

Biblical Dynamics of Human Relationships 4

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[0 : 0 0] place right there in that psalm that he just read and a little later on will also be in psalm 51 but i just want to emphasize a couple of verses and explain the conditions under which david penned these and it has to do with his struggling and wrestling within himself over his sin and his attempting to come to terms with it and pour out his heart to god he has not done that in the early part of the psalm and if you will note in verse 3 he says when i kept silent about my sin that's another way of saying as long as i refuse to mention it or think about it or talk about it or address god regarding it david was in a holding pattern regarding his sin he did not want to come clean but he did not want to continue living with the guilt and the anxiety it was weighing him down only people who have a conscience can experience this kind of guilt and david was certainly among those and i want you to note he said when i kept silent about my sin my body wasted away through my groaning all day long what i think and i don't want to be guilty of reading into the scripture something that is not there but i think david went through a period of time wherein he was agonizing and this may well have been and probably was in connection with the bathsheba affair is this another way of saying while i was covering up this sin and refusing to acknowledge it or deal with it it was taking a toll on me i couldn't eat i couldn't eat and i couldn't sleep that's another way of saying my body was wasting away this is a man in the throes of great guilt and it is bearing down on him crushing him when i kept silent about my sin my body wasted away through my groaning all day long for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me my vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer and how did i break out of that i acknowledged my sin to thee and my iniquity i did not hide well yes you did david for a while you hid it until you couldn't stand it any longer and that's the nature of guilt that's the way it works on us it accumulates and it piles up on us and finally we get to the breaking point where confessing it acknowledging admitting it is no longer the great thing to be avoided we've got to get out from under this thing and sometimes coming clean is the only way to do it in fact that's god's way of doing it and i want to emphasize something here at the outset of this this is really important these steps that we are going through i call them biblical dynamics for human relations what these are these principles the the information and the processing of the information and the repentance and the apology and all of it all of these concepts all of these steps

if you will that we just happen to come out to the number of 12 these 12 steps they all represent a biblical concept or provision for dealing with human relationships there is a biblical answer to every human problem and i've said in the past there is a spiritual solution to every human problem i don't care what the problem is if it is relational there is a spiritual solution if it is financial there is a spiritual solution if it is physical or health wise there is a spiritual solution now i'm not talking about a cure so it'll all go away and everything will be fine i'm saying there is a biblical response to it if it is a loss of a loved one there is a biblical response to it and implementing that biblical response won't bring them back but it will provide the wherewithal that god has already established for dealing with it so every situation i care not what it is has a biblical response every human problem no matter what it is has a spiritual solution sometimes people misunderstand that and they think that you're saying well if you just have the faith or implement the solution or whatever it is the problem will be fixed changed and overhauled or restored or renewed or made to be never happen no that's not what we're saying at all but we are saying that god always provides a biblical solution the wherewithal to go on from that point to not only cope but to triumph in it and that is really really important now in these various steps that we've given and let me just well let's just run through them again because you're going to see this a number of times before we finish it we are talking about a relationship that begins from a position of closeness and i call this the hunky-dory outset okay everything is fine uh if it is if it is uh if it is a boy girl thing you both have stars in your eyes for each other and the relationship is wonderful and there is a great closeness there and then what creeps in is an offense offenses are inevitable it is not possible to live as a human being among human beings without wronging one another in one way shape or form it just goes with our dna structure we just do things and say things that offend each other it's part of the human condition accept that as a reality and where the real rubber meets the road here is not in denying that offenses occur but it is in resolving the offense and that's the important thing that we want to put the emphasis on so once the offense occurs and we told you offenses always come through one of two ways something we say or something we do or something we say and do we don't have any other way of getting under each other's skin than those two but they're enough we don't need any more our actions get us into big trouble and sometimes our tongue gets us into big trouble and it creates an injury than the other person now it may be a little pinprick maybe a little pinprick injury that just kind of you just shrug it off and forget about it it's it yes yes it bothers you it's an offense but it's not that big a deal and you just let it go you let it slide it doesn't really penetrate you it doesn't stick doesn't draw blood it's just

