

**J.R. Miller:**

"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you â€" leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift!" Matthew 5:23-24

There is something to do â€" before we kneel down to pray in our closet, or begin our worship in the sanctuary, or come to the Lord's table. We ought to look inward at our own hearts â€" before we look upward at the face of God.

Are we ready to pray? Are the obstructions out of the way? Is our heart ready for worship? The worship that pleases God the best â€" is love in the heart. He has no pleasure in sacrifices and ceremonies and ordinances â€" while the heart is full of bitterness! He cares nothing for our professions of love to Him â€" so long as we hate our brother. "If a man says, 'I love God' and hates his brother â€" he is a liar! For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen â€" how can he love God whom he has not seen?"

If therefore, we want our worship to be acceptable to God â€" we must be sure to come into His presence with hearts cleansed of all bitterness, anger, revenge, and malice. Thus every approach to God in prayer, requires self-examination. And if we can remember that we have wronged anyone, or that there is any estrangement or strife â€" we should seek reconciliation before we pray. At the least, we must see that our own spirits are thoroughly cleansed of all bitterness, before we come to God's altar.

This rule is fitted to keep our hearts always free from anger. Paul counsels that we should not let the sun go down upon our anger. No day should be allowed to close over us â€" with anger in our hearts. We may never see another day, and we should not lie down to sleep cherishing bitterness against any other person.

The evening prayer should cleanse our spirits of all feelings of anger, as we pray, "Forgive us our sins â€" as we forgive those who sin against us!"