

Relationships (Part 4)

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Date: 04 March 2018

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[0 : 00] Would you turn, please, to Romans chapter 15 for just a moment. There's a verse there that all too many are not familiar with, and it talks about relationships and maintaining and restoring them.

And it has to do with admonishing one another. A lost art. Maybe a lost art is not a good term. Maybe it is an art that has never been actually practiced so much so that it couldn't be lost. I suspect that people have had difficulty with this as long as there have been people. I know that we still have difficulty with it today, and I'm talking about admonishing one another.

So let's read Romans 15, verse 13 and 14. Now, may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, and able also to admonish one another.

[1 : 18] And the word admonish here in the Greek word is the word from which the term neuthetic counseling comes, and the neuthetic approach to counseling.

And this simply has to do with a confrontational kind of thing that involves people taking personal responsibility for their actions. Confrontation is a very delicate business, so much so that it usually is avoided at all costs.

We tend to have a big yellow streak running right up our back when it comes to being able to admonish or confront one another.

And we usually justify it on the basis of things like this. We say, well, who am I to go to anybody and tell them I'm not perfect either, you know, or I better get my own act cleaned up before I go talk to somebody else.

And it's something that we are just really, for the most part, unwilling to do, or at least greatly reluctant to do. But there is an aspect to admonishment or confrontation that goes with this.

[2 : 35] When you care enough to confront, when you are so concerned about the direction that some loved one is taking, and you view them as being on a path of self-destruction or of great harm they are going to do to themselves or to others, we can sometimes then find it within ourselves to go to them and say, hey, what's going on?

What are you doing? What are you thinking? What's happening? Why are you doing this? Say something to them. And we call that caring enough to confront. It's kind of like a tough love.

The coward's way out is just to say, well, none of my business. I should just keep my nose out of it. Well, nobody is talking about being nosy.

We are talking about genuinely caring. And Paul here is talking about the ability and the willingness to confront one another.

That's the word admonish. And it means you simply go to them. Now, understand, to confront or to admonish doesn't mean you go tell somebody off.

[4 : 00] That's not what we're talking about. It doesn't mean you give them a piece of your mind. But it does mean that you go to them with an attitude of genuine love and concern, not vindictive, not accusatory, not judgmental.

But you are really concerned about what's going on or about the direction they're taking and say, hey, I just owe it to you, I feel, to say something.

And I would want somebody to say something to me if they saw me going in that direction. This is all a relational thing that we're talking about.

And at the conclusion of our last session on right relationships, I had intended that to be the final session.

But questions have arisen since that time and some in my own mind and some from others that I thought we need to devote another lesson to this and maybe clear up some loose ends and touch in some areas that were not covered before.

[5 : 06] And I don't want to spend a lot of time in review, but I do want to just simply remind you that relationships is the stuff that life is made of.

Nothing else matters compared to relationships. And the happiness and the fulfillment and the enjoyment of life and people who are on the highest scale of enjoying life are not the world's wealthiest people and not the world's most famous people.

They are people who have the most enjoyable and abiding relationships. Connections with other people.

This is really what life is all about. The greatest thing in the world. Greatest thing in this world or in the world to come.

Is to love and be loved by someone else. There is nothing that can compare with that.

[6 : 17] God himself has not created anything that can compare with that. And as I've related before, God is so high and committed to relationships that he sent his own son to the earth to do what he did for the sole purpose of restoring a broken relationship between the creature and the creator.

That's how committed God is to relationships. And there is only one thing. Only one thing that will injure a relationship.

Can anybody give it to me in one word? The offense. The offense. This is the one thing that injures and damages relationships.

It is the offense. The offense. The offense consists of something that we say or do to someone else that is hurtful to them.

It wounds them emotionally. And we liken these wounds to just three very simple ideas. One is like a dart tossed into the spirit of another person.

[7 : 41] And it creates a wound. A hurt. Another is an arrow, which is a bigger offense. And it creates a bigger wound.

And there is more hurt from an arrow than there is from a dart. And then there is the spear. The one that just, it's the real biggie.

It's the one that sometimes just does us in with the relationship. It is a terribly hurtful, deep wound. And the point that we made about these offenses is that only the one who put the wound there is able to remove it.

You cannot pull out the dart or the arrow or the spear yourself. You didn't put it there.

The offender did. You are the recipient of it. You are the one who is wounded. And it can only be removed by the one who put it there.

