

Biblical Dynamics of Human Relationships

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[0 : 00] I almost feel apologetic for the series that we are going to begin this morning because of its great simplicity.

And I also believe familiarity that so many of you have to what we are going to be talking about. And yet I don't know of anything that is more important, as you have heard me say since 1971, there is nothing so important as relationships.

The making of them and the sustaining of them. So that's what we are going to be talking about. And this you may consider as an introduction to the biblical dynamics for human relationships.

Because there is really only one thing that is wrong with the world. That's all. Just one thing. And it is the way that we treat one another.

That's what's wrong with the world. And the solution, of course, sounds simple. If what is wrong with the world is the way people treat each other, then all we need to do is stop that.

[1 : 21] And start treating people the way we ought to. And that's the solution. The world is fixed.

Okay? What's next on the agenda? All we have to do is stop treating one another the way we do. And the world would be fixed. But we all know that it just doesn't work that way.

The world is the way the world is because people are the way they are. And people are societal, which causes them to form relationships with one another.

It's a story as old as Genesis 3, boy meets girl. And then from there on, the relationship is established.

Human relationships are the binders, the glue of human civilization. And they are so prevalent that even the animal kingdom develops them.

[2 : 26] Singles find other singles of the opposite sex. It doesn't make any difference whether you're talking about people or polar bears or muskrats or gerbils.

Males find males, find females, and they pair off and they mate. And they have little polar bears or gerbils or whatever they may be.

And that's just the way it is. In this world. So we have been emphasizing, as long as we have been here as your pastor, that the essence of life is found in relationships.

It is what life is all about. In fact, God in the triune being of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit has always been a God with nurtured relations.

God is so committed to relationships and their value that he went to the extreme length of sending his only son down to this earth so as to become a human being born of a woman for the sole purpose that he might repair a broken relationship between the creator and the created.

[3 : 51] God is so committed. We are told in the second epistle to the Corinthians that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

God is so committed to the world to the world to the world to the world to the world to the world to the world to the world. So whether it is between man and God or between man and woman, a loving, successful relationship affords the most exquisite joy and fulfillment that those in that relationship can have.

And the opposite is equally true. A failed or ruptured relationship between God and man or between man and woman affords the greatest and most agonizing pain and anger and dissatisfaction that humans can experience.

And while this series on the biblical dynamics for human relationships is not geared to marriages per se, but to all of life in its varied relationships, there is no question that marriage provides the most extensive and definitive illustration, or human laboratory, if you will, of personal relationships.

So the question, of course, is how does a rapturously, deliriously, in love couple get from the position I can't live without this person to the position of I can't live with this person.

[5 : 41] How did such a turnabout come about? And those of you who have not personally experienced a pain like this surely know plenty of others who have or who will.

How did such a turnabout come about? The answer is always and ever the same. Nothing new. Don't look for anything especially profound or different here in this series because you're not going to find it.

This is as same old as same old can be. The culprit that causes that turnabout is always the same.

Never changes. No matter what language you speak, what culture you live in, or what color your skin makes no difference. It is endemic to human beings.

There is but one culprit, one dynamic that is always present when any relationship is injured or terminated. And there does not appear to be any exceptions.

[7 : 04] At least I cannot find any. It is so simple, yet perhaps many have never really thought it out. We are speaking, of course, of the offense.

The O-F-F-E-N-S-E. The offense. We offend one another.

We injure one another. We wound one another. And there are two vehicles for doing this. Only two.

Just two. I cannot think of any others. The way we injure and wound one another through things that we say and things that we do to one another.

And even though there are only two, we have found them to be more than adequate, haven't we? We don't need any more.

[8 : 17] We say hurtful things and we do hurtful things. One or both is involved at the core of the wounding or the death of all relationships.

And yet, I do want to offer some clarification here because this is very, very important. I do not think it is possible for human beings to live together whether as husband and wife or brother and sister or parent and child or for people to function together in a workplace as employees or employers, employees, to live next door to neighbors I just don't think it is possible to do that without offending one another through what we say or what we do.

The reason being it is just part of our makeup of humanity to be in our fallenness to be automatically bred in us self-centered.

You are a selfish human being at your core. Does that apply to preachers? Oh, absolutely. We might even say especially to preachers.

Every one of us is cursed with this terminal reality called selfishness. It is the ego, the old nature that lurks in our bosom somewhere and is ever ready to leap into the forefront and take control and run the show.

