

**So as we've said throughout this series that repairing a broken or disrupted or awkward or damaged relationship, it's not easy. And oftentimes, not all the time, but oftentimes we actually want to. I mean, if we just push a button and the relationship was fixed or the relationship was better, we would. And even if we don't really want to oftentimes we know we ought to, want to. You ever ought to, want to. It's like, you know, if you ever pray and say, "God, I know what I should ask you for but I don't really think that's what I want". So I want to want to what I want to want to want. So when it comes to relationships we want them to be fixed. Or at least we know we ought to want them to be fixed but it's just so difficult. And one of the reasons it's so difficult is honestly, we just don't know how to.**

So want to is one thing but how to is something else. And it's not intuitive. As we said, throughout the series, we think, you know, it's intuitive but repairing a broken relationship is not intuitive. And part of the reason is not is because repairing a broken relationship requires something that does not come natural to any of us. It requires humility. And we are born, we come into the world and anti, you know, resisting humility. Putting somebody else first. You know, making ourselves small, going to that smaller place. So because it kinda resists, you know, our nature resist it and we don't know how to do it, oftentimes these relationships they just kinda dangle out there in this sense of awkwardness. And for some of you, your strained or broken relationship with somebody you don't see very often so it's not front of mind.

In fact, if you've been tracking with us in the series you're kinda looking forward to it being over. So you can put them back over in that box where you've kept them for years until I started talking about it, and suddenly you find yourself thinking about them, and your mom or your husband or your wife or a friend is like, "Hey, maybe you're like". "Nope, Nope, Nope, Nope". We just, we just resisted. And the other reason this is so difficult is since it's not intuitive and a lot of us have never even seen this modeled well, it's something we have to learn. It's a learned skill, which means somebody has to learn us, right? Teach us how to do it. And hopefully this series has given you some handles or some steps in doing that. But again, the series, you know, it's just a series. There's so much more to it. But ideally seeing this model is so helpful because as you know, some things are really more caught than taught.

So if you're a parent or you're a grandparent, okay? And this isn't gonna be like a message on parenting but I just wanna say something about this. It is so important for you to teach your children how to repair a damaged or broken relationship. And maybe the primary reason you should teach them or model for them what it looks like to repair a broken relationship is so that someday they will know how to repair their relationship with you. Yeah. And you're like, "Oh, that could never happen between me and my kids". It will. It's just gonna be strange. And think about this, if they don't know what to do, they won't know what to do. And it's gonna impact you.

And you say, "Well, Andy, that's pretty, self-serving. Teach your kids how to, you know, repair damaged relationships so they'll know how to repair a relationship with their own parents". But it's not self-serving at all. Here's why I say that. That their relationship with you, you know, this because of your personal history. Your children's relationship with you will be reflected in their future relationships, right? I mean, the damage that's done in a home we become a carrier. We carry that with us into the other relationships. So one of the best investments, if you have children, one of the best investments you can make in the future of your children. And in fact, this is a multi-generational investment. You have no idea where this is gonna land or how well this will serve them or how long this will serve them, one of the best things we can do is teach our kids how to repair a damaged relationship. And one of the best things you can do in this regard, I'm gonna move on. Is if you have ever done this successfully or you have ever tried and failed in this, you should share those epic stories with your kids.

**So again, they're not only gonna watch you try at home, but they're gonna hear how it worked out, how it didn't work out, what you wish you had done. So don't hide those things from your kids. It's so important that we model and we teach it for our kids. And I'll tell you, again, I'm gonna move on. I'm gonna tell you where to start with your children. It all begins with a personal pronoun. You remember those? The personal pronouns. In fact, you might need a lesson in this particular personal pronoun. Let me explain. So we have three kids and they're all 20 months apart by accident or providence, but anyway, they're pretty close together. And so when one would do something offensive to the other or hurt the other's feelings or just be cruel to the other, we would do what every parent does. We'd say, "Okay, apologize to your brother, apologize to your brother". And the apology would be so heartfelt, it would bring us to tears. It would go like this. "Sorry, sorry, sorry". Anybody ever heard the one word apology? Just sorry.**