[8 : 47] We can try to ignore it, to overlook it, or whatever. But we all know that that doesn't work very well because it's still there. So the methodology, and I don't know what else to call it, but a methodology, a step.

I don't know how many steps there are. I didn't even count them. But this is the procedure. This is the game plan, to the best of my ability to understand it, as to how injured relationships can be repaired.

And I want to be very frank and very blunt about this and very dogmatic about this. There is none other way. There isn't any other way.

None. Zero. Zero. By which an injured relationship can be properly repaired and restored.

This is the only way. And I am convinced that it is the way that Scripture has set forth. And we talked about divine operating assets made available to us. We talked about being blessed with all spiritual blessings and heavenly places in Christ.

[10 : 00] And among other things, that means that for believers, God has provided us with a certain apparatus that is designed to repair the damage that we do to each other.

And we do damage each other. Because in our humanity, we tend to be very self-centered.

That's the way humanity is. It is the ugly side of human nature. You can say all kinds of good things about us, how generous we might be, and how caring, and how loving, and how this and how that.

And these things are true. In many respects, they are true. But humanity has a dark side. And it is ugly. And it is self-centered. And it begins at about the age of two months, somewhere in that area.

We tend to think, coming into this world, that the whole world revolves around us. It is all about me.

[11 : 14] And by the time we're about 20 years of age, we discover that the whole world does not evolve around us, but it should.

So nothing is really changed too much. And what causes offenses is I wrong you through something I say or something I do because you are in the way, somehow or another, of me realizing what I want.

You are an impediment to my realizing my goal, whatever that might be. And I make you pay for it. And the way I make you pay is by saying something that hurts you or doing something that hurts you.

And you will discover that virtually all offenses come from some kind of a self-centered motivation. If we are rude to someone, it's because we are impatient.

And why are we impatient? Because somebody made me wait an extra five minutes for no good reason. So we lash out and we say things and we do things that are stupid and that we often later regret.

[12 : 34] But this is the way we hurt each other. And you realize, of course, that no one can hurt you as much as someone who is committed to love you.

Those hurts hurt more than anything. The hurt that the stranger lays on you in line at the grocery store who pushes their cart in front of you or whatever.

It's an irritation, but it just comes and goes and you dismiss it and you don't think anything about it. And you think, what a jerk. Go on. Because you don't know that person.

They can't get to you. They can't really hurt you. But someone who is supposed to really love you and says they do, or at least said they did, they are the ones that can hurt you.

Closer someone is to you, the more vulnerable you are, the more susceptible you are, and the greater the penetration of the hurt when it comes.

[13 : 52] Offenses are inevitable. They come from our humanity. And it is not the offense that ends a relationship or that keeps it distant.

It is the unresolved offense. You can go a long ways with another person with a great number of offenses between you where you are the offender and sometimes you are the offended.

And you can go a long, long ways as long as the offenses are resolved. But if they aren't resolved, then what sets in is the inevitable emotional distancing between the offended and the offender.

And very often what happens is that a climate is created whereby when we have been offended, it makes it a whole lot easier for us to offend them.

It is kind of like we envision that as balancing the scales, you know. Well, they have hurt me plenty. So you jab back and it becomes a back and forth thing, a tit for tat.

[15 : 16] And all the while we are getting our digs in this other person. And I am talking about husband and wife, fellow employer, a neighbor, a relative, a brother, a sister, anyone.

It works this way across the board. It does not make any difference. It's not just for marriage, for any kind of relationship on any level. And we just go back and forth.

We are the offended and then we are the offender. And all the while this is going on, if there's no resolution, guess what's happening? The distance between these two parties grows wider and wider and wider and wider.

And if it's someone with whom you work or a neighbor, what you do is you stop speaking. You're not even on speaking terms. You don't even wave when you go by.

You just turn your head and look the other way. You don't even acknowledge them. You're walking down the street. You cross the street to the other side rather than face that person. You just stay clear of them.

[16 : 20] You want nothing to do with them. Because of unresolved defense. Hurts between the two of you. And if you happen to be married and this is going on, very often it ends the relationship.

The relationship, marriage-wise, is in real emotional trouble. And there's already been an emotional separation. Still living together.

Still under the same roof. Might even be sleeping in the same bed. But there's a distancing emotionally. And you're growing further and further apart. Now the idea is to grow closer and closer together.

So that you are working on becoming one. Deeper and stronger and greater and better.

