



NEXT LEVEL RELATIONSHIPS

Matthew 18:15-17

- **One of the most important life skills we have to learn is conflict resolution.**
- **When there is unresolved conflict in our lives it blocks our fellowship with God, harms the Church's impact on the world, and robs us of blessings in our lives.**
- *"If one part suffers, all the parts suffer with it, and if one part is honored, all the parts are glad. All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it." (1 Corinthians 12:26-27)*
- *"Those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness." (James 3:18)*
- **One of the proofs that we are a real Christian is that we want to be a *Peace-maker* rather than a *Peace-breaker* (Matthew 5:9).**
- Jesus - *"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector." (Matthew 18:15-17)*
- **It takes intention to resolve broken relationships, so the only way to really resolve conflict is to face it and deal with it.**
- ***What does it take to restore broken relationships with other Christians?***

Restoring Broken Relationships Requires:

ADMITTING OUR HURT

- *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts." (Psalm 139:23)*
- **Confessing our hurt is better than repressing or expressing our hurt.**
- **We need to make a list of those who've harmed us (what they said and did), not so we can resent them but so we can begin the process of reconciling with them.**
- *"Don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil." (Ephesians 4:26-27)*

Restoring Broken Relationships Requires:

REFUSING TO GOSSIP

- Jesus - *"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense."* (Matthew 18:15)
- **When people hurt us, rather than seeking to reconcile the relationship we are tempted to tell others privately or publicly how those people have hurt us.**
- *"A troublemaker plants seeds of strife; gossip separates the best of friends."* (Proverbs 16:28)
- *"Fire goes out without wood, and quarrels disappear when gossip stops."* (Proverbs 26:20)
- **Gossiping about others is slandering them.**
- *"Slandering others makes you a fool."* (Proverbs 10:18)

Restoring Broken Relationships Requires:

PURSUE RECONCILIATION

- Jesus - *"If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back."* (Matthew 18:15)
- **Many people practice procrastination or avoidance when it comes to reconciling broken relationships, which means they will remain unreconciled.**
- ***How do we pursue reconciliation with others the Jesus way?***
- **To pursue reconciliation with others we need to *clothe ourselves with love and peace.***
- *"Clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace."* (Colossians 3:14-15)
- **To pursue reconciliation with others we need to *state our case specifically and lovingly*, because if we say things offensively they will be received defensively.**
- *"We will speak the truth in love."* (Ephesians 4:15)
- **To pursue reconciliation with others we need to *listen to our offender's perspective.***
- *"Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."* (James 1:19)
- **To pursue reconciliation with others we need to *admit our wrongs to our offender.***
- Jesus - *"Why worry about a speck in your friend's eye when you have a log in your own? . . . Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."* (Matthew 7:3, 5)
- **To restore relationships we need to *forgive our offender.***
- *"Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of malicious behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."* (Ephesians 4:31-32)

Restoring Broken Relationships Requires:

FOLLOWING THROUGH WITH THE PROCESS

- Jesus - *“But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church.”* (Matthew 18:16-17)
- **If you have met with the person to initiate the restoration and you’re not successful, then bring a trusted Christian with you.**
- *“You must not convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of only one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.”* (Deuteronomy 19:15)
- **After you bring someone with you into the situation with the offender and they still don’t reconcile with you then you bring the situation to a Church Leader or Pastor.**
- Jesus - *“Then if he or she won’t accept the church’s decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.”* (Matthew 18:17)
- **Some people will never accept their fault in a conflict, but that is not an excuse to treat them wrongly.**
- Jesus - *“Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are My disciples.”* (John 13:34-35)

- *“Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.”* (Romans 12:18)
- **We will ultimately have to forgive those who have harmed us, whether we are able to reconcile with them or not.**
- *“Make allowance for each other’s faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others.”* (Colossians 3:13)
- **We need to forgive others because the Lord has forgiven us and because of the foolishness of resentment.**
- *“To worry yourself to death with resentment would be a foolish, senseless thing to do.”* (Job 5:2 GNB)
- **We need to forgive others because we will need forgiveness in the future.**
- Jesus - *“When you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive you your sins too.”* (Mark 11:25)
- Jesus - *“Then the king called in the man he had forgiven and said, ‘You evil servant! I forgave you that tremendous debt because you pleaded with me. Shouldn’t you have mercy on your fellow servant, just as I had mercy on you?’ Then the angry king sent the man to prison to be tortured until he had paid his entire debt. That’s what my heavenly Father will do to you if you refuse to forgive your brothers and sisters from your heart.”* (Matthew 18:32-35)
- **Who do I need to pursue restoration with others - and what is my plan for beginning that restoration process?**