And Sandra and I are like, we're such good parents. Listen, let's just have a group hug, have prayer. And we're like, no, we would not let 'em get by with that. We're like, "Nope, you gotta add the personal pronoun". And this is the first lesson in humility. It's "I'm sorry". And we would literally make our children look the brother or sister in the eye and add the I'm. "I'm sorry". This is the early lesson in humility. This is where it all begins. It begins with owning what we've done, owning our slice of the pie. Now, somewhere around middle school, it changed a little bit and went more like this. "Tell your brother you're sorry". "Brother, you're sorry". Right? Which is the point, okay? This is not intuitive and it bumps up against our stubbornness and that thing in us that never wants to be wrong. And that's exactly why we're talking about it.

So today, we are in fact wrapping up our four-part series, entitled "[Reassembly Required: A Beginner's Guide](#)", it's just a beginner's guide, there's so much more to this, "[A Beginner's Guide to Repairing Broken Relationships](#)". Now, throughout this series, there's been a disclaimer. And I wanna say it one more time because this is so important. When it comes to re-establishing or repairing or reassembling and adult relationship, the goal is not reconciliation, the goal is no regrets. This is so important. If the goal is reconciliation, that means you are moving toward this person with an agenda. And an agenda in a relationship is like a third party in the relationship. It's like, okay, we're gonna reconcile. I heard this series, come here, come here, sit down, sit down. We're gonna, I'm gonna. You're just kinda like, no, I don't wanna be around you. What is wrong with you? You need to find a different church. What's happening, right?

So when you have an agenda for someone, I mean, when somebody has an agenda for you, do you draw closer or do you kinda sit back as far as you can in the booth, like how long is this gonna last, right? So the agenda, the agenda from our perspective is not reconciliation. Again, we don't control all the parts. We don't hold all the cards. Our agenda is, we just want there to be, as far as we can control it and to the degree we control it, no regrets. We wanna know that we did everything we could and we're gonna continue to do everything we can. We did everything we could and we're continuing to do everything we can, because reconciliation is a process, but also, reconciliation is a posture. It's dynamic. It's ongoing because it's relational. And the win, the win is to go to bed every night and know, you know what, to the best of my ability, I have an open door policy, assuming that's a safe person. We're gonna come back to that in a minute.

Now, the Apostle Paul gives us a theme verse, and if you were gonna memorize like one verse to kind of associate with this topic, something to put on the mirror or the dashboard, this would be it. And the reason that may be important is because when we're finished talking about this, that relationship that's unresolved is still gonna be out there. This isn't a one and done. This is a process. And I think this verse more than anything else in The New Testament or in the scriptures, it sort of encapsulates the tension of relationship and the goal. So here's what the Apostle Paul wrote and we looked at this briefly last time. He says, "If," he's such a realist. "If it is possible". Because again, you're not holding all the cards. I mean, this isn't like a broken plate. I can get all the pieces and glue

them back together. I mean, there's another person involved. I mean, you don't have access to all the pieces. He says, "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you".

**In other words, the parts that you have control over. And in the Greek, this carries the idea of if you've got it in you, it's kind of a challenge. If you've got the grit, if you've got the determination, if you're ready for this, be at peace with everyone. Your English New Testament says, "Live at peace with everyone". But that sounds kind of like both people were involved. You have no control over that. The Greek text really kind of indicates, be at peace. In other words, you do everything you can do. I do everything I can do to remove any obstacle to reconciliation, which doesn't guarantee reconciliation because the other person has to be involved. But my responsibility is to remove every obstacle I can because reassembly, you know this, it begins with us, it begins with us, regardless of who initiated the fuss.**

Now, we said throughout the series, reassembling a relationship requires four decisions on our part. We've talked about two, I'll review the first two real quick and then we're gonna jump into number three and four. The first decision was simply this. I will get back to, not get back at. I will get back to, not get back at. I am taking retribution off the table. There is no payback, this is get back to, just like your Father in heaven. In fact, if you're not a Christian or not a religious person, some of this content will be helpful. I hope you found it helpful or hope you find today helpful. But if you're a Jesus follower, not just a believer, but somebody who wakes up every day and to the best of our ability says, Jesus, I wanna follow you. If you're a Jesus follower, then we are to do for others what God through Christ has done for us.