[10 : 14] There isn't a one of us that does not have this problem. And the problem is magnified in the case of any who think they don't have it.

And you've got an even bigger problem. And part of your problem then would be denial. For anybody who says, not me, I'm not like that. You see, I don't have a selfish bone in my body.

Oh, for pity's sake, wake up and smell the coffee. You do have. And there is no way that you can avoid it.

So, the truth be told, and that's what preachers are supposed to do, there is no way that you can avoid this or that you can eliminate it so that you just don't have the tendency to be selfish and say things that hurt and wound or do things that hurt and wound.

It's inevitable. Deal with it. Learn to accept it as a reality as part of your humanity and part of your living. So, if it is inevitable that we are all going to do things and say things that offend one another on different levels and in different ways, what then is really the problem?

[11 : 34] If the problem is not the offense because they are automatic and we're going to do it anyway, what is the problem? I'm so glad you asked. The problem is not the offense.

The problem is the unresolved offense or offenses. That's the problem. and the reason they are not resolved so as to not only smooth things over but to make things right, the reason they are not resolved is because of our self-centeredness, our egos, our will.

it is a very ugly reality but it is true. We all offend one another in different ways, different times, and by the way, it ought to also be pointed out that there are two kinds of offenses.

One, of course, is intentional. That is the jibe, the dig that we get in that we intend to get in. It's the kind of thing that comes from our lips in the heat of battle when we need a strong point to make to shore up our position.

We can say a deliberately hurtful thing. We know how to ring each other's bell.

[13 : 18] We know where the soft spots are. hurt. And we can go for that in a very deliberate, intentional way to hurt because we intend to hurt.

We want to hurt. That's what you do when you're in a verbal battle with somebody, right? You get your jabs in, you hurt them. They are an opponent and your object is to defeat them.

So you wound them. And then there are some offenses that are unintentional. You see, we are so good, we are so good at offending each other that we can do it when we don't even mean to.

Isn't that a skill? It's possible for us to wound or hurt another person unintentionally. didn't mean to hurt them, didn't mean to have that effect at all, but it did.

And people have varying degrees of sensitivity. You all know as well as I do that there are some people who are offended at everything.

[14 : 34] They are offended when you sing the Star Spangled Banner at a sporting event. That offends them. They are offended with in God we trust on our coins.

They are offended by that. They are offended at everything and anything. I'm not talking about those kind of offenses. Those are not in reality real offenses at all.

Those are just petty disagreements that people have stuck in their crawl. I wouldn't classify those as offenses. And they are not capable of being resolved anyway. But I'm talking about the kind of offenses that we commit one to another that can be and should be resolved.

because the biblical dynamics provided for us does not require us to go on living in that kind of a climate where we have offended someone.

And very often they offend us in return. That's what you do, isn't it? In the heat of battle, when husbands and wives tow off on a big argument about something, they retaliate and they trade one offense for another and they offend each other back and forth.

[15 : 40] And this goes on, sometimes in a shouting match. And so, as I said, we're not talking about marriages per se, but marriages do provide the more obvious laboratory for the differences that we're talking about.

So that's why they often surface there. And then, there is the person who is hardly capable of being offended. I mean, they have such thick skin that you have to speak very bluntly and very plainly to them in order for them to get the message.

There's an expression that we use so much today that's probably overworked. He just doesn't get it. You can't speak plainly enough to some people to make them get it.

They are very dense and very thick skinned. And we've got people at the other end of the spectrum who are very thin skinned and very delicate and they are very easily offended.

and very often the two are kind of put together, you know, which creates some real problems. And for the most part, I would go so far as to say, and realizing that there are always exceptions, there are always exceptions, I think that women, I think that femininity tends to be more sensitive, tends to be more delicate, tends to be more easily offended because they are very feeling oriented.

[17 : 23] And masculinity tends to be the other way. And as I've said, there are exceptions. There are some very sensitive, quick to feel men, and there are some very thick skinned women.

I don't know that I have ever noticed a more thick skinned woman in my life than the lady who just finished her tour as the speaker of the House of Representatives.

You talk about having to have thick skin, my goodness, that woman's got armor plate like an armadillo or something. And you know what?

If you are going to be involved in politics, you'd better not have very thin skin because you're not going to survive.

I suspect that our Honorable Jim Jordan could address that issue somewhat. You are accused of everything, you are called everything, you are vilified, you are this, you are that, by the opposition.

