



Photography by Ben Tan

Sunday, October 22, 2017 – Maureen Brown

“Discipline of Reconciliation” – 2 Corinthians 5:17-20

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

(These are to be used personally, with family or with your Small Group)

“Reconciliation is not merely an idea for Jesus. It is something we do as His followers. More than a status given to us by God through Christ’s work on the cross.it is something we must practice together.” David Fitch

1. What do you think of when you first hear the word reconciliation?
2. How would you define reconciliation?
3. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 in several translations. The Bible says that God is working for the reconciliation of the whole world to himself in Christ. We are now ambassadors of Christ entrusted with the message of reconciliation. How do you feel about being called “Christ’s Ambassador” when it comes to the message of reconciliation?
4. David Fitch proposes that the disciplines are best understood as on the move. They occupy three spaces continually – what he calls the Close Circle, Dotted Circle and Half Circle. Let’s look at the three circles and consider the discipline of reconciliation in each environment.
 - a. **Close Circle:** table of intimacy where believers gather/ all are in mutual submission to Christ and to one another/ closeness that is supernatural and Jesus is the host. Read Matthew 18:15-20 - What are the steps listed in this passage to bring reconciliation in the close circle? What do you think it means to treat someone as a Gentile or a Tax Collector?

- b. **Dotted Circle:** believers welcoming people into their space and to their table to be a part of what God is doing /opportunity to enter in or observe what God is doing- Believer is the host. Read 1 Corinthians 6:1-8 – how does this speak to the message of reconciliation in the dotted circle environment?
 - c. **Half Circle:** Christ’s presence doesn’t remain in the close circle or the dotted circle, it goes with us into the hurting and broken world, here the believer is the guest. The question is never whether Christ is here or not – rather it is whether His presence is welcomed or not – In this half circle we are guests not hosting. Read Matthew 5:9-14 – how does this speak to the message of reconciliation in the half circle environment?
5. When considering reconciliation in these three environments, what questions do you have? Which circle/environment is the most challenging for you?

Next Steps

Even when we are obedient to what God calls us to do in regards to reconciliation, we can’t make or force it to happen. However, we still need to do our part. Fitch states that we must quiet our egos, listen, submit to one another, ask for forgiveness, confess our sin, make things right and let Him work. Perhaps with this study, God has placed a relationship or situation on your heart that you need to deal with. The message of reconciliation can be overwhelming when we think of the need throughout our world; however, this one relationship placed on your heart can be where it can start.

Imagine what could happen if churches everywhere inhabited their neighborhoods with Christ’s faithful presence of reconciliation? God in Christ is reconciling the whole world to himself (2 Cor 5:19) and we are his ambassadors (vs. 20)

Take some time to talk with your group about how you might experience more of God's presence in your life and how you might also reflect that in the world around you with the message of reconciliation.