

Relationships (Part 2)

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[0 : 00] We are talking about relationships, which just happens to be the most important thing of our being. And we pointed out to you in our last session, which was also our first session, that God is so committed to relationships that he interrupted what was taking place in heaven to provide for the repair of a broken relationship.

In that Christ left the glory of the Father, came down to the earth to become one of us, to die in our place, all for the purpose of restoring a broken relationship.

There is nothing more important than relationships. And we looked at the principal cause for the injury and the destruction of relationships, and we defined that as the offense.

I was going to use my chalkboard, and I went to get it, and I don't know what it is with that thing, but I made sure that I used the dry eraser mark, and that stuff is just, like, welded on there.

So I don't know what's going on. I think that board, anyway, I can't use it. So if you're taking notes, I'll make sure that you're able to get what you want. We talked about the offense, and I got to thinking about that.

[1 : 23] We tend to think that it is the offense that does end relationships or injures them, but that's not quite the case. And I want to explain what I mean, because the explanation is the dynamic of this whole thing that we're talking about tonight and probably for the next two or three weeks.

It is not the offense, negative, hurtful things that we say or do to one another that really injures the relationship.

It is not the offense. It is the unresolved offense. It is amazing how many offenses we can commit against each other in word or deed that can sustain the relationship if they are resolved.

That's the problem. It is offenses that are not resolved that creates the broken relationship that separates people when the offense does not get resolved.

So why don't we resolve our offenses? And that's part of the spiritual dynamic that we're going to be talking about. And I really want you to get a handle on this because it is so absolutely critical.

[2 : 51] How many times have we said something like, the essence of a marriage relationship is spiritual, while it may be physical, it may be economical, it may be social, it is more than anything else spiritual.

And that is true of all human relationships. They are a spiritual connection. People do not understand that or realize it.

They think that it's strictly social or family or whatever. But at the base of it, it is spiritual. And I'm talking about that from the standpoint of it is with our human spirit that we do things and say things negatively that injure one another.

And it is their spirit that we injure. Not only that, but God has provided for us spiritual operating assets that need to be implemented to resolve an offense.

And that's key to what we're also talking about. So I want you to think in terms of, and what we're going to do is go through the process step by step.

[4 : 03] And I want you to see how each of these is connected to the other. If there is another way of doing this, I don't know what it is. If there is another system that works, I don't know what it is.

I have been doing marriage counseling for almost 50 years. And I have found this thing time and time again.

It always seems to work this way. If there are exceptions to it, I don't know what they are. And I'm not talking about just marriage. I'm talking about relationships in general.

Within a family, among brothers and sisters, between neighbors, people that you work with. It's all the same. There are spiritual dynamics at work here.

And many times Christians don't even understand that, much less people who are not believers. So the first thing that happens in this chain of events, and we're talking about things that injure and separate relationships.

[5 : 06] And sometimes, sometimes the separation exists for years. Do you know there are multitudes?

And I'm talking about a marriage now because one of the reasons I use marriage as an example is simply because of the closeness of the relationship in marriage.

This is where we have more opportunity to offend one another and be offended than in any other relationship. Because of the nature of the closeness of marriage and because of the availability one to the other, we have more opportunity to get under each other's skin.

Because there is more contact. So that increases the opportunity. And what we are thinking about is when the relationship begins to come unraveled and it is not resolved, what happens is the distance is just a little.

And then over time, if it is not resolved, the distance gets greater and greater and greater. Do you not suspect that there are people today in a marriage relationship who are still together physically?

[6 : 39] And they may even be sleeping in the same bed. But they were emotionally divorced years ago. How can this be?

Happens all the time. There is always an emotional divorce before there is a legal divorce. The thing starts coming unraveled. And sometimes they are willing to stay in the relationship for an extended period of time because divorce is messy.

People talk. The kids are hurt. We will stay together until the kids are old enough. You know, this kind of thing. And divorce is just, divorce is expensive. Someone said marriage is grand.

