

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday July 22, 2018 "Relationship Series: Confrontation".

A. Intro.

Welcome to the weekly devotional that gives you some specific things to work thru from the message on Sunday. Whether you were able to attend the worship service or not, this devotional is free-standing and you can still go thru it to help you dig deeper in your own spiritual walk. Take as long as you need to dive into this material and feel free to share it.

B. Sunday's Message.

This family series has us taking on some difficult but yet so important topics, and this past Sunday was no exception. Tami addressed the difficult issue of confrontation, and how do we do that truthfully and honestly and yet still make sure we operate in the full understanding and practice of grace. We can think about our own childhood and we most likely had one parent who was the 'hard' disciplinarian parent and the other was the parent who we knew would let us get away with more. This is how most of us practice our understanding of the classic 'truth and grace' having hard conversations with those important people in our life. We either are too harsh and come across as unloving and overly judgmental, or we lean too far in the other direction and our practice of grace is closer to enabling because we never have those hard conversations.

So as usual...those, *"let's get this conversation going"* questions.

Who was the tough parent when you were growing up? Who was the easier one?

And to just push this self-awareness thing along.

How do you see yourself, as more able to confront or an avoider?

How do you view the 'other side'? For example if you consider yourself the easier one to get along with how do you view those who tend to be more direct, and if you are the more direct person how do you view the easier one?

Healthy confrontation, conflict resolution, is hard, and a learned skill. It takes a keen sense of self-awareness, self-discipline, focus, and godly goals and principles to be able to have those difficult conversations with important people in our life, and not do damage.

And dