

# A HEART OF RECONCILIATION

## A HEART OF PEACE

No one escapes the pain of conflicting relationships. Relatives refuse to speak for years because of a long-ago disagreement. Courtrooms are crowded with litigation between coworkers, neighbors and angry mates. Even churches can't escape the destruction of discord.

Matthew 5:9

### DO I HAVE A HEART THAT ALIENATES?

Acts 8:23

- **PRIDE** - Do I focus only on the \_\_\_\_\_ injustice of how much I've been wronged?
- **FAULTFINDING** - Do I dwell on the mistakes of \_\_\_\_\_ and fail to focus on my own faults?
- **RESENTMENT** - Do I hold on to my anger until it \_\_\_\_\_ into bitterness?
- **AVOIDANCE** - Do I avoid being around the person with whom I have conflict?
- **SILENCE** - Do I close the door on communication by refusing to \_\_\_\_\_ my feelings in a healthy way?
- **ISOLATION** - Do I detach and withdraw from the person physically or emotionally?
- **UNFAITHFULNESS** - Do I share unnecessary information with others and act in an untrustworthy manner?
- **HOPELESSNESS** - Do I lack the faith that God can \_\_\_\_\_ in any situation?

Hebrews 12:15

### DO I HAVE A HEART OF RECONCILIATION?

1 Corinthians 1:10

- **HUMILITY** - Do I focus on how much the Lord continues to \_\_\_\_\_ me?
- **SELF-EXAMINATION** - Do I expect change only in others, or do I \_\_\_\_\_ at my own need to change also?
- **FORGIVENESS** - Do I choose to release my personal rights and \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord to empower me to forgive?
- **CONFRONTATION** - Do I communicate my \_\_\_\_\_ without accusation?
- **COMMUNICATION** - Do I set aside quality time to share my \_\_\_\_\_ and have personal interaction?

- **RISK TAKING** - Do I risk \_\_\_\_\_ knowing that God's love and acceptance will fulfill me?
- **COMMITMENT** - Do I set aside my personal \_\_\_\_\_ for the sake of the relationship?
- **CONFIDENCE** - Do I trust God to \_\_\_\_\_ my heartaches and to meet my needs?

1 Thessalonians 5:24

## CAUSES OF IRRECONCILABLE DIFFERENCES

Irreconcilable differences, a legal term, is recognized in many countries as grounds for divorce. Where valid, this simple courtroom plea breaks the bonds of holy matrimony, irrespective of the fault of either party.

Proverbs 28:14

### A. DOWNWARD SPIRAL TO A HARDENED HEART

- **Dislikes** confrontation
- **Denies** \_\_\_\_\_ exists
- **Dwells** on personal injustice received
- **Dominates** conversation and makes no concessions
- **Declares** to \_\_\_\_\_ all the facts
- **Deceives** others about personal feelings
- **Discusses** the \_\_\_\_\_ with defiance
- **Distrusts** motives of another
- **Defends** \_\_\_\_\_ views
- **Deafens** ears to apologies
- **Deflates** \_\_\_\_\_ solutions offered
- **Develops** apathy
- **Detaches** emotionally
- **Determines** not to be \_\_\_\_\_ again
- **Disapproves** of seeking a mediator
- **Deduces** that the \_\_\_\_\_ person will never change
- **Desires** revenge
- **Damages** the \_\_\_\_\_ of the other person
- **Disowns** personal responsibility
- **Discounts** any \_\_\_\_\_ commitments

Proverbs 29:1

## B. ROOT CAUSE

Ultimately, the root of unresolved conflict between two people is unforgiveness on the part of one or both parties.

**WRONG BELIEF:** *"I have been so hurt and offended that I have no desire for reconciliation. Forgiveness is impossible because you will never change."*

**RIGHT BELIEF:** *God offered reconciliation to me before I ever changed. Because Christ forgave me, I can seek restoration in my broken relationships by yielding my rights and allowing Christ to forgive through me.*

Colossians 3:13

## STEPS TO RECONCILIATION

1 Peter 3:9

### A. KEY VERSE TO MEMORIZE 2 CORINTHIANS 5:19

### B. KEY PASSAGES TO READ AND REREAD

#### CHRIST'S CALL TO CHRISTIANS . . . INITIATE RECONCILIATION

- When you have wronged another . . . Matthew 5:23-24
- When you have been wronged . . . Matthew 18:15-18

## C. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**QUESTION:** *"What do I do if I can't persuade someone with a stubborn heart to reconcile?"*

**ANSWER:** *You are not responsible for the response of another person, but you are accountable to God to seek reconciliation. Each person is directly accountable before God.*

Romans 14:12

**QUESTION:** *"Should I seek reconciliation even when I am still angry?"*

**ANSWER:** *Reconciliation will not take place if you have not dealt with your unresolved anger. Allow the Spirit of God to bring about true repentance on your part and an attitude that can soften the heart of the one offended.*

Proverbs 18:19

**QUESTION:** *"How do I know if I am only chasing an impossible dream by hoping for reconciliation in the future?"*

**ANSWER:** *You cannot know whether a broken relationship will truly be reconciled. No one but God has total knowledge of the future. But if you respond to the Lord and to the conflict in a Christlike manner, you can assuredly have God's peace for the future.*

John 14:27

**QUESTION:** “What do I do if my effort to bring about reconciliation with someone fails?”

**ANSWER:** Others will be watching your response, so continue doing what is right.

Romans 12:17

## RECIPE

When life gives you lemons . . . make lemonade! If you add the right ingredients, the same transformation may occur in your communication with a loved one. Practice following this easy recipe and taste the sweetness of reconciling painful differences.

Proverbs 16:24

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- Share the problem using “I” statements. “I’m feeling betrayed. Would you be willing to listen?”
  - Describe only the upsetting words or behavior without criticizing character.
  - Do not accuse, belittle, call names or criticize.

Ephesians 4:15, 26

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- Respond with a willingness to give undivided attention. “Yes, I will listen.”
  - Do not interrupt. Hear the problem to the “last drop.”
  - Above all, don’t make excuses or become defensive.

Ephesians 5:21

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- Affirm what is being said.
  - “You are saying you felt betrayed last night when I did not defend you? Is this correct?”
  - Agreement with the facts is not necessary.
  - Ask if your understanding of the problem is correct.

Proverbs 15:31

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- Injured one makes a request. “When someone criticizes me in front of you, would you be willing to express emotional support by making a comment on my behalf?”
  - Listener identifies some acceptable responses for use in the future.
  - Listener is willing to please the other with a commitment to change.

Proverbs 13:19

Next: Test The Condition of Your Heart