

Restoring Broken Heart Connections with Your Children

Richard Ross, PhD

Introduction

Questions for Parents:

1. If your child is genuinely pushing away your convictions and values and genuinely does not want to be around you, might he or she be reacting to emotional neglect or injury?
2. Is it possible your career, stressful marriage, new romance, or adult friendships have left you with little time or energy for your children?
3. Are you aware that if your child is emotionally abandoned by you, he or she almost certainly will reject your faith, make terrible lifestyle choices, and drift even further away from you as an adult?
4. With Scripture as your guide and Christ as your strength, will you commit to doing whatever it takes to provide your children with the unconditional love, sense of significance, and emotional security they must have to prosper?
5. If there is the need, will you do whatever it takes to heal an injury your child may be carrying from you? Are you willing to take the first step by asking for forgiveness?
6. If there is the need, will you forgive your child for hurting or disappointing you?

Healing Family Relationships

Rob Rienow

Forgiveness

Forgiveness and reconciliation is a three-phase process. This may take years for the Lord to accomplish. .
. Consider the small steps God would have us take toward this vision of family healing.

Phase 1—Forgiveness with the will

If we are commanded to forgive, then forgiveness must involve a choice. It begins with an act of the will, with obedience to Christ. Forgive as the Lord has forgiven you. If you wait until you ‘feel’ ready to forgive, you may end up waiting your entire life.

Ask the Lord to bring to your mind specific things your family member has done or said over the years which have hurt you. Write them down. When your list is complete, choose through prayer to forgive him or her for each individual item.

Phase 2—Forgiveness with the heart

The heart is God’ territory. He is the one who has the power to change our hearts. So, if we want our hearts changed, we have to ask God to do it. The second phase of forgiveness is a daily prayer.

Phase 3—Reconciliation

Our responsibility before the Lord, and to our family, is to do everything in our power, as far as it depends on us, to forgive and to seek reconciliation.

We can't control the attitudes and actions of our family members. They may have no interest in forgiveness or reconciliation. But, as far as it depends on us, we can still seek healing.

Prayer

We need God to powerfully move in our hearts, and in the hearts of our family members, if we are to experience true healing. Therefore, we need to pray.

Pray for Your Own Heart

Jesus wants us to deal with our issues first. We need to pray and ask God to open our eyes to see how we have contributed, and are contributing, to the broken relationship.

Pray for God to Bless Your Family Member

When we are in conflict with someone, the last thing in the world we want to do is pray for God to bless them. What does Jesus tell us to do? Pray for them.

Pray for Reconciliation

We need to pray specifically and directly for God to bring healing to the broken relationship. Ask God to fill your prayers with hope and faith.

Pray with Endurance

Jesus gives us three commands. Ask. Seek. Knock. These are all present-tense commands, which means Jesus wants us to ask, and keep on asking. Seek, and keep on seeking. Knock, and keep on knocking.

When it comes to healing broken family relationships, endurance in prayer is essential.

Pray Together

The first four prayer strategies have been personal in that they haven't directly involved the family member with whom we are in conflict. We can do each of these within our personal relationship with God.

If it is possible to pray together with your family member, I strongly encourage you to try it. God will help you.

Pray for God to Make Himself Look Good

The biblical concept here is that we want God to glorify himself. We want Him to reveal himself, to show off His power, to act in such a way that people see it and praise Him for His goodness.

Repentance

There are five powerful ingredients we can include when we ask forgiveness from a family member.

Step 1: Confession

We simply state the wrong thing we did. . . . No sugarcoating. No blaming. No excuses. Just clearly admit what you did.

Step 2: Acknowledge you were wrong

This is an extraordinarily powerful sentence when it comes from the heart.

Step 3: Express regret

This is the step where we say, 'I am sorry.'

Step 4: Commit to change

Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change in behavior.

Step 5: Ask for forgiveness

The process of asking for, giving, and receiving forgiveness are powerful steps on the path toward healing and reconciliation.

Keeping Relationships Strong and Healthy

Your Child Will Appreciate It If You:

- Will hear them out
- Show respect
- Explain your decision

The Principle of the Open Window

- Open windows are momentary.
- Open windows are valuable.
- For communication, you need to be available.
- What are the factors that are making your family so busy?

Communicating Unfailing Love—A Foundation for Communication

- When you're being as sinful as you ever get, does God reject you?
- Do you use withdrawing your warmth as a way to punish a disobedient child?
- Do you use your warmth as a reward for performance?

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