[18 : 33] So if you've got very thin skin, you're probably not going to make it in the world of politics and you're probably not going to make it in the pastorate either because people say things that wound you.

So we've got two different kinds of offense. We've got the deliberate, the intended, and the unintended. And by the way, the pulpit is an excellent place to offend people without trying to do so.

And talking about politicians again, that too is an excellent place to offend people without trying to do so. We've often discovered that particularly when it comes to elections and things like that, you usually go into an election with approximately 50% of the people against you.

Now, that isn't always the case, but it's very often the case. Public is kind of divided, and then your responsibility is to turn the tide in your direction, but that's often the way it works.

So you've got to, I don't know, I think it was a politician who said, if you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen. That kind of a thing.

[19 : 55] So there is the inevitability of the offense. Offenses are going to come, we are going to say things and do things that wound and hurt people, and what is the effect of that?

I'll tell you what the effect of it is. And the effect sometimes is very insidious because it isn't always obvious. But the effect is this.

When two people are together, and I'm going to use the analogy of a marriage because it is so obvious, and everybody knows what you're talking about, when two people are together, very tight, very close, and the offense or offenses enter the relationship in their exchanges, in the way they are talking to each other, and in things they are doing to each other.

And what happens with each offense? The closeness loses a little something. Imperceptible at first.

You don't even notice it. It is so slight that you can't even tell you're any further apart perhaps than you were before. You're just as close as you were before, except maybe there's a little hurt, a little, you know, out of sorts there.

[21 : 22] But when the offense is not resolved, and we'll talk about that later, the distancing is so slight and so imperceptible.

And again, that depends on the magnitude of the offense. We'll talk about those and categorize those also. There are minor offenses that just kind of irritate us, just buggish.

But it's not that big a deal. So we tend to let it pass. And then there are the medium sized offenses that I can't believe you did that.

Or I can't believe you would say that. And there's often the retaliation and the tit for tat. And then there are the biggies.

where trust is compromised or lost. Serious, serious stuff.

[22 : 24] What happens with every offense that is not resolved is a little bit of distancing. Just a little bit of distancing.

Not as close as you used to be. Not as friendly as you used to be. Not as open as you used to be.

Not as eager to see the other party as you used to be. And as time goes on and unresolved offenses accumulate, the emotional distancing between the couple gets Oh, you're still sleeping in the same bed.

But the emotional distancing between the couple starts to increase. you don't notice it. You're not all that aware of it. You're just there, moving a little bit further and further apart.

And don't we all know of couples, for instance, who before they made their separation legal and got a divorce, they had already been divorced emotionally, maybe years ago, and they just stayed together because of the children or because of finances or whatever.

[23 : 49] But the emotional separation took place a long time ago and then finally sometimes they just make it legal and divide up the assets. And it's always because of this one thing, this one thing.

Now, it may not be just one offense. It's an accumulation of offenses, but they are not resolved. Another way I've likened this is to building a brick wall.

Each time you offend a person, whether it is someone with whom you work or a neighbor or a family member, brothers or sisters, parents or children, each time there is an unresolved offense that takes place between these people, it's like you're laying a brick.

Just laying a brick. And then they offend you, and another brick is laid. And then you offend them. Something you say, something you do, an act of omission, an act of commission, and each one is another brick.

And you're building a brick wall emotionally, without even realizing that you're doing it. And what this wall is going to do is, it's going to separate the two of you emotionally.

[25 : 13] So there's a barrier between you. And all of those bricks consist of unresolved offenses.

promises. And what we are going to spend the next few sessions doing is dismantling the brick wall, removing the barriers, so that the closeness that was there when everything was great can be restored.

word. Is this workable? Let me tell you, not only is it workable, it is the only thing that is.

Nothing else works. Nothing else works. There is a biblical methodology, a pattern, through which we must go in order to resolve these offenses and make the relationship not only as good as it was before the offense, but even better.

And that is the end goal. That's the objective. And it can only be done, in my estimation, I have not seen any other way of doing this.

[26 : 42] I have not seen any other way of resolving it. And you can talk all you want to about this psychologist and that psychiatrist and all the rest, but when push comes to shove, they have no lasting answers.

And one of the, one of the greatest causes of dissatisfaction that has been expressed by psychiatrists and psychologists, openly and publicly in some cases, is their frustration over their utter inability to really help people with big problems.

