

I. The Peaceful Fruit of Right Living

“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”- Hebrews 12:11

- A. Disciplines are practices/habits that often cost a little on the front end (whether it be of our time, strength, or personal comfort), but in the end they position us for grace and life in our inner man. Though it may challenge our flesh, we submit ourselves to the biblical process and principles for conflict resolution because it is the right way to live. In so doing, we position ourselves to enjoy the peaceful fruit of right living in our mind, heart, and relationships.

II. Resolving the Conflict Within

“What causes quarrels and fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?” -James 4:1

- A. This verse says that it is our flesh and sinful desires that often puts us at odds with others. It is our pride, selfishness, entitlement, and high view of ourselves and our opinions that cause conflict with our brothers and sisters. Before we go into a conversation to resolve a conflict—whether it be because of our sin or others—we must take a look within; dislodge the logs in our own eyes, own our sin before God, and align with His heart and perspective. We want to be peacemakers who excel in love, and carry God’s heart for those we find ourselves at odds with. Any conversation that follows will go far better when we’ve taken this time.

III. Righting our Wrongs:

- A. Our horizontal relationships are inextricably tied to our vertical relationship with God. You cannot be wrong with man and be right with God. The Lord cares so much about how we relate within our horizontal relationships that in Matthew 5, He tells us that He would rather us go make things right with our brother or sister than to stay at the altar offering our worship. Likewise, In 1 Peter 3:7, husbands are warned that their prayers will be hindered if they don’t relate rightly to their wives as fellow heirs of the grace of life.

“So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” -Matt. 5:23-24

“ Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” -1 Peter 3:7

B. Ken Sande’s 7 A’s of Biblical Apology:

- 1. Address everyone involved:** All wrongdoing offends God so should start with him. *1 John 1:9- “Confess your sins to Him, he is faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you from all unrighteousness.”* ... The general rule: your confession should reach as far as the offense. (Ex: If you sin against your spouse in the presence of your children, you need to go to both your spouse and your children to make things right).
- 2. Avoid if, but, and maybe:** Do not attempt to justify or qualify your wrongdoing. The quickest way to wreck an apology is by using words that shift the blame to others or minimize or excuse your guilt. (Ex: “*I’m sorry if I hurt you*” or “*I’m sorry I lost my temper, but if you wouldn’t have...*”.) Focus on your sin, not theirs.
- 3. Admit Specifically.**
- 4. Acknowledge their Pain.**
- 5. Accept the Consequences:** (Ex: You may need to correct a piece of gossip you passed on or you might have to pick up extra work to pay for damages you caused to someone’s property.)
- 6. Alter your Behavior:** A sincere apology comes from a heart that is committed to not repeating the offense. Share how you plan to change or choose differently in the future by God’s grace.
- 7. Ask for Forgiveness.**
- 8. Allow Time.**

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” -Romans 12:18

IV. When You’ve been Wronged:

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.” - Matthew 18:15

- A. The Biblical protocol for when we find ourselves at odds with other believers, whether we are the offender or the offeree, is to take responsibility for the restoration of the relationship and go directly to that person to discuss the matter. Our goal in the conversation should be “winning a brother”, not winning an argument.

“Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.” -Matthew 18:21-22

- B. Peter asks the question we’re all wondering. “But how many times should we forgive someone who continues to sin against us?”. Though Peter’s initial suggestion of seven times sounds generous, Jesus calls us to a far greater standard of mercy. In the parable of the “unforgiving servant” that follows, we are to see ourselves as the servant who has been forgiven the insurmountable debt. Because we have been forgiven much, we are set free to forgive much. As often as a brother or sister comes to us and sincerely repents, we are to forgive them and release them from their “debt”. (Matt. 18:21-35, 6:12, 3:13, Lk. 7:47)

V. Helpful Tools:

A. Crucial Conversation’s S.T.A.T.E. Principles:

1. **Share your Facts**: Here you share the solid facts and available data to you, not the stories or meaning you’ve attached to these facts. (Ex: *“I’ve noticed that you have been late to our last two meetings, and that you were on your phone quite a bit during it.”*)
2. **Tell your Story**: This is when you can share your interpretation, making it clear this is just your interpretation, not necessarily the facts. (Ex: *“Now I’m not sure why that is, but it gives me the impression that you don’t value our team and the success of this project.”*)
3. **Ask for their Perspective**: The goal isn’t to prove you’re right but to understand the other person and resolve the situation. This is where you would ask for their story and any data points that you may not have. (Ex: *Am I missing something about what’s going on? I’d love to hear things from your perspective.”*)
4. **Talk Tentatively**: This shows that you’re open to being wrong. Saying things like *“it makes me wonder”* and *“I get the impression”* works better than *“it’s obvious to me”* or *“it’s clear that.”*
5. **Encourage Testing**: Ask the other party to share their viewpoint even if it’s completely different from yours. If they’re uncommunicative, you can prompt with *“Let’s say I’m wrong here. Can you help me see things from your point of view?”* or *“You seem frustrated and I’d like to understand why. Can you help me see your perspective?”*

B. The S.T.E.A.R. Model:

Situation> Thoughts> Emotions> Action> Results

Situation: The facts of a situation.

Thoughts: The meaning and stories we interpret and attach to the facts.

Emotions: Our thoughts generate our emotions.

Actions: Our emotions fuel our responses and the energy we bring to interactions/relationships.

Results: Our actions create our results and the reality we live in.

IV. A Time to Forbear and a Time to Share

“There’s a time.... To keep silent, and a time to speak” -Ecc. 3:7

“I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” -Eph. 4:1-2

“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. 3:13

- A. There are times when the right course of action is silence and there are times when it is to speak. It takes discernment to know what a given situation calls for. A good question to ask is, “What would be the most loving course of action in this situation? What would best serve this person and reflect The Lord?” If words are called for, then speak the truth and do so in love. (Eph. 4:15, 4:29, Prov. 15:1, 12:18)

V. Recommended Reading:

-”Crucial Conversations, Tools for Talking When Stakes are High” by: Joseph Grenny, Kerry Patterson, Ron McMillan, Al Switzler, Emily Gregory.

-”The Bait of Satan” by: John Bevere

-”Emotionally Healthy Spirituality”, “ The Emotionally Healthy Leader”, “Emotionally Healthy Relationships” by: Peter Scazzero

-”Unoffendable” by: Brant Hansen