

## Steps (Week 9) – Reconciling and Amending

Michael Snetzer – October 30, 2013

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So we're back together again. What did you guys think about last Thursday? Yeah, that was some good stuff. I really enjoyed being able to gather with you guys. Tonight we are going to be moving away from our vertical orientation. That's maybe a bad way to say it, "to move away from our vertical orientation." We are going to remain vertically oriented to God, but as we have now experienced and received God's love, we are going to begin to talk about how to bend that out into the world.

Tonight's message is on *Reconciling and Amending*. We have not only been saved to God but to a body, to a people, and so there is not only reconciliation that happens with God our Father but also reconciliation that happens within the body of Christ. As I mentioned, up to this point we have been primarily addressing and assessing and reconciling our hearts before God, but it is now time to move toward the horizontal to demonstrate what God has done in our hearts to others by our words and our deeds.

Do you notice? I used the word *demonstrate*. I didn't use the word *prove*. We are not out to prove anything. We are out to demonstrate the love of Christ and the way he has transformed our hearts. So tonight we will look at the first of two weeks on what's called *biblical peacemaking*, and we will look at the overarching concept of reconciliation and then what we are to do when we sin against another. Next week we will look at what we are to do when we are sinned against.

Just as a matter of recap, you may remember in our first week together, our introduction, we talked about the greatest commandment. We said a redemptive message or biblical counseling exhorts the greatest command. I don't think I did a great job of explaining how this all works itself out practically, and so I'm going to get a chance to do this over again tonight.

The greatest command basically says we are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and love our neighbor as ourselves. There are two parts to this greatest command. The

first part is about my vertical orientation to God, and the second part is about my horizontal orientation to others. So we could put this up there.

Over the last eight weeks, we have been talking primarily about the reconciliation of our hearts before God. When Jesus speaks about the greatest command, he speaks it in order for a reason. These are not in this order for no reason, and the reason they're in this order is that the way we relate to others is a direct result of how we are relating vertically with God. If I am having trouble loving others, it is an indication there is something going on in my vertical relationship with God. So the overflow of my relationship with God is what enables me to love others the way Christ has called me to, which is a sacrificial type of love.

Another thing we might notice from the greatest command is God has designed and wired each one of us to live in loving relationship with him and with others. To live outside of a loving relationship with God and others is to live dysfunctionally. We have been primarily looking at this, and now we are going to look to the horizontal.

This says we have gone to great lengths to examine our hearts so we might not engage the world in fear, self-preservation, self-delusion, arrogance, aggression, guilt, or greed but out of God's redemptive love. As we engage the world around us, we want to be an accurate reflection of God himself. If we're walking in fear, we cannot walk in love.

In fact, the Scriptures say perfect love drives out fear. As we receive the love from the Father, as we understand his love for us, as we understand he is all-powerful, that he is sovereign, that he is our protector, our provider, our director, that we have security in him, we begin to lose fear. We're going to see how that plays itself out in the ministry of reconciliation.

Out of this vertical heart relationship with God, we will now begin to look at our relationship with others. Reconciliation or transformation of our hearts vertically will lead to a demonstration of his love horizontally. As our hearts are reconciled to his, we will see more clearly how to act in accordance with his will.

Why have we spent all of this time looking at our hearts before God? The answer is so we would see more clearly how to reflect him in the world. I'm using those words very intentionally. Remember when we started off and said our hearts are deceitful above all things. So before we get too far into

the reconciling and amending, I just want to talk a little bit tonight about why we would spend so much time on the vertical orientation.

Whenever I have a young lady and her mom come into the office with a father who is acting unfaithfully and not living up to his responsibilities and maybe caught up in some sort of addiction, why would I want to first address her heart before God before having that loving conversation with her father? So we're going to answer that, and we're going to see how our sin and, in particular, our idols, hinder our ability to see rightly.

As one who counsels God's Word often, people are often confused about what my role is. Many times those whom I sit with bring a conflict, and each is convinced they are right and the other is wrong. Imagine that. They believe it is my role to tell them who's right and who's wrong. In other words, they're expecting me to pick a side.

I believe my role as a biblical counselor, a counselor of God's Word, is to be an advocate for each but not to pick a side, to speak to each of them in keeping with their own hearts while maintaining an allegiance to God. My allegiance is not to one person or the other. My allegiance is to God, and I believe it's my responsibility to speak redemptively into each one of their lives and not to pick a side. If I get into that kind of picking a side, then I'm going to get myself in a lot of trouble.

