



Ambassadors
of
Reconciliation™

Application Discussion Guide for Young Adults & Christian Camp Staff

Conflict Resolution vs. Reconciliation Self-paced Study

Case Studies and Application Questions

Use this guide for the following:

- For preparing Christian Camp Staff for dealing with conflict
 - Within the staff, with campers, and in their personal lives
- For reconciling with someone:
 - Write down answers to the application questions for a conflict in your life.
- For Small group Bible study discussion:
 - Read the case studies. Discuss questions for the people identified in the case.
- For Pre-course work for *Coaching People through Conflict Practicum*:
 - Read the case studies. Answer questions from your Pre-Course Homework Worksheet.



With the sun warming things up early, it started off as the perfect day – or so Missy thought. As the summer program assistant at the camp, she was kept busy with several projects. After lunch, she immediately left the dining hall to run supplies to each of the main cabins, unaware that she was supposed to drive a group of campers to the ranch for their horseback riding.

Six pre-teen campers and their counselor Tim waited for more than 18 minutes in the heat for Missy to show up. The campers were impatient and complaining, and Tim became hot under the collar. He had a full schedule that day, and he didn't have time to wait around for Missy to get her act together. He left the campers to look for her, running across the campus from the office to cabins. In the meantime, Missy had checked back with the office and learned that the group were waiting for her. By the time Missy and Tim caught up with each other, they were 25 minutes late leaving the main campus. Tim was hot and sweaty. In a demeaning tone, he tells her in front of the campers, "It's way past time you were here. You know, you aren't the only person in this world."

Missy responds, "Look, I'm sorry. No one told me that I was supposed to drive this afternoon."

"Don't you bother to check the schedule? Or can't you read?"

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And then under his breath, but loud enough for Missy and some campers to hear, “Horses have more sense than her.” A couple of campers snickered. One of them said, “Neigh!” and the other campers laughed.

Missy was quiet on the drive out to the ranch, but inside she was crying. When they arrived, she met another frustrated group. The wranglers had been waiting also in the heat. As soon as the campers poured out, wrangler Kara said, “What’s your problem? Don’t you know we have a schedule to keep?”

“Look, I didn’t know I was scheduled to...”

“Skip the excuses. I hope you feel good knowing just how you messed things up for everyone today.”

The same camper neighed with laughs coming from others.

Missy cried all the way on the drive back to the main campus. She felt ashamed and worthless. Then embarrassment and sadness turned to anger at Tim and Kara.

By the evening staff meeting, most had heard about the late pickup from Tim and Kara. In the retelling of the story, 25 minutes late had become 45. One of the staff called out “Neigh! She’s actually on time!” as Missy approached. She retorted, “Shut up! It wasn’t my fault!”



These questions can apply to the above case study or to a current conflict from your personal life. For the case study, you can assume either Missy’s or Tim’s role. For a conflict from your life, apply these questions to yourself, writing out your answers.

1. How have you contributed to this conflict?

Who has been affected by your sinful thoughts, words, or actions?

2. In spite of your sinful nature, how does your heavenly Father view:

a. you?

b. the person with whom you are in conflict?

3. In light of how your heavenly Father views you both:

- a. What is your worth to God?

- b. What is the other person's worth to God?

4. Review 1 John 3:1.

Whose are you?

What comfort does your relationship with God give you in the midst of this struggle?

5. In Christ, we are called as new creatures to put away our "old self" and put on our "new self" in Christ.

- a. How can you put away your old self in this conflict?

- b. How can you put on your new self in Christ?

- c. What would your contrition and repentance look like?

6. Describe what material or substantive issues need to be resolved in your conflict.

7. Identify what relational issues need to be reconciled in your conflict.

8. Write a prayer asking for God's help in resolving the material issues and reconciling with the other person.



Same Case Study as Lesson 1, continuing the discussion with different application questions.

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Application

Lesson 2

For the Case Study, put yourself into either Tim's or Missy's shoes. Use the questions below to understand his or her idols.

For personal application, consider a conflict where you may have felt one of the following: anger, bitterness, pride, fear, judgmental attitude, jealousy, or defensiveness. Reflect on the following questions to identify your underlying idols.