Divorce is about a hundred grand. And there are all kinds of reasons why people stay together even after there is an emotional divorce. And what I want to share with you is a procedure, a specific procedure for dealing with the offense when once it has occurred.

One partner has injured the other. And again, I don't want you to limit yourself into thinking of this as marriage. Think of it as just relationships in general. But as I said, there is more application for it in marriage because the opportunity is greater.

[7 : 59] So, first of all, there is the offense. Something that we say or do. Maybe a major offense. Maybe a minor offense. I likened it in our first session to a little dart that we throw.

And it enters the heart of the one we offended. But it's just a dart. And then there is an arrow that is a bigger offense. And then there is a spear that is a really big offense.

All of these cause emotional wounds to the one who is offended. And the only person who can effectively remove the object so that healing can begin is the one who put it there.

So, first, there is the offense. Something that we say or do that injures emotionally. It may be an insult.

It may be a slight. It may be an ignoring, whatever. It is registered as an injury in their spirit.

[9 : 13] And the result is a distancing, a coolness, aloof, or perhaps anger, or sadness, or pouting.

All of these are symptoms of a wounded spirit. And then that which follows next is, automatically, resentment.

Resentment is a feeling of injury that has gone to seed. It results in thinking and behaving attitudinally in a different way toward the offender than we would if the offense had not occurred.

In other words, there is a price to pay when we offend someone. And that price is a silent treatment, some act of revenge, some tit for tat, some he has hurt me, I'm going to think of some way that I can hurt him and get back at him.

And, of course, what that does is it exports the offense to the offender, and then that creates a little bit more of a widening.

[10 : 38] So, as we retaliate to the one who offended us by offending them, all we are doing is widening the gap. Because each offense creates more distance between us.

And it just works that way. This is the way it works for believers and for unbelievers. This is the way it works all over the world. This is the way the human race behaves.

And you do realize, do you not, that we live in a world that's filled with conflict? Nationally, internationally, as well as personally.

And what is the basis for all of it? This is exactly what we're talking about. It is always an offense. Whether it is the bombing of Pearl Harbor that is a national offense against another nation, or whether it is something that we do to an individual that creates an offense.

The result is resentment. When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, we resented that. And we retaliated. And what we did created an even greater distance, didn't it?

[11 : 56] And finally, we are at a place today where those offenses have in many respects been resolved.

There are still people who still harbor resentment from that. There are still people who will not buy a Japanese car because of Pearl Harbor. But by and large, most of that has been resolved.

Now, we've got the offense, the injury, the distancing, the resentment. And then comes a time of possible examination over a first step to be taken to repair the injured or damaged relationship.

And it is information. Information comes from two sources. One is internal. One is external. Does anybody remember what internal information is like or how it works?

Anybody? Okay. I'll create a setting for you. Here is a man who says something unkind or uncalled for or rude, in a fit of anger or frustration or whatever, to his mate or to a co-worker.

[13 : 18] It doesn't make any difference. It doesn't have to be married. Maybe it's somebody that he works with. And the offense is registered by the one receiving it.

And maybe they begin to feel badly about it and maybe a little anger about it, maybe distancing themselves, maybe kind of cool toward them, giving short, curt answers, not making conversation, not volunteering anything, speaking only when they have to, this kind of thing.

It creates a tenseness in the atmosphere. And the one who created that is the offender. And they start saying something to them, saying, well, you know, so and so, she sure didn't seem very friendly this morning.

I wonder if something, oh, yeah, I think, yeah, I probably shouldn't have said what I said. I bet she's really ticked about that. I probably shouldn't have said what I did.

That was really kind of tacky. You know, I wish I had to do over again. I wouldn't have said that. And I wonder if that's why she, this is reasoning, thinking, replaying what he said in his own mind.

[14 : 35] This is internal information. He is recalling it and thinking about it and mulling it over and regretting it. Now, here's the problem.

Here's the crisis. Here, at this point, is why many relationships in their offenses are never resolved.

Because of the unwillingness or, I hate to use this word, but as a man, I'm going to use it.