But when these unresolved offenses take center stage. Then things just start growing apart.

[17 : 24] And the next thing you know, you don't even like each other. And people stay together for various reasons.

But neither one is enjoying the relationship. And let me tell you something. I am convinced. I am really convinced.

That one of the reasons, maybe the greatest reason. That God has put such a premium on relationships. Is because he really wants us to enjoy life.

And enjoy each other. Not endure each other. But enjoy each other. God wants us to get a bang out of life.

To have relationships that are just super. Just, if it gets any better, can't stand it.

[18 : 28] This is as good as it gets. And Her Majesty and I used to say that sometimes. And next year can't possibly be any better.

And next year rolled around. And sure enough, it popped the year before. That, my friends, and some of you, maybe all of you. I don't know what that means.

But living and traveling first class. And it's got nothing to do with your possessions. Or the size of the house you live in. Or the kind of car you drive. Got nothing to do with that.

It's got everything to do with the way you connect. With each other. So, once the offense has occurred.

There has to be. If there is going to be a resolution to the offense. There has to be.

[19 : 26] Something take place. And we've got the offense committed. Hurt feelings result. Resentment follows that.

It may not even be a resentment that is expressed. And by the way. We can offend one another. In something we say or do.

Unintentionally. And we don't even know we have offended them. We don't have a clue. Never dawned on us. That we hurt them by what we said. And if the one who is offended.

Doesn't bring it to our attention. Then they become part of the problem. In that. That they could contribute to the resolution. If only they would.

Inform the offender. That they've been offended. And to the extent that they're unwilling to do that. And by the way. Why would anyone be unwilling to do that?

[20 : 29] You answer my question. Somebody says something. Or does something that hurts you. Really hurts. But you're not going to let.

And you suspect that they don't even know it. What would keep you from telling them? What would keep you from going to them?

Fear. Pardon? Fear. Fear. Explain that. Well. You wouldn't. You wouldn't. You wouldn't want to be confrontational. So therefore.

In your mind. Think. Well. If I just let it go. It'll be alright. It'll get better. And so therefore. It never gets resolved. Okay. Fear of confrontation. Fear of confrontation. Okay. Do you think.

That there might be a lot of wives. Who would be afraid. To confront their husbands. Because.

[21 : 26] He might blow up. He might get angry. And you know what really. Scares. A woman. You know what really scares a woman. Is a man who is out of control.

With his emotions. With his feelings. She's scared. Because she doesn't know. What he might do.

And do you know something. That's part of his game plan.

He intends to scare her. He intimidates her. That's the way. He keeps her off his back. She is afraid to confront him.

Afraid to say anything. Because. He'll go ballistic. And he goes ballistic. Because. He knows. It works. It terrifies her. And it will help her.

Keep her mouth shut. Man can use that. As a tool. Of intimidation. And there are a lot of women. Who are afraid.

[22 : 25] And scared to death. To confront their husbands. And they try to create. Every kind of scenario. You know. Give him his favorite meal. And all this. Before they bring up.

A little thing. It might set him off. You know. And it's tragic. But it goes on. Why else do you think.

That someone might not go. Yes. Why would they possibly.

Want to hold on to it. Pardon. Because they're angry. Yeah. Nursing. Nursing a grudge. Or.

They said. Really cut me to the quick. But I'm not going to give him the satisfaction of knowing that he hurt me. And that's pride.

You see how devious this thing is. This is the deceitfulness of the human heart. Desperately wicked above all things. Who can know it? Jeremiah said. Other thoughts about this?

[23 : 30] Okay. Well. If we have been hurt by someone. And we refuse to go to them. Yet we continue to resent the hurt.

Then we become part of the obstacle for the thing being resolved. We need to work up the courage to go to them.

If they hurt us. They have a right. To know. And we have a responsibility. To tell them. Emotional distancing.

Okay. So let's talk a little bit about information. Once the resentment is there. And the coolness that's in. And the distancing. And we know that things are not right between us.

But we don't want to rock the boat and say something. Because we might make it worse. So we just build up.

[24 : 40] A head of steam of resentment. And we stuff these feelings. And we nurse these grudges. And we just.

It affects the way we treat that person. It contributes to a negative atmosphere. Things are not lovey-dovey.

They are not what they ought to be. Because we don't feel that way towards them. So we're not going to act like everything is hunky-dory and wonderful. When it isn't. So we just kind of emotionally keep our distance.