When I start to speak redemptively into a person's life, in other words, if they came in expecting I was going to pick a side and I was going to say, "Oh, this person..." then I begin to speak to their hearts, that's often not what they were looking for. What's assumed whenever I do that is I must be siding with the other person, but that's not at all what I'm doing. My responsibility is to maintain my highest allegiance not to one person or the other but to God.

This is much like we find with the elders of Israel in Ezekiel 14. Let's take a look there at Ezekiel 14. Did you guys study that this week? Yes? Okay, good. Some of you did. Was it a part of the homework? Yes. Okay, there are like two people. It says in verse 1, "**Then certain of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.**" This is Ezekiel speaking.

**"And the word of the LORD came to me: 'Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. Should I indeed let myself be consulted...?'"** So they're coming to Ezekiel. He's a prophet. He speaks on behalf of

God, and they're probably looking for some circumstantial wisdom, and God is saying, "Before you talk to them about this, there's something else I want you to talk to them about."

It says they have stumbling blocks of iniquity before their faces. Think about that. Think about if you had a stumbling block of iniquity before your face. How well do you think you see? Not very well. It says they have taken idols in their hearts. This is saying the idols of our hearts skew our ability to see rightly. **"Therefore speak to them and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord GOD...'"** Ezekiel is responsible for speaking on behalf of God. His highest allegiance is not to try to please them; he is to be faithful to what God is calling him to.

**"Thus says the Lord GOD: 'Any one of the house of Israel...'"** These are God's people. **"...who takes his idols into his heart and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols, that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel, who are all estranged from me through their idols."**

What does our idolatry do? It estranges us from God. What is God after? He's after our hearts. He's for us. He knows those idols are enslaving and they keep us from seeing rightly. **"Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD: Repent and turn away from your idols, and turn away your faces from all your abominations.'"**

I think I shared this with you guys, but I'll use it again as an illustration and I'll take it a little bit further. There was a time where I was counseling a family, a husband and a wife, and they were in a debate over what swing set to buy. I'll go ahead and tell you what each one idolized. The man idolized money, and the woman idolized safety.

So out of five swing sets, which one do you think he picked? The cheapest one. Right. Which one do you think she picked? The safest one. Do you think both of them could defend their positions biblically? Listen to this. "God has given us money to be good stewards of, and we should not spend it frivolously." This is the husband. Right? Then the wife is like, "But he has given us children, and we're supposed to protect and make sure we have the best for them."

So they are defending their positions, even using biblical arguments for their conflict. There's actually a way to resolve this and make a decision, and we're going to get to that in a minute. For some this may not be popular. It's definitely not popular in our culture. As long as these stumbling

blocks of iniquity are before their faces, what are they making decisions based on? The gods they serve.

It's not in obedience to God; it's to this idol. It is skewing their vision, and they are convinced their vision is right. So they make decisions on how to get more money or more safety, not more of Jesus. How do you make decisions? Are you making decisions in your life right now for some other reason other than your pursuit of Christ and your obedience of Christ? I think we have to be honest and say, "Yes, we do."

Taking this example of this couple with the swing set, I want to begin to teach about biblical decision-making or even biblical conflict resolution. I don't think you can teach this without teaching about authority. You cannot teach biblical decision-making apart from authority, because if you do it will stagnate unless you agree.

Here's what you need to know. Every single person in this room is under authority. There is no person in this room who's not under authority. We are all called to submit to the authority we're under. For some of us we have authority over others. If we have children, we have authority. If we are in a position where we're in a company, where we're a boss or something, we have authority. Here's the thing. In this authority I believe the one who is in submission does not get to dictate the decision-making. There is something different that goes on there.

I think the Lord has taught me a lot this year about being in submission. When I have a boss, can you imagine if I came to my boss and I said, "You will not tell me what to do. In fact, I'll tell you where we're going to go with this company. We are going to do this on this date. Do you know what time I'm going to come in? I'm going to come in at this time, and guess how much you're going to pay me? You're going to pay me this amount of money"?

Can you imagine if I went up to a police officer after he pulled me over and I was like, "Excuse me, mister. Would you get back in your car? I'll tell you when you can get out of that car"? That sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? The posture that those who are under authority have when they come to those in authority is they request. Those who are in authority have the responsibility to be the decisive agent.