and these are petty things and we all do this just through an unkind remark or an inconsiderate act that we do that really bugs me it irritates me but I'm not going to make a big deal I'm not even going to mention it that happens all the time but I'm talking about the offense that constitutes a wound in the human spirit it penetrates it really gets in there and it may be a little one like a dart it may be bigger like an arrow it may be huge like a spear goes right into your spirit and the result is a wound and what that does in the spirit of the one who is offended it causes them to make a case of resentment against the one who put it there you start having negative thoughts towards that person I don't know how they could have done that to me I don't know whatever possessed her to say something like that and mentally you resent the individual and that results in an attitude and you see our attitudes produce our actions actions always flow from attitudes we have an inner feeling or attitude towards someone that results in our acting in a certain way and very often we emotionally distance ourselves from that person who wounded us and this produces as I said the long quiet evenings at home where this this produces you're sleeping on the couch tonight but that kind of thing that's the coolness or the distance and the distance may be may be geographical maybe it's a co-worker who has offended you and you know what when you see that person coming you make plans to go another way so you won't even have to interact with them or meet them you avoid them because you resent them they hurt you they wounded you you don't even want to talk to them you don't want to see them you isolate yourself from them and what begins turning this around is information and the information is either external or internal and by information all I mean is the facts of the offense get replayed in your mind what you said or what you did you start thinking about it mulling it over I wonder why they seem to be avoiding me I wonder what's wrong I wonder what's bugging them oh I bet I knew

I saw their jaw drop when I said thus and so this and so at the meeting the other day I bet they're really ticked at me about that you know so what you're doing is you're replaying the offense in your mind and you're trying to figure out why they're treating you the way they are that's information it's internal information and you are processing that it may be external information whereby they may tell you I don't appreciate what you said I really took offense to me I don't appreciate what you said I really took offense to me I don't know why they're treating you the way they are and you are processing that it may be external information whereby they may tell you I don't appreciate what you said I really took offense to that and I'm not sure that this place is big enough for both of us so why don't you think about leaving that is information that's external information that's what they are providing you and you start processing this information information and the idea is if you are the offender if you are the guilty party and what you said or did that offended them you need to make that right now I don't want to get too far field here but do you realize also that there are things that need to be said that will offend people but there to taking offense is as much or more on their side than it is on yours with expressions such as the truth hurts sometimes when you say something to someone that is true it hurts and they are offended when you have opportunity to proclaim the gospel to someone you have to deal if you are going to be faithful to the gospel you have to deal with the need for salvation why there is a need and when you bring up the fact that each individual is a sinner including the person to whom you speak they may well be offended at that be unusual for them not to be offended me a sinner I'm a nice guy what are you talking about I'm not a you know and people are offended at that you you can't apologize for that you can't well I'm sorry I offended you I didn't mean it let me retract that no no so there are all kinds of nuances and exceptions to this and and I realize that they exist but we are just trying to stay with the main track now once once we have processed the information internally and we have come to the conclusion that we were wrong that what we said was not simply truth that they were offended at and we don't apologize for the truth but what we said we were out of line we were unkind we were hurtful to them we were abrasive we offended them and we are to blame once you process that and come to that conclusion then repentance is in order and repentance means you change your mind so that if you had to do over again you wouldn't that's what repentance means you change your position the word is methanomic and we extend an apology and we extend an apology forgiveness is requested and then forgiveness is granted restoration is realized and increased closeness is affected now we're going to deal with each of those in more detail but I just wanted you to see them like that all together and you will be from time to time repentance is one of the most necessary and profound concepts in all of the word of God it is a term that is virtually lost even in evangelical circles today not much being said about repentance and I don't know of any greater need than that repentance is a concept that God loves because God loves and values relationships

the connection between repentance and relationships is obvious and I hope it's going to become a whole lot more obvious you know it's just a word that we don't use very much the Bible is full of it Old Testament and New but we don't talk about it very much as I said before to most people repent is what they think of what they think of is this nerdy little creature wearing the white gown and carrying a sign that says repent the end is near and everybody kind of gets a chuckle out of it but let me tell you something God in heaven isn't chuckling he sees repentance as the key to restoring wounded relationships repentance as the key to restoring wounded relationships repentance on the part of one who is wrong is the first step toward repairing a broken relationship and when we move from being wrong to becoming right because we have reversed our position that's repentance repentance we have need for repentance from individuals all the way to nations there have been times in our history when presidents have declared a day of mourning and fasting and prayer and I don't know whether the word repentance was ever used or not but it should have been we as a nation have things for which we could and should repent we have a congress that is sitting that needs to be a repentant congress repentance however most of them would probably say well that wasn't us that was those other guys and they're gone they made those decisions they passed those bills years ago we didn't have anything to do with that well repentance biblically speaking is almost always in vogue because there is always a need to repent anytime and every time you discover that you have been wrong anything anything anything anything anything anything anything anything the only corrective the only corrective the only the only corrective recourse that you have is to change your mind because the facts information requires it so you get in line with the information and you reverse yourself is it embarrassing of course it is of course it's embarrassing you're saying I was wrong I just flat out blew it back there I was wrong I was wrong I need to change my mind about this and let me tell you something that does not come easily and I am convinced that it comes harder for men than it does for women you heard about the gal who met her prince charming and she was convinced that he was Mr.

