

INSIGHT

One of the key ingredients in having a successful relationship is learning how to quickly reconcile your differences. The Bible teaches that reconciliation is the process by which God and man are brought together again. At one time God and man were alienated from each other, due to man's sinfulness (Isaiah 59:2). God demonstrated His love for us by letting his Son be used as a tool of reconciliation. Through the sacrifice of Christ, man's sin is atoned and God's wrath is appeased. Thus, a relationship of hostility and alienation is changed into one of peace and fellowship. God set a very valuable example when he decided to let his one and only Son die for us (John 3:16). He showed us the importance of a relationship. God took the initiative to restore our relationship with Him even though He did nothing wrong. ²¹ *Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior.* ²² *But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation--" Col 1:21-22.*

In 2 Cor 5:17-20, it shows that God gave us the ministry of reconciliation. Therefore, in the same way God humbled himself for us we should also do the same towards our brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, and to everyone. We must learn to be builders of relationships not destroyers! How do you think God feels when we can't settle our differences? Please understand, God does recognize that quarrels will sometimes happen, even among the elect of God, who are holy and beloved. It is our duty as Christians to forgive one another in such cases. In order for us to do this we are encouraged to do two things: The first is to clothe ourselves with love; *"And over all these virtues put on love"*(Col 3:14). The second is to submit ourselves to the authority of the peace of God: *"Let the peace of Christ rule in your heart"* (Col 3:15) As members of one body, we were called to be at peace with one another. We must be thankful! Our work of thanksgiving in Christ is such a sweet and pleasant work that it will help make us sweet and pleasant towards all men and God.

The Royal Law: Loving Relationships A Ministry Of Reconciliation

Key Text:

Matthew 5:9

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. "

Theme:

Peacemakers are those who devote their lives to making peace by following the example of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. Being a peacemaker involves an effort and a goal to always be at peace with all men as long as it is up to us (*Romans 12:18-21*). It also involves helping others to be at peace with God by proclaiming the gospel of peace (*Rom. 5:1; Eph. 6:15*). As peacemakers we are called to be the light of the world and to set the example of how we should live our lives. Therefore let us always be quick to reconcile our difference for the kingdom of God awaits us!

Application:

Here are some practical suggestions:

1. **Pray.** If you are struggling with an attitude with a brother or a sister, ask God to help you work it out. God is there for us and he wants to help.
2. **Listen!** Learn to listen to the person. Take time to hear and understand why the person is hurting and be determined to be part of the solution!
3. **Humble yourself!** Learn to admit when you are wrong. The quicker we humble ourselves and admit wrong, the faster we will be able to make peace.
4. **Speak to edify!** God teaches us that is not what goes in to the mouth that makes us unclean, but it what comes out. Therefore when speaking always strive to build up and encourage.

May the Lord richly bless you!

SERMON OUTLINE

Overcoming The Major Destroyer

“If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself,’ you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers” James 2:8-9

Practical Ways To A Loving Relationship

I. Last Week: Building Loving Relationships

1. **Honor:** Relationship starts here (*Rom. 12:10*)
2. **Nurture:** Four Elements Needed
 - a. Commitment
 - b. Meaningful Conversation
 - c. Meaningful Fellowship (*Acts 2:42*)
 - d. Physical Needs: Meaningful Touch

II. Restoring A Weakened Relationship

A. How To Detect The Erosion

1. People are made of three major ingredients
 - a. *Spirit* (the inner person; who we are)
 - b. *Mind* (the emotions, the will)
 - c. *Body* (hormones, skin, etc.)
2. We all have a 3-fold relationship with everyone
3. You can wound someone’s spirit
 - a. Hurtful jokes, harsh words, honoring something above them, etc.
 - d. Reaction: spirit closes, will stiffens, no touch
-- they disagree with everything you say
-- they are distant and/or silent

B. How Do I Restore The Relationship?

1. Learn to open the person’s spirit
 - a. Get soft (humility; gentleness)
 - b. Ask what’s the matter and listen to what they are saying!
 - c. If you are to blame, seek forgiveness
 - d. Do not argue
 - e. Reach out and touch (embrace, hug, etc.)

Conclusion: Pursue Peace (*Rom. 14:19*)

1. The kingdom is about peace (*Rom. 14:17*)
2. Anger can cause someone to sin and also fall away!
3. We are in the ministry of reconciliation!
(*2 Cor. 5:18*)

SMALL GROUP STUDY

Warm-up:

Have you ever been deeply hurt by another person? What caused the hurt and how did you respond to the hurt?

See To It

Matthew 18:1-7

1. Before we can build a relationship with the Lord and His people, what must we be? Why?
2. List the characteristics of humility. How does it show itself?
3. What kind of relationship must we have with saints of Christ?
4. Who is to be the most pitied? Why?

Seeing It Closer

1. **Read verses 10 through 14.** What kind of relationship does the Father have with His children?
2. When we destroy a relationship with our sin, what are we, in fact, doing?
3. What are some ways we can restore a wounded relationship? How can we promote peace between us and those whom we discouraged or hurt?
4. What insights have you learned regarding the sheep of God from what was just read?
5. How can we guard ourselves from causing someone else to stumble? What must we be aware of?

Getting To It:

We are members of God’s family; His prize possession for whom He sent forth His Son to die. With this in mind, we must always remember not to put stumbling blocks in the way of people, especially God’s people. Learn to recognize what can destroy relationships and be willing to reconcile yourself with those whom you’ve hurt with your sin. Be the kind of person Christ calls us to be: humble children, valuing His possession, always pursuing peace!