And sometimes. And sometimes. We pick up on this. And we sense that. Something is not right. Between us.

Things are not like they used to be. A sense of coolness. And we start probing in our own mind. For what's the problem. What's going on here. What have I said. What have I done.

[25 : 38] And what did we call that? Information. Internal information. When we are rethinking. What's happened to this relationship.

Not like it used to be. Something's wrong. We start meditating. Thinking about it. Cogitating. Turning over in our mind. What's the problem. What's going on. This is internal information.

And sometimes. If they communicate to us. And very often they do. Because. More often than not. When people are really hurt. By something we say or do.

Usually they'll let us know. And very often. It's with the offense. Sometimes it's a give back. And you end up in a. Big fight. Verbal battle going on.

Sparring back and forth. And everybody knows. Both parties know. Whether it's a boss. And an employee. Or a next door neighbor. Or husband and wife. But everybody knows. That things are out of kilter.

[26 : 39] And we are having words. So. Sometimes the information. As to what we did. Or said. Is external. That is. It comes from them.

And they advise us. As to what we have done. Or what we have said. And then. We. Reach. A crossroads. And. This is the critical part.

This. This. This juncture. This area right here. Is why more. Relationships. Go. Unrepaired.

And unrestored. And. Unresolved. Than anything else. We get the information. Either internally. Or externally. But we will not act on it.

We will not. Do anything about it. We will not. We will not. Repent.

[27 : 39] We will not change our mind. We dig our heels in. Our ego flares up. We get stubborn. We are not going to give in.

And. And we. Refuse. To repent. And this is the sticking point. Right here. This is where most.

Relationships. Go south. This is where they're buried. This. This heads off. Any reconciliation. Of the past. If there is not going to be. Any genuine repentance.

And repentance. Is nothing more. Than changing your mind. Repentance. Is not. Penance.

Repentance. Is not. Somehow. Paying for our crimes.

Repentance. Simply means. You change your mind. It's a change of attitude. We express it as a change of heart. And what I mean by that is. When we said. Or did the hurtful thing.

[28 : 36] To this person. If you are repentant. You would. Give. Anything. To have that situation.

Back. And be able to redo it. Because. If you could. You would not do. Or say.

What you did. Why wouldn't you? Because. You've changed. Your mind. You've changed. The way. You feel.

About that. You might have said. What you did. In the heat of battle. Out of anger. Or out of. What you viewed. As self-defense. Or something like that. But if you had it. To live over again. If you had a chance. To rerun that thing. You would do it differently. That's what repentance means. Now.

[29 : 31] Unfortunately. You can't go back. And do it again. You can't rerun that. You can't create. A scenario. You know. Hey. Stop everything.

The last 30 minutes. Just. Erase that. Erase that. Delete. And we'll start all over. That never happened. All right. You can't do that.

Can't go back again. So there's only one avenue. Well. Actually. Two avenues left to you. And one. I've suggested. Is often already taken.

That is. Doing. Nothing. Nothing. And we justify that. On the basis of. They'll get over it. They'll cool down. They'll get over it. Yeah.

Maybe I heard her. Maybe I shouldn't have said that. And maybe if I had to do over again. I wouldn't do that. But. Give it time. And they'll. They'll forget about it. They'll cool off.

[30 : 27] Or. This is a favorite. Just go out and buy her something expensive. And.

Let. That serve. As. Your. Apology. You don't have to. You don't have to eat crow that way.

You don't have to. Stumble. Fumble around. Trying to apologize. You just let. This.

Neat. Little. Expensive. Trinket. Do your talking for you. Forget it. Doesn't work.

That is someone. Who is trying. To make. Amends. On. The cheap. What do you mean.

[31 : 24] On the cheap. That thing. Cost me. Eight hundred bucks. But do you realize. How many people. There are. Who would rather. Shell out. Eight hundred dollars. In cold. Hard cash. Than they would.

To say. Hey. I'm sorry. About yesterday. I really screwed up. I blew it. It is my fault. You are not the blame.

I own. The whole thing. It is. All. On. Me. I was a real. Jerk. Class A. Got no excuses.

I just. Hope you can find it in your heart. To forgive me. I guess. I couldn't blame you. If you didn't. You realize.

How many men. There are. Who would much. Rather shell out. Eight hundred dollars. And they would go that route. There's a lot. Maybe even most of us. And I'll tell you why. It's because.

