

# Can God Heal My Relationship with My Spouse or Child?

By Harold Graham, Chaplain

The question can be answered simply, yes, God can heal the relationships we have with our spouse and/or child. The downside of this answer is that we can wait a very long time. It can take some time for the others in the relationship to respond to the Lord. It also raises other questions; "Am I ready to be healed by God? or, "Do I need to be healed first?" It is very easy to put the entire responsibility for change on God, "Just zap me Lord and make it all better!" But rest assured that God desires reconciliation in our broken or damaged relationships.

Some questions need to be asked concerning the damage; what caused the damage? Who is responsible? If I, myself, am at fault, am I ready to have God work in me? This can be very hard. Truth has a tendency to bring pain to the extent that everything within us cries to escape and run from the changes we need to make in ourselves. But remember, truth is our friend. Proverbs 27: 6 says that "The wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses." It is easy to want the kisses of avoiding truth. But this will block what God wants to do in and through us. Will we be blockers or willing participants in the healing. Mending relationships is hard work but rewarding when it happens

Often the healing is a process, taking time, sometimes years. Oh to be sure, God can and occasionally does an instantaneous miracle where a remarkable recovery happens. We can only be open to what God desires to do in us. We cannot control what God does in others at all. Nor can we control the choices of others as they respond to the working of God in them. Take responsibility for self and the changes necessary for healing! As we heal and are actually changed on the inside, others will eventually respond to the new state of being that happens in us. One author wrote that it takes three years to change our eulogy. The first year is to find in self the mistakes and sins that need corrected, the second year to incorporate those changes into ourselves and the third year for the others in our lives to catch on. But never, never try to prove or show anyone anything, this is manipulation. Just change because it is the right thing to do and allow others the freedom to come to their own conclusions. Remember, to manipulate just slows or stops the healing because it robs others of personhood.

Consider that the relationship may never be what it once was. This does not mean that it cannot be better. It can take time to begin to trust again. It can become a much healthier relationship as God begins to heal the "sick" elements. Forgiving past offenses is absolutely necessary and accepting the need to be forgiven, vital. Are we willing to accept that some things will not be as they were? Are we willing to trust? Are we willing to be trustworthy? Acceptance is the key to the "healed" relationship. Yes, God does heal but never without our cooperation. We must be willing to partner with Him and allow Him to do the surgery on ourselves first, then to stay out of the way as He works in others.

## Other Resources

- *Beyond Boundaries: Learning to Trust Again in Relationships* by John Townsend
- *Boundaries in Marriage* by John Townsend and Dr. Henry Cloud
- *Victory over the Darkness* by Neil Anderson
- *The Bondage Breaker* by Neil Anderson
- *God's Healing for Hurting Families: Biblical Principles for Reconciliation and Recovery* by David L. Thompson
- *The Five Languages of Apology: How to Experience Healing in All Your Relationships* by Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas
- *Desperate Marriages: Moving Towards Hope and Healing in Your Relationship* by Gary Chapman