Consider the idols listed in this lesson. Ask yourself the following questions to identify the idols with which you were struggling:

1. Improper desires for physical pleasure
 - a. What physical pleasure did you find yourself thinking about much of the time?
 - b. When a certain desire or expectation was not met, did you feel frustration, resentment, bitterness, or anger?
 - c. What was unsatisfying about the gifts God has given you?
 - d. How did you get even with the other person when you did not get what you wanted from him/her?
2. Pride and arrogance
 - a. How are your expectations of the other person magnifying your demands on him/her and your disappointment in his/her failure to meet your desires?
 - b. How are you judging the other person when your desires are not met?

- c. How are you getting even with the other person when your desires are not met?
- d. How have you communicated to the other person what you feel he/she must do?
- e. How have you threatened the other person? (“Give me what I want or you will pay!”)

3. Love of money or material possessions

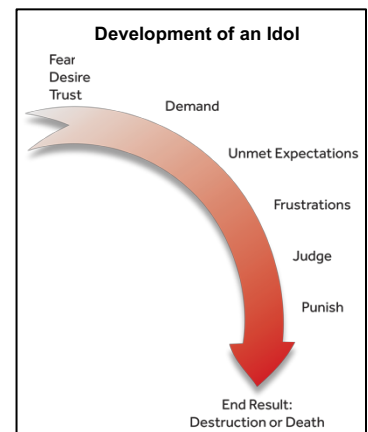
- a. What preoccupies your thoughts? (What is the first thing on your mind in the morning and/or the last thing at night?)
- b. Fill in this blank: “If only I had _____, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure.” What does this suggest to you about your trust in God for what you desire?
- c. When a certain desire or expectation is not met, do you feel frustration, resentment, bitterness, or anger?

4. Fear of man

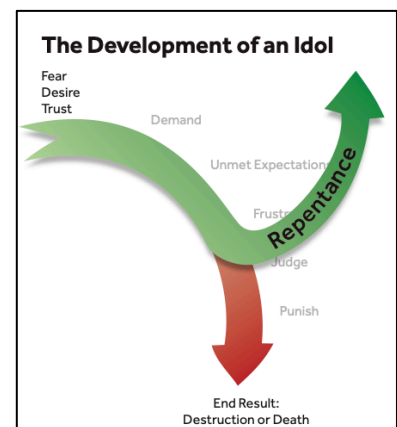
- a. Whose approval do you want most of all?
- b. Whom are you seeking to please at almost any cost?
- c. What do you want to preserve or avoid about your reputation?
- d. In this situation, what or whom do you fear most?

5. Good things that I want too much
 - a. What do you find yourself thinking about much of the time?
 - b. What causes you the most worry? How has your anxiety replaced your trust in God?
 - c. Fill in this blank: “If only _____, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure.”
What does this suggest to you about your trust in God for what you desire?
 - d. When a certain desire or expectation is not met, do you feel frustration, resentment, bitterness, or anger?

6. What or whom have you sacrificed to get what you wanted?
7. If you do not repent of this pattern, what will be the destructive results?
8. What are some of the Commandments you have broken in this conflict?
(Compare your thoughts, words, and actions to the explanations of the Ten Commandments.)



9. What hope is there for you?
(See 1 John 1:9; Romans 5:8, 15:13; Ephesians 1:7.)
10. Write a prayer that reflects your confession and your thanks to God for His forgiveness. Include a petition for strength to overcome these temptations in the future.





Kyle and Nicole were engaged to be married in three months. For several years, Kyle had been working as a production manager in a company that produced specialized components for the heavy equipment industry. Business was booming. His boss offered to promote him to plant manager if he would agree to do whatever the boss asked him to do. The promotion meant a raise plus large bonuses. Kyle quickly agreed, thinking that the increased income would be great for a new marriage. He didn't ask his boss what was meant by "do whatever the boss asked."

Two weeks into his new position, his boss asked him again about his commitment. Kyle affirmed his agreement, apprehensive of where this was leading. The boss told him that two of the plant employees were older (early 60's), and that meant that their seniority wages and health insurance were costing the company more expense than younger employees. In addition, they weren't as energetic as the younger guys on the team. So, Kyle needed to begin documenting everything these two guys did wrong so that Kyle could justify firing them in the next 45 days. His boss promised to give him a bonus equaling 1/3 of the savings in annual health insurance costs, which would amount to a few thousand dollars.

Kyle's heart sank. He respected both of the older workers, knowing that both men were solid workers. Their families were dependent upon their incomes. Kyle feared it would be difficult for them at their ages to find new jobs that paid as well. He regretted his promise to "do whatever" just to get the promotion, and he resented his boss for setting him up.