I used the term *responsibility* because it is a heavy weight to carry. They have to make that decision, and they have to make that decision to a higher authority they're in allegiance to. As I have learned

probably over the last couple of years what it means to be under authority, it doesn't mean you always agree. It doesn't mean you have to agree. It means in your disagreement you submit.

It's not that you're silent. In fact, let's say in my job here, if I believe there is an unwise decision... I'm not speaking as there are unwise decisions going on. I'm just saying if I believed there was an unwise decision that was about to be made, I have a responsibility to communicate, "Hey, here's what I believe the Lord would have us do," but guess what? At that point I have done my responsibility. I have given that counsel.

Do you know what? A good leader is eager to hear that and to value that counsel. But guess what? That leader, that one in authority, now has to weigh that. Oftentimes someone who is making those decisions and doesn't consult somebody who's closer to that situation before making that decision will make that decision in ignorance.

Here's what you have to know. All of us who are in submission have to trust the Lord is bigger than whoever our boss is or whoever that person is in authority over us and this person is not bigger than God and God is going to orchestrate this situation for his kingdom good ultimately and what he wants me to do is in faith joyfully submit, even if I don't agree.

Now we're going to talk about this couple, because now we're going to drag this into marriage. This is not popular in our culture, but I would not be a faithful pastor of God's Word, I would not be a faithful counselor of God's Word, if I did not tell you that a husband has the responsibility to lead his family. He is the head.

That means he has a biblical authority in his family to lead his family under submission to Christ for the glory of God. He's not to act selfishly, and he has a responsibility to even value his wife's counsel. Before God, do you know who's responsible for making those decisions in the home? It's not the wife, and that can be a really scary position for a wife to be in, because guess what's going to happen sometimes?

There are going to be some times that you have a husband who makes foolish decisions, and it's going to cost you and your family personally. This is sacrificial love. It is loving your husband more than stuff. It's trusting God in the middle of that and trusting God will discipline your husband for his glory and for your husband's good. God is not passive in all of this.

Back to Ezekiel 14... Just to finish this up, it says in verse 8, "**And I will set my face against that man; I will make him a sign and a byword and cut him off from the midst of my people, and you shall know that I am the LORD.**" Can you imagine sitting with somebody, biblical counseling? You see the idol. You're counseling. You can see it's skewing vision. You're calling them to repent. You're calling them to turn because they're headed in a direction that's destructive.

Are you all familiar with the story of Balaam and his donkey? I sometimes feel like the donkey, like I can see the angel of the Lord standing, and this is not going to go well. I mean they're just kicking and beating this donkey and saying, "I want to go this direction," and you're like, "No, you don't want to go that direction." That is never going to go well, because here it says he will set his face against that man and make him a sign.

As we counsel those around us, we have a biblical responsibility to try to head off that which is going to lead to destruction. Why do we deal first with our hearts before the Lord before we start talking about horizontal circumstances and how to engage that? To make sure we're seeing rightly. This is an Old Testament example.

There's also a New Testament example in Matthew 7:1-5. Let's just skip down to verses 3 through 5. We talked a little bit about this last week, we're going to talk even more about it next week, and we're going to talk about it this week. "**Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?**"

So what does this big, honkin' log do? It obstructs your vision. What do you think you're going to make decisions based on? What you can see. That's what you're going to serve. It says first to get the log out of your own eye. So before you worry about what's going on this way, let's make sure this is right. That's why we've gone to great lengths to make sure we're not engaging the world out of the flesh.

Do you remember we said that last column...? I think I even put it in here. That last column, that's the big log. Have you looked at your inventory from that standpoint? That's a massive log. Did you ever realize how massive of a log that was until you started to look at just how it has played into all of these different things? We've been operating a lot of the time in the flesh. Do you see that little thing over there, the word that's sideways. Can you see it? That word is *speck*. That's the log, and that's the speck. We want to make sure we get that log out of our eye.

I love to engage culture, and I love to engage psychology. One of the things in cognitive therapy is there's this thing called a *schema*. A *schema* is this lens through which we see the world. If you put your hands up like this and crossed them like this, this is how I see things. You can have two different people who experience the exact same event and will walk away from that event feeling differently, thinking differently, and behaving differently.

What I think is going on in that schema, because this is my value system, so I make decisions based on this grid, is exactly what we're talking about in Ezekiel 14, that I make decisions based on the things I love and that's what I think is right. So it won't be until those things are removed that I will be able to see rightly and clearly so I can be obedient to what God calls me to.