And I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but psychologists and psychiatrists rank near the top. when it comes to suicides and divorce and other indications of a wrecked and unhappy life, you cannot improve upon the pattern and the procedure that God has provided in his word.

and we want to work that out and see exactly what is involved and these are specific steps, very definite. We're not going, we're not aiming for anything vague or indefinite or fuzzy.

This is going to get nailed down. And I make no apology whatever for referring to the Bible and I know what the common wisdom is regarding the Bible.

[28 : 18] that old dusty book. Why, the Bible doesn't have any computers in it. It doesn't have any iPods in it. It's just so out of date.

How can you possibly take the Bible seriously? Listen, the Bible is not and was never intended to be some kind of technological up-to-date book.

The Bible has a much, much higher objective than your latest electronic gadget. It's not interested in that. The Bible addresses the issues of human beings living with human beings and how to get along with each other.

How to have an abundant and fulfilled life. How to have a joyous relationship in your marriage. That's what the Bible speaks to. It speaks to eternal issues.

It addresses the issues that have beset mankind from Genesis 3 on. The Bible knows how to deal with and address hurting human hearts.

[29 : 32] Broken promises. Failed lives. Failed marriages. The Bible addresses those things. The Bible doesn't fool around with nitpicking trivia like the latest electronic gadget, spaceship, all of that nonsense.

It talks about where we really live and what we really are. And I want you to turn, if you will, please, to the passage that was read earlier by Gary. We'll look at both of them.

Well, instead of going to the Mark passage, let's look at Luke. I'm sorry, Matthew. Let's go to Matthew for a parallel passage. And it's Matthew chapter 19.

And verse 1. We'll just jump in there with verse 1. verse 1.

says that they were testing him. This is a kind of a question where the one who is asking the question has an agenda of gotcha.

[31 : 09] This is that kind of question. You've heard the old adage, the no-win question when you ask a man, have you stopped beating your wife? No matter how he answers that, he looks like a real bad guy, doesn't he?

So, this is a question that is designed for entrapment. It's just designed to put Jesus in the position where whatever he answers, it's going to be wrong.

Because there are two schools of thought, and people are lined up on both sides, the school of Shammai and the school of Hillel. And one school says that you cannot, you cannot divorce your wife unless she is guilty of adulterating the marriage relationship.

That's the only grounds you have for divorce. The other school says, to the other extreme, you can divorce your wife for any reason you deem suitable. If she badmouths your side of the family, you can divorce her.

If she burns the toast, you can divorce her. You can divorce her for whatever. So, people were lined up on both of these sides and they had rabbis that supported both of them. And Jesus said, verse 4, Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

[32 : 34] Consequently, they are no longer two but one flesh. So, what God therefore has joined together, let no man separate. They said to him, here we go.

Well, why then did Moses command to give her a certificate and divorce her? And he said to them, because of your hardness of heart, heart.

Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it has not been this way. What is he saying here?

Moses said you could grant a divorce, give her a certificate of divorce, because cause of the hardness of your heart.

Now, that is a phrase that we are going to explore in some detail because it is very, very critical. And may I suggest that part of our fallenness, of our ego, of our old flesh and old sin nature, is that we all have a propensity, a proclivity, a leaning toward a hardness of heart.

[34 : 08] It is part and parcel of the human fallen ego. The hardness of heart is nothing more than plain, old, mulish stubbornness.

That's what it is. It's misleading when we talk about the hardness of heart because we almost automatically think about feelings and emotions.

We think of somebody being soft-hearted or hard-hearted. Somebody who's hard-hearted is cruel and unfeeling. Well, that enters into it because we are also going to explore a dynamic that I wish I knew more about and that you might be able to give some input on.

And that is the connection between emotions and feelings and intellect. They are not the same. They readily interplay and they interplay in a tremendously complex way so that sometimes we get tricked up by our emotions and our feelings and our intellect and objectivity and subjectivity.

All of these things come into play and they are very, very important. And I just want you to understand them before we finish with this series. The hardness of heart means Moses and in reality you realize it wasn't Moses it was God through Moses made it acceptable, made it permissible, not required, but permissible that you could divorce a mate because of the hardness of your heart.

[35 : 45] And basically what that boils down to is this, you would be utterly impossible to live with. So Moses gave you a way out.

But only because of the hardness of your heart. Only because in your humanness and fallenness you can be so stubborn.

And hardness of heart plays itself out in two ways. Now there are a lot of ways in which we can be hard of heart, but when it comes to resolving conflicts, differences, repairing relationships, etc.

