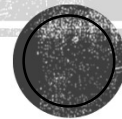


PEACEMAKING AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

Resolving Conflict in the Run of the Life with Gospel Wisdom



1

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE: 8 A'S

- **Address** everyone involved (Lk. 19:8)
 - The confession should go as far as the offense.
- **Avoid** 'ifs' and 'buts' (Ps. 51)
 - These words ruin your confession. 'If' means, "I'm not actually confident I did anything wrong," and 'but' shifts blame to other people or circumstances.
- **Admit** specifically.
 - We love to be vague about ourselves, but amazingly specific about others. Confess both your specific actions and underlying attitude.
- **Acknowledge** the hurt
 - Express understanding and genuine sorrow for the way you affected that person. Validate any wounds you may have caused—pain is not true or false.



2

CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE: 8 A'S

- **Accept** the consequences (Luke 19:8)
 - A willingness to accept the consequences is often the mark of a genuine confession.
- **Alter** your behavior (Eph. 4:22-32)
 - Repentance is an implicit promise—words are tied to future actions.
- **Ask** for forgiveness (Lk. 17:3)
 - This gives the person an opportunity to respond and express forgiveness.
- **Allow** time for healing (Prov. 12:18)

3

GENTLE RESTORATION

- “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.” Gal. 6:1
- “Do not reprove a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a righteous man, and he will increase in learning.” Prov. 9:8-9
- “Better is open rebuke than hidden love.” Prov. 27:5
- “Nothing is so cruel as the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*

4

FIRE-STOKING VS. GENTLE RESTORATION

Stoking the Fire	Gently Restoring
Looks forward to the confrontation itself	Sees a confrontation as a regrettable necessity
Based primarily on irritation or anger	Based primarily on love seeking understanding
Primary goal of communicating a grievance	Primary goal of a restoring a person or relationship
Can be done with little to no self-examination	Preceded by careful self-examination of heart
Little attention given to timing, style or exact content of confrontation	Preceded by careful consideration of the best timing, style and content of confrontation

Go in love or don't go at all! (Matt. 7:12)

5

GENTLE RESTORATION- HOW?

Matt 18:15

- Keep things as private as possible for as long as possible
- Speak face-to-face when possible with a phone call as a second option. As a general rule, avoid using emails and texts.
- Be quick to listen. Ask questions that discern the heart. You can see the "what" but not the "why."
- Bring in the hope of the Gospel. Don't leave someone feeling condemned even in repentance!

6

HOW? CONFLICT WHEN SIN IS THE PRIMARY ISSUE

Matt 18:16

- Only bring in other wise believers as a second-step.
- In some cases, it may be wise to alert the other person that you are doing so.
- Do not seek counsel from your group of yes-men or women. Involve people who will tell you that you are wrong and who are willing to point out your blind spots.

7

HOW? CONFLICT WHEN SIN *ISN'T* THE PRIMARY ISSUE

- Action
 - “when you did/said X”
- Feeling
 - “I felt Y”
 - “I was Y”
 - “It rubbed me the wrong way” (in the absence of ability to name the feeling)
- Explanation/Interpretation of Action
 - “because it seemed to me like you Z...”
 - “because from my perspective Z...”
 - “because it came across as Z...”
- Ask for Clarification
 - “help me understand...”
 - “Am I misinterpreting or misremembering things?”

8

THE SURGICAL MODEL—NEVER CUT BLINDLY

- Have I prayed for wisdom and acknowledged my need for God to help me as I prepare for and move forward with this confrontation?
- Is this the right time and context for surgery?
- Have I observed a serious offense or a standing pattern sufficient to warrant an incision?
- Am I content to address one area of concern even if I am aware of multiple?
- Am I committed to making an incision no larger than necessary?
- Am I humbly prepared to offer an observation as opposed to an assumption or conclusion?
- Is my goal in spiritual surgery restorative love and truth or personal preference?



9

FINAL THOUGHTS

- We must not let desires for our own comfort and social harmony trump our obligation to gently restore and confront in love.
- Faithful, gentle efforts at restoration don't always result in tear-free conversations where everyone leaves happy
- Let love and humility dominate your confrontation



10