[32 : 23] We got an ego. As big as this building. And when you. Pamper with that. You. You. Pamper with that. Fragile ego. Boy.

We really. Get out of sorts. So. We'll do whatever is necessary. To protect that ego. The apology. The word apologia.

The Greek means. With. Words. You articulate. You spell out.

What the offense is. That you did. Or the thing that you. Said. And you. Specify. You detail it.

Because. In order for the. Offended person. To be able. To fully forgive you. They need to know.

[33 : 17] That you know. How you have hurt them. How you have wronged them. And only in your. Articulating that. Can they.

Appreciate. That you understand. How they were hurt. And that's very. Very important. To their forgiveness. Very important. These are all.

Just. Methodical things. That I cannot. See. Working. In any other way. And when we are specific.

About the apology. We are telling them. I was wrong. In. What I did. Or what I said. And we admit it.

We take ownership. For it. A half-hearted apology.

Means. That. I want to apologize. For what I said. If you apologize. For what you said. That's a half-hearted apology.

[34 : 18] A full. Blown. Sincere. Apology. Makes. No. Demands. On the other person. They may.

May. May. May. May. May. Well. Have. A portion. For which. They should apologize. But. That's not your bailiwick. That's not your job. Your job. Is to apologize. For your part.

Not. To call them. To account. For theirs. Leave that. Between them. And the Lord. For forgiveness. And once we apologize.

We ask. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. Forgiveness is a gift. Nobody owes it to us.

Forgiveness. Forgiveness. Is an acknowledgement. That an offense. Has occurred. If an offense.

Has not occurred. There's no point. In seeking forgiveness. There's no point.

[35 : 16] In forgiveness. Even being. In view. But it is. An automatic. Admission. That. A wrong. Has been committed. And we request.

Forgiveness. And in doing that. We. Put. The offended. Person. In. The driver's seat. They are holding. All the cards.

And the offender. Who is offering. The apology. Is in the position. Of vulnerability. If you want to say. They come crawling. That's not a bad way.

To put it. That's. What. The offense. Entails. And. You see. What.

What is. Taking place. Here. Is because. Of the offense. There is. Pain. For both parties. Both people.

[36 : 11] Are hurting this. You don't tell. Hey. Don't tell me. It doesn't hurt. To apologize. Ha. You better believe. It does. Doesn't it guys.

Hmm. Doesn't it hurt. To apologize. And you know what. I remember. On more occasions. Than one. When I had to. Go to her majesty.

And apologize. For. Some stupid thing. Most of the things. I did. Were stupid. You know. Irritating. Just. Uncalled for.

Just dumb. Stupid things. And. In apologizing. I always felt like.

My ego. Was taking a beating. And you know what. It was. It was. It hurt.

[37 : 17] Me. To go. Crawling. If you will. And apologizing. For my wrong. And it hurt. It hurt me so much.

That I would say to myself. Marv. You don't ever want to do this again. You don't. You don't want to ever go here again. Remember this. The pain involved.

For her. And for you. You don't want to do this again. And you know what. That actually does. Help bring about. Some change behavior.

And you realize. That's the only way. That repentance. And apologizing. Can be shown. To be genuine.

How do we know. That the apology. Is sincere. How do we know. That the repentance. Is sincere. There's just one way. Just one way. And that is.

[38 : 15] Change behavior. Over time. That's the only way. Changed behavior. Over. Time.

Anybody. Anybody. Can change their behavior. For the weekend. That's not a big deal. And do you know.

Repentance. Can be phony. As a three dollar bill. And an apology. Can be phony. Apology. Because.

Because. We can use. An apology. As a tool. Of manipulation. We can.

Manipulate. Someone. By apologizing. And. We haven't. Really. Changed. Our heart. Or our mind.

[39 : 11] At all. It's just that. We. See. What. It's going to take. To get things back. On a reasonable.

Even. Even. A reasonable. Even keel. And if an apology. Is what it takes. Okay. I'll apologize. But my heart's not in it.

The real. Feeling. Of apology. Isn't there. I'm apologizing. Just because. That's what it's going to take. To get things back. To some degree. Of normality.

But I haven't changed. My attitude. Hasn't changed. So an apology. Can be just a tool. Of manipulation. I. Think I told you this story.

About when Barbara and I were married. And. The preacher wouldn't marry us. And. He. Asked me.

