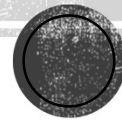


PEACEMAKING AND PRESUPPOSITIONS

Resolving Conflict in the Run of the Life with Gospel Wisdom



1

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!



2

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.

3

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?”

4

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?



5

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



6

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?



7

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



8

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