Kyle began to document, even exaggerate, the severity of the two men's mistakes. He raised his voice with them whenever they slipped up, letting them know they were being written up. Guilt started to overcome him as a Christian. Their mistakes were no worse than others' mistakes, including his own. He knew what he was doing was wrong – even evil. He was unable to sleep well at night. He became moody and snapped at Nicole for the smallest things. She asked him what was wrong, but Kyle was reluctant to tell her what was bugging him. In fact, he hadn't told anyone. He felt trapped and began to fall into a depression. Nicole wondered if her fiancé was having second thoughts about the wedding.



These questions can apply to the above case study or to a current conflict from your personal life. For the case study, assume Kyle's role. For a conflict from your life, apply these questions to yourself, writing out your answers.

1. Which of the following idols are you guilty of in this situation? (Review the application questions at the end of Lesson 2 if you have not done so.)
 - a. Improper desires for physical pleasure
 - b. Pride and arrogance
 - c. Love of money or material possessions
 - d. Fear of man
 - e. Good things that I want too much

2. Besides the individuals with whom you are in conflict, which others are being affected by your thoughts, words, or actions?

3. What is keeping you from confessing your sins against God before one of the following:
 - Your pastor?

 - A mature Christian with whom you are not related but whom you trust?

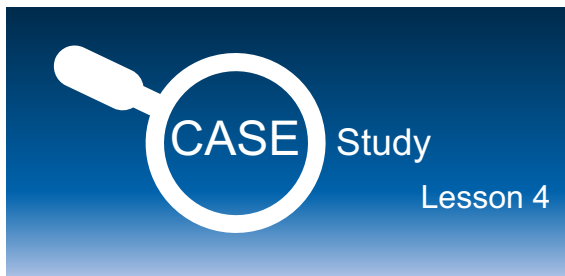
 - A mature Christian with whom you are related and who loves you?
 - a. Pray that God will take away your fear of confessing before another person and give you courage.
 - b. If you continue to struggle with your guilt and yet are reluctant to confess to someone who will proclaim God's forgiveness to you, seek out your pastor or a mature Christian for advice and encouragement.

4. Application of confession and hearing God's forgiveness proclaimed to you:
 - Make an appointment with your pastor or a mature Christian believer.
 - Explain that you desire to confess your sin to God before another person so that you might audibly hear God's forgiveness proclaimed to you by another Christian.
 - If the person is not your pastor, ask for his or her commitment to keep what you confess confidential (pastors vow to keep private confession confidential).
 - Tell the person that you have a simple form that will help guide you both.
 - When you meet, you may give some background of the situation if helpful for *you*. But such background is not necessary for the person hearing your confession.

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- Consider using the form *Proclaiming God's Forgiveness* (pages 20-24 in this guide). Using that form, you can confess your sins to God, and the person hearing your confession can proclaim God's forgiveness to you.
 - Your confession may be general or it may include specifics. God knows more about your sin than you do, and He does not need details in order for Him to forgive. However, if a specific sin is troubling you, confessing that particular sin aloud will help you to "own" your sin. More importantly, when God's forgiveness is proclaimed to you, it will help you to "own" the forgiveness, providing you with special comfort and assurance.
 - Whether or not the form is used, be sure to request that the person hearing your confession specifically use Bible verses in proclaiming God's forgiveness (e.g., see the verses listed on page 24 of this guide).
 - Ask the person to pray for you.
5. Write your reflections on confessing before another believer and hearing God's forgiveness audibly proclaimed to you.



Giving the Devil an Opportunity



Jamie and Dakota are both new camp counselors. Jamie tends to be laid back and not concerned about strict schedules. She sometimes forgets to follow through on things. She is light hearted, always making jokes, and generally well liked by campers because of her being lax on camper rules.

Dakota is task-orientated, always following the rules and expecting others to do the same. She often takes things rather seriously. Dakota is competitive – in sports, in school work, in relationships – and she lives to win.

At first, Jamie and Dakota hit it off, since both like soccer and ultimate frisbee. When on the same teams, they played together well. But if on opposite teams, they could set each other off.