There are two specific areas where a hardened heart comes into play. This human stubbornness. And one is first of all in the refusal, the adamant refusal to repent, to change your mind, change your position.

no, I won't, I won't, I won't give in. You set your jaw, you dig in with both feet, I shall not be moved.

[36 : 58] I won't. And you can't make me. That's an impenitent heart. Sometimes called a stiff neck. will not be turned. God said of his people, Israel, surely all day long I have stretched out my hand to a disobedient and gainsaying people, a stiff-necked people.

Writing to the Hebrews, the writer says, harden not your hearts as did your forefathers in the wilderness.

That means you just dig in your heels and you're not going to, that's one manifestation of a hardened heart. And the other is, curiously enough, to counter a refusal to repent is a refusal to forgive.

no, I won't forgive you. How can you expect me to forgive you after what you did to me?

[38 : 08] Forgiveness, you've heard the old adage, to err is human, to forgive is out of the question. And that's the way many translate it.

That's the other part of a hardened heart. So when you couple these together, a refusal to repent or change your mind and a refusal to forgive when somebody does apologize, that results in the offense or offenses remaining unresolved.

I would not be surprised, I would not be a bit surprised if there are not offenses right here in this auditorium in marriages that are 20 years old or older.

and have never been resolved. You're still together, but you're not together like you ought to be. Because where there are emotional barriers between you due to unresolved offenses, you can never be as close, as intimate, as fulfilled, as in love as you ought to be, or as you want to be.

There are brothers and sisters, I mean blood brothers and blood sisters, who haven't spoken to each other for years. They may even have trouble remembering what the offense was.

[39 : 42] It was so long ago. What was it that we were fighting over? And it sometimes takes effort to recollect it. There is a distancing there.

There are people that you haven't heard from for years because there's bad blood between you. And you're not going to take the initiative. You're not going to call them.

If they want to repair it, let them call me. Do you know what that is? That's an impenitent heart. That's being hard-hearted. They are the ones who did the deed.

Let them take the first step. It's not my responsibility. Well, these offenses are so serious that they bring a relationship to wreck and ruin and they prevent those who are in it, whether they are brothers, whether they are neighbors, whether they are co-workers or whatever.

from having the chemistry and the camaraderie and the good feelings toward one another that everybody, I think, wants to have.

[40 : 58] But we're just not willing to pay the price. That's an impenitent heart. That's a hardness of heart. One other passage that was read earlier that we need to look at for just a moment, and I want to open this for some Q&A, is Romans chapter 2.

Gary read earlier. Romans chapter 2. And therefore you are without excuse, every man of you who passes judgment, for in that you judge another, you condemn yourself.

And let me just insert something here without any extra cost. There is nothing at all wrong with judging because we all have to judge. Every decision you make about anything is an exercise of judgment.

It doesn't make any difference whether you're talking about buying a house, or buying a car, or getting married, or whatever. You are exercising judgment. You're making a decision.

You're making a choice. That's judging. That's not the same as being judgmental. And our Lord condemned judgmentalism in the Sermon on the Mount when he said, judge not, lest you be judged.

[42 : 12] He was talking about you are not to reach conclusions about people and their decisions and their character, etc. based on inadequate information that you have.

Because you don't know everything that's taking place in their lives, and you don't know everything they've been subjected to, and you don't know everything that this person has undergone. So withhold your judgment.

Don't be judgmental. There are things that could be going on in this individual's life that you know nothing about that can radically color the decisions that they make.

Job is a perfect example of that. Job's miserable counselor friends thought they knew everything. They accused Job of this, they accused him of that. They were being judgmental. They were reaching conclusions and assigning motives and actions to Job based on what they knew nothing at all about.

And we're very prone to do that sometimes. Rush to judgment, make decisions about people when we don't have adequate information, but it doesn't keep our tongue from wagging. That's judgmentalism.

[43 : 17] And the scriptures forbid that. We ought never to engage in it. But judging here is entirely different. He's saying judgmentalism for you who are judgmental practice the same things and we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.

Do you suppose this, oh man, when you pass judgment upon those who practice such things and do the same yourself, that you will escape the judgment of God? Or do you think lightly of the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to repentance?

You're going to hear a lot about this word before we get finished. And I know most of you already know what it means. But when I get through with it, you're going to really know what it means. But because, oh, look at verse 5.

Because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God who will render to every man according to his deeds.

Now, I want to clarify one thing. Paul is writing here to unbelievers. He's not talking about Christians. He's talking about unbelievers who are storing up God's wrath against themselves.

