

PEACEMAKING AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

Resolving Conflict in the Run of the Life with Gospel Wisdom



1

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?



2

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



3

THE DIFFICULT TOPIC OF FORGIVENESS

- Reconciliation only comes with both resolution of the conflict and restoration of the relationship.
- Reconciliation is the giving and receiving of genuine forgiveness
- Though Christians have been forgiven and reconciled to God and therefore, should be the quickest to forgive, many Christians struggle with bitterness and unforgiveness.
- The topic of forgiveness raises interesting and difficult questions: What does “I forgive you” really mean? Do I forgive someone who has not repented? What about the consequences?



4

THE DIFFICULT TOPIC OF FORGIVENESS

What forgiveness is not:

- A feeling
- Forgetting
- Excusing

What forgiveness is:

- A decision modeled after God's forgiveness of us—a decision to cancel a relational debt and to not hold an offense against an offender.
 - “Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Eph. 4:32
 - “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.” Col. 3:12-13



5

A TWO-TIERED PROCESS

Attitudinal Forgiveness: Release the Offense to God

- A heart posture; A disposition of forgiveness toward the offender
- Acts 7:60; Lk. 23:34
- Does not require the offender asking forgiveness (Rom. 12:18)

“When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them. This is gospel forgiving.” Thomas Watson

- Remember, our suffering, like our victories, is not our own.

Transacted Forgiveness: Relational Restoration

- Requires the offender asking for forgiveness (Matt. 18:26-27)
- Completes the cancellation of a relational debt provided genuine forgiveness (1 John 1:9)
- Transacted forgiveness cannot happen without attitudinal forgiveness



6

HAVE I FORGIVEN?

- Do you hope the best for the person who offended you? Do you hope they prosper and that the Lord blesses the work of their hands?
- Do you find yourself frequently returning to this offense in your mind and marinating in it? Does this become particularly acute when you see this person?
- Do you tend to label this person in your head as, “the person who did X?”
- Do you continue to bring the offense up in conversation with the offender or others as a “reminder” after you have extended “forgiveness?”
- Despite your extension of “forgiveness,” do you feel a strong aversion to restoring the relationship to what it was (or better) before the offense *that doesn't stem from practical concerns?*