Over the summer, their differences increasingly rubbed each other the wrong way. One night it was in the laundry. Laundry schedule required that Jamie be done by 9:45, and Dakota was scheduled to start at 10:00. When Dakota showed up at 9:50, Jamie was a long way from being done. Dakota left disgusted, and came back at 10:05, but Jamie's clothes still weren't done. When Dakota returned at 10:20, she lost patience. She took Jamie's clothes out of the washer and tossed them in a pile on the floor. One of Jamie's black shorts landed on some bleach, ruining them. When Jamie discovered the shorts, she confronted Dakota about her violating Jamie's rights and ruining the shorts. Dakota retorted in a sarcastic voice, "Oh, I didn't realize that you actually cared about rules and other people." Jamie picked up the wet clothes and stormed out, saying "Look who's talking. The Rule Keeper has become the Rule Breaker. But's I guess it's okay when you think you're better than everyone else." Jamie immediately told two other staff what happened, accusing Dakota of being a royal jerk.

At flag raising the next morning, Dakota was in charge and began exactly on time. Jamie ran up late as the flags were being raised. Dakota said to the group, "Wow, Jamie is late. Can you believe that? Like that never happens." Everyone noticed the cold stare that Jamie gave Dakota. Jamie responded sarcastically, "Yes, sir, your holiness," giving an exaggerated salute.

That night, Dakota walked back to the cabins after evening campfire, talking with Taylor and Robin, two other staff members. Dakota complained about Jamie and her lack of respect for the rules or others. Taylor added a couple of his own complaints against Jamie. Robin listened to their gripes for a few minutes, but then defended Jamie, reminding Dakota that she may be a little less structured but is a committed Christian who does a great job relating to kids in her cabin. Behind the trio, Jamie was walking alone in the dark and heard what Dakota and Tayler said, but turned away before hearing Robin's defense. Jamie was hurt by their conversation, believing that all three were tearing her down behind her back. Jamie stays up late talking with two other staff, crying and complaining about the other three.

The anger of both Jamie and Dakota gave the devil an opportunity, affecting the staff. (Ephesians 4:26-27)



Application

Lesson 4

These questions can apply to the above case study or to a current conflict from your personal life. For the case study, assume either Jamie's or Dakota's role. For a conflict from your life, apply these questions to yourself, writing out your answers.

1. If you could go back in time and do anything differently in your encounter with the other person, what would that be?

Reflecting on your answer, what have you failed to do as a child of God?

2. Consider whether you have any bitterness against the other person. Read Ephesians 4:26-27.
How long have you been angry?

How has your bitterness given opportunity for the devil in your life?

3. Reflect on your words in your conflict with the other person. Compare them to Ephesians 4:29-32.
What words have you spoken to the other person that were not helpful for building up?

4. Think about others you have talked to about this situation. Comparing your speech to the Commandment on not bearing false witness, how have you sinned? (Note especially the *proactive* requirements of this Commandment, such as those in Proverbs 11:13; 1 Corinthians 13:7; and Philippians 4:8.)

5. Read Philippians 2:14-15. Whether or not you talked to someone else, have you grumbled or complained about the other person?

6. What behaviors did you exhibit that failed to follow God's commands?

7. Compare your thoughts, words, and actions to what the Bible describes in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. How have you failed to love the other people involved?

8. Prepare to express your confession to the other person. Use the Guidelines for Confession to write out the words you could use.

Guidelines for Confession

- Go as a beggar.
- Own your sin.
- Identify your sins according to God's Word.
- Express sorrow for hurt your sin has caused.
- Commit to changing your behavior with God's help.
- Be willing to bear the consequences.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Trust in Christ's forgiveness.

9. Write a prayer for God's help in confessing to the other person. Or, use the following:

Gentle Savior, I am often blind to my own faults. By nature I want to defend and protect myself. But you did not protect yourself when dying on the cross for my sins. Instead, you willingly laid down your life for me, taking on my punishment, that I may be restored to God and live eternally in heaven. Help me see my faults in conflict, especially my dispute with [name]. Grant me insight that I may see where I have failed you and others. Assure me of your love as you guide me in confession that I may hear your promise of forgiveness. Then, according to your will, grant my reconciliation with all those I have sinned against. I ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.



Campers Noah and Jared, both 12 years old, knew how to aggravate each other. They often started in fun, but they would easily end up getting too rough and hurting someone.