1. *The ministry of reconciliation*. Let's now look at 2 Corinthians 5. We're going to start in verse 11. It says, "**Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord...**" Is that knowing the fear of man? No, this is the fear of the Lord. Did you know the weight of God's glory as we see him more and more rightly will displace lesser fears?

It's out of this highest allegiance to him, that he's the One I care most about, he's the One I want to please, it says, "**...we persuade others. But what we are is known to God...**" Listen. How many times do we try to defend ourselves? A lot. He's like, "Listen. God knows. If you're doing this out of a pure heart, you don't have anything to prove."

**"...and I hope it is known also to your conscience. We are not commending ourselves to you again but giving you cause to boast about us, so that you may be able to answer those who boast about outward appearance and not about what is in the heart."** What he is saying here is, "You know our hearts. You know we are for you. You know we are for God."

It says, "**For if we are beside ourselves...**" Listen. "As I carry the gospel message, as I carry the message of reconciliation, if you think I'm crazy..." What does it say? It says, "**...it is for God...**" It's not for you. Like, "I'm here to please God. So if you think I'm out of my mind in what I'm saying, it's not for you; it's for God," But, "**...if we are in our right mind, [maybe] it is for you.**"

It's just the most fascinating thing to be involved in carrying the gospel in the ministry of reconciliation. Oftentimes you think, "Oh, I'm going in, and I'm going to share the gospel with this person," but guess what? This person over here is the person it was actually for. This person is not wanting to hear it, and this person is like, "I want to hear more."



**"For the love of Christ controls us..."** Do you see? He's demonstrating the fact that what is propelling... His motive in coming to them is love. It's not fear. It's not guilt. It's not shame. It's not an outburst of anger. It's not resentment. It's not bitterness. It's not to get anything from them. He has all things. He has his security in his Father who's in heaven.

**"...because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves..."** Do you know what the mark of a Christian is? That he no longer lives for himself. He may default there a lot, but his primary aim is to live for God. That didn't exist before.

**"...but for him who for their sake died and was raised. From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh."** It's not about what this person can do for me. I don't use people anymore for my agenda. "What can this person do to help me get to the place where I want to go?" No, we see them through spiritual eyes. We see as ambassadors of Christ the people who are in need of God's grace.

**"Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."** Hallelujah!

**"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."**

This is interesting. He has given us the message of reconciliation. That is the message we are to be carrying out. He has given us the ministry of reconciliation. He's talking to the Corinthian church, and he's telling them to reconcile their hearts to God, to no longer live for themselves. These are God's people, and they are living for something else. He's saying, "Be reconciled to God. Give your life for what God has called you to."

**"...God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become**

**the righteousness of God."** So the motive is the love of Christ, the ministry of reconciliation. The means is Jesus Christ, and the message is to be reconciled to God. Be reconciled to God while there's still grace, while there's still an opportunity to run home.

2. *Making amends.* Numbers 5:5-7 says, "**And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 'Speak to the people of Israel, 'When a man or woman commits any of the sins that people commit by breaking faith with the LORD, and that person realizes his guilt, he shall confess his sin that he has committed.'"**" You go and you confess.

**"And he shall make full restitution for his wrong, adding a fifth to it and giving it to him to whom he did the wrong."** So prior to being effective ministers in the message of reconciliation and the lives of people we may have harmed through our own sin, we need to demonstrate the gospel has taken root in our own lives through repentance and faith.

Part of repentance is after being convicted of sin taking responsibility for the things we have done and accepting whatever consequences result from our past actions, including paying restitution. We do this not to be reconciled to God, but out of a heart that has been reconciled to God through the gospel in a way the law cannot.

The law can only reconcile things outwardly. Think about that. If you wrong somebody and you go to a judge, he says, "Okay, pay back what you owe." That's just the outward. Only the gospel can change the heart from which injustice flows. He changes my heart, and all of a sudden I am for justice and I want to make amends. I want to tell somebody I was wrong.

I want to be able to go to someone and tell them on behalf of God he is in the world and he is reconciling people's hearts to himself and I get to go and say, "God has done a work in my heart, and I was wrong." Maybe that person doesn't believe there is a God, but that may give just the opportunity to say, "Maybe there is a God."