[18 : 58] right and she married him and discovered that his first name was always always and as she entered on into the relationship she became very determined that she was going to change his first name from always to never and that's the story of a lot of relationships isn't a lot of marriages it is a tough pill to swallow to be able to step up and say you know what I was just flat out wrong here I was wrong I'm sorry I apologize that is not an easy I know men who would take 30 lashes before they do that that's what the psalmist was talking about God was talking about don't be as the horse or as the mule that's the hard heartedness the stubbornness dig your feet in and I shall not be moved well that which leads us to repentance is information plus feelings what do feelings have to do with it everything cannot divorce emotion and feelings from the intellect it is part of the human package I wish I better understood exactly how they relate one to another but I know enough about them to know that they do relate it is information plus feelings which is a sense of felt guilt or remorse this is what David was talking about when I covered my sin my body was wracked with pain day and night and I couldn't sleep and on and on and on and on that's a sense of felt guilt or remorse for what we have said or done that wounded or offended the other party and resulted in our emotional separation or maybe geographical separation or in the case of a marriage it might even result in legal separation or divorce the key message the key message the key message of all of the Old Testament prophets and I want to emphasize this the key message for all of the Old Testament prophets was repentance and all the while they were preaching to the children of Israel either the northern ten tribes the southern two tribes or when they were all together as a congregate all together as a congregate all together as a congregate all together as a congregate body the message of all of the prophets Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel Daniel all of them all of the minor prophets the message of all of them without exception Elijah and Elisha was repent repent repent why because they were wrong they were wrong and the prophets were calling them on it revealing their sin preaching against their sin publicizing their sin and that is never appreciated Jesus said to the generation of his son which which of your fathers which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute just name one of the prophets that your fathers your ancestors did not persecute and why did they persecute them because they hated their message their message was one that pointed out the wrong and the shortcomings of the people

and they don't like that and they don't like that you know something they still don't that's just human nature but that's why God always raises up prophets because he loves people and he wants to provide them an opportunity to repent so what do they need they need information and when you give people the gospel they change their mind they change their mind they change their mind wow what a powerful concept and it's so simple that's all you do when you proclaim the gospel is you give people information to work with and they process the information and they reach a conclusion and happily the conclusion will be you know what I guess I'm not right with God I guess heaven is not my home I guess I really am a sinful being it all kind of comes home to me it all fits it all connects and you know what I need to do I need to face the music on this I need to turn my back on self-righteousness and my elevated opinion of myself and I need to see myself as God sees me and it's not a very pretty picture and I need to put my faith and I need to put my faith and I need to put my faith and trust in Jesus Christ because he died for me pay the price of my sin all that person is doing is processing information and reaching a conclusion that causes him to change his mind this is why I say no one can be saved without repenting we just don't think of it as repenting and a person can repent and not even know that they're repenting not even realizing that they're processing information and reaching a different conclusion what I'm trying to do is give you the mechanics of this so you can see how this thing works even if you don't realize it when it's going on in your own heart and mind it's going on it's part of our makeup it's the way we are put together and we can thank God for the ability to do that metanoia repentance data or information through the mind the intellect deals with the facts of the matter and replays the scene that's information and sometimes we replay it over and over and over and over again and it begins to wear on us that's the guilt accumulation guilt guilt guilt guilt is the emotional pain and consequence from the recognition that you have violated a standard and it really bothers you good if it doesn't bother you you've got a much bigger problem

I remember reading an article several years ago it was in an FBI report that they put out periodically about crime statistics etc and what's going on in the nation and this is up 4% and this is down 3% and so on and so on and this one gentleman was an expert and a profiler in the FBI and he shared his concerns in saying and this was probably 20 years ago I usually think it was 10 and then I double it and I come pretty close you know how it is reckoning time and anyway this gentleman who was a well respected authority in the FBI said we are as a nation we are now rearing a group of preteen young people who are going to one day be super predators that was a term that he used we are now rearing a group of preteen children who are going to grow up to be super predators these individuals will be devoid of a conscience they will have no remorse over anything they have done no feelings of sympathy for their victims they will be completely cold and calculating have we seen anybody like that over the last five years and you know these young people that go into schools and shoot up the place murder classmates and students and teachers what's the problem