And you know what He did for us? Well, interestingly enough, the verse after the most famous verse in the Bible tells us, the most famous verse in the Bible, John 3:16, the next verse says this, listen to this. "For God," he's talking about Jesus. He said, For God, did not send Jesus, did not send His Son into the world to get back at us, but to get back to us. For God didn't send Jesus in the world to pay us back, but to get back. "He did not send Him to the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through Him". He came to rescue us in spite of our behavior. He came to rescue and establish a relationship in spite of the fact that we've been resisting the relationship all along. And then Jesus comes along and He says, follow me. Don't just believe in me. I want you to follow me. And I want you to follow my example.

Again, the Apostle Paul, after he explains to this group of Gentile new believers all that God went through to create the possibility for their salvation. He says this, and this goes right to the point of this first decision. He says, "All this," talking about the process of having a relationship with God. "All this is from God," here's our word, "who reconciled us to himself through Christ". And then he gave us the assignment of reconciliation. And English text says the ministry of reconciliation. But ministry is such a churchy word and the Greek term here existed long before there was a church. It really means the assignment or the opportunity to serve. He says, we've been given the assignment or we're supposed to provide the service of reconciliation. We're to do for others what He did for us. And then Paul finishes with this, it's so amazing. "That God was reconciling the world to Himself". God was doing everything He could to remove all the obstacles. That's why he sent Christ, in Christ.

And then this part. "Not counting people's sins against them". Because God knew what we know that's easy to forget and that we want to forget. That if I'm gonna reconcile with you at some point along the way, I have to quit counting your sin against you. I've gotta take whatever you did to me and I've gotta get it out of the equation or we are never gonna reconcile. And the point of the Gospel, the reason we gather in worship is because took it upon Himself to take the main obstacle that stood in the way of reconciling with us. And He moved it out of the way before we even knew about it, that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. And when Paul wrote that, this was like, hey, Paul was thinking, while I was still alive, I'm in Tarsus and way over in Jerusalem, my savior died for

me. I didn't even know about it. While I was literally still a sinner, hundreds of miles away, Messiah died for me, and I didn't even know about it. God removed the obstacle of my sin so that He could be reconciled to me.

**So do you know what this means? Look at this. "He has committed to us the message of reconciliation". And again, if you're not a religious person or not a Christian, I mean, take the pieces and parts that you want. I can't say you need to do anything. I don't have any authority over you. Nobody left me in charge of your life. But if we're gonna take what the Apostle Paul said seriously, if we're gonna take what Jesus said seriously, we have been reconciled to God. That's the essence of our message. That's what it means to be a Jesus follower and a Christian. And if that is the essence of our message, if we've been given the message of reconciliation, how in the world do we carry that message into our world if we refuse to reconcile it with the people around us? It takes us back to what Jesus said last week.**

Remember last week, not me, I wouldn't do it. He looked at us all, He said, if you don't do this, you're just hypocrites. You're just hypocrites. You're taking advantage of what God has done on your behalf and you are not willing to do that for the people around you? Second decision we talked about is this one, this is last time. I won't spend much time on it. I will own my slice of the blame pie. I will own my slice of the blame pie. And I'm gonna look in the mirror and I'm gonna take the pie out of my eye. And there may not be much pie in my eye, but before I try and get the pie out of your eye, I'm gonna take the pie out of my eye. I'm gonna remove the plank. You remember this? I'm gonna remove the plank not so I'll be a better person, not so I'll be a healthier person. I'm gonna remove, I'm gonna take, I'm gonna focus on what my role in disrupting this relationship was, and I'm gonna remove it, so I can see more clearly how to move toward and reconcile with you.

Our third decision and our fourth decision today are things I've talked about throughout the series. I've kinda left some breadcrumbs along the way. I've sort of sewn this idea throughout the series, but I've not asked you to commit to it. So today, I'm gonna take something we talked about before and I'm gonna turn it into a decision that I'm gonna challenge you to make. The third decision is this. I will make the first move regardless of who moved away first. I will make the first move toward reconciliation regardless of who moved away first. And humanly speaking, the reason you're going to do this is because the most mature person in the relationship should take responsibility for the relationship, right? And I know you, you are the most mature person in the relationship. Isn't that correct? I mean, when you tell your story about the things that he or she did, when you tell that story to other people, clearly you come off looking like the more mature person. 'Cause what they did was terrible, what you did was, you were just responding to something terrible, your part was so small.