Because of his cowardliness and his protection of his ego, he will not take the next step.

The next step is to swallow hard, bite the bullet, put your tail between your legs, eat crow, whatever you want to call it.

[15 : 43] But he's got to muster an apology. Fellas, we are talking major pain here.

There is something about the masculine ego that would rather take a beating than apologize.

This is a crisis. Internal information has informed him. He knows very well why so-and-so is very cool and distant.

What's he going to do about it? Well, I'll tell you what most men will do about it. Most men will do the same thing that most women will do about it. And you know what that is? Nothing.

Nothing. Nothing. And we rationalize this way. We say, oh, she'll get over it. Just give her time to cool down and she'll get over it and forget all about it and everything will return to normal.

[16 : 53] And I'll tell you what. Very often, that seems to be the case. And it seems to work. But it doesn't.

It only seems to. It doesn't. And what happens is, the offense that has been committed is still lodged in the spirit of that person.

And do you know what they're doing? They're keeping score. They've added that to the other offenses that have been committed by you to them.

And never resolved. And they are accumulating them. They are warehousing them. And in their spirit, what they are doing is, they are building a case against you.

Now, let me ask you something. Do you think that they are building against you for your offenses? Do you think that they are going to be able to avoid that or any expression of that in their attitude to you?

[18 : 09] Of course not. It's going to affect not only the way they feel internally. It's going to affect the way they treat you externally.

It's a different situation. The relationship is cooled. It is distanced. There is something stuck in their crawl.

And here is a spiritual crossroads. I cannot emphasize enough how much this is a spiritual problem.

When we know the right thing to do, and we don't want to do it, what is that? That's sin.

That is rebellion against God. That is sin. When you know the right thing to do, but you don't want to do it.

[19 : 06] Why don't you want to do it? What's so tough about apologizing? When we apologize, when we say, I'm sorry, we are announcing to everybody within earshot, I am wrong.

That does not feel good. That does not make me look good. That does not make me feel good. We feel almost belittled by it.

We will go to almost any length to avoid apologizing. We do not want to put into words. The word apology means from words.

That's what the word means. Apology. From words. Apologia. From words. You articulate it. Well, I'll tell you what.

It is easier. To go out and buy her a bouquet of flowers.

[20 : 21] I just bring them home and say, here, these are for you. Why do we do that? That is apologizing on the cheap.

And it won't work. It won't work. But it takes a lot less effort to do that. And it doesn't bruise my ego.

It is offering an apology without having to say the words. I'm sorry.

I was wrong. So, we want to get a substitute to communicate the message for us.

So, we will not have to endure the pain of belittling myself and eating humble pie and say, I am sorry.

[21 : 29] I was wrong. In other words, the reason we don't like to apologize is because it's all about me.

I'm not concerned about how I have hurt you, injured you, or wounded you. I'm only concerned about how it is going to hurt me and bruise my ego by having to apologize.

So, I will avoid that at all costs. Or, if you can call this an apology. Just in case I have said or done anything that hurt you, I just want you to know that I'm sorry, okay?

That's an apology on the cheap. Do you know what the person who is offended, do you know what they want to hear? They want to hear you admit what you said.

Do you know what they want? I'll tell you what they want. They want details. Oh!

[22 : 49] Oh! Details! And let me tell you something. Every little extra detail that you spell out is more pain for you.

Avoid the details. Keep it nice and general. If I said anything, which means I probably didn't, but just in case you are so overly sensitive that you took it that way, which really isn't my fault, but it's your fault, then I'm sorry, forgive me, okay?

What we're trying to do is avoid the pain mechanism and make this as quick and painless as possible and get it over with. So everything can return to normal.

So everything can return to normal. Ah, boy. Aren't we stinkers? This is what this is. Hey, this is a spiritual problem.

It's a spiritual problem. It's a spiritual problem. What needs to be done is we need to, with words, articulate, spell out.

