

August 25, 2026

Start With Me

August Series: Christ-Centered Relationships

Week Focus: Making Peace

Scripture – Psalm 139:23–24 - *“Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

Devotional Reflection

When relationships become strained, our attention naturally moves toward the other person. We remember what they said, what they did, how they responded, and all the ways we believe they should have handled things differently. Some of those concerns may be legitimate, but if our only question is, **“What did they do wrong?”** we may miss what God wants to accomplish within us. David gives us a different starting point in Psalm 139: **“Search me, God.”** Before asking God to expose someone else, he invites God to examine him.

That is a courageous prayer because we do not always see ourselves accurately. Hurt can affect our perspective, pride can defend our behavior, and frustration can convince us that because someone else was wrong, there is nothing for us to examine. Perhaps our tone made matters worse, we stopped listening, responded defensively, withdrew without explanation, or allowed resentment to influence our behavior. **Another person’s wrongdoing does not prevent God from showing us where we still need to grow.**

Jesus reinforces this posture in His teaching on reconciliation. In Matthew 5:23, He describes someone remembering that another person has something against them, creating space for personal examination rather than merely cataloging another person’s failures. This does not mean accepting blame that does not belong to us or assuming responsibility for someone else’s choices; it means having enough humility to pray, **“Even if I was hurt, Lord, is there anything in my response that did not reflect You?”** God’s correction is not intended merely to produce guilt—it is an invitation into greater Christlikeness.

As followers of Christ, peacemaking requires us to become completely available to God’s truth. If the Holy Spirit reveals something in our motives, attitudes, words, or responses, we do not have to immediately defend ourselves or follow every admission with **“but they…”** We can receive His correction and allow Him to change us. And if honest examination reveals that we have faithfully done what was right, we can receive that clarity without manufacturing guilt. **The goal is not to find something wrong with ourselves; the goal is to hide nothing from God.**

Today, resist the temptation to begin with them. Bring the relationship before God and give Him permission to search your heart before you decide what anyone else needs to change. Ask Him to reveal what belongs to you, give you humility to own it, and give you wisdom not to carry responsibility that belongs to someone else. Peacemaking becomes healthier when we stop asking only, **“What did they do?”** and become willing to pray, **“Lord, start with me.”**

Focus for Today

Before asking God to change someone else, allow Him to examine you.

Practice

Pray Psalm 139:23–24 slowly today.

Then consider the relationship God has brought to your attention and ask:

“Lord, is there anything in my attitude, words, actions, or response that You want to change?”

If God reveals something, write it down **without adding “but they...” afterward.**

Do not manufacture guilt where God has not convicted you, and do not accept responsibility that belongs to someone else.

Your assignment today is not to fix the other person. Let God work on you.

Prayer

Father, search me and know my heart. Help me see myself clearly and humbly. When I am tempted to focus only on what someone else has done, turn my attention toward anything You desire to transform within me. Show me where my words, attitudes, actions, or responses have not reflected Christ. Keep me from accepting responsibility that is not mine, but also keep pride from preventing me from owning what is. Give me grace to receive Your correction and courage to change where You lead me. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Reflection Question

In the relationship God has brought to my attention, what might change if I stopped asking only what the other person needs to do and sincerely prayed, “Lord, start with me”?