When you rehearse the narrative about what happened to this relationship in your mind, aren't you the most mature person? Yeah. I mean, when I rehearse these things, not only am I the most mature person, there's a crowd, in my mind. And I'm like talking to this person and I'm kind of giving 'em what for explaining my side and there's a crowd and they're going, "You're right, Andy, you're right, Andy, you're right". And then they all applaud and I walk off, and they look at this person, like you really, I mean, he's right, you know? Because I'm right, you're right. So if you're right, if I'm right, if it's mostly them, well, then we're the most mature people in the room. And the most mature people should initiate reconciliation.

That's humanly speaking. But there's another reason. In fact, this is so amazing to me. Jesus' most inconvenient command, not His most extreme command, but His, especially within the context of the first century, His most inconvenient, what Jesus says, I'm gonna show it to you in a minute, was just flat out inconvenient, but it underscores this very point. In fact, it is so inconvenient and so tied to first century Judean culture, when we read it in our New Testaments, we just kind of read right

over it, like, I'm not so sure what that means. But when Jesus said this, I feel confident everyone in his audience just gasped. Like what? Did He say what I think He said? It's like okay, okay Jesus, okay, tell us a parable or something. You've gotta be kidding. You want us to do what?

**But again, it's so tied to first century Judean culture, it doesn't even leave a mark on us. Here's what he said. He was teaching. He said, "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar," and He's already lost us. It's like, whatever, what is it? I don't know what He's talking about, right? Here's what he's talking about. He's referring to this extraordinarily inconvenient trek to Jerusalem through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, to the temple, up the southern stairs, to get in line to offer a gift at the altar. Now you may live in Jerusalem, but still, it's a journey, right? And you gotta take time off of work and you're dragging the kids and it's hot as, it's just really hot there if you've ever been there, right? And the kids are crying, it's just a mess, and there's no fast pass! I know, it's amazing. You can't even call ahead. "Excuse me, what's the wait like? Three days!?! Okay, Frank, it's three days. We better get going". You have no idea what you're gonna find when you get to Jerusalem**

And you, what is this line for? Well, this is to get to the temple. I can't even see the temple. That's the long line, you know? And they have no idea what they're gonna run into. He says, so this is that day you decide you're gonna go make a sacrifice at the altar. And Jesus is very specific here. So again, it's something we miss. He's not talking about making a sacrifice for sin. This isn't like, oh, I've done some horrible thing so I have a goat, I'm gonna go to the temple, I'm gonna sacrifice an animal and ask God to forgive me of my sin and cleanse me of my sin. This is not that. He's very specific. This is a gift. This isn't an I owe God an apology. This is a gift. This is someone who's just grateful. This is someone for whom God answered a prayer. This is someone for whom things worked out and they just wanna go to the temple.

So this is a really good person. This is a person who's kind of getting extra credit. I'm not just gonna be grateful in my heart 50 miles away. I'm gonna make the long trek knowing God's saying, wow, they are really, really, really grateful. Look at all that they went through just to express their gratitude. So this is a gift. This is a voluntary sacrifice, expressing devotion to God. I just wanna be closer to God. So he says, okay, so you know, "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and when you get there you remember that your brother or sister has something against you". And Jesus is so brilliant. He is intentionally ambiguous. He didn't say what it is. He doesn't even say whose fault it is. He says, if you get there or as you're arriving there, or maybe you found your place in line and suddenly it comes to mind, oh yeah, that, yeah, we need to talk when I get back. I kind of left him hanging there.

You know what, I think she misunderstood what I said and she's, or he's down there, and so you know. Suddenly, you remember, there's an interrupted conversation. There's an unresolved conflict. Well, the way we think, the way Jesus' audience thought was this. Well, no problem. I'll deal with that later. I'm gonna stand in line. I'm gonna make my gift to God, let God know how grateful I am. Then when I go home, I'll deal with that, says compartmentalized, vertical religion, but not horizontal Jesus. Says internalized religion where our whole faith is just completely internalized, but not real world, earthy is the new holy Jesus.

