

When You've Been Wronged.

The Final Chapter: When Reconciliation Fails.

Even after all the fairly intense chapters on the need and process of reconciliation, it's possible that you, like a tormented prisoner, aren't ready to give up your painful past, and intend to hang on to your offences. Satan has used these offences to open your heart to a series of lies, brought on by your stubbornness, that have become a place of bondage for you due to an ugly, relentless grudge. Those lies keep people imprisoned—lies about who God is and about being entitled to personal justice. They keep people in chains to their pain and shame. People who are hurting are very susceptible to believing lies.

Before we identify the lies and how to overcome them, let's look at the goal: reconciliation. Of course, full reconciliation is the goal, but sometimes we cannot achieve total reconciliation.

Kinds of Reconciliation.

Full Reconciliation

Full reconciliation can occur when trust, honesty, and respect are all present; it happens when forgiveness restores the belief that two people, or classes of people, have been brought together in faith, each concerned about the welfare of the other. When trust, forgiveness, or respect is lacking, it is difficult to move ahead in a meaningful relationship.

Partial Reconciliation

Second, there is *partial reconciliation*. This happens when there is a recognition of wrongdoing; forgiveness has been both requested and received, but trust and respect have been so seriously eroded that there cannot be any real in-depth friendship. **Note...If we trivialize what the other party considers serious, there cannot be full reconciliation.** Keep in mind that *when sin is viewed superficially, it will be dealt with superficially.*

Partial reconciliation also comes about where the real fruit of repentance is lacking. Where little effort is made to rectify the wrong, or to change behavior, then the relationship will always be suspect.

Probably there are many people in our past with whom we are partially reconciled: there is a cordial relationship, a mutual commitment to treat one another with respect, but the memories of the past make us wary and cautious. And of course, sometimes there are personality differences that make it difficult to be in full fellowship with others. Remember that others might think about us what we think about them! Perhaps we have eroded their trust or been unfair in our past dealings. Whenever possible, we should do what we can to make partial reconciliation full reconciliation.

No Reconciliation

Throughout this study we have emphasized that you cannot reconcile with a spear thrower or a destroyer. David could never have reconciled with Saul. It is impossible to reconcile with someone whose goal is to control or destroy you. We cannot reconcile with those who seek our undoing.

There can be no reconciliation with a person who believes that your forgiveness wipes out his or her legitimate debts. Forgiveness does not wipe out the natural and necessary consequences of wrongdoing. Even when God forgives us, we still must endure the results of what we've done. Just ask King David.

Also, you can't reconcile with a person who has died, or a person who would only use your request for forgiveness as another reason to prove that you are wrong, and they are totally innocent.

If you must live near those with whom reconciliation has failed, you have inner, God-given resources to cope victoriously in such circumstances. For one thing, don't let the controlling person—the person who refuses rational reconciliation—don't let them define you. You are responsible for yourself, not the difficult people who happen to be in your life. Don't give this person ownership of your feelings. You must be in control of who you are and what God has called you to do.

Almost always there is no use trying to change the opinions of the person who won't reconcile. Usually at this point they are only interested in their version of

the truth, **Not the Truth!** You must entrust them solely to God. As for you, stop watering silk flowers. Seek God for wisdom. Just as God was there for David when Saul was chasing him, just so God is there for us when we encounter difficult people who refuse all counsel from us or others. Our responsibility is to be a healthy, godly, Spirit-filled person, and God uses these situations to develop qualities we'd never otherwise have.

Yes, I believe in one sided forgiveness. Bitterness must be released from our lives, or we are the losers. When we don't forgive those who have wronged us, our lives will remain under the control of those who have done us the most damage. Let me say it again: Don't let their sin ruin your life.

Satan's Big Lies

"God doesn't care about my pain." Those who believe this lie tell themselves, *If God cared He would have judged the person who has wounded me; instead, He has postponed His justice for some elusive future date, I won't wait for that.*

"If I'm hurting, I'm justified in making everyone around me equally miserable." It's the law of misery loves company—but rather, it's misery *demand*s company. Many angry parents have overcorrected their children while angry or bitter, thus, they are passing their hurt to a future generation. The long-term effects of our bitterness can affect people whom we shall never meet.

"When I forgive, I minimize the wrong I've suffered." Not true. The injustice is no less when you forgive; God recognizes the injustice. But even if reconciliation is not possible, there is a kind of one sided forgiveness that you must experience to set yourself free. When reconciliation fails, we must recall the one central truth: We must forgive the offender.

Forgiveness is releasing the bitterness despite the pain. Don't deny the pain; rather, forgive in the midst of pain. When you forgive you do not minimize the hurt, the pain, or the evil. What you do is release it into the Lord's capable and loving hands. He is the perfect judge and ultimate keeper of justice.

The Truth Will Set You Free

For those caught in the web of Satan's lies, what's needed is a strong dose of divine truth. Paul provides the secret to leaving your past behind and moving to a future of joy and usefulness in Romans, Chapter 12: 9-21.

How to Counter Satan's Lies

- Speak words of blessings. Matthew 5:44, Romans 12:14.
- Feel the emotions of your adversary. Romans 12:15.
- Act in a way that promotes harmony and makes restoration possible. Romans 12: 16-17.

Romans 12:20-21.

- If your enemy is hungry, feed him.
- If your enemy is thirsty, give him something to drink.
- Overcome all evil with good.

Let the Chains Fall Off. Decide to Forgive and Let Go!

I urge you right now to surrender your pain to Christ. Only He is able to set you free from the prison of resentment. Don't allow the foolish, petty deeds of a long lost past chain you to a life of misery and anger. Your marriage has suffered long enough, your children and grandchildren have endured the brunt of your angry outburst for too long already, your ministry is dangling by a thread. Give it up now! Let your wounds become scars and start living again. My prayer is you will.

Remember the warning. "Bitterness is like drinking poison and expecting your enemy to die!"

Are you ready to "give it all up"?

I have one more "ism" for you. "They say, your perception is your reality." However, "your perception can become obscured by your prejudices."

Isn't it funny, two different people commit the same offence against us, however, due to the relationship we have with one but not the other can end up with two very different results.

I pray that this study has blessed you. And that hearts and minds have been changed for the Glory of God. May you live a life free of bitterness and wrath, and may the love of God live in you and shine out from you to a world that is lost in darkness. And may the God of Peace grant you His Wonderful Peace. Amen.

Charlie

*This study has been based on the book and DVD, "When You've Been **Wronged**" Moving from Bitterness to **Forgiveness** by Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer, Senior Pastor of the Moody Bible Church in Chicago, IL.*

Blessings!