I'll tell you what the problem is problem is unresolved offenses very often it's connected with what we call bullying or making fun of kids wounding kids injuring their psyches making them build up powerful powerful steam of resentment happens in co-workers too they've even coined an expression going postal where you have it in for the people who have offended you at work and you come into the place with a weapon or multiple weapons and you shoot as many people as you can everybody who has hurt you or wronged you now nobody in any way shape or form is justifying what they do that's crazy but I am trying to explain why they do it it's a very logical rational response to them we see it as murderous and completely unjustified but they don't they don't and many times if they are taken alive incarcerated put in prison examined questioned stone faced hard hearted no remorse they got what was coming to them those dirty so and so's

I'm only sorry I didn't take out more of them where is that coming from devoid of a conscience no feeling or compassion for their fellow human being and they are convinced that they didn't have any for them once we process the information about the offense then we come to the crisis this is the turning point do we now harden our heart and refuse to repent or do we do as David did when confronted with information and let's go if we will please to Psalm 51 I'd like to read a few verses here Psalm 51 be gracious to me O God according to thy loving kindness according to the greatness of thy compassion blot out my transgressions well you can understand that David is acknowledging them there's nothing to blot out if he doesn't have any he knows full well he has some wash me thoroughly from my iniquity cleanse me from my sin for I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me no excuses none of this well she was a beautiful woman and after all

[31 : 29] I'm just a normal healthy male what did you expect confronted with that kind of temptation what guy wouldn't cave in and take advantage of the situation none of that and he's not seeking to justify anything he's just flat out admitting my sin is ever before me against thee the only have I sinned and done what is evil in thy sight skip down if you would please for time's sake to verse 14 deliver me from blood guiltiness O God thou God of my salvation and then my tongue will joyfully sing of thy righteousness in singing now I'm miserable now I'm moaning and groaning now but once I am assured that I enjoy your forgiveness then everything will be okay many of you remember our daughter

Dawn Elizabeth and she was the Lord took her quite unexpectedly at the age of 30 in 1960 1995 Barbara and I were out of town and her death was a complete shock to everyone but when Dawn was about three or four years of age she was diagnosed as mentally retarded and epileptic and she was one of the she was one of the epileptics that was never controlled with medication 90% of people who have epilepsy can be well controlled provided they stay on their medication Dawn was on every medication known to medical science and unfortunately she just fell in the 10% that could not be controlled no matter what and Barbara early on made the decision that well if in God's providence and wisdom we have been blessed with a retired daughter who has certain deficiencies and certain social shortcomings etc there is one thing we are going to make certain of and that is that even in that negative kind of situation she is going to be a respectful and a thoughtful child to the extent of her ability and

Barbara and I were always agreed that as parents you do not have the right to raise a brat and inflict them on society that you must administer discipline and you must make certain demands upon these children and see to it that they fulfill them for their own good as well as for society's good and even though Dawn has this tremendous deficiency we are not going to allow her to become a mentally retarded spoiled brat so we are going to make certain demands of her that she is able to fulfill within her capabilities and she proceeded to explain to her what it meant to apologize to ask forgiveness to be forgiving and sometimes

Dawn had difficulty keeping these things separate and I remember on one particular occasion she was acting up I don't remember what it was but when you have a child like this you always have a tremendous difficulty in trying to determine what area of their behavior they are actually responsible for and what area of their behavior are they not responsible for because it's just beyond her and sometimes we felt like we were walking a tight rope we wanted to cut her slack where it was needed and where it was a good thing but we didn't want to let her get away with things just to look the other way and one time she and Dawn had some kind of a set to about something I don't know what it was and she told Dawn young lady you just go to your room and Dawn was about she was probably 25 years old at the time but mentally she was about four or five and she said young lady you go to your room and you stay there until you are ready to come out and apologize and I will forgive you then and she turned around and stomped off to her room slammed the door went in her room she was in there for about three minutes which to her probably seemed like three hours you know and pretty soon she came out blubbering crying tears running down her cheeks she threw her arms around

Barbara and says to Barbara I forgive you and I accept your apology and of course Barbara lost the project but you don't have that excuse you know the difference between forgiveness and an apology here in Psalm 51 where he is acknowledging this I want you to note verse 17 the psalmist said the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit what is that a broken spirit God is pleased with a broken spirit how is it that a broken spirit is a sacrifice what is it that is sacrificed