So to their shock and awe, He says, when that situation comes to mind, I want you to leave your gift there in front of the altar. Like, wait, wait, did He say grieve? But He didn't say leave. Did He say grieve? I think He said. Like what, you want us to leave it? Wait, like we're already there at the altar. Like it's been days, maybe it's been hours, maybe it's been awhile. And we're finally all the way to the place where we're one, two, three, four, we're seventh in line, honey, just seven, just seven more people, we're almost there. And then I remember this thing back at home and I'm supposed to just leave my gift there? I mean, if I leave it there, when I get back, it may not be there. When I get back, it

may have wandered away. What do you mean just leave it there? And Jesus says, yeah, because the reason you're shocked, the reason you're dismayed, the reason this is so inconvenient is because you have things out of order. You're still thinking like a religious person. You're still thinking like an internalized religious person.

**"First," first, as in of first importance, as in more important than what you came to do, "go and be reconciled to them". Here's what they heard. Wait, Jesus, wait, Jesus, Jesus, wait. You want me to put them before God? And Jesus would say, no, this is how you put God first. This is how you put God first, by reconciling with those whom God loves. You put invisible God first by reconciling with your visible brother. Brother-in-law, sister, that neighbor, the guy at work, the lady at work and it wasn't a big deal, but you can tell, you know what you said wasn't. He says, yeah, if you wanna, if you wanna be right with God, you just get right and stay right with the people God loves. You put invisible God first by reconciling with the people around you. And then if you want brownie points, you put God first by reconciling with your enemy.**

I mean, this was a complete category scramble for them, as it is for many of us. He said, oh, don't wanna leave you hanging. And then once you've done that, come back, maybe somebody will hold your place in line, maybe they won't. "And then you come and you offer your gift". To which we say in our modern world, okay, hey, wait, wait, wait, wait. Can't we just forgive them in our heads and believe in you in our heads? Can't we just kind of keep this all in our mind? Can't we just, I have forgiven them and I'm not gonna have anything to do with them, I'm certainly not going to reach out. But I have forgiven them, so I forgave them in my mind and I believe in you in my heart. Isn't that enough? To which Jesus would say throughout the Gospels, well, if you wanna be a believer, but not if you wanna be a follower. And heads up, believers didn't change the world, believers that in shape Western civilization. It wasn't people who believed things that capture the imagination and the fascination of the Roman Empire. It was the followers. So if you're gonna follow me, that means you have to do what I did.

And at this point in his journey in the Gospel, He could've smiled and said, folks, I haven't done nothing yet. You just wait. Because not only has your heavenly Father come up with a plan to remove the obstacle of sin between you and your heavenly Father, I am the vehicle. And if you're lucky, and if you happen to be in Jerusalem that mid-morning, you'll have the opportunity that people from this point forward for thousands of years would long to come back and see, except they would probably turn their head. Because your heavenly Father is gonna offer His Son as a sacrifice for sin so that He no longer has to hold your sin against you. That's how far He's willing to go to reconcile with you. So get out of line and go reconcile with your brother and your sister. It seems like a really big price to pay, but not in comparison to the price that's about to be paid. And even if you don't go with me down that way of thinking, that train of thought, just know this. Your Father in heaven is glorified by your love for others on this earth. You can't just forgive them in your heart and believe in me in your head.

Not if you're gonna follow me. Internalized religion lets us off the hook, doesn't it? Read the Gospels. Neither Jesus, nor His brother James, read his letter, had anything good to say about that approach to God. Jesus is actually inviting us, this is what's so powerful, He's actually inviting us to a better way of living that makes the world a better place to live. It's our way of teasing out or living out or walking out the essence of what we say we believe as Christians, that as God reconciled us to Himself, we have the opportunity, the responsibility to do everything we can to reconcile others to ourselves. In fact, here's one way to think about it. Every time you pray, every time you pray, pray for yourself, pray for a friend, a neighbor, somebody's health, or whatever it might be, your kids' grades, your kids.