One night in bed they started throwing things at each other. It began with socks and tee shirts, but then Jared tossed a shoe that hit Noah in the arm. Noah sent his flashlight over to Jared's bed, missing him but hitting Daniel in the head. The counselor came in to settle things when Daniel screamed an obscenity.

The next day at lunch, Noah and Jared threw a few pieces of food across the table at each other before catching the counselor's eye, stopping them for a moment. Then, Noah tried using his fork as a catapult, and accidentally sent the fork flying across the table hitting Andrea's arm. Both boys ended up being scolded. Of course, they both blamed the other with "He started it!"

Later, while playing Eagle's Eggs, Jared said he tagged Noah who denied it. They both start arguing, calling each other liars. Before anyone could respond, they starting throwing punches at each other and wrestling on the ground.

You and your fellow staff member reached them just as Jared nailed Noah's face, giving him a black eye. As they were being pulled apart, Noah kicked Jared hard in his left thigh, causing him to cry out in pain. By this time, a group of kids had gathered around. What had begun as fun ended in hurt.

As staff members, you realize that this is an opportunity for the boys to practice confession and forgiveness. Each of you takes one of the boys aside to coach them.



These questions can apply to the above case study or to another conflict where you are assisting others to reconcile. For the case study, assume a camp counselor's role. For a conflict where you are assisting others, apply these questions to that situation, writing out your answers.

1. What do you do first with each of the boys (or parties in conflict)?

2. What can you do to transition the conversation into a godly approach? (Hint: Look at the top of the cross diagram from *Go and Be Reconciled*.)

3. Before bringing the boys (parties) together, with whom do they need to be reconciled?

4. What godly power can you give them that can enable them to reconcile in a godly way?

5. What can you do to prepare them:
 - a. To confess to the other person?

 - b. To forgive as they have been forgiven? (This is a hint!)

 - c. To be a witness to others around them?

6. What consequences might be appropriate, although forgiveness is given?



From BFF to
WFE
(Worst Friend Ever)

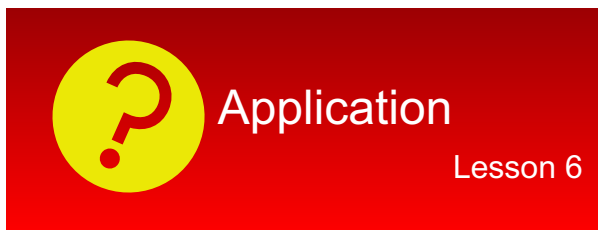


Amber, Nicole, and Kaitlyn shared everything. They played together on the college volleyball team. Between classes and practice, they always could be found together. The girls loved skiing in the winter and running in the warmer months. After college, each found employment in the same city where they attended church together. Nicole married first, then Amber. Kaitlyn remained single. As BFFs, their friendship continued to flourish.

That is, until one day...

Amber and Kaitlyn exchanged some texts where Kaitlyn complained about Nicole. Kaitlyn thought that Nicole was acting arrogant because she married first, and Kaitlyn felt like Nicole was putting her down for not having a boyfriend. Amber defended Nicole and wrote some curt responses to Kaitlyn, who wrote back with hurtful words. Amber forwarded the whole exchange to Nicole. Nicole and Amber exchanged a flurry of texts in which they grumbled about all of Kaitlyn's idiosyncrasies and how she must be jealous of them. It didn't take long before Kaitlyn learned about the other two "ganging up" on her. She responded with angry texts to both of these friends. Before long, they were posting negative things about each other on social media. Kaitlyn called them WFE – worst friends ever!

Once inseparable, Amber and Nicole now avoided Kaitlyn. It wasn't difficult to steer clear of one another, except at church. So they separately concluded that the best way to not see one another was to stop going to worship.



These questions can apply to the above case study or to a current conflict from your personal life. For the case study, assume the role of Amber, Nicole, or Kaitlyn. For a conflict from your life, apply these questions to yourself, writing out your answers.

1. How have you prepared to restore the other person with forgiveness? (If you need help with this, review the application questions from Lesson 5.)

2. Before seeking to restore the other person, what kinds of logs do you need to get out of your own eye first (Matthew 7:1-5)? (If you need help with this, see the application questions at the end of Lesson 4.)

3. Review 2 Timothy 2:24-26.

What are your responsibilities in helping the person with whom you are in conflict?

What are God's responsibilities and *not* yours?

