, NASB)

"namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19, NASB)

"and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." (Colossians 1:20, NASB)