

Take Responsibility - LG Study

Scripture Focus: Matthew 5:23-26 & 7:1-5

Pursuing Reconciliation

Read: Matthew 5:21-26

- Who is instructed to initiate reconciliation?
- What priority does Jesus place on resolving conflicts?
- What consequences does Jesus describe for unresolved conflict?

Insights:

- Jesus prioritises reconciliation over religious practice
- He sets a high bar - requiring personal responsibility
- He says conflicts should be addressed quickly before they escalate/deteriorate
- Internal attitudes determine external actions (as we'll see again in Matthew 7)

Reflection Questions:

- What unresolved conflicts are you currently avoiding? (and why?)
- How does unresolved anger impact your Spiritual life?
- When was the last time you took the first step in reconciliation?

Principles for Stewarding Conflict:

- Take initiative
- Act quickly
- Seek personal resolution
- Prioritize relationship over being right

- Address heart attitudes

Discussion Prompts:

- Share a time when quick reconciliation prevented a larger conflict
- What makes taking the first step in reconciliation challenging?
- How can we support each other in pursuing peace?

Personal Application

- Identify one relationship needing reconciliation
- Plan a humble, direct conversation
- Commit to taking the first step

Examine Yourself First

Read: Matthew 7:1-5

- What does Jesus specifically warn against in verse 1?
- What metaphor does Jesus use to describe judging others?
- How does Jesus suggest we should first approach personal conflicts?

The core issue is the critical spirit that seeks to tear down rather than build up
Judgment without love, compassion, and self-reflection is destructive

The "log & spec" metaphor reveals our tendency to:

- Magnify others' faults
- Minimize our own shortcomings
- Approach conflicts without self-awareness

Questions:

- When was the last time you found yourself being overly critical of someone else?
- What "planks" might be blocking your own vision right now?
- How can you approach conflicts with more humility and self-reflection?
- How might our relationships change if we focused on self-examination before criticism?

Every major religion has a form of "Golden Rule" - Jesus expressed it in Matthew 7:12 as: "do to others what you would have them do to you". Commentators also use the term "Golden Result" to refer to what happens when you practice the Golden Rule, which is that "people will usually treat you the way you treat them". Following Jesus "rule" can lead to changed behaviour in others. As people experience being treated fairly & well (with humility rather than harsh judgment), their response to you and others is likely to change too.

Application:

This week, practice:

- Pausing before critiquing others
- Examining your own motivations
- Offering grace before judgment
- Seeking to understand before being understood

Going Deeper

Spend some time reflecting on the need to balance justice & mercy in reconciliation, and how Jesus modelled this for us through His sacrifice:

1 Peter 2:23-24 - "When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed."

- by his wounds you have been healed - not by his retaliation

- He had to be wounded, for us to know healing - he absorbed the sin/hurt
- sometimes we have to absorb the wounds we receive
- Justice and mercy at the cross
 - Sins punished (justice) so we could be forgiven (mercy & grace)
- we should "steward conflict" as part of our worship, doing so in Jesus' presence:
 - "because of Your sacrifice Lord, I am willing to work to resolve my differences with others"
- it honours Jesus' sacrifice - all about reconciliation