[40 : 07] If I. Wanted to know. What was involved. In becoming a Christian. Well I'd always wanted to know that. Didn't even know. The knowledge existed. And he told me. And asked me. If I wanted to receive Christ.

And I said. Well yes. I do. And I did. And I wasn't kidding anybody. And. He and I.

Knelt down. On the floor. In that little. Main Street. Baptist Church. In Ellensburg. Washington. And I gave my heart. To Christ. December 8th.

1956. Nothing. Has been the same. Since. And. Uh. Because he wouldn't marry us.

Since I wasn't a Christian. And asked me. If I wanted to become a Christian. And I said yes. And I didn't realize at all. I was just a. Really.

[41 : 02] Ignorant. 21 year old soldier boy. That. Didn't know enough to come in. Out of the ring. And. Uh. I responded. To his invitation. And. And I became a new creature.

In Christ. But you know. I found out later. I found out years later. That the preacher.

Wasn't convinced. And what's more. Barbara. Wasn't convinced. Christ. And she. Confided. In me.

Years. Years later. And I had no idea. This was going on. And she. She recounted. She says. The day that we got married. She said. When we left the church. And headed for our. Uh.

Honeymoon night. She said. I was. Just a nervous wreck. I was a. I was a mess. I was scared to death. And I said. What are you talking about?

[42 : 01] She said. Well I was. She said. I. And I was just praying. And praying. She said. I asked the Lord. I don't.

I don't know. If what he said. Or what he did. Was real. Or not. And I. I'm just. Praying God. And asking you. Would you. Give me. Some.

Assurance. Some. Something. That. What he said. Was real. Because. The way. This thing. Looked. Was. My mom.

Didn't want me. To marry him. Because I was. Because he wasn't. A Christian. And I was. And the preacher. Refused. To marry us. Because. He wasn't. A Christian. And I was.

And when Marv. Was confronted. With this. And saw that. As an obstacle. And he says. Okay. So I need to become. A Christian. And that's what it takes. Okay. I'll play your game. And I'll become. A Christian.

[42 : 59] And I'll jump through. Your hoops. And do whatever it takes. To get the girl. And she said. It really looked like. That's what you did. And if that's what you did.

The thing that scared me. Was that I had just. Been. Married. To a class. A. Manipulator. Who will do.

Whatever it takes. To get his way. And I'm going to be in. For a bumpy. Bumpy ride. God.

Is there any way. You can show me. That what he did. Was real. How in the world. Could you possibly do that. I don't know. But I am a nervous wreck. And when we got to. Our motel room.

And I put in a call. To my mother. And dad. Who were back in Ohio. My mom answered the phone. And I said. Well mom.

[43 : 55] You'll never guess. What happened to me today. And she said. Well. I think I know. You did get married today. Didn't you? And I said. Well yes. That's true. We did get married.

But. Today. I got saved. I received Christ. As my savior. And Barbara says. When you told your mother that. I just. Thank you God.

Because I knew. That if what you had done. Was not real. There's no way you would have even mentioned it.

To your mother. And I said. Thank you God. And then. She said. The next Sunday. When you wanted to go to church. After refusing all of my invitations.

To accompany me to a church. When you came up with the idea. You wanted to go to church. I knew it had to be real. That was the icing on the cake. So. An apology.

[44 : 53] Can be just a tool of manipulation. That is not heartfelt. That is not genuine. At all. And. If it's. Motivated by.

That. That. It won't take. There will be no mileage. Gain from it. And the relationship. Will not. Be improved. At all. It will just. Suffer worse damage.

Because. Insincerity. Has entered into this. in an attempt to manipulate, and that just will not fly. I want to, with the few minutes we've got left, I want to deal with an issue that I'm not sure about, and there are a lot of issues that I'm not sure about, but this is one of them, and I don't want to be splitting hairs and get too detailed in this, but I've really been wondering and toying with the idea, can forgiveness be granted and a relationship repaired or restored if forgiveness is not requested? I want you to think about that, because I've thought about it long and hard, and I think there is a practical forgiveness, and I think there is a judicial forgiveness.

And no, I don't have a chapter and verse to give you, but the principles are there, because we are judicially forgiven all trespasses in Christ. We know that. That's our judicial standing, our legal standing before God.

[46 : 39] And what I'm talking about is this. I make a distinction between having a forgiving attitude and forgiving.

