

## **The Gathering December 2, 2020. How to heal relationships in a few, not so easy steps.**

2020 has been just an abysmally tough year. COVID, lost jobs, shut-downs, aloneness, divisiveness, immigration, and just politics in general. I know just about all of us have lost relationships with others. Both family and friends. This short companion piece to The Gathering video will help us begin that journey and work of healing and restoring those broken relationships. Peacemaking is NOT sitting around saying, “*boy we are in some serious conflict I wish it were better*”. It’s actively doing the work of MAKING peace. So we know the effort to reconcile relationships, beginning the process to bring about healing, bridge divides, will take effort and intentionality. So, some opening questions.

**What relationships in your life are currently strained or broken and what caused them?  
Have you made any attempt to mend, or heal these relationships?**

We’re going to keep this short to make it as easy and clear what are some of the important issues to consider and practices to use, (yes, this will take some time), to heal and restore those important relationships in your life. The more indepth source of info is the posted The Gathering video.

**TRUTHS**. These are things we need to know, FULLY believe in and embrace, to be a peacemaker.

- Remember your identity is in Christ, not in whatever positions, beliefs, or values you hold.
- For this conversation to rebuild and restore relationships, it has to be based on **humility, respect, and trust**. Make sure you nurture all of those in your conversation with others.
- Being a peacemaker, healing relationships, is not avoiding conflict. We WILL have disagreements with other significant people in our lives. It’s learning to have healthy conversations that will surface issues that are creating conflict and working through those differences.
- Relationships are the most important thing. You HAVE to value the other person more than making a point...period. This means everything you say will be towards building unity and connection.
- There is a scarcity of encouragement and empathy out there. Be it and bring it!!

**PROCESSES**. These are not steps. You do not work from one to the next. These are actions, practices, required to put into place to work towards healing and reconciliation.

- Do your own work. Deal with the log in your eye before you address the speck in another’s eye.
- Be authentic and courageous. Be vulnerable sharing your own hurt about how the broken relationship has affected you. This will feel risky, but will carve out a space for honest sharing.
- Hold loosely your own understanding and in humility be willing to consider you might be wrong.
- Have you tried to ‘understand’ why the person sees things differently than you? Not that they might be right. They could still be very wrong. But they do have a reason to hold to the views they do.
- Nurture a curiosity to understand why the other person believes what they do.
- Remove any obstacles that would be barriers to healing. (i.e. bitterness, resentment, etc.).
- By owning your part of the broken relationship with no ‘buts’. This will create a safe space, and give a good model of how this conversation could go. And will help lessen any defensiveness.

**These are just a starting point to begin healing. Watch the video where we hit this in more detail and give you some hints for the series about this at the first of the year.**