

Principles of Reconciliation and Rebuilding Trust

Six Principles of Reconciliation in Order to Rebuild Trust: PEOPLE

- 1) Pursue Peace
- 2) Examine Yourself
- 3) Offenses Defined
- 4) Process Offenses (1 or 2)
- 5) Listen in Confrontation
- 6) Exercise a Renewed Mind

I. **Principle One: Pursue Peace** - Resolve to Pursue Peace Eagerly with Conviction.

Be obedient to God's will in pursuing peace through forgiving others since Christ has forgiven you (Eph. 4:32). Be resolved that practicing biblical reconciliation with others has eternal consequences. Jesus taught that there is no more foundational pursuit than peace through personal reconciliation (Mt. 5:23ff,6:14, 18:1ff).

Matthew 6:13–15 - "13 'And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. [For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.]' 14 'For if you forgive others for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 'But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.'"

II. **Principle Two: Examination Yourself**

Identify Causes of Bitterness Conscientiously in Self-Examination. Keep a blameless conscience. Confess any failures leading to this breach to those to whom it is due.

III. **Principle Three: Offenses Defined**

Define Offenses Clearly. Before accusing or judging others, define their offense(s) biblically. An offense is a cause or occasion of sin, a "stumbling block" (*scandalon*, Mt. 5:29ff, 16:23, 18:6). A true offense requires **a)** that another person violate the Law making you the victim of such sin, and **b)** this alleged sin is confirmed with proper evidence. Differences of opinion, irritations, annoyances, failures of others, etc. are not a true offense against you and thus do not justify your criticism, cynicism or condemnation.

IV. **Principle Four: Process of Reconciliation**

Respond to Offenses with (only 2) Biblical Actions. There are only two *categories of resolution*: **a)** those offenses we forgive without requiring further action (no continued process). This is being "tender-hearted" and letting "love cover a multitude of sins" (Eph. 4:32, 1 Pt. 4:8). **b)** those offenses we pursue reconciliation by "process" with the means of sequential, humble confrontation (Mt. 18:15ff) to give opportunity for the clarification, repentance, and peaceful resolution.

V. Principle Five: Listen in the Confrontation

What to say in confrontation: Something has been bothering me and I want to keep a clear conscience, you did _____ at _____ time. That seemed to me to be _____ (violation of some clear commandment) and I wanted to give you a chance to address this _____.

What to say if you are confronted: After listening, say 1) if you are guilty, you are right, I sinned in doing _____. I was wrong, please forgive me. Is there anything that I can do to make the situation right? (This is the restitution question). Each party should **listen** and be willing to humbly accept the truth, amending the accusations and then freely grant forgiveness.

VI. **Principle Six: Exercise a Renewed Mind** - Practice Dealing with Relational Strains by Renewing Your Mind - After responding to true offenses biblically, Phil. 4 gives practical guidance in dealing with *ongoing strained relationships*. Seven actions emerge for prayerful action:

Philippians 4:2–9 [GS trans.] - I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to think together in the Lord. 3 Yes, and I ask you also, my yoke-fellow, take hold of these women, for they have struggled beside me in the work of the gospel, together with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life. 4 [You all] continually be glad [that you are] in the Lord; again I will repeat, be glad. 5 [You all] Let your gentle, patient side be seen by everyone. The Lord is near. 6 Stop worrying about things and pray about everything specifically with thankfulness so that what you ask for [instead of worry about] is made known to God. 7 And [then] the peace of God, which exceeds all your thinking about [the problems], will protect your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. 8 Last of these [encouragements], beloved, [in such problems] envision whatever is true, whatever is honest, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable, [see in this] what is excellent and glorious. 9 Keep on putting into practice the things that you have been disciplined in and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

- 1) Problem - Identify the problem (state it clearly) (Phil. 4 v2-3).
- 2) Praise - Rehearse praise and gratitude for being “in the Lord” (v4).
- 3) Patience - Repent of impatience and be more long-suffering (v5).
- 4) Petitions - Replace worries with thankful, specific petitions (v6).
- 5) Peace - Leave the results with God and receive/accept His peace by faith (v7).
- 6) Positivity - Envision the truth, goodness and beauty of your situation (v8).
- 7) Practicality - Identify and practice good models of peace (v9).