

Nothing But Love

Pastor Mark Hebebrand

7-27-25

Dealing with Relationships That Hurt and Let You Down

Let's face it—people will let us down. Friends, leaders, family, even those in the church. But Scripture gives us a higher way to live and love, especially when we've been hurt.

The Apostle Paul's letters to the early church offer deep wisdom for navigating painful or disappointing relationships. He challenges us to respond not with bitterness or retaliation, but with **patience, affection, mercy, and above all—love**.

1. Love is Patient

Paul writes in **1 Corinthians 13:4–7 (ESV)**:

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

Love doesn't give up easily. It endures even when others fail us. To love with patience is to carry others in their weakness and give grace in their shortcomings.

There's a famous story about Robert Ingersoll, a well-known atheist, who once challenged God to strike him down in five minutes. When nothing happened, a believer responded: “Do you think you can exhaust the patience of God in five minutes?”

God's patience toward us teaches us how to be patient with others. **2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)** reminds us:

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

2. Show Affection and Honor

Paul encourages believers in **Romans 12:10 (ESV)**:

“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.”

Even when we're hurt, we are called to respond with love and honor. This doesn't mean ignoring the pain—it means choosing to act in love anyway. Showing honor in the face of disappointment is one of the most powerful ways we reflect Christ.

3. Put On Tender Mercy

In **Colossians 3:12–14 (ESV)**, Paul writes:

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

To "put on" these traits means it's a daily choice. We clothe ourselves in mercy, kindness, and forgiveness—not because others deserve it, but because **Christ has shown us the same**.

Common Wounds in Relationships:

Many of us have experienced pain in the following ways:

- **Church hurt**
- **Broken friendships**
- **Family wounds (father wounds, mother wounds)**
- **Disappointment with leadership**
- **Betrayal, gossip, or slander**
- **Struggles in marriage**
- **Estranged children**
- **Growing apart from loved ones**

These are real and painful. But they don't define the end of the story.

4. Love Never Fails

Paul reminds us in **1 Corinthians 13:8 (ESV)**:

"Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away."

Love never fails—not because people don't fail, but because **Jesus never fails**. When we are rooted in His love, we're anchored no matter what storms come.

Stay Rooted in Love

Ephesians 3:16–17 (ESV) says:

"...that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love..."

Being rooted in love means our identity and reactions are not defined by people, but by Christ. From that place, we can forgive, endure, and love even those who have disappointed us.

The Fruit of Resting in Love

When you're resting in God's love:

- You're more attuned to His voice
- You discern timing and divine moments better
- You're present and less anxious
- You fight battles from a place of peace, not panic
- You operate from the Spirit, not the flesh

- You walk in the rhythm of grace

Psalm 116:7 (ESV):

“Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.”

Practical Ways to Love When It’s Hard

1. **Set aside time with God daily**
2. **Unplug from distractions**
3. **Accept the gift of His yoke (His way of doing life)**
4. **Listen before you react**
5. **Let grace set your rhythm**

In Conclusion

Paul’s letters consistently call us back to this truth: **when relationships hurt, respond with love.** Love doesn’t ignore pain—but it chooses a higher road. As we walk in love, we become a reflection of Christ to a broken world.

Philippians 1:9 (ESV):

“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment...”

Let love lead. Let grace heal. Let Christ be seen in the way you love—even when it hurts.