[44 : 51] They are making deposits in the bank of God's wrath. And one day, God's going to make the withdrawal and apply the proceeds to that person. He's not talking to believers here.

He's talking to unbelievers. But the principle is, a stubborn and unrepentant heart can be very much lurking in the mind and heart of a believer.

And, not only are there consequences that perhaps will be revealed at the award throne of Christ, least, but there are always temporal, earthly consequences that we endure right here and now by way of the injured or the terminated relationship because of the offenses being unresolved.

Kindness of God leads to repentance and the stubborn and unrepentant heart ought not, ought not to be found in anyone who names the name of Christ.

But we know it's all over the place because Christians, people who know and love Jesus Christ and are going to be in heaven when they die, can say and do really ugly things one to another.

[46 : 12] and we are completely without justification for doing so. So the offense is there, the distancing has begun and what we want to concentrate on is God's remedy, the biblical dynamics for restoring, refurbishing, renewing relationships that have been injured.

And it is a very simple, a very simple thing to do. All it requires is your willingness to do it.

And that's a big, big item. A really big item. Okay, somebody has a microphone back there. We've got just a few minutes.

Questions or comments? Feel free. Thank you. Anyone?

And you're confident that you're not being judgmental, aren't you, Roger? Yeah. Well, I can understand the awkwardness that you might feel in even thinking about asking a question under these circumstances.

[47 : 39] but I just want you to bear in mind that this is so basic and so simple yet it is the very thing that is robbing us from an abundant life in Christ and a wonderful, close, warm, joyous relationship with each other.

Not just as marriage, but any kind of a relationship, this is key. This is so bottom line, so essential, so necessary, and often so ignored, just ignored.

Will this really work? You betcha. and I want to emphasize that nothing else will and nothing else does.

There's only one way to fix a broken relationship and that's the way that God who provided for and sustains relationships mandated and it's wonderful.

It's just another demonstration of his grace that he has provided these mechanics for us and all he wants us to do is implement them. What do you have to do to implement them?

[49 : 09] You have to use your will, that old stubborn uncrucified will. That's why it's so tough. That's why we don't do it.

Do you realize what we're talking about is not only that which ruptures human relationships. You realize this is the cause of all international conflicts.

This is why nations go to war. Nations do things and say things to other nations that offend them. And we say, you can't do that to us.

We're going to make you pay. December 7, 1941, when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, war, that was offensive.

You know, we really got ticked over that, didn't we? And we had a whole war. Millions, billions of treasure and millions in blood was shed as a result of that one offense.

[50 : 22] promise. And how did we get it resolved? We retaliated. You exacted a terrible price on us December 7, you know what?

We're going to make you pay a bigger price. And we did. You can't expect nations to follow biblical remedies, and we certainly didn't, nor was anybody interested in it, but it'll work for us.

It'll work for the way God intended, for sure. This, if you understand this dynamic, this is at the root of all human conflict.

somebody says something, or does something, to another person, or persons, that hurts, that wounds, that grieves, and it can be fixed.

It can be remedied. Well, I can think of some cases that can't be, no, you can't. We're going to deal with those two. There isn't anything that can't be remedied, including murder and adultery.

[51 : 43] They can both be remedied. And I'll tell you why, it's because neither of those sins is greater than the grace of God. That's why. The key is all in implementation.

Implementation. Will we? We can. Will we? Don't say you can't.

Don't say you can't. You can say you won't. But you can't say you can't.

Because you can. God says you can. And if God says you can, and you say you can't, who do you think I'm going to believe?

Wow. This is wonderful stuff. It's not my stuff. It's God's stuff. It's put there for our blessing and our benefit and for the repair of injured relationships.

[52 : 54] nothing can hurt you like people who are close to you. And no one can bring you the joy and the fulfillment and the bliss like people close to you.

Works both ways. Would you stand, please? loving father at the outset of a new year, we are engaging something that is so simple and yet so critical and so foundational to our very being.

And there is much about these subjects that we certainly don't fully understand, beginning with myself. But if we are simply willing to implement that which we do understand, that you have provided in your word with great simplicity and great authority, our lives would be immeasurably improved and relationships would be deepened, strengthened, helped.

That's our goal. And we ask that as we continue to delve into these principles that you've provided, that the wisdom we know we lack will be provided by yourself on a step-by-step basis for which we will be eternally grateful in Christ's name.

Amen.