

RESOURCE:

HOW DO YOU KNOW IF YOU NEED RECONCILIATION?

Here are seven signs (or levels) that show the progression of relational rupture in our hearts:

1. **You roll your eyes inside and think: “You idiot. What a mess you are.”**
When there is no sadness or sympathy, but instead, disdain and sneering...that is the beginning of a relationship going bad and your heart hardening.
2. **You hear about the person having a problem, and it is very satisfying.**
You realize you have tied your happiness to their unhappiness, and that is a terrible sign.
3. **You start to find most things they do irritating.**
You realize that something that person did is irritating or infuriating, but you would overlook it if someone else did it.
4. **You start to feel awkwardness in the relationship.**
The awkwardness might come from just one side or both sides. Awkwardness is a sense of unease when around each other.
5. **You start avoiding the person.**
This can mean avoiding places you know they will be or, when in the same place, taking pains to not have to meet or talk.
6. **You get a chance to pass along negative information about the person and enjoy it.**
7. **You are hardly speaking to each other, and there is a lot of very obvious friction that others can see.**

Know the difference between a reconciled and an unreconciled relationship.

An unreconciled relationship is one in which you see (a) avoidance, (b) coldness, or (c) irritability (i.e., the same action performed by another person does not disturb you as much as it does when this person does it)! If you find yourself avoiding or being cold to, or very irritated with, the other person (or if you can tell the other person is cold or irritable or avoiding you), then you probably have an unreconciled relationship.

On the other hand, “I forgive you” does *not* mean “I trust you.” Some people think they haven’t reconciled until they can completely re-trust the person who did the wrong. That is not the case. Forgiveness means a willingness to *try* to reestablish trust, but that reestablishment is always a process. The speed and degree of this restoration entails the re-creation of trust, and that takes time, depending on the nature and severity of the offenses involved. Until a person shows evidence of true change, we *should not* trust the person. To immediately re-trust a person with sinful habits could actually be enabling them to sin.

Trust must be restored, and the speed at which this occurs depends on the behavior. Just because you don’t (and shouldn’t) trust a person who wronged you as you did before doesn’t mean you don’t have a reconciled relationship with him or her.

Adapted from Tim Keller’s *Forgive*

FORGIVE