



Recoil or Reconcile

Learning to Forgive in a Broken World

Unresolved tensions comprise a kind of burden which diminishes the mind's capacity to function in optimal fashion, robbing people of a good measure of joy and peace.

It is reasonable to conclude that breakdowns in our relationships with others can be a prime source of trouble in the Christian life. Apprehensions about going places for fear we will see someone whom we have offended, or who has offended us, do not make for a peaceful and contented life, and yet very often people are willing to let such tensions continue without any effort to resolve them.

God's Word reveals the importance of reconciled relationships. The Lord Jesus insisted that loving other human beings made in God's image is the second most important thing we can do. (Matt. 22:39) In Matthew 5:23-24, the Lord tells us that if you are worshiping and "remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering" (NASB).

God honoring relationships have thus a higher priority than our religious activity.

I. There are at least four sources of relational conflict which require resolution.

A. Reconciliation is needed when:

- (1) I may have offended someone;
- (2) I may have been personally offended;
- (3) I may have taken offense on behalf of someone else;
- (4) there may have been a misunderstanding.

II. Conflict is the product of unmet desires dwelling within the human heart. (James 4:1-3)

A. Self motivated desires wage war against our mind, will, and affections (James 4:1)

- (1) It's something that cannot be satisfied by you
- (2) It's something that someone else has that you want
- (3) It's something that someone else controls giving you
- (4) It's something that you can't control getting or receiving

B. Here are some examples of these self motivated desires:

- (1) To never be hurt or disappointed by others
- (2) To have others understand your emotional pain
- (3) To be loved by others
- (4) To belong to someone
- (5) To never be alone
- (6) To be fulfilled by others
- (7) To be satisfied by others
- (8) To be significant to others
- (9) To be understood by others
- (10) To be valuable to others
- (11) To be accepted by others
- (12) To be respected by others
- (13) To be held in high regard by others
- (14) To be approved of by others
- (15) To maintain a favorable position with others
- (16) To be viewed as competent by others
- (17) To be secure/safe with others
- (18) To be served by others
- (19) To have personal preferences accommodated at all times
- (20) To be in control

C. Lust for the heart's desire will lead to preoccupation with satisfying those desires and will surely end in conflict. (James 4:2-3)

- (1) So strong is the lust that it leads to murder. (Mt. 5:21-22, 1 Jn. 3:15)
- (2) So strong is the envy that it leads to fighting and quarreling.
- (3) So strong is the selfishness that God denies the prayer requests.

III. Christians must use God honoring means to resolve relational conflicts.

A. God honoring means will not focus on MY feelings or desires.

- (1) It is not continuing on as if nothing had ever happened
- (2) It is not doing nice things for the other person and hoping that they will eventually get over the problem.
- (3) It is not telling a partial truth and assuming that makes everything right.
- (4) It is not leaving unsolved problems between Christians.

B. God honoring reconciliation involves a restoration of the relationships between:



God & Man

Man & Man

1. It has 3 essential elements:

- a. *Confession of sin* to God & other offended parties
- b. *Forgiveness* by God & other offended parties
- c. *Establishment of a new relationship* between:

Offender & God

Offender & Offended



IV. Why, oh why must I forgive?

A. Just what's in this for me?

- Temporary Personal Gain

Unresolved tensions comprise a kind of burden which diminishes the mind's capacity to function in optimal fashion, robbing people of a good measure of joy and peace.

i.e. Here's a real peace robber - "Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers." (1 PE. 3:7)

Will God hear his prayers offered on behalf of your family? Help him live peaceably with you.

- Eternal Personal Gain

i.e. "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

(MT.6:14-15) Do you show respect for Christ's sacrifice in the way that you forgive others?

The Only Biblical Path to Reconciliation

FORGIVENESS

+ REPENTANCE

RECONCILIATION

(Rebuilding)



Enmity & Alienation



Peace & Fellowship

*- Be imitators of God, therefore,
as dearly loved children. -
(Ephesians 5:1)*

In Romans 12:18 Paul wrote, "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men". (NASB) This is the evidence that reconciliation is a two-way street.

Suggest Reading: **From Forgiven to Forgiving** by Jay Adams

Much of the unhappiness, guilt, and depression experienced by Christians is occasioned by unresolved differences between themselves and others. Reconciliation, which restores fellowship between humans, is important enough that wherever one stands with respect to the offense, it is incumbent upon him to "go."

In Matthew 18:15, He speaks to the time when "your brother sins against you," and of our need to "go and reprove him in private..." In Joshua 22:10-34, we see a prime example of tensions caused by mere misunderstanding, with both parties having commendable motives and objectives, but one's actions are misinterpreted by the other.
(Pastor Tim Crater, Counsel on Being Reconciled to Our Brother)