Anytime you pray, do you know what you're doing? In fact, if you're not really even a religious person,

but every once in a while, you kinda shoot up a prayer, and you're not sure how it works, but you just kinda shoot up a prayer, you almost can. In fact, I've told this before. I have a friend who was used to be a pastor and he's an atheist and he admitted it, and it wasn't a gotcha. It was just kind of funny. He'd prayed for so long in his life. He said, "Every once in a while I accidentally pray". You just look up, it's like, oh my gosh, or oh my somebody, or to whom it may concern. If there's anybody out there, help me. It's just kind of that, it's a human reaction to look up when we need help. We don't look down when we need help. We look up when we need help. Did you know, regardless of your theology or if you even have any, every time you pray, you are celebrating and you are leveraging the fact that God did not stop with forgiveness, that He went the extra step and reconciled you unto Himself so that you can have a relationship with God.

**The reason you imagine or actually believe or are confident that God hears your prayers is because your heavenly Father forgave and reconciled. And every time we pray, we are leveraging, recognizing, and celebrating that fact. Which means in those moments, we're reminded, every time we pray, we're reminded that we've lost our right to just close the door on other people, roll up the welcome mat, pull up the drawbridge, throw up our hands and say, I don't care. And if they're ever willing to come around, I'm around, but I'm not making any more effort. He reconciled with you in order to have a relationship with you. So number three is I will make the first move regardless of who moved away first. And then the fourth, decision. Again, we've talked about it all along, I've just not challenged you to decide. The fourth one is simply this. I will, in fact, keep the door open and the welcome mat out. I'm deciding. I know it's the right thing to do, I've thought about it. It's difficult. But you know what, have you decided? And when this person comes to mind or this group of people, have you decided? I'm deciding I'm gonna keep the door open and I'm gonna keep the welcome mat out.**

Now, to be clear, I don't ever recommend and nobody in their right mind would ever recommend you try to reconcile with someone who is unsafe physically or emotionally. But those people aside, this is an extraordinarily important decision, for several reasons. Number one, this has to be a daily decision for some of us as it relates to some people 'cause the hits just keep on coming, don't they? Every Thanksgiving, here it is again. Every Christmas, here it is again. Every time the family gets together, here it is again. Every time we say we're gonna do A, then you know, suddenly, I mean, it just keeps on coming. Which means there are people perhaps in your life where this is a constant thing. Something's always happening. Something's always changing. They're always stirring the pot. They're always making it worse. They're always making it bad. And there's something in you and there's something in me that's like, you know what, okay, I've had enough. I'm gonna cross my arms. I tried, I don't care. They're out, and I've done everything I can do. And I just don't have it in me to do anything else.

And that's when we remember the goal isn't to fix them and the goal isn't to fix it, the goal is no regrets, and this will reduce your regret. This will potentially keep you healthy. This will pretty much ensure there's no bitterness build up. This decision, as we talked about last time, keeps the hurt connected to its actual source. It makes it difficult to transfer the hurt from one relationship to another. But the moment you close the door, the moment you roll up the welcome mat, the moment you say never ever again, you're out, and there's still that angst and that energy and that stuff, it's gonna go somewhere. And chances are, it's gonna go with you to another relationship.

So if I could pry for just a minute, I wanna ask those of you who are married an emotional question. And this may be something your husband or wife has suggested in the past and you lost it and they decided, we are never going there again. Or maybe they brought it up two or three times. And every time they do, they have to just kind of gear themselves up because they know what's coming. And every time they bring this up, there's something in you that's like, I should pay attention to that because that just churns me up.

So I'm gonna ask it from the safety and distance of the stage. The safety of a camera lens. Is it possible, I'm no counselor. Is it possible that your father or your mother is haunting your marriage? Is it possible that your father or your mother is haunting? What do I mean by haunting? I mean, their presence and the angst of what happened in the past, it just sits there, it infiltrates, it causes you to overreact or under-react. You go ballistic or you just shut down, and you're not even sure why. Because you look at the details of the situation or the argument and you're like, you know what, I don't think this created that. But if anybody else brings it up, oh, pity the fool, right? 'Cause you got hurt, I mean, and anybody can see this, genuine hurt. I mean, you have every reason in the world to be angry and hurt. And somewhere along the way you decided that you didn't care. And when you decided you didn't care, you rolled up the welcome mat and you shut the door.