[24 : 09] You know, yesterday when I said thus and so and thus and so? Yes. Well, I've been thinking about it and I realized that I was really out of line and it was very rude and inconsiderate of me and I didn't take into consideration thus and so and your feelings and so.

Now, here is why this is important. Listen, this is very, very important and this is why it counts so much. When and only when we articulate in detail what we did to injure this person in their spirit, when we do that in detail, it assures them that we know and understand how deeply we hurt them.

They don't think we know as long as we keep everything very vague and general. And it makes it so much easier for them to forgive us if they know that we know exactly what they are forgiving and what we are asking forgiveness for.

This is communication that really counts. This is really, really important. I'm not talking about nitpicking. I'm talking about being specific.

There are certain aspects to the injury, to the offense, and we need to point them out. We need to let the one we have offended know that we understand how we have offended them.

[25 : 57] Because if we try to apologize on the cheap, their forgiveness will be on the cheap. And the relationship will not be restored the way it ought to be.

And what I'm talking about with a restored relationship is not simply that it can be returned to the place where it once was.

I'm talking about actually exceeding that and going beyond that. Because if offenses are resolved in the right way, the relationship can actually be strengthened and better than it was before the offense ever occurred.

But only if it's resolved in the right way. Now, I don't know about you, but I think this is a marvelous, I think this is an absolutely marvelous provision that God has given us in his grace to enable us to strengthen a relationship by offending one another.

Is that grace or what? But it has to be done in the right way. In other words, this is the payoff. God has made provision for us to have an even better relationship than it was if we resolve our offenses in the right way.

[27 : 20] Now, that's pretty major. Now, I'm not suggesting that we go through life trying to offend one another so that we can strengthen the relationship by resolving it.

You know what I mean. It is just a gift of God's grace so that when we injure one another in a relationship and we become distanced or estranged, it doesn't have to stay that way.

God can not only put it back together, but he can make it better than it was before. And I know for a fact what I'm speaking about. Now, after almost 50 years of marriage, I've seen that work in our own marriage.

And there's nothing special about us. It'll work for anybody, especially anybody who is in Christ. All of these benefits are available to them. So, the apology needs to be spelled out with words, articulated, specified, not general, not vague.

Not if I said something that offended you or if I did anything that hurt you. No, no if about it. No if about it. You did. Don't come around with an if.

[28 : 39] Just come around with an admission. And let me tell you, it is absolutely amazing the power that is packed into a sincere apology.

It is remarkable the grief and the wound that can be removed by a sincere apology. And how can they tell that it is sincere?

By your being specific. By your saying. What you said that was wrong. What you did that was wrong. Spelling it out in detail. That is just amazing.

And this is a provision that God has made. This is, we talked about being blessed with all spiritual blessings and heavenly places in Christ. This is part of that package. The dynamics involved in resolving an injured relationship.

It's part of the spiritual package that we possess as believers. And it's available to every believer in Christ across the board. Utilized, implemented. By so few.

[29 : 55] By so few. I almost feel like. I almost feel like. That Christians. Who do not avail themselves.

Of this incredible. Asset. Relational asset. Is simply. Allowing. An aspect.

Of the death of Christ. To go to waste. Not utilizing it. Not benefiting from it. When Christ died on that cross.

He died a death that. Purchased for us. Incredible. Operating assets. And if as believers.

We refuse. Either through ignorance. Or stubbornness. To implement them. We are just. Belittling.

[31 : 00] The work that Christ accomplished on that cross. Or put it another way. Jesus did not die on the cross. So that we could. Treat each other. With real shabby relationships.

Relationships. When he said that. He came that man might have life. And have it more abundantly. This is part of it. And let me tell you. I can't think of anything.

That is more beneficial. Or more abundant. In life. Than in loving relationships. That's the absolute ultimate. There is nothing that can compare with that.

Nothing. Absolutely nothing. So. We have got. An apology. What is going to prevent us from.

Apologizing. We have got the information. Whether it is internal information. And what would an example of external information be?

[32 : 02] I will tell you. An example of external information. Is information that comes from the one we offended. And it may be by way of argument.

