

Avoid These Carnal Weapons When Dealing With Relationship Wounds

Relationships are complicated—they're messy, difficult and take a lot of work. Sometimes they go wrong and people hurt us, or we hurt them, causing pain that goes deep. It's inevitable: As long as there are people in our lives, there will be pain!

Fortunately, God knew this so He put a lot of practical wisdom about relationships in the Bible.

In his series "How to Restore a Wounded Relationship," IHOPKC director Mike Bickle shares real life examples of how to heal the hurt and disappointment that so many of us feel.

Whether you've been hurt by a child, boyfriend or girlfriend, co-worker, or spouse, the Lord wants to bring restoration and healing. He can touch the deepest hurts and untangle even the most complicated relational webs, because "with God, all things are possible" (Mark 10:27).

The most common way a relationship is wounded is through corrupt, perverse and sarcastic speech. The Bible also warns against complaining, which hurts our spirits and drives people away.

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue" (Prov. 18:21).

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit" (Prov. 15:4).

Our speech includes what comes out of our mouths *and* what we type, text and post online. Corrupt, perverse words grieve not only the Holy Spirit but the speaker and the hearer as well, so we should follow David's example and ask God to "set a

guard” over our mouths and hands (Ps. 141:3).

When we accuse others unfairly or criticize, belittle and make fun of them, the relationship suffers. We tell ourselves it’s nothing, or just innocent play, but over time a tiny sore can become a gaping wound; what starts as a tense or strained relationship fractures or becomes openly hostile if the hurt isn’t addressed.

And this is true whether we’re on the giving or receiving end: The pain from corrupt speech will always show up, even if we try to deny it. As Christians, we must learn to deal with hurt emotions.

The Bible exhorts us to avoid saying perverse things: “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers (Eph. 4:29). This is our goal, and something we can all start practicing.

But what if damage has already been done? Jesus instructs us to go to our brother (or sister) and make a godly appeal. We are to go to them when they have something against us (Matt. 5:23–24) *and* if we have something against them (Matt. 18:15–20). This is hard, but God will help if we partner with Him!

A godly appeal means coming in the right tone, timing and spirit, in a way that shows love for the person—even if they are an enemy (Matt. 5:44). It involves humility and being willing to affirm the person, even while telling them how their actions or words were hurtful or wrong.

And we must follow the right process, by going to them individually before sharing the matter with others (Matt. 18:15–20). If a meeting is going to be especially tense, you may seek counsel from a godly friend or mentor about how to handle yourself, but this is *not* the same as sharing the problem with multiple people or gossiping about it.

Relationships take time to develop and can be damaged quickly by a careless word or gesture. The healing may take time, but God is faithful and will guide us if we ask. Often, we will have to confess our own faults and show mercy in order to receive it from others and from God (Matt. 5:7; 6:14–15).

The bottom line is to speak and act in love. As Mike explains, “The one who loves most is the one who wins in God’s court.” Similarly, the writer of 1 Peter 4:8 exhorts us to “above all things have unfailing love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.”

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