

Let us look at Step 9, as we look into the 12 Steps with God

Step 9 – Amends – We made direct amends to such people whenever possible.

In Step 9 – It is time to act – tonight we will be discussing exactly how to go about making amends. We will be giving you a biblical method for amends, starting with a definition and then an explanation. This exercise should put us in a position of peace and security in our relationship with God, and therefore, our relationships with others. In our previous lesson we spent more time talking about the need for repairing the broken relationship with God. But once that relationship is on track, we must turn our attention to the people we have hurt by our sin.

First, we need to start with a definition...According to an online dictionary, Amends is to compensate or make up for a wrongdoing.

It is obvious that nothing done today can erase what was done yesterday, but we do recognize that simply leaving relationships in disrepair is a sin. We cannot erase the memory of sin but may be able to repair the relational damage done by it.

In 2 Corinthians the Apostle Paul describes this ministry of reconciliation,

2 Corinthians 5:17-19, “Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.”

In Christ, we are a new creation with a qualitatively new level of excellence, made possible by Christ’s death on our behalf. The old things encompass old value systems, priorities, beliefs, loves, and plans. Sin no longer has control of your life and the new things include a spiritual perspective of everything and you begin living for eternal things rather than temporal things.

How do we repair the relational damage inflicted by our sin? The following is a suggested biblical step-by-step approach to making amends with those whom you have wronged,

Matthew 5:23-24, “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. ²⁴First be reconciled to your brother and then come and offer your gift.”

Walk in obedience - Jesus taught that remembering your offense and taking care of it is of great importance. The situation described in these verses appealed to a Jewish audience who were both commanded and compelled to make sacrifices at the temple to atone for their sins... God often orchestrates our growth in areas of weakness or ignorance when we strive to walk in obedience in all aspects of life.

Recognize your wrongs - As sacrifices were being made at the temple one may be reminded of a sin he had committed in the past, hence *your brother has something against you*. This reminder often comes with a reaction of denial, deflection, or disregard; however, the key is to acknowledge that we have sinned against someone. We did something wrong and we must make it right.

Act quickly - Jesus taught that if you remembered a sin against someone as you were being obedient to Him in your service, that required an immediate response. In fact, the sacrifice was to be left there while you went immediately out to take care of the problem.

Prioritize reconciliation - The importance of personal reconciliation is so important that Jesus taught it was to take priority over even sacrifice. This is a huge point, especially to the Jews. They risked not having an atonement for sin until their sacrifice was made, however Jesus mandated that amends be made first. There is no doubt that God intends human relationships to be right.

So how does reconciliation happen? We recommend the following steps:

1. **Check your heart.** Sincerity is particularly important. Be real. (2 Corinthians 2:17)

2 Cor. 2:17...For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

2. **Know your sin.** Conviction is especially important. Be convinced. (Psalms 51:3)

Psalms 51:3...For I know my transgressions, And my sin is ever before me.

3. **Love your audience.** Their continued growth is vital. Be helpful. (1 John 4:16)

1 John 4:16...We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

4. **Choose your words.** Communicating well is critical. Be clear. (Ephesians 4:29)

Ephesians 4:29...Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

5. **Remember your place.** Humbleness is essential. Be submissive. (Philippians 2:3)

Philippians 2:3...Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves.

Consider and Confess:

1. What things have you prioritized in your life above amends to this point?
2. God directs as we are obedient. Are you walking with Him? (If not, why not?)
3. Have you ever tried to apologize, but your heart wasn't in it? How did it go?
4. Has anyone ever tried to apologize to you, but they weren't real and just going through the motions? Did you consider their apology to have any value?
5. Have you ever considered that your apology may help the other person? How could you apologizing help them? (Do not be theoretical, use real examples in your own life.)
6. It may be worth writing out your apologies beforehand, but do not mail them. Make sure you speak directly to those with whom you must make amends. Why do you think it is important to do a face to face apology, whenever it is possible?

Looking forward:

In our next lesson we will start working on building a pattern and habit of admitting our wrongs when they come to mind and fixing them with quickly. We want to build this into our lives as a pattern to follow. As we seek to eliminate sin from our lives, restore relationships, and implement godly behavior; we should feel great about how we are growing in Christ...**we are beginning to walk with God.**