It may be by way of. A little note that they write us. Maybe by. Saying something like.

We need to talk. You know. Every man. Every husband. Just loves to hear that from his wife. We need to talk. And the guy.

Just kind of dies a little bit inside. You know. Because he knows. He knows that she is out of sorts about something. And it is likely. Something that he did.

And he is being called to the principal's office. And he is going to get chewed out about something. And what is more. In his heart of hearts. He suspects he has it coming.

[33 : 06] And that just adds to the pain. You know. So. We need to talk. That is an example of external information. Or maybe. Maybe. Maybe you are reading the scriptures.

And maybe you are reading. Be kind. One to another. Tender hearted. Forgiving one another. As God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.

Let me read that. You know. This is the Lord speaking to you. Through his word.

That is external. Information. Information. Maybe you hear. A message. On Sunday. Or maybe. On the radio. Or TV. Or you are reading.

Your daily devotions. And. Bang. Boy. It hits you right between the eyes. God was laying for you. You know. That is external information.

[34 : 04] Now. Here is the problem. There is only one thing. There is only one thing. That will keep us. From acting. On that. Whether it is internal information.

Or external information. We are at a crisis. This is. This is. What shall I say.

This is the watershed. This is the. This is the point. That decides. Whether it is going to go this way. Or this way. This is a crisis. And the one thing.

That will. Keep us. From following through. With an apology. Taking responsibility.
Following through. With an apology. Apology is.

Is an unwillingness. To repent. And repentance. Is painful too. It is.

[35 : 02] It is kind of like. Part of the apology. The repentance. Is where it begins. The apology. Is the follow through. The repentance. Is internal. It is something. That takes place. In your spirit.

But the apology. Is something. That extends beyond you. And goes to them. In other words. If you repent. Internally. Of what you have done. How do you let them know that?

They don't know that you have repented. They don't know that you have had this information. This change of heart. Inside yourself. They don't know that. Unless you what? Unless you apologize.

Then you let them in. On your repentance. But they don't know that you have repented. So here is this crossroads. This is a real crisis. And let me tell you something. This is the one sticking point.

Why relationships that are injured. Are not resolved. Whether they are marriage. Workplace. Neighbor. Family. Whatever. This is the one place.

[36 : 01] Where. They are not resolved. And this is. This is that fine line. The repent.

The repent means. And you have been here long enough to know. What does it mean to repent? I can't hear you. Change your mind.

What are you changing your mind about? You are changing your mind about what you said. Or what you did. Because at the time you said it or did it.

You probably thought it was really appropriate. And very justified. And they had it coming. And you just tell the legateers. And when you repent.

You reverse yourself. You say. No. That was not. Right. I was wrong.

[37 : 00] You've just done a 180. When we said it. Or did it. It may have been out of anger. It may have been out of retaliation. It may have been.

Just out of sheer. Just. Just out of the sheer. Jerk factor. That we possess.

That we come by. By. By our birthright. You know. And when we repent. We are. Reversing. When you repent. You take.

The other person's part. Against. Yourself. You side. With the enemy. If you want to.

Call them the enemy. They are the one that you have offended. You side with them. Against yourself. Well. Why should I do that? Because you're wrong.

[37 : 57] Stupid. That's why. And the internal. Or external. Information. Shows you. Hey. You really did a dumb thing.

That was stupid. You were wrong. You were out of place. You were out of line. You were inconsiderate. And a whole host of other things. You have. No defense. No defense. And by the way.

A genuine. Apology. That follows. Genuine. Repentance. Is never. Ever. Defensive.

All the defenses. Are down. You're not trying to build a case for yourself. You're not trying to make yourself look good. You're not trying to soften it on yourself.

You're not trying to excuse yourself. You're not prepared to defend yourself with this old nonsense. Well I shouldn't have said what I did I suppose. And I wouldn't have except you made me so mad.

[38 : 56] That is a defensive apology. That's saying. You're as much to blame in this thing as I am. And you know what.

