RECONCILIATION

Core Value #5: RECONCILIATION
By Jesus' reconciling us to himself, by taking on our sin and not counting our sins against us as we deserved, he gave to the church the ministry of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). We share this gospel of reconciliation by pointing others to this same forgiveness and reconciliation with Christ, by demonstrating this same spirit of forgiveness, not harboring bitterness and resentment in our hearts toward others. Jesus put to death the enmity that exists between male and female, Jew and Greek, slave and free through his body so that we might be one (Ephesians 2:14-21).

Living a Life of Reconciliation as a Christian - A Biblical Vision for the Modern Church
When these passages are read together, reconciliation unfolds in four major movements:

1. Reconciliation accomplished by Christ
2. Reconciliation received as a new identity
3. Reconciliation practiced as a daily calling
4. Reconciliation embodied in Christian community

1. Reconciliation Is Accomplished by Christ

Ephesians 2:14–16 — Christ Is Our Peace
"For He Himself is our peace… destroying the dividing wall of hostility."

Paul describes reconciliation as something Jesus **has already achieved** through the cross.

What Christ Reconciled

- Humanity to God (vertical reconciliation)
- People to one another (horizontal reconciliation)

The "dividing wall" Paul refers to symbolized deep hostility between Jews and Gentiles — religious, cultural, and social separation. Christ did not merely improve relationships; He created: "one new humanity."

2 Corinthians 5:18–19
God:

- Reconciled us to Himself through Christ
- No longer counts our sins against us

Reconciliation begins with God's initiative, not human effort.

Modern Church Implication
Living reconciliation starts with remembering:

- We were enemies welcomed by grace.
- Peace is received before it is practiced.

Christians pursue reconciliation because they already live inside Christ's peace.

2. Reconciliation Creates a New Identity

Ephesians 2:19–21 — One Household of God

"You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens… members of His household."

Reconciliation changes belonging.

Believers become:

- Citizens of one kingdom
- Members of one family
- Stones in one spiritual temple

Identity shifts from cultural or social divisions to shared life in Christ.

2 Corinthians 5:17:

"If anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come."

Reconciliation is not behavior modification — reconciliation is **new creation identity**.

Early Church Example

The early Church visibly embodied this:

- Jews and Gentiles shared meals and worship.
- Slaves and masters called one another "brother" and "sister."
- Economic and social status lost defining power.

In a rigid Roman hierarchy, this unity was revolutionary.

Modern Church Application

A reconciled life today means:

- Primary identity in Christ above politics, culture, or background
- Seeing fellow believers as family, not categories
- Pursuing unity across differences

Reconciliation reshapes how we see people.

3. Reconciliation Becomes the Christian's Calling

2 Corinthians 5:18–21 — Ministry of Reconciliation

Paul moves from what God has done to what believers now do:

"We are therefore Christ's ambassadors."

Christians are entrusted with continuing God's reconciling work.

What This Ministry Includes:

Proclaiming Reconciliation With God

Inviting people into restored relationship through the gospel.

Practicing Reconciliation With Others

Living as peacemakers in everyday relationships.

Supporting New Testament Teaching

- **Matthew 5:9** — Blessed are the peacemakers.
- **Romans 12:18** — Live at peace as far as it depends on you.
- **Colossians 3:13** — Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Reconciliation becomes a lifestyle, not a one-time event.

Modern Church Application

Living reconciliation looks like:

- Initiating difficult conversations
- Seeking restoration rather than avoidance
- Refusing gossip and division
- Extending forgiveness even when costly

Christians do not merely believe reconciliation; they practice it.

4. Reconciliation Is Embodied in Christian Community

The Early Church as the Model

The early Church's greatest apologetic was reconciled community.

Ethnic Barriers Broken

Acts 15 shows the Church refusing to force Gentiles into Jewish cultural conformity while preserving unity.

Social Divisions Transformed

House churches gathered people from radically different social classes around one table.

Conflict Redeemed

The New Testament letters themselves show communities working through disagreements rather than splitting apart. Unity required intentional effort shaped by humility and grace.

Why This Mattered

The Roman world was deeply divided by class, ethnicity, and power. A reconciled Christian community demonstrated that Christ's kingdom had truly begun.

Modern Church Application

A reconciled church today:

- Prioritizes unity without abandoning truth
- Creates safe processes for conflict restoration
- Values relationship over preference
- Models peace in a polarized culture

The Church becomes a living demonstration of the gospel.

5. The Inner Posture Required for Reconciliation

Scripture consistently links reconciliation with Christlike character:

- **Humility** (Philippians 2:3–5)
- **Gentleness and patience** (Ephesians 4:2–3)
- **Love that bears with others**
- **Willingness to absorb offense**

Reconciliation mirrors the cross — peace often requires sacrifice.

6. What Living a Life of Reconciliation Looks Like Practically Today

With God

- Living from forgiveness rather than shame
- Practicing repentance regularly

Within the Church

- Addressing conflict directly and graciously
- Listening before defending
- Protecting unity intentionally

In Personal Relationships

- Apologizing quickly
- Extending forgiveness repeatedly
- Seeking understanding over victory

In the World

- Acting as bridge-builders in divided environments
- Practicing respectful dialogue
- Demonstrating hope and peace

The Biblical Picture of Reconciliation

Dimension	Ephesians 2	2 Corinthians 5	Modern Expression
Source	Christ is our peace	God initiates reconciliation	Grace-centered identity
Identity	One household	New creation	Shared belonging
Calling	Unified people	Ambassadors	Peacemaking lifestyle
Witness	New humanity	God appealing through us	Gospel made visible

A Simple Biblical Definition

To live a life of reconciliation is to embody the peace Christ accomplished by restoring relationships with God and others, living as ambassadors who pursue unity, forgiveness, and belonging in every sphere of life.