



Hope
for the
Heart

Reconciliation

QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

An Excerpt from the *KEYS FOR LIVING*

God's Heart on Reconciliation

- **Rejecting** relationships ... leads to disunity and dysfunction.
Restoring relationships ... lets healing and harmony prevail.
Romans 12:16 says ... *"Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud."*
- **Rejecting** relationships ... grieves the heart of God.
Restoring relationships ... gladdens the heart of God.
Philippians 2:2 says ... *"Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."*
- **Rejecting** relationships ... signals unforgiveness.
Restoring relationships ... signifies forgiveness.
Luke 6:37 says ... *"Forgive, and you will be forgiven."*
- **Rejecting** relationships ... deepens guilt and drains joy.
Restoring relationships ... dissipates burdensome emotions.
Psalm 38:4 says ... *"My guilt has overwhelmed me like a burden too heavy to bear."*
- **Rejecting** relationships ... breeds deep-seated anger and hostility.
Restoring relationships ... brings about peace.
Ephesians 4:26 says ... *"In your anger do not sin: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry."*
- **Rejecting** relationships ... misses opportunities to show mercy.
Restoring relationships ... mirrors the character of God.
Psalm 25:6 says ... *"Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old."*

"Make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him."

(2 Peter 3:14)

Types of Reconciliation

- **Relational:** to bring a broken relationship into harmony
- **Personal:** to be at peace with our circumstances or with ourselves

- **Financial:** to bring accounting records into agreement
- **Spiritual:** to be at harmony with God

"All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation."

(2 Corinthians 5:18)

What Characterizes a Heart of Reconciliation?

- **Humility:** Do I focus on how much the Lord continues to forgive me?
- **Self-examination:** Do I expect change only in others, or do I recognize my own need to change also?
- **Forgiveness:** Do I choose to release my personal rights and allow the Lord to empower me to forgive?
- **Confrontation:** Do I communicate my feelings without accusation?
- **Communication:** Do I set aside quality time to share my heart and have personal interaction?
- **Risk taking:** Do I risk rejection, knowing that God's love and acceptance will fulfill me?
- **Commitment:** Do I set aside my personal hurt for the sake of the relationship?
- **Confidence:** Do I trust God to heal my heartaches and to meet my needs?

"The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it."

(1 Thessalonians 5:24)

Reconciliation vs. Forgiveness

- **Reconciliation** focuses on the relationship.
Forgiveness focuses on the offense.
- **Reconciliation** requires at least two people.
Forgiveness requires only one person.

- **Reconciliation** is necessarily reciprocal.
Forgiveness is not necessarily reciprocal but can be directed only one-way.
- **Reconciliation** is the choice to rejoin the offender.
Forgiveness is the choice to release the offender.
- **Reconciliation** involves a change in behavior by the offender.
Forgiveness involves a change in thinking about the offender.
- **Reconciliation** is a restored relationship based on restored trust.
Forgiveness is a free gift to the one who has broken trust.
- **Reconciliation** is offered to the offender because it has been earned.
Forgiveness is extended even if it is never, ever earned.
- **Reconciliation** is conditional, based on repentance.
Forgiveness is unconditional, regardless of a lack of repentance.
- **Reconciliation** necessitates a relationship agreed on by both parties.
Forgiveness necessitates no relationship at all.

*“Do two walk together unless they
have agreed to do so?”
(Amos 3:3)*

Key Verse to Memorize

*“Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult.
On the contrary, repay evil with blessing,
because to this you were called
so that you may inherit a blessing.”
(1 Peter 3:9)*

Key Passages to Read

Luke 15:11–32

The Heart Test

- Do my actions demonstrate love toward my offender?
(Matthew 5:44)
- Do I speak well of my offender? (Luke 6:28)
- Do I do what is right toward my offender? (Romans 12:17)
- Do I have a forgiving spirit toward my offender?
(Matthew 6:14–15)
- Do I exhibit meekness toward my offender? (Matthew 5:5)
- Do I pray on behalf of my offender? (James 5:16)

How to “Bury the Hatchet”

- Prepare your heart for seeking reconciliation. (Colossians 3:15)
- Know that refusal to seek reconciliation affects the intimacy of your fellowship with God. (Matthew 5:23–24)
- Seek forgiveness and apologize for words that have hurt the other person, be conciliatory. (Proverbs 6:2–3)
- Be kind and gentle, trusting God to work in the heart of the other person. (2 Timothy 2:24–25)
- Reflect the character of Christ in all that you do. (Galatians 2:20)
- Enlist a mediator if necessary. (Matthew 18:16)
- Do not hold yourself responsible for the outcome. (Romans 8:28)
- Rest in the knowledge that you have done all you can do to seek peace. (Romans 12:18)

How to Respond When Reconciliation Is Refused

There are no guarantees that any relationship will be reconciled, so when your attempts to reconcile are rejected, remember ...

- If your heart has been repentant, you have God’s total forgiveness.
*“If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness”
(1 John 1:8–9).*
- Pray for the one who refuses reconciliation—there is an unmet need.
*“Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”
(Matthew 5:44).*
- God never leaves you when you suffer the loss of a close relationship.
“The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit” (Psalm 34:18).
- Control what you say about those who refuse reconciliation.
*“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse”
(Romans 12:14).*
- Don’t be vengeful—in time God will deal with those who do wrong.
*“Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: ‘It is mine to avenge; I will repay,’ says the Lord”
(Romans 12:19).*

- God will do a work in you that is good in spite of the difficulty.
“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose”
 (Roman 8:28).

Questions and Answers

“What do I do if I can’t persuade someone with a stubborn heart to reconcile?”

You are not responsible for the response of another person, but you are accountable to God to seek reconciliation. Each person is directly accountable before God.

“Each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.”
 (Romans 14:12)

“Should I seek reconciliation even when I am still angry?”

Reconciliation will not take place if you have not dealt with your unresolved anger. Allow the Spirit of God to bring about true repentance on your part and an attitude that can soften the heart of the one wronged.

“An brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.”
 (Proverbs 18:19)

“How do I know if I am chasing an impossible dream by hoping for reconciliation in the future?”

You cannot know whether a broken relationship will truly be reconciled. No one but God has total knowledge of the future, and the Bible tells us that “nothing is impossible with God” (Luke 1:37 ESV). But if you respond to the Lord and to the conflict in a Christlike manner, you can assuredly have God’s peace for the future.

*“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you.
 I do not give to you as the world gives.
 Do not let your hearts be troubled
 and do not be afraid.”*
 (John 14:27)

HOPE FOR THE HEART’s *Biblical Counseling Library* contains our *Biblical Counseling Keys*, providing *God’s Truth for Today’s Problems* on 100+ topics.

The *Quick Reference Guides* contain excerpts from our *Biblical Counseling Keys* and offer immediate, concise answers with *biblical hope and practical help*. For more comprehensive help and additional resources, refer to our *Biblical Counseling Keys* on **Reconciliation**.

Related Topics ...

- Anger
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Confrontation
- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Manipulation

If you would like more information, biblical counsel, or prayer support, contact:
 1-800-488-HOPE (4673)
www.HopeForTheHeart.org

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

THE HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®
 Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™
 Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.



*Together ... Changing Minds.
 Changing Hearts. Changing Lives.*

P.O. Box 7, Dallas, TX 75221