

When we come to the understanding of our reconciliation with God through the work of Jesus, it can be both exciting and painful. It is exciting because of God’s love and grace extended to us in Christ, but it can also be painful as we acknowledge the reason we needed that reconciliation—our sin. Paul believes that the purpose of God’s work is to reconcile the whole creation to Himself. In doing so, Paul will give words to our condition.

Why can it be painful to acknowledge who you were before Jesus? How can that acknowledgement lead to joy over who you are in Christ today? Take some time to remind one another of your secured identity in Christ.

- ♦ **Alienated** Col 1:21 *And you, who once were alienated...*

This alienation from God is the reason behind our own brokenness. We’re often stuck chasing certain things (other than Jesus) in our lives—things that do not, and cannot, satisfy us. Alienation means *estrangement*; we don’t participate with God in His truth. Alienation can often entail when we seek God’s blessings rather than seeking *Him*.

In what ways are you lured by things that falsely promise to bring joy and happiness? How do these things pale in comparison to Jesus?

- ♦ **Hostile** Col 1:21 *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind,* We can easily believe someone has to be blamed for the frustration in our life. Dissatisfaction and frustration can then lead to a growing hostility in our mind. Anger can often reveal a self-absorbed, or entitled, focus.

What kinds of things can make you angry (even in subtle ways)? What does this reveal about your expectations and/or dissatisfaction?

- ♦ **Evil Deeds** - Col 1:21 *And you, who once were alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds,*

Evil deeds means we respond in a way that is diseased or blind. Evil deeds don’t come out of nowhere; they come from alienation, a growing hostility, and then are acted out.

How do you act out in ways that are “diseased or blind”?

- ♦ **Reconciled** - Col 1:22 *he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless and above reproach before him,*

He is the one who has come and brought a reconciliation to us in our lost state. Without reconciliation, blame and frustration are always going to be benchmarks of our mental and spiritual life. This is why we are told that Christ, in His flesh, in the incarnation, reconciled us. Jesus gets our hostile mind and our evil deeds, pays for them in full, and we get His righteousness; our alienation is over!

How does it feel to know you are “holy and blameless and above reproach before Him”? How does grace challenge and correct our wrong beliefs about God?

We do not receive reconciliation by any act of our own, but by an act of God Almighty. That’s the good news!