

# RESTORING TRUST WITH REPENTANCE

“STRINGS ATTACHED” SERIES | PART 3 OF 3

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1 JOHN 1:5-9 NLT

...if we are living in the light, as God is in the light, **then we have fellowship with each other...**

2 CORINTHIANS 7:8-11 NLT

...Just see what this godly sorrow produced in you!

**...you have done everything necessary to make things right.**

## 5 PARTS TO REPENTANCE...

### 1. “I’M \_\_\_\_\_”

JAMES 1:15 NLT ...when sin is allowed to grow, **it gives birth to death.**

This is expressing genuine regret for my sin. I should be able to express my concern and compassion for those bearing the brunt of my selfishness. Even if we don’t see, or agree with, the full scope of a person’s offense, we should always identify any error of our own for which we CAN express genuine sorrow. This shows humility and helps lower the defenses of all involved. If I don’t feel sorrow then I need to pray for Jesus to soften my heart and open my eyes. I may need to meet with someone that’s not involved and ask them to help me see the damage that I’ve done. I need to meditate on scripture that reflects God’s heart for our relationships and consider how I’ve brought into a lie and rebelled against His will.

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### 2. NAME THE SIN

PSALM 139:23-24 NLT ...**Search me, O God, and know my heart...**

Rather than “sorry about the other night” or other vague statements, naming my specific sin brings clarity to the conversation. When I do so, it gives the other person the chance to accept my repentance or clarify their offense. It’s important to go beyond our actions and talk about the motivation of our actions. We must communicate our regret for the motives behind our actions. “IF” has no place in true repentance.

For example: “I’m sorry if I hurt you by what I said.” Or “I’m sorry if you feel that way.”

This is a passive-aggressive way of blaming them for being easily offended. Own your sin.

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### 3. “\_\_\_\_\_ PLEASE FORGIVE ME?”

1 PETER 5:5 NLT “God opposes the proud but **gives grace to the humble.**”

SEE ALSO: PHILIPPIANS 2:1-8

This is a question. Not, “I hope you can forgive me.” Not, “I’m glad we’ve resolved this.” “Will you forgive me?” makes me VULNERABLE and that’s the point. It reminds me that I am at their mercy. I have sinned and they will have to live with the consequences of my choices. Nothing will change that. I don’t deserve their forgiveness, but I am ASKING for it. This is healthy vulnerability. If they follow Christ, they absolutely need to forgive me BUT I AM NOT THE ONE TO TELL THEM THIS.

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ASKING this question reminds me that this is an ongoing conversation and it communicates to them, that I am IN THIS until it is resolved. I can walk away from a statement like, “I hope you can forgive me.” But it’s absurd to ask a question then walk away without the answer. I am HERE...and asking the question makes it clear to both of us.

For deeper issues, the answer isn't always given immediately. Sometimes they need time to process. But you lovingly pursue the communication process until you get their answer, because it's about resolution. For this same reason, you may have to come back to this conversation many times even after they verbalize their forgiveness. When the issue resurfaces, you can't shut them out with a defiant, "You said you forgave me!" That's not the point. The aim is resolution. And no matter how long ago this happened or no matter how many times you've repented, or no matter how many times they've forgiven you, SIN IS SIN. You can still call it sin. You should still be able to express regret over the sin. And RESOLUTION is the goal. So don't get defensive. Repent again. This builds and rebuilds trust.

#### 4. VOW TO \_\_\_\_\_

ROMANS 12:2 NLT

"...let God transform you into a new person by **changing the way you think...**"

Once their forgiveness is offered you need to clarify your intention and your plan to change. This helps reassure the other person that you value them, take your sin seriously, and that you don't simply plan to sin repeatedly and keep cleaning up the same mess.

For example: *"It was wrong to yell at you like that. I was selfish and impatient. I was thinking about me and not you. I don't want to do that anymore. I want to learn to slow down and ask more questions. I want to understand you better and not try to control you with my anger. I want to learn more from you about how you see this sin and I want to learn from God about how to live differently. I'm not pretending this will be immediate or easy but I want to live differently and I will learn to."*

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#### 5. RESTORE / \_\_\_\_\_ WHAT WAS LOST

ACTS 26:20 NLT

"...all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and **prove they have changed by the good things they do.**"

This isn't always relevant but is very critical when it is. If I ever, in sin, damage or destroy another person's property then I should pay back fully what was lost. This could take time and may even be impossible depending on the rarity of the item but it's wrong to assume that my words are enough to cover the offense of wrecking a friend's car or pawning my wife's pearls.

So, when relevant, the final step of repentance is communicating the desire and the plan to repay the person for what I've taken, and then actually following through.

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A GREAT MESSAGE FOR THOSE WHO  
STRUGGLE TO 'FORGIVE THEMSELVES'.

#### REPENTANCE IS A GIFT: WE DON'T HAVE TO STAY THE SAME!

ACTS 11:18 NLT ..."God has also given the Gentiles **the privilege of repenting** of their sins..."

2 TIM 2:25 NIV...God will **grant them repentance** leading them to a knowledge of the truth...

ROMANS 2:4 NLT...**his kindness is intended to turn you** from your sin...

#### REAL RESTORATION WITH OTHERS

IS ONLY POSSIBLE WHEN WE LEARN TO GET **BRUTALLY HONEST AND OPEN WITH GOD:**

PSALM 32

PSALM 51

PSALM 139

SEE ALSO: 1 JOHN 4:19–20, ACTS 3:19