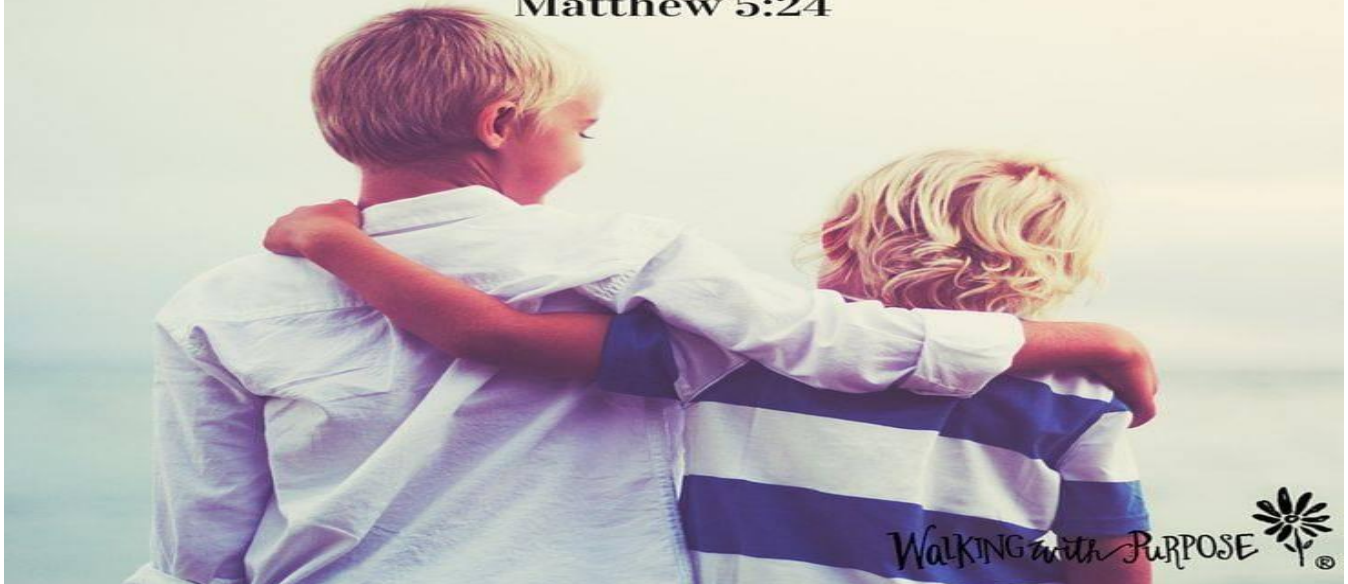


Go first and be reconciled with your brother.

Matthew 5:24



Jesus wants us to settle our differences quickly before we get into legal proceedings; otherwise matters can escalate out of control and damage us as well as our influence. Jesus emphasizes the urgency of making things right. As God's human children, we may assume falsely that segmenting our lives into sacred and secular compartments is acceptable to God. We deceived ourselves into making worship a weekly event rather than an everyday lifestyle, making our segmented worship unacceptable to God. To keep us from thinking that settling our differences is only a "church rule" and not a "life rule," Jesus reminds us that reconciliation involves all of life, not just the "religious part." Jesus is serious about forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation as the way of God and the lifestyle of his children. May we make a constant effort every day to sort out what separates us. Blessed Thursday