

God's Recipe to Repair Your Ripped Relationships in 2025

"Ripped" abs are one thing, but ripped family and friend relationships are something else. Left to linger, they take an incredibly painful emotional, spiritual and mental toll on our lives. Who comes to mind as you read these words?

Remember how Paul told the Philippian community of believers to plead with two lovely ladies named Euodia and Syntyche to please end their relational differences and restore the unity to which God calls us as His family (Phil. 4:2-3)? How would you like to be remembered throughout history for being like these two bickering babes? Neither should we want to be remembered like this by family and friends because we wouldn't "die to ourselves" and walk humbly (even submit to mediation, Matt. 18:15-16) to have our broken relationships healed for the glory of God.

Start Strong

Everyone likes a fresh start. A new beginning. The opportunity to put some things behind us and get going on the pathway to success. With the recent election, there is an air of optimism, so let's lean into it for unity and a brand-new future.

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We don't have to keep looking in the rearview mirror or remain stuck. Pivoting may not be easy, but it pays rich dividends!

The apostle Paul, like all of us, made mistakes and experienced relational conflicts with people (such as Peter and Barnabas) but demonstrated his maturity and character by resolving the rifts and reminding us to do likewise, remaining

forward looking rather than plagued by regrets.

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“Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. All of us, then, who are mature should take such a view of things” (Phil. 3:13b–15a, NIV).

As a spirit of accusation has been unleashed from hell to bring division to churches, couples, families and friends, long-standing relationships have splintered, causing trauma and terrible examples to onlookers (especially our children and young people). Let’s change it.

In John 17 Jesus prayed for us before His crucifixion, “Father, I pray they be one, even as we are one, so that the world may believe that You have sent me” (see vv. 20-23). In other words, if the world does not see love and unity among God’s people, Jesus is giving them the right to question whether He came from God. Shocking but sobering.

Auld Lang Syne

On New Year’s Eve around the world, friends and family gather to traditionally mumble through a 1788 Scottish song that emphasizes the question: Should old acquaintances be forgotten, or should we once again remember and rekindle long-standing relationships, not letting them fade into “once upon a time?”

As we bid farewell to the old year, we must be careful to go forward with kindness and not dwell on past issues that divide us. “Should old acquaintance, be forgotten and never thought upon, the flames of love extinguished, the heart grown cold, that thou can’t reflect on days once upon a time?”

Embarking on a fresh new year gives all of us the opportunity to humble ourselves before God and one another, reflect on the undeserved forgiveness and mercy God has given us, then do as Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. Here, He told us when we come before His presence to put down our gift and first be reconciled to someone where an offense exists. He also stated that if we do not forgive others (70 times seven), neither will our heavenly Father forgive us (see Matt. 18:21-23, 6:14-15).

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Let's engage in the spiritual discipline of reconciliation.

For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. ... Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled" (Heb. 12:11-17, ESV).

10 Biblical Steps to Restore a Relationship

1. Affirm that being reconciled is a directive, not an elective (Matt. 5:23-24).
2. Reject passivity and act intentionally to thwart the "accuser of our brethren" (Rev. 12:10b, NKJV).
3. Conduct yourself in a godly manner, being "swift to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger" (James 1:19b, ESV).
4. Honor due process, coming in a spirit of inquiry and not

accusation, knowing “the first to present his case seems right, until the other comes and examines him” (Prov. 18:17).

5. Purpose to give people the benefit of the doubt and be loving, avoiding inflammatory, categorical statements that are inconsistent with charitable conversation (1 Cor. 13).
6. Resist all prideful, self-righteous attitudes and actions in dialogue, remembering that we are all sinners saved by grace (Jer. 17:9–10).
7. Uphold the directive of Jesus to meet privately and personally to handle apparent sinful conduct, thereby steering clear of gossip and slander (Matt. 18:15).
8. After thorough interaction, if you are at an impasse, follow the instruction of Jesus and humble yourself to seek mature biblical counsel to help resolve the conflict (Matt. 18:15–16).
9. In repairing relationships, intentionally extend mercy to others, differentiating between an isolated incident and an ongoing pattern of behavior (James 2:13).
10. Celebrating God-given diversity within the Christian community, pledge to be gracious in recognizing different preferences, personalities and positions on gray areas and disputable matters, refusing to let them be a source of division (Rom. 14).

Here’s the deal: The new year is beginning, and this is going to be our opportunity to launch into it with a new sense of freedom because we’ve put God first and dealt with division to walk in unity for God’s glory. I will be honest in acknowledging that my family and I have fallen short in this area this past year, but we’re moving forward to honor God through repentance and reconciliation efforts.

“Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!—Life forevermore” (Ps. 133:1, 3, NKJV).

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