

Tearing Down Walls

For over twenty years I have been looking for one of my best childhood friends. When he got married I was his best man. He was in my wedding and we were great friends. One day he and his wife moved away without a word. I never heard from them again. . . until a few weeks ago. With the advent of better programs on the internet for finding people I managed to locate them in the same town in Florida my Dad lives in. With his help I have reached out to my friend and I pray that whatever wall was put up so many years ago will be broken down and we will renew our friendship again.

Just last night I met a man at one of my wife's family gatherings. When I introduced myself I asked where he lived. He said in Stewartstown, "well, actually in a little area north of there called Rinely." When I explained my ties to Rinely, he kind of looked down and said I used to go to that church for years, I even sang in the choir. I encouraged him to visit us again and he assured me he would try. Again my prayer that whatever wall was put up so many years ago will be broken down and fellowship renewed.

There are times in life when we put up walls. Sometimes there are walls to protect us from getting our feelings hurt. Sometimes they are walls of shame. Other times there are walls of anger and bitterness. And the worst of all are the walls we put up to protect our sin . . . pride. But I have a secret weapon, one my Dad showed me and one we all can use. You tear down a wall with a bridge.

My Dad and I were not very close when I was growing up. As I grew up and out of the house, I suppose I was no different than my kids are now. We have our own lives and we go out and live them. He had his life and I had mine. We would connect at Christmas and birthdays, but that was all (except when I asked for money). It never occurred to me that my Dad might have liked to just hear from me once in while until I had grown children myself.

I said earlier that my Dad taught me how to break down walls, so let me explain. Not only were my Dad and I not what I would call real close, at one point in time were actually estranged. My Mom and Dad had gotten a divorce so I was mad at him and we had not talked for over a year. During the course of that year though my heavenly Father had been dealing with me, and I become deeply convicted. It was if He said, "How can you ever understand the love of your heavenly Father if you don't try to understand the love of your earthly one?"

Well , in the past I had always taken my Dad with me to look at cars when I needed one. I was needing one right then and I had a few staked out to go and see the next day. I had saved up some money and had my trade and no doubt could make up my own mind. I realized that even though I really did not need or even want my Dad's help the next day, I should at least try to build a bridge between us. I should at least care. So with great fear and uncertainty I called him

up. The conversation was strained and I broke the ice by talking about the different cars I was going to look at the next day. He and I discussed the different options and he was reserved with his advice. I thanked him and he told me thanks and that he loved me.

The next morning when I went out to go shopping, my Dad was sitting in front of the house. He had driven almost 300 miles through the night and was sitting at my doorstep. We went car shopping together. I don't even remember what car I bought. It didn't matter. What mattered was that a wall had come down and the bridge of caring was what brought it down.

My Dad and I are closer than ever before in our lives. We email and talk to each other every week and it's all because he showed me the value of building a bridge. We all have family and friends, neighbors and co-workers. I call them our **Circle of Care**. Many of them have walls up, but if you will just build a bridge of care you can tear most of them down. My heavenly Father taught me that one . . .

"The weapons we fight with are not with the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have the power to demolish strongholds (tear down walls)"

- 2 Corinthians 10:4