**And consequently, you didn't mean to do this, you became a carrier. Because when core relationships break, something in us breaks as well. And most of the time, we really don't know what to do, especially when we were young. And then we do the wrong things and perhaps make things worse. But now you know. And the reason I wanted to focus this on that is I wanna challenge you to decide, would you decide, no regrets, no regrets? I'm not gonna get to the end. I'm not gonna get to a funeral and wish I could go back. I'm not doing that. That's not gonna be my story. You gotta decide, that's not gonna be my story. I'm not gonna wait until I get that call and go, oh, you know, I should. No, that's not gonna be my story. You're not gonna let that be your story. No regrets. I will get back to, I am not gonna get back at. I will own my slice of the blame pie.**

It is so tiny, it is so insignificant, but you know what? I wanna see that relationship clearly. And if there's anything in my eye keeping me from seeing clearly, I want it out. And I'm gonna make the first move, even though I'm not the one that created the mess. I'm gonna make the first move even though I'm not the one that moved away, relationally speaking. And I'm gonna keep that door open and I'm gonna keep that welcome mat out. And when I think it's too much and when I think I've stretched as far as I can stretch and when everything in me wants to close that door, I'm gonna remember what my Father in heaven through Christ did for me. He does not count my sins against me in my relationship with Him. So by His grace, I'm gonna do for Him, I'm gonna do for her and I'm gonna do for them what through Christ my heavenly Father did for me. I'm gonna keep the door open. No regret.

Now, I wanna take kind of a hard right turn for a minute. And I wanna say something to those of you who are not Christians, you're not Jesus followers. Not religious, maybe a different religion. Used to be, walked away from it. In fact, you're only listening or watching because you're staying at someone's home and this is what they do or they made you come to church. I understand that. And I'll say this too. I say this all the time. If I were to hear your story, I probably wouldn't be a Christian either. I mean, if I experienced what you experienced, so I'm not criticizing you at all. I wanna end by extending an invitation directly to you. And the reason I want to extend this invitation specifically to those of you who might fall into that category is this.

Often, not always, but often, a broken relationship is the catalyst for a broken faith. Oftentimes, a broken relationship, somewhere in the past or maybe currently, maybe a family member, maybe another Christian or a group of Christians, or a break with a relationship with a church. I don't know what your story is. But more often than not, a broken relationship is the catalyst for a broken faith. And I'll be honest, that's difficult to admit because you're smart and you know that those two things really are mutually exclusive, but it felt connected when it happened. And as difficult as it might be for you, it could be that those dots are actually connected. Because more often than not, they are.

So as much as I hope that you'll reconcile with your brother and your sister, and as much as I hope that you'll reconcile with your prodigal son or your prodigal daughter or your prodigal father or that



friend next door, or that neighbor, that person at work, and it wasn't a big thing, it was a little thing, and as much as I hope that you'll take those steps and make these decisions, I wanna urge you and plead with you and invite you to be reconciled to God, to be reconciled to your Father in heaven. The Apostle Paul, he was so direct to brand new Christians in Corinth. Listen to how he said it. This is where I got the words. He says, "We implore you," we beg of you, "on Christ's behalf," because of what Christ has done for you, "be reconciled to God". Be reconciled to God.

**I know your story, he would say, I've heard your story, I was there for your story, I get it, you have every reason in the world, but be reconciled to God, who removed all the obstacles and went looking for you., not to get back at you, but to get back to you. He's the Father in the story of the prodigal son who's done everything he can and he's waiting and he's wanting and he's wishing and he's longing and he's imploring, be reconciled to me, be reconciled to God. Because in spite of you, He loves you. And when you're ready or if you're ever ready, we're here for you. Because as hard as this may be for you to believe, every single one of us, starting with me, we all have a be reconciled to God story of our own. So I invite you, stop resisting, stop rehearsing that narrative, look beyond what he did and look beyond what she didn't do. And would you please be reconciled to God?**

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