[38 : 08] I'll tell you what it is that is sacrificed when you have a spirit that is broken you have a human ego that is thrown upon the altar and sacrificed and that ego is something that we want to preserve and protect because it is so precious to us our ego it's another name for the flesh the ego is the fortress of the flesh broken spirit a broken and a contrite heart oh god thou wilt not despise what do you do when you despise something you look down on it that's what the word means despise means to look down your nose at someone or something to demean them to look down upon them to belittle them that's what it means to despise and the opposite is to look up to someone in the sense of honor or respect it's a huge difference between looking down someone and looking up to someone one is disgrace the other is honor they are opposites god will not look down upon a contrite heart he respects it and he honors a contrite heart what does the word contrite mean it means to smash to break to crush to destroy that's what contrition is it involves our self depreciation self deprecation all we are doing is taking a rightful position under god and it is debilitating to the human ego but let me tell you something it is the most wonderful spiritual exercise which anyone can engage a broken and a contrite heart oh god thou wilt not despise to be contrite means to be broken in pieces to collapse to be defenseless that's a contrite heart defenseless you're not throwing anything into the fray to justify yourself you are taking the blame the guilt you are absorbing it because it's yours you deserve it own it and you'll be a better person for it it has a cleansing cathartic effect because you're dealing with reality you're dealing with what really is in the situation there is absolutely nothing like it

I'd like to close with a passage from Luke chapter 18 and this is perhaps one of the most poignant examples of a contrite spirit a broken spirit and it is one with which we are all familiar it is in a parable that our Lord has given and he is interestingly enough he is giving this parable in the presence of those to whom it was really addressed and applicable in Luke 18 and verse 9 he told also this parable to certain ones ah look at this he told this parable to certain ones who trusted in themselves that they were righteous this is this is a self righteous crowd and they viewed others with contempt in other words they despised others looked down on others and the illustration he gives is two men went up into the temple to pray one a

Pharisee who is sociologically and spiritually the cream of the crop these were the spiritual elite of the day if anybody had it all together it was this crowd the Pharisees and the other is a tax gatherer that's the other extreme you can't get any more in the sociological gutter of Israeli society in this time than to be a tax gatherer because you not only collected taxes from your fellow Jewish countrymen but you collected them by being on the Roman payroll so you were a traitor as far as they were concerned you were the scum of the earth the tax collector and they went up to the temple to pray and the Pharisee stood and was praying thus to himself God I thank thee that

I am not like other people swindlers unjust adulterers or even like this tax gatherer can't you see him looking down his nose at this lowly tax gatherer I'm glad I'm not like one of them I'm glad I'm not like him I fast twice a week I pay tithes of all that I get the implication hey God aren't you impressed aren't you really relieved that I'm on your side but the tax gatherer standing some distance away was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven but was beating his breast saying God be merciful to me the sinner

I tell you said Jesus this man went down to his house justified rather than the other for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled but he who humbles himself shall be exalted wow what a powerful illustration Jesus said in the Beatitudes blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven what does it mean to be poor in spirit it means to be lacking and to be deficient and to be willing to admit it that's what it means to be poor in spirit and when we are we recognize that God has available to us everything that we lack when once we are willing to admit that we have a lack that we don't have it together that we aren't self sufficient that we cannot and do not in and of ourselves please

[46 : 26] God in any way shape or form it is just amazing how the church has been here for 2000 years and we have still unsuccessfully communicated what we are all about to the general population of the world they think that people who go to church are the goody two shoes and the people who have it all together and they don't understand that the reason we go to church is because we don't have it all together and we know that we're willing to admit that we don't come here so we can show off our spiritual wearers and communicate to everybody how wonderful we are we come here because we are willing to acknowledge one to another that we are all sinners saved by grace standing in the need of prayer there isn't a one of us who thinks we have arrived and if you think you have arrived spiritually you're in the wrong fellowship you don't fit here we are all people who are in process hopefully moving in the right direction but sometimes our movement is two steps forward and one step backwards but that's part of our humanity that's the way we are put together progress is not always what we would like it to be but that's not God's fault all throughout this series one thing

I want to keep emphasizing and I want you to get this through and through if you will please all of these biblical dynamics that we are talking about for repairing and maintaining human relations are all available to every single person in the body of Christ but they must be implemented with your will they are available to you but God does not impose them upon you he says here they are I want you to exercise your will in implementing these things and if you do I will take care of the consequences and it is wonderful I'm speaking from personal experience and our father how grateful we are for the principles that you have provided we do pray for a facility of really understanding these things and having sufficient insight to them so that we can see mechanically and methodically how they actually work in a day to day relational laboratory we want this to be practical and helpful and we want to see it implemented here in our own assembly and in the families that you have so graciously given us this is our prayer in

Christ's name Amen