And like I said, I hope I'm not splitting hairs here, and don't hesitate to bring me up short if you think that's what I'm doing, but I see forgiveness as a transaction, and it has to be conducted in two parts. There has to be a forgiver, and there has to be the forgiven. This can't be done with one person.

It's always the offender and the offended. And while we ought to always have what I call a forgiving attitude, and by that I mean that we have a disposition that wants to forgive, that is eager to forgive,

that is willing to forgive, that would love to forgive if forgiveness were requested.

That's a forgiving attitude. And I think every believer ought to have that, no matter what or what the circumstance. We ought to have an attitude, a disposition that is willing to forgive anyone who asks us for forgiveness.

[48 : 15] Can you forgive someone who doesn't ask for forgiveness? Now, you can have a forgiving attitude toward them, but that's different, isn't it?

When we request forgiveness, this is what makes the transaction a transaction.

Trans means across, or it encompasses a distance from one thing to another. Trans, whether it's a transcontinental railroad or transportation, whatever it is, it's from here to there.

And it involves two parties. I don't think there's such a thing as a possibility of a one-way forgiveness. You can have a one-way forgiving attitude or disposition, but you can't actually forgive. Can you forgive someone who says, can you say, you know, what you said the other day or what you did or whatever? I just want you to know that I forgive you.

[49 : 27] And they come back and say, huh, you forgive me. I'm not asking your forgiveness. I didn't do anything wrong. I don't feel that I said anything that was out of line. I don't need your forgiveness.

Can you forgive them? No. No. Well, you can't. I mean, forgiveness has to be granted on the basis of an offense acknowledged.

There has to be some intelligence involved, not just emotion or feeling. So you can have a feeling or a disposition of forgiveness, but you cannot grant forgiveness where it is not requested or even acknowledged by way of need.

Now you tell me, am I splitting hairs? Am I slicing this too thin? Or does this make sense? Mike?

Particularly, I guess, through man-to-man relationship, I can see where the one who's made the offense realizes what he's done, and so he changes, he repents, and he demonstrates that through a changed behavior and a changed relationship with the person he offended.

But yet, he doesn't come right out and say, look, I'm really sorry. But it's clear after a long passage of time and this change in his behavior that he has, in fact, apologized.

[51 : 09] Okay. So he's, maybe he has apologized as much as he's going to apologize in his way without verbalizing or expressing it in words.

But he is, he is trying to produce the net effect of an apology, which is a changed attitude or disposition without apologizing or saying the words.

Is that an apology on the cheap? No. That takes work to change your attitude. That's, on the cheap is something that you do and don't change the attitude.

To say, I'm sorry, it's on the cheap. Because if I don't change, then there's no work. Yeah. Or if you change your attitude because you know you've done something wrong, that takes work.

That's true. I would not deny that. It takes a lot more, takes a lot more work and a lot more effort to actually change one's behavior than it does to express it in mere words.

[52 : 17] So, someone can be very eager and quick and they're sorry about everything. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Please, excuse me. And they're apologizing for everything.

But, if it is just words not backed up by a change in behavior, then that's on the cheap. And, well, the expression has been used, words are cheap, talk is cheap, what I want to see is action, you know.

Good point. Good point. Someone else? Fresh out of time. Well, I'd intended, last week I said I intended that to be the last session.

Tonight I intend this to be the last session. But this time, I really mean it. And from this, I will not repent. Okay? So, we will consider this our final session.

And I, we're all aware that there is so much more that can be said about this. Because all of these areas can be expanded upon greatly. And you've all got stories that you could relate about these things, about either being the offender or the offended.

[53 : 33] Because it works both ways. And we're sometimes on the receiving end and sometimes we're on the giving end. But, anyway, thank you for your participation and for your kind attention.

Let's pray. Father, we are thankful tonight for the mechanics that are set forth in Scripture that really do provide us with the basis for healing broken relationships.

And, yet, it does involve pain. And it is emotional pain on the part of the offended and the offender. Because nothing hurts people like sinful behavior.

and we realize that this is why you are so angry with sin.

Because sin hurts people and you love people. And we recognize that you have gone to the great extreme that you have to demonstrate your love for us.

[54 : 45] how that God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. All because of the way we injured you and the way we injure each other.

And yet, you have taken these incredible steps and gone to these tremendous lengths to repair that which you so highly value, relationship sustained between you and your people.

And we are the happy beneficiaries of your magnificent efforts. And we thank you for it so much in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.