Think about that. Maybe it's years and years after the offense. You were living for yourself, you were wronging people left and right, and all of a sudden God blows you up. He just breaks your heart over how you've treated people, and then you get to go and say, "God is doing a good work in my heart. He is working in power. Now I want to let you know on behalf of God I'm here to tell you he is reconciling the world to himself, and I'm a testimony of that."

The gospel tends to go out in concentric circles, and so we often go to those closest to us, those who have been most affected by our sin. The ones who are closest to us are the ones most affected by our sin. What God has revealed through revelation, through this process of examination we should consider steps or application that should be taken to repair any damage done to those we have harmed. We want to look at the traditional Twelve Steps, and as we usually do, we want to look at them and then redeem them.

It says here in Step 8, "We made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all." Romans 12:18 says, "**If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.**" As far as what you're responsible for, live peaceably with all. You only control half the equation, and that's your responsibility.

I think the big theme behind this step is *willingness*. Are you willing? Are you still openhanded? Are there those people where you're saying, "No," to God to? I'm not saying do it. The next step is going to talk about wisdom in doing so, but are you willing? If God calls you to it, are you willing or have all of a sudden you said, "Yes," last week when we were all before the Lord and we were like, "I offer myself to you"? "Nope. Not this one." Then you're back to slavery. Right?

Step 9 says, "We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." You see the Numbers 5:5-7 verses we were just talking through. What does wisdom look like? Sometimes wisdom means *timing*. Again, you don't control this thing, so you don't get to go and impose yourself on somebody.

If you have somebody who's saying, "Hey, I'm not ready," then you need to respect that. You don't force that. There are some situations where it may not be wise to go directly. For example, it may seem obvious, but for us men it may not be wise to go through the rolodex of our lives and look up old girlfriends and invite them to coffee to make amends, unbeknownst to your wife and unbeknownst to their husbands. That's not wise.

In fact, I'll tell you currently I hope this week I will be sending a letter of amends to a young lady I wounded deeply as a young man. This has taken a lot of time, consideration, prayer, working with my wife to make sure we're on the same page so that letter goes in good faith and working really with mentors we've worked with for some time so there's not any more damage done.

Sometimes this "...except when to do so would injure..." Although there are some biblical principles in here, Step 9 is not the Word of God. It may contain a biblical principle, but this exact wording is not from the Bible. It says, "...except when to do so would injure them or others." This is often used as an excuse not to confess, particularly in the context of a marriage covenant where there has been adultery.

Oftentimes, people won't look at the Bible, but they'll look at Step 9 and they'll say, "This is the Word of God, and so it says, '...except when to do so would injure them or others.'" Did you know the injury actually happened when you committed the adultery? That's the offense. Now there's something that separates you. Honestly, your relationship is not even based in integrity. It's not based in the gospel.

Do you know what it's based in? Deceit. You're artificially holding somebody in a relationship they may have biblical grounds to be out of apart from your repentance. Part of your repentance is your willingness to accept responsibility. Do you see how that works? Does that mean it's going to sting? Does that mean it's going to be difficult? Yeah, but you're giving the opportunity for your relationship not to be based in deceit but to be based in the gospel of Jesus Christ. That's what marriage is to reflect.

Another little bit of wisdom is if they're unaware and no harm was done, I don't know that you need to go confess. When I was in a program before, I was pretty legalistic about some of this stuff, and so I would say, "Hey, man, if I thought a bad thought in my mind about somebody, I needed to go tell them." That's not helpful. They didn't even know. "Hey, I judged you in my heart, and I really thought you were this," and they were like, "I don't even know you." You can get so extreme in some of this.

Sometimes it's not wise to go and do that in person. Sometimes it's a dangerous situation. Maybe it would be better to send a letter. We want to use wisdom, so you have your mentors who are working with you. Here's one I've heard before. "But I've already been forgiven. Why should I have to make it right?" Can you imagine how ridiculous this would sound to the offended party? "I know I wrecked your car, but God has forgiven me, so I don't owe you anything."

Yes, you've been forgiven, but restitution... That is a heart of justice. God is a God of justice, and he brings about justice through our hearts, rather than outwardly through the law, through the gospel. Practically, it makes sense to make amends to those we've harmed before we go about in our

ministry pursuits, I believe, because it gives you credibility so you're not disqualified because someone comes against you with some unresolved issue.