4. How have you failed to restore the other person with gentleness?

5. Review Galatians 6:1. Identify the sins that you believe have ensnared the other person.

6. If these were your sins, describe what another person could do that would help free you from your entanglement.

7. Identify a time and place that will provide safety for both you and the other person to meet together.

8. Prepare your words by writing out your opening comments.

- Begin by assuring the other person of your care and Christian love.
- Acknowledge behaviors and motives of the other person that are godly.
- Confess your own sins that you have not yet addressed.
- Next, if you were personally affected, refer to the behavior that caused you personal hurt or harm. Using an "I statement," indicate how you were personally hurt or affected:

"I feel _____ when you _____ because _____. As a result, I _____."

9. Prepare yourself to listen. The other person will not likely hear anything you have to say until he or she feels that you have listened to him or her. Remember basic skills in active listening:
- Waiting – Be patient. Wait until the other person finishes speaking before responding. Don't plan your response until the other person is finished speaking.
 - Attending – Maintain eye contact and other body language that communicates your genuine interest. Nod occasionally or respond with short phrases that indicate you are paying attention (e.g., *I see, uh-huh, I understand*, etc.).
 - Clarifying – Ask questions to test your understanding (e.g., *When you said _____, did you mean _____?*).
 - Reflecting – Repeat short portions back to the person. This communicates that you are listening closely and allows for the other person to restate things if needed. It also helps the other person hear back what she has said, which may help her rethink her responses to the situation.
 - Agreeing – Look for opportunities to agree. When you agree with some portions, the other person believes that you are open-minded and really listening. He will much more likely hear what you have to say if he believes you are balanced in your assessment.

Which of the above listening skills are most difficult for you?

10. Prepare open-ended questions to help the other person discover for himself or herself the offensive behaviors and own them. For example:
- “When you [describe the behavior], what were you hoping would be the result?”
 - “If you had the opportunity, what would you have done differently?”
 - “If someone else had done the same thing to you, how would you have felt?”
 - “Now that you have had time to reflect, what words or actions do you regret?”
 - “What could you have done that would be more reflective of your faith in Christ?”

Write out some questions:

11. Anticipate the person's reaction to your questions and plan your response.
- How will you respond if she immediately repents?

- How will you respond if he becomes angry?
- How will you respond if she tries to justify what she did?
- How will you respond if he tries to explain things away?

12. What will be your next steps if he is not yet repentant?

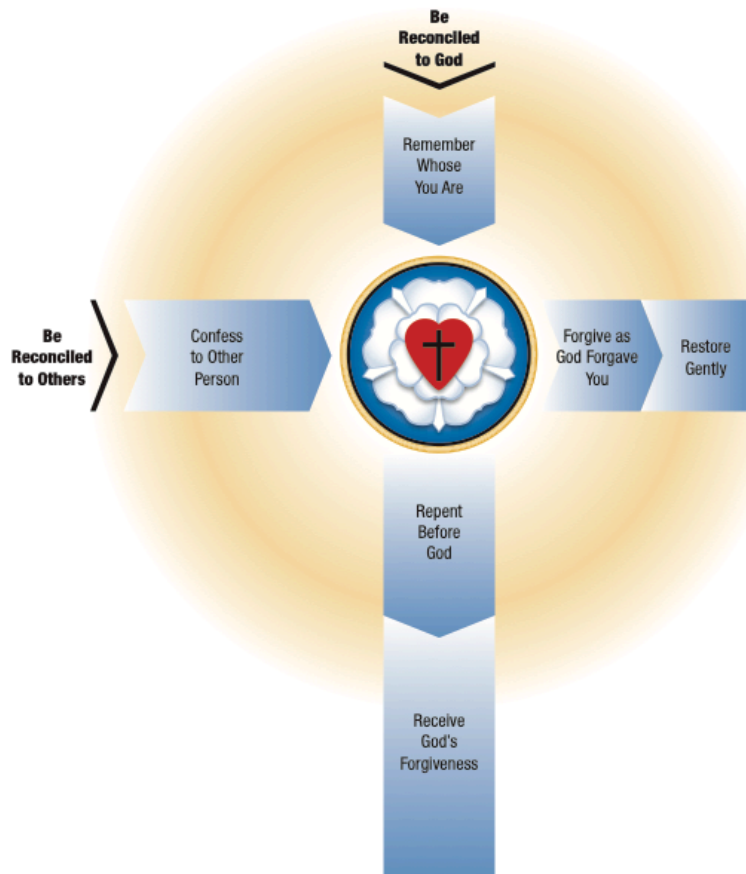
13. How will you proclaim God's forgiveness and then your own?