Listen. They may be. But that's not for you to say. That's for them. To reach. On their internal information.

Or external information. They don't need any help from us. And if they are at fault. Or bear some of the responsibility in this.

Do you know what will bring them to the surface more quickly than anything else to admit their wrongdoing? Is you admitting yours? Then the Lord has liberty to speak to them about their part in it.

And it may take a while. Don't expect it to come back to you immediately. It might even be a day or two. That's alright. And if it never does come.

[40 : 02] That's okay too. That's between them and the Lord. That's not for you to say. We just need to take care of our own bailiwick. And that's plenty of problem right there.

This is so simple. And so basic. And so ignored. And let me tell you something.

I want to say this with every bit of sincerity that I can muster. There isn't anything else that works. This is the only provision that is given.

For resolving offenses. I don't know of any other. Now there is one other that we think does it. But it doesn't.

We just kid ourselves. And that is. You don't say anything. And they don't say anything. And you both just kind of forget all about it.

[41 : 03] And lo and behold. Give it a couple of days. And you know what? You're speaking again. And you're even being intimate again.

Well now that proves right there. That everything is fixed. Hunky dory. No it doesn't. No it doesn't. If the offense has not been resolved.

It is still there. And it will have kids. These things have a way of reproducing. And you know what?

An offense that is not resolved. Just needs a little tiny bit. A reminder.

To bring it right back up again. And we put that baby on the turntable. And we play it again. And we play it again. And any time and every time something happens to remind us of that.

[42 : 07] There it is. And we play it again. And you know what happens? We relive the wound. All over again. And what that does.

Creates a little more distance. A little more distance. I have likened this to. I have likened the offenses. That we commit against each other. To bricks.

That we lay in a wall. And every offense. Is a brick that we lay. And then they offend us. And that's another brick. And then we offend them.

And that's another brick. And over the years. We've got a barrier. Between. An emotional barrier. Between us. The metaphor of a brick wall.

And we don't connect anymore. And we don't know what happened. I'll tell you what happened. There's a whole ton of offenses. That have been accumulating.

[43 : 08] Over the years. Never reversed. Never resolved. Just more bricks added. And more bricks added. And nobody's taking any bricks out of the wall.

Because a brick doesn't come out of the wall. Until the offense that put the brick there is resolved. It just stays there. And we just add more bricks to it. And the wall gets bigger. And bigger.

And bigger. And the next thing you know. We find ourselves saying things like. You know what? I don't think I even love him anymore.

Matter of fact. I don't think I even like him. Hey. This happens. This is epidemic across our nation.

Right now. Even. Among Christians. And that is tragic. The world doesn't have this resource to draw upon.

[44 : 10] But we do. We do. We are squandering. Part of the assets that Christ died to provide for us.

Think of it that way. Well. Our time is gone. I hope you will take some of these things to thought. And. We've got more.

That is equally important to come. Regarding forgiveness. And what it is. And isn't. And conditional. And unconditional. Forgiveness. And reconciliation. Restoration. And perhaps we'll be able to cover that all in the next session.

I've got some really. Super outstanding DVDs. That I absolutely got to share with you. And we want to get them in during this time. So. It won't be next week.

But I'll let you know. And they are really extraordinary. You'll really appreciate them. And next week. I'll promise that I'll allow time for Q&A.; Which we didn't tonight. Our time is gone. So let's pray.

[45 : 13] Thank you Father. For. Marvelous. Marvelous assets. That you've made available to us. And we recognize that all of us. Have been remiss at times.

In implementing them. And we pray that this time. That we spend together. Talking about this. Will stir within our hearts.

The need. To fully implement. What Christ died to provide for us. No more needy area. Than that of. How we relate to.

And treat. One another. Father. And we are so grateful. That you have made these spiritual dynamics. Available to us. And we can examine them. And we pray that each of us.

Will open our hearts and minds. To the truth that is behind them. In Christ's name. Amen. And we say. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[46 : 13] Happy birthday. Welcome.