

Rick Warren: The First Step in Restoring Your Relationships

“Where do wars and fights among you come from? Do they not come from your lusts that war in your body? You lust and do not have, so you kill. You desire to have and cannot obtain. You fight and war. Yet you do not have, because you do not ask” (James 4:1-2).

The first biblical step toward restoring a relationship is to talk to God before talking to the person.

Discuss the problem with God. If you’ll pray about the conflict first instead of gossiping to a friend, you’ll often discover that either God changes your heart or he changes the other person without your help.

All your relationships would go more smoothly if you would just pray more about them. As David did with his psalms, use prayer to ventilate vertically. Tell God your frustrations. Cry out to him. He’s never surprised or upset by your anger, hurt, insecurity or any other emotions. So tell him exactly how you feel.

Most conflict is rooted in unmet needs, and some of these needs can only be met by God. When you expect anyone—a friend, spouse, pastor or family member—to meet a need that only God can fulfill, you are setting yourself up for disappointment and bitterness. There are many needs only God can meet.

The apostle James noted that many of our conflicts are caused by *prayerlessness*: “Where do wars and fights among you come from? ... You lust and you do not have ... Yet you do not have, because you do not ask” (James 4:1-2).

Instead of looking to God, we look to others to make us happy and then get angry when they fail us. God says, “Why don’t you come to Me first?”

Talk It Over

- What is the first thing you usually do when you have a conflict with someone?
- Why do you think our first inclination is often to gossip about a conflict?
- Does your prayer life reflect that only God can meet all your needs? Why or why not?

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