



UNITY AND BROKEN RELATIONSHIPS

Our unity is based in individual unity with Christ, but personal relationships also affect it.

We can find some examples of relationship issues between Christians and how to solve them in the Bible.

-  **Restoring a broken friendship. Acts 15:36-39**
-  **Restoring a broken relationship. Philemon 1**
-  **Restoring broken unity. 1 Corinthians 3:5-11**
-  **Restoration after an affront.**
 -  **Forgiveness. Luke 6:37**
 -  **Restoration. Matthew 18:15-17**



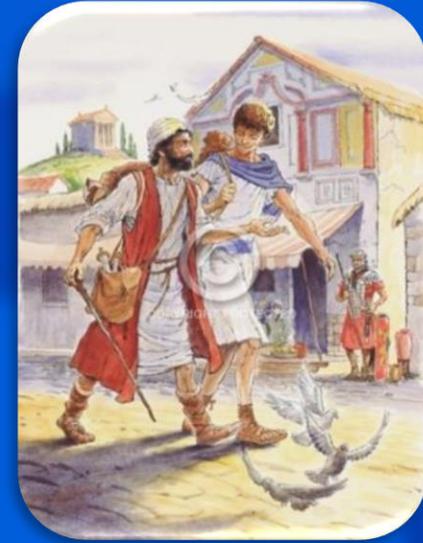
RESTORING A BROKEN FRIENDSHIP

"Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry." (2 Timothy 4:11)



Paul and Barnabas spent much time together. However, an argument about John Mark threatened their friendship (Acts 15:36-39).

Paul didn't want to give Mark a second chance, because he had abandoned them in their previous journey. But Barnabas still trusted Mark.



The apostle of grace had to learn to show grace to the one who had disappointed him.



Paul's ministry was later enriched by Mark's ministry, and Paul accepted his help again.



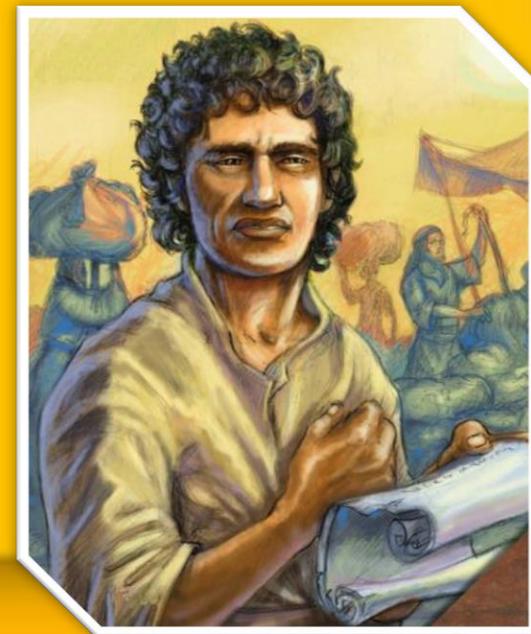
RESTORING A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP

**"For perhaps he departed for a while for this purpose, that you might receive him forever."
(Philemon 1:15)**

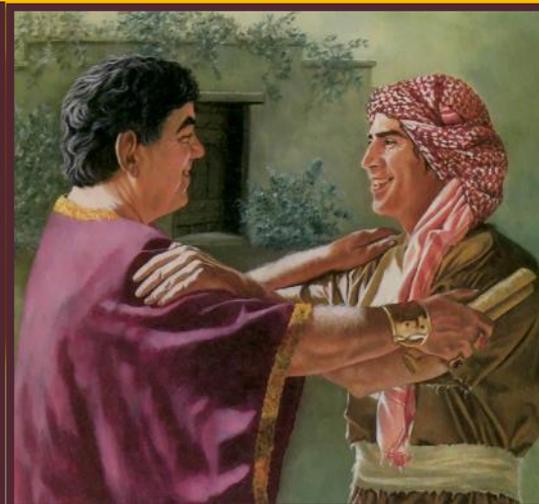
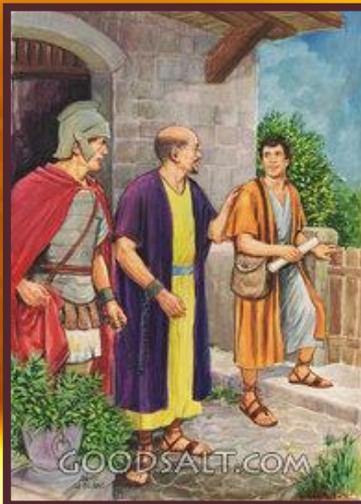
Onesimus abandoned his position (slave) and took something that belonged to his employer (master).

Philemon could have filed a lawsuit against Onesimus. In that time, a master owned his slave.

If Philemon had shown resentment, his testimony as a leader of the church in Colossae would have been harmed.



Paul mediated between them. He was even willing to pay for what Onesimus had stolen. He had faith that Philemon would show Christian love and treat Onesimus as his brother (beyond their work relationship).



RESTORING BROKEN UNITY

"There are many different ways to serve, but they're all directed by the same Lord." (1 Corinthians 12:5 VOICE)

There was a problem of unity in Corinth (1Co. 1:11-12).

They had not understood that God uses different leaders and ministries to do His work. All of them are important to God.

Reading Paul's advice to the Corinthians, we learn that:

There's no place for feeling proud or undervaluing oneself, all merit is God's.

God calls us to cooperate, not to compete.

There are no greater or lesser people, but people with different skills.

There are no greater or lesser gifts, all are given to fulfill the same purpose.



FORGIVENESS

"in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." (Colossians 1:14)

We are not forgiven by our repentance or our confession, but by Christ's death at the cross. Confession is a way to ask for forgiveness.

God doesn't forgive us because He changes His mind, but because our attitude towards Him changes. We must forgive others like God forgives us (Matthew 18:21-35).

Forgiving others is a vital need for our own spiritual wellness, and releases others from our condemnation. It also takes our resentment away, even if our forgiveness is not accepted by our offenders.



“If your brethren err, you are to forgive them. When they come to you with confession, you should not say, I do not think they are humble enough. I do not think they feel their confession. What right have you to judge them, as if you could read the heart? ... We ourselves owe everything to God’s free grace. Grace in the covenant ordained our adoption. Grace in the Saviour effected our redemption, our regeneration, and our exaltation to heirship with Christ. Let this grace be revealed to others.”

RESTORATION

"leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift." (Matthew 5:24)

What three steps does Jesus give us in Matthew 18:15-17 to help us to resolve conflicts when we are wronged by another church member?



Resolving our differences in private and with Christian love.



Calling one or two neutral people to mediate.



Calling the local church board to work towards reconciliation.

These steps must be followed in this order to achieve reconciliation and unity.

The more people is involved in this process, the harder the reconciliation.



“It is of the highest importance that the youth understand that Christ’s people are to be united in one; for this unity binds men to God by the golden cords of love, and lays each one under obligation to work for his fellow men... No partition walls are to be built up between man and man. Christ as the great center must unite all in one.”

E.G.W. (Fundamentals of Christian Education, ch. 61, p. 479)