

**PREPARING THE SOIL OF THE SOUL:  
ACCEPTING & PRODUCING RECONCILIATION  
2 Corinthians 5.16-21**

The work of reconciliation lies at the very heart of the gospel we cling to as followers of Jesus. Our faith is rooted in the notion that all people are estranged from God because of sin and evil, and that Jesus reconciles us to God in his life, death, and resurrection: restoring our broken relationship and creating the opportunity for healing and restoration. This week, as we focus on how the soil of our souls is prepared to accept and reproduce this reconciliation, it's important to examine how we approach our role in the story as good but corrupted creatures made in the image of God.

**THE BAD NEWS:** We are in bad shape and there will be a judgment.

*For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*  
2 Corinthians 5.10

**THE GOOD NEWS:** God initiates RECONCILIATION with us.

- When we ACCEPT God's reconciliation, we become a NEW CREATION.

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!*  
2 Corinthians 5.17

- But becoming a new creation involves TRANSFORMATION, and that is HARD.

- Part of our transformation involves RECONCILIATION with OTHERS.

*All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation... v 18*

**Steps to Producing Reconciliation in the World:**

- View other people through a TRANSFORMATIONAL lens.

**TO DO:** Before interacting with someone, especially someone you find difficult, pause to consciously set aside preconceptions and remember their value as someone for whom Christ died. Consider their background, challenges, and potential.

- Initiating reconciliation in BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS.

**TO DO:** Begin by reaching out with a phone call or meeting invitation, acknowledging any role you may have played in the conflict, and expressing a genuine desire to understand the other person's perspective without defensiveness.

- Become an AMBASSADOR of RECONCILIATION where you see conflict.

**TO DO:** Develop listening skills, create safe spaces for difficult conversations, and help opposing parties identify common ground while acknowledging their legitimate differences.

*Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.*  
Matthew 5.9

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**What is God saying to me?**

**What am I going to do about it?**