Let's say your ministry really takes off, and those people you offended back then... You're not going to be able to go back to everyone. God will lead you to those he wants you... Guess what? He'll bring people into your midst he wants you to deal with whom you won't even have remembered and give you those opportunities.

Take, for example, my position here. There are those out there... Think about it. For 32 years my life was a train wreck, and I used people through that whole 32 years. To those who are in my immediate reach, I have made my amends, but there are people out there who could come to this church as a pastor and say, "Guess what Michael Snetzer did? He has done this, and he has done this." Do you know what? I welcome that day when people walk through that door and they say, "Michael did this, and Michael did this," and I'd say, "I've been waiting to tell you how sorry I am."

If there are those who are in your immediate circle and you've just avoided and you're unwilling and you've had every opportunity to do that and you're just not willing, it's our pride that gets in the way of that, and it's a lack of faith in the gospel and the grace of God that he's in control. Making amends has been one of the most delightful ministry opportunities the Lord has given me. I talk about this in the Amends training with the sponsors, and we don't have time to go into it now.

Financial amends, legal amends, family amends, friend amends, living amends, where I didn't get the opportunity... I just had to live life differently to demonstrate. Actually, they weren't ready to hear it. Relationally, even spiritually, where I've mislead people spiritually early on, and God brought people into my life that allowed me to connect back with those I had wronged and to make that right. It's glorious. It's so good. It can be really intimidating and really scary, but it's so good.

Lastly, here are the Peacemaker Ministry's "Seven A's of Confession," which we've altered here slightly. *Address those affected.* Makes sense. *Avoid excusing your wrongs or being overly dramatic in an attempt to invoke pity.* Note that you stand in the gospel, that you're a new creation in Christ and you go because God has changed your heart and you want them to know God is just that good. You're not going into it to get something. You're doing it because you want to be faithful to God regardless of what their response is.

*Admit specific attitudes and actions.* So you want to be specific, not general. There is a way, like with this letter I'm talking about that's going to go out this week, because I don't know who's going to read that on the other side and because I don't want to throw them under the bus, I'm going to allude to things in a way that they're going to know exactly what I'm talking about without trying to dredge up and to cause problems on the other side. Again, it takes wisdom.

*Acknowledge the hurt and express regret for the harm done.* Whenever it says godly sorrow produces repentance without regret, it's talking about the sorrow. I don't regret being made sorrowful. It doesn't mean I don't regret what I've done. I do regret what I've done. *Accept the consequences and be willing to make restitution.* That's part of repentance. I've been given all things in Christ, and I'm willing to lose whatever I have in this life in order to be his ambassador to let people know I don't live for the same things the world lives for. If it costs me going to jail, man, I hope I have a heck of a prison ministry.

*Accompanied by altered attitudes and actions...* If your heart has changed, you're going to behave differently. You're going to strive for something different. It doesn't mean you won't come back and ask for forgiveness for the same things again, but there is a change in trajectory. *Ask for forgiveness.* It takes humility to ask. Do you remember that posture? Posturing ourselves, not telling people, but asking, "Will you forgive me? Please forgive me."

The redeemed truth from Steps 8 and 9 is relationships break down because of sin. If there was no sin in the world, relationships would work harmoniously, evidenced by love and unity. Division among God's people provides opportunities to identify sin and purify the body. That's the body of Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ brings about justice in a way the law cannot, by inwardly reconciling the very heart of injustice to God.

As those forgiven by God, we can humbly approach those affected by our sin and make amends. This change of heart brings glory to God by demonstrating the power of the gospel and reflecting his heart and bringing justice through his reconciled people. Let's pray.

Lord, we're just overwhelmed by your grace and your love and your pursuit, that you would love us in such a way to bring us back to you, to align our hearts with you so we would accurately reflect you in this world. Lord, we confess there are many ways we have not done that well, that we have lived for ourselves, that we have tried to gratify our flesh through the world and we'd followed the Prince of the Air, the power that is now at work in the sons of disobedience.

God, you entered into our lives and you've loved us with an everlasting love and you have taken your rightful place in our hearts so our allegiance is to you. We pledge our allegiance to you, God, and we desire to follow you as you lead us into eternity. The Scriptures say we are seated with Christ. Positionally, we are already there. We're promised that, but we are still here so you have work for us to do, and you have given us a great ministry, the ministry of reconciliation, pointing people to you. I pray you would free us of the fear of man. Deliver us from that so we might freely love others. It's in Jesus' name I pray, amen.

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