

/// 9-1 ///

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH ENEMIES

A. You have none – what a privilege

/// 9-2 /// Do you have any? Probably not. The British prime minister is probably not your enemy. The president of the European Union is probably not your enemy.

Let us ask ourselves a few questions closer to home. It might help us.

Before we continue, we will now distribute the questionnaires and you can fill them out.

/// 9-3 /// Each time write down the first name the Holy Spirit brings to mind.

/// 9-4a /// Which person or persons on your church leadership team do you find the most difficult to get along with? _____ & _____ (fill in initials)

/// 9-4b /// For which person on the denominational level in the Head Office do you really not care very much? _____ (fill in initials)

/// 9-4c /// With which pastor in your province are you really at odds? _____ (fill in initials)

/// 9-4d /// With which family member do you most easily quarrel? _____ (fill in initials)

/// 9-4e /// Which person in your church would you rather have disappear? _____ (fill in initials)

/// 9-4f /// If such and such a member (fill in initials) _____ emigrated to another country would you be excited?

B. He found an enemy

Once upon a time 2 most unlikely people met. One was a beaten up Jew, the other a good Samaritan. They were not neighbors; they had never met and didn't know each other. Technically they had different skin, different clothes, different lifestyles, a different outlook on life, and different feelings. Yet Jesus called the one who built the relationship "a neighbor." What did he do that was so unique?

The first thing this man did was "**he saw a need.**" He saw a problem and decided to do something *good* about it. Secondly he "**came close**" — he overcame his reluctance, his feelings and went to be with his enemy.

Thirdly he “**spent time**” with his enemy. He gave the most important thing he had in his life, he gave time. Fourthly he “**listened**”, or took notice, of the person’s need. Fifthly he decided to do something about it, he “**met that need**”. That cost money and personal care. Then sixthly he committed himself to “**follow up**” until complete healing took place.

/// 9-5a /// Thank you for listing your enemies above.

Are you happy to have these and other enemies? ... Yes ... / ... no ... (*circle one*).

/// 9-5b /// Do you want to continue having these enemies? ... Yes ... / ... no ... (*circle one*).

/// 9-5c /// If not, what would you like to do about it? _____

/// 9-5d /// Would you like to become a peacemaker? ... Yes ... / ... no ... (*circle one*). Matt 5:9

/// 9-5e /// Will you be the initiator? ... Yes ... / ... no ... (*circle one*).

/// 9-5f /// If you circled “yes,” with whom will you begin to rebuild relationships?
_____ (*initials of person.*)

/// 9-5g /// Would you like to be blessed? Personally blessed? ... Yes ... / ... no ... (*circle one*).

C. Jesus’ desire & recipe

Jesus suggests you — the key person in your church -- become a peacemaker.

In Matt 5:9 He promises blessings to those who will take time and effort to make peace in unpleasant situations.

Is it easy? No!!! Will it be quick? No!!! See Prov. 18: 19 and 16:12

But the recipe for healing is the same six items Jesus pointed out to us.

1. Become concerned.
2. Go to the unpleasant person — take initiative.
3. Spend time together. (*Have a meal together*)
4. Listen closely, discover why he is that way, what are his hurts, needs.
5. Do something practical, something physical, meet a need. (many times).
6. Stick to it until your repugnant brother becomes a friend — do not give up!

Making peace is one sure way to grow your church. Making peace involves learning to respect other people, lift them up. And to become humble yourself, lower yourself.

God’s grace, like water, flows to the lowest place.

People flock to churches that have peace and unity.

Where there is lack of peace and unity, the Holy Spirit leaves.

From my perspective, the lack of real love and therefore peace and unity is the biggest problem in our Baptist churches.

Love your enemies — It’s one of Christ’s 3 major commandments.

Let us decide to become willing obedient servants and build holy churches here in Ukraine.