THE RECONCILIATION TABLE

Making room for honest conversations,
repair, and the possibility of peace.

A Scripture-shaped guide to approaching conflict with humility, speaking truth in love, offering meaningful apologies, and discerning what restoration can look like.

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

ROMANS 12:18 (NIV)

BE WITH JESUS. BECOME LIKE HIM. FOR THE SAKE OF THE WORLD.

THE INVITATION

Why the table?

Jesus shared meals with people whose lives were complicated by betrayal, shame, rivalry, and regret. Around a table, people could be seen and heard. A shared meal cannot resolve every wound, but it can make space for the kind of attention that reconciliation requires.

Peace is more than a pleasant conversation

Biblical reconciliation begins with truth. It may involve confession, repentance, restitution, forgiveness, and time. Sometimes trust can be rebuilt. Sometimes the faithful next step is a clear boundary and a willingness to release revenge.

A few Scriptures to begin with

- Matthew 5:23–24 — Take initiative toward repair.
- Matthew 18:15–17 — Address harm directly and responsibly.
- Ephesians 4:25–32 — Speak truthfully; refuse contempt.
- Romans 12:17–21 — Pursue peace without retaliation.
- Colossians 3:12–15 — Make room for patience and forgiveness.

PREPARATION

Before you sit down

A difficult conversation deserves preparation. Write your answers before reaching out, and consider whether the other person is ready and willing to talk.

Name the wound

What happened? Describe observable actions before interpreting motives.

Own your part

What did you do, avoid, or say that requires an apology?

Clarify your hope

Are you seeking understanding, accountability, an apology, restored contact, or a practical agreement?

Choose a wise setting

Would a neutral location, a mediator, or a written exchange be safer and more productive?

A readiness check

Can I listen without rehearsing my rebuttal? Can I tell the truth without humiliating the other person? Am I prepared to hear an answer I did not expect?

A CONVERSATION GUIDE

At the reconciliation table

1. Begin with purpose

“I value our relationship, and I would like to understand what happened and whether we can take a step toward repair.”

2. Describe the experience

“When _____ happened, I experienced _____. I want to understand how you saw it.”

3. Listen and reflect

“What I hear you saying is _____. Have I understood you correctly?”

4. Take responsibility

“I was wrong to _____. I can see how it affected you. I am sorry.”

5. Discuss a next step

“What would repair require? What would help us move forward wisely?”

You do not need to settle every disagreement in one sitting. You can agree to pause, seek counsel, or return to the conversation later.

PRACTICING REPAIR

The anatomy of an apology

A meaningful apology names the wrong without minimizing it or demanding immediate forgiveness.

Be specific

“I interrupted you and dismissed what you were trying to tell me.”

Acknowledge the impact

“I understand that it made you feel unheard.”

Accept responsibility

“That was my choice, and it was wrong.”

Offer repair

“Next time, I will listen before responding. Is there something I can do to make this right?”

Allow time

“I understand if rebuilding trust takes time.”

Avoid attaching a defense to the apology: “I am sorry, but...” tends to move responsibility back onto the injured person.

WISE DISTINCTIONS

Forgiveness, trust & boundaries

Forgiveness

In Christian practice, forgiveness involves releasing the claim to personal vengeance and entrusting justice to God. It can be a process, especially after serious harm.

Trust

Trust is rebuilt through consistent truthfulness, accountability, and changed behavior. Forgiveness does not automatically restore access or responsibility.

Reconciliation

Reconciliation ordinarily requires participation from both people. You can pursue peace faithfully even when another person is unwilling to repair the relationship.

Safety comes first

If a relationship involves abuse, threats, coercion, or ongoing manipulation, do not arrange a private confrontation or shared meal as a first step. Seek help from a qualified professional, trusted advocate, or appropriate authority. Safety and accountability must guide the process.

PRAY TOGETHER, WHEN APPROPRIATE

A simple table liturgy

This brief practice may open or close a conversation when everyone freely agrees. It is never a substitute for taking responsibility.

Opening prayer

Jesus, you know the stories we carry and the words we struggle to say. Give us courage to tell the truth and patience to listen. Keep us from pride and contempt. Show us what love requires in this moment. Amen.

Scripture to read

James 1:19–20 and Ephesians 4:29–32. Read the passages aloud from your preferred Bible translation.

Questions for the table

- What do you most want me to understand?
- Where have I contributed to the hurt between us?
- What would a wise next step look like?

Closing prayer

God of mercy, help us follow through on what we have named today. Teach us to practice truth, justice, and love in the days ahead. Amen.

REFLECTION & ACTION

Your next faithful step

A relationship or conversation I need to consider:

What I need to own or understand:

A boundary or support that may be necessary:

One concrete next step and when I will take it:

Remember: You are responsible for your faithfulness, not for controlling another person’s response. “As far as it depends on you” leaves room for honesty about what is possible (Romans 12:18).