

3 Essentials to Restoring a Relationship

"We know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28, MEV).

Forgiveness is not resuming a relationship without change. In fact, forgiveness and resuming a relationship are two different things.

One of them is what you do as the offended person. Resuming the relationship is what the other person does in order to get back into your good graces. Saying "I'm sorry" is not enough.

In fact, the Bible teaches three things that are essential to resume a relationship that's been broken. These are all what the offender has to do.

1. Restoring a relationship requires repentance. In other words, you're truly saddened about what you did. That's not just saying, "I'm sorry." It means saying, "I was wrong. Please forgive me." You can be sorry that the weather was bad or something like that, but repentance is admitting wrong and being truly sorry.

2. Restoring a relationship requires restitution. Sometimes you have to do some kind of physical or material restitution. Even when you're forgiven, it doesn't mean you're off the hook. You still have to pay a debt to society or to someone for what was damaged or destroyed by your actions.

3. Restoring a relationship requires rebuilding trust. That, friends, takes a long, long time. When somebody hurts you, you have to forgive him or her immediately. But you don't have to trust that person immediately. Forgiveness is built on grace and is unconditional. Trust has to be rebuilt over a period of

time.

Most people in our culture don't get the difference between forgiveness and rebuilding trust in a relationship. Whenever a political or religious leader gets caught in a scandal, there will always be people who say, "We're all imperfect. We're all human. We need to just forgive him and keep on going."

No! You must forgive him immediately, but you don't have to trust him. The Bible says trust is built with time. Credibility is what a leader leads with. All leaders must have trust; it's the currency they live in. If you lose trust, you have lost your right to lead at that moment. You may have the title, but you're not the leader until you rebuild trust. And that isn't going to happen instantly.

Talk It Over

- What does it take for someone to regain your trust? What are you willing to do to regain someone's trust?
- Give some examples from your life when you were sorry and when you were truly repentant.
- In these three factors for restoring a relationship, what is the responsibility of the person who was offended? {eoa}

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