Consider using the form *Proclaiming God's Forgiveness* (pages 22-26 in this guide) in which you can both confess and receive forgiveness.

14. Write a prayer seeking God's guidance for both of you.

Proclaiming God's Forgiveness

Go and Be Reconciled: *What Does This Mean?*



*Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another,
as God in Christ forgave you (Ephesians 4:32)*

Ambassadors
of
Reconciliation™
Cultivating Lifestyles of Reconciliation

Proclaiming God's Forgiveness

When someone confesses his sins, whether against God or us or other people, Christians have the privilege of proclaiming God's forgiveness.

Although the Bible does not require a specific form for confession and forgiveness, these forms provide simple ways to confess sin to our pastor, fellow Christian, or family member and receive the good news of God's forgiveness.

The Development of an Idol

We slide down the slippery slope of idolatry when we elevate a fear, desire, or trust into a demand. When expectations are not met, frustration increases. We judge those who will not give us what we want and we punish them. Left unchecked, idolatry results in destruction or death of the idol and/or the person worshipping it. In other words, idolatry leads to death. (James 1:14-15)

Guidelines for Confession

Confession and forgiveness lead to life (2 Corinthians 7:10). Expressing godly sorrow in confession reflects true contrition which is a result of repentance. (James 5:16)

Go as a beggar. (Matthew 5:23-24; Luke 15:19; Luke 18:13-14)

Own your sin. (Numbers 5:5-7; Psalm 32:3-5; Psalm 51:3-4)

"I sinned against God and you when I . . ."

"I was wrong . . ."

Identify your sins according to God's Word. (Exodus 20:1-17)

Sinful thoughts, words, and actions. (Matthew 15:19; Ephesians 4:29; Galatians 5:19-21)

Sins of omission (e.g., failing to love, as in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

Express sorrow for hurt your sin has caused. (Luke 15:21)

"I am sorry for how my actions hurt you when..."

If unsure how you hurt, ask! ("Can you help me understand how my actions hurt you?")

Commit to changing your behavior with God's help.

(Matthew 3:8)

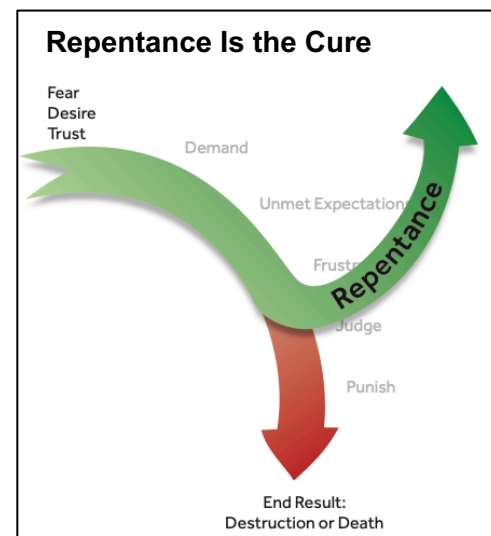
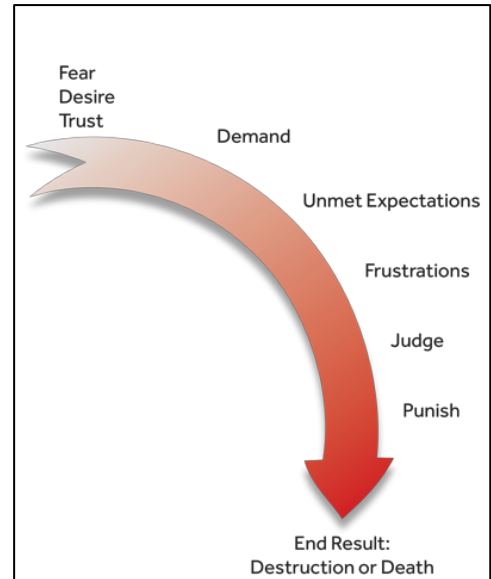
"With God's help, I will not do this again."

Be willing to bear the consequences. (Luke 15:21; 19:8)

Ask for forgiveness. (Genesis 50:17; Psalm 32:5; Luke 18:13)

Trust in Christ's forgiveness. (Colossians 1:13-14; Ephesians 1:7-10)

Regardless if the other person forgives, trust in Christ's forgiveness.



The Confession

Confession of sin is a private matter. A Christian hearing a confession and proclaiming God's forgiveness is obligated to respect the confidential nature of a confession.

When confessing, you may prepare by meditating on the Ten Commandments and by praying Psalm 6, 7, 13, 15, 51, 121, or 130. If you are not burdened with particular sins, do not torture yourself to search for or invent other sins. However, if particular sins trouble you, naming them out loud will help you own your sins. Moreover, it will help comfort you for those specific sins as God's forgiveness proclaimed to you.

NOTE: *When confessing sin, it is not necessary to use any specific rite or prepared words. However, some may find it helpful to use the following:*

The person hearing the confession begins:

Since Adam and Eve sinned, all people have been born in sin. We sin against God by disobeying his commandments, and we also sin against others around us. Nevertheless, God promises in the Bible to forgive us when we confess our sins because Jesus died for all our sins (see Psalm 32:2-5 or 1 John 1:8-9). Thus, you are invited to confess your sins so that you can hear God's forgiveness proclaimed for you.

The person confessing prays:

Heavenly Father,

I know that you created me and love me.

You have taught me in the Bible how to live as your child.

But I was born a sinner.

And I have sinned against you and others around me,

by what I have done, and by what I haven't done.

I deserve your wrath and eternal punishment.

I am sorry for my sin, known and unknown.

(optional) **I am especially sorry for ...** [mention specific sins that trouble your conscience]

Have mercy on me.

Please forgive me for Jesus' sake.

Help me to live in the way that you teach me.

(optional – you may pray additional thoughts to God.)

In Jesus' name. Amen.

If you sinned against the one hearing your confession, you may also say:

I have also sinned against you, and I ask you for forgiveness, too.

Fellow Christian Proclaiming Forgiveness

(Pastors may provide another form for individual confession and forgiveness.)

Upon hearing a person's confession, a fellow Christian announces God's forgiveness:

God loves you. He promises to be merciful to you and strengthen your faith. Do you believe that God's promises of forgiveness given in the Bible are written for all God's children, including you?

I do.

Then hear and believe what God's Word promises you (*use one or more Bible verses, including those on the following page*).

In 1 John 1:9 God promises: "If we confess our sins, [God] is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Through Romans 8:1, the Lord declares: "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

In 1 Peter 2:24, God assures us: "[Christ] himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed."

Therefore, _____ [name], believe this Good News: For Jesus' sake, God forgives you all your sins.

Amen.

If the person confessing has also asked for forgiveness from the one hearing the confession, these words should also be spoken:

As God through Christ has forgiven both you and me, I also forgive you your sins against me.

Amen.

May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

Amen.

A prayer of thanksgiving may follow. Psalms 30, 31, 32, 34, 103, and 118 are also appropriate. The one hearing confession may know additional Scripture passages with which to comfort and strengthen the faith of those who have great burdens of conscience or are sorrowful and distressed. He may include some of the passages listed under "God's Word Proclaiming Forgiveness" from the following page.

God's Word Proclaiming Forgiveness

When proclaiming God's forgiveness, comfort the person with the assurance of God's love by reading Bible passages that proclaim God's grace. Personalize the promise by inserting in the verse the person's name and personal pronouns as noted in the brackets below.

Blessed is [Name] whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is [Name,] against whom the LORD counts no iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit (Psalm 32:1-2).

For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward [Name] who fears him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove [your] transgressions from [you] (Psalm 103:11-12).

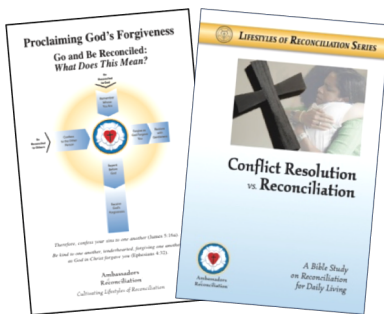
[Jesus] was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification. Therefore, [Name,] since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the glory of God (Romans 4:25-5:2).

There is therefore now no condemnation for [Name] who [is] in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1).

[Name,] for our sake [God] made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him [you] might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

[Name,] He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds [Name,] you have been healed (1 Peter 2:24).

[Name], the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses [you] from all sin (1 John 1:7).



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