

How To Reconcile When **You** Caused The Pain

Recently we were asked “Does reconciliation work if the person who caused the hurt initiated it?” The short answer is “yes, but not always” To better understand how to reconcile when you caused the pain, we will look to the Bible for clarity and direction. Romans 12:18 says:

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

Let’s take a back to front look at this verse to discover how to reconcile when we are in the wrong.

“Live peaceably with all” | In Jesus’ most famous sermon, Jesus declares that the sons and daughters of God will be known for making peace on earth. So the simple answer to today’s question is: “Yes!” It is part of our identity as Christians to go out of our way to create peace in the world; but this call is not to be legalistically and unwisely wielded in same way in each situation. To be honest, I’ve been guilty of taking this part of the verse too far without balancing my actions with the rest of the verse. One particular argument with a friend stands out in my mind. In my desire to make things right, I reached out about five time over a couple of months to apologize and to try to reconcile, but each call was ignored and eventually they became more angry that I wouldn’t leave them alone then at the original situation—I wasn’t reconciling wisely and I made matters worse. This verse, however, shows us how to wisely and faithfully “live peaceably with all” while sidestepping mistakes like mine. But how?

“So far as it depends on you” | You need to understand that no broken relationship, whether you caused the pain or received the pain, is entirely upon you to create reconciliation. A broken relationship always needs the participation of **both** sides. Sometimes people will not want to reconcile with you, to forgive you, or even talk to you and you have to accept that you have no control over their hearts or actions. But the big question is did you try? Trying a bunch of times to reconcile doesn’t automatically make you more faithful than trying once, but in most situations, your responsibility is to give it a **real** try and to allow the person to respond.

If possible | But you can’t always try, because sometimes it is just not possible. Death, legal action, and blocked contacts are just a few things that can get in the way of you reconciling with others. When reconciliation is not possible, then you are released from needing to reconcile. Just make sure that you don’t use “impossibility” as an excuse. It is also worth noting that in some rare occasions, reconciliation may be “possible” but also very harmful to the person you hurt. Be careful of seeking reconciliation for your own good over the good of somebody else.

Some Practical Steps | So you hurt somebody and you are wondering how you can reconcile when they don’t seem interested. You believe reconciliation is **possible** and you believe it **depends on you** to try, but now what? I recommend these three steps:

- 1) **Reach Out and Apologize** | Approach them with an apology and express a desire to work things out. Be clear in taking responsibility and avoid making excuses. If they accept your apology and you reconcile, then great! If not...
- 2) **Give Them Space** | Express that you will always be available to work things out and *then give them space*. The ball is in their court now.
- 3) **Be Ready** | They may never call you, but be ready to reconcile if they ever reach out. (Remember my botched reconciliation? I have word document in my computer with my apology, because if the person I hurt ever calls, I want to be ready to apologize fully and remove every barrier from reconciliation.)

Brothers and Sisters, I encourage you go out and **“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”** And if you ever need help, you can always ask