

Fixing Broken Relationships

READING

Romans 12

Romans 14

1 John 3

1 John 4

There cannot be any relationship in all of Creation worse than “God and I are enemies”. And God found a way to fix that. So there is definitely hope for you two.

We all want our relationships to be good. When our relationships are good, everything else in life seems easier to deal with.

But sometimes they go bad. It doesn't matter where the “blame” lies. Firstly because wherever the blame lies, you are both suffering because of it. And secondly because in almost 30 years of pastoral care, I have never seen a relationship between two people where one person had all the blame for what was going wrong.

But this is not about blame. This is about fixing it. Hopefully you're reading it while you're still at the stage that you still both want to fix it. But as long as one of you is still committed to making it work there is hope. Lots of hope.

No matter how bad your relationship with this other person has become it is not as bad as your relationship with God used to be. You and God used to be enemies. There cannot be any relationship in all of Creation worse than “God and I are enemies”. And God found a way to fix that. So there is definitely hope for you two.

God fixed it by making a decision. He decided to unconditionally love you, no matter what.

And not just any love. A completely unselfish love that always put your needs above his. Always.

God kept loving you as you rejected him. Probably time after time. As you flirted around with the world. As you ran off into sin after sin. Perhaps even cheating on him with other religions and so called “gods”.

God just kept loving you. 100%. unselfishly. unconditionally.

Until eventually you came back to him. Repenting. Sorry. Wanting him. Wanting to be restored to a good relationship with him. Wanting with all your heart to love him back.

Sometimes our human relationships are so far gone that this is what it takes to fix them. One person in the relationship has to make the decision that regardless of what they get back from the other person, they will unconditionally love them. They will treat them as if they are getting back the love they crave, even if they are only getting back spiteful hate and hurt.

Are you willing to be that person?

If you are, then your relationship has hope. There is no guarantee, but it has a LOT more hope than it had two minutes ago before you made that decision. A lot more.

It's not going to be easy. Unconditional love is tough. It hurts. It can sometimes hurt way more than it has been hurting so far. Because you are putting so much more in and maybe getting even less back.

But the other person will notice. In time they will be thinking to themselves, “what the heck is going on.”

Keep loving them.

Read the book “Five Love Languages” by Chapman. And the summary of them [here](#).

Work out their love language and go hard. Go for it with everything you've got.

Do not expect instant success. Just like God when he tried to get your attention, it might take a long time. You have to be prepared for the long haul. Just keep on loving them in **their** language.

Challenge yourself every day, to come up with ways to love them better than you did yesterday.

And finally, pray. Pray a lot. Pray every time you try to love them.

Loving someone who wants out of a relationship is difficult work. Even just loving

someone who has been hurt is difficult work. Probably your love won't be enough.

Especially when you are at the point that you want to love them but you feel like you just can't do it...

Pray. Ask God to take the hate, or anger, or frustration from your heart. Close your eyes and actually picture yourself reaching into your heart and cupping the hate in your hand

and passing it up to God. Ask him to take it from you and to replace it with his own love.

To fill your heart with his love, so that you will be able to pour out, not your own, but

God's love to the other person.

To give her credit, I first heard this idea 20 odd years ago from Nancy Missler in a series of talks she called “The Way of Agape”.

There is still hope for your relationship. But you can't just “give it a try”, you have to be completely committed to it. For a while you are going to have to do all the work.

And keep praying. Keep God's love flowing out of you. And you might just get that relationship you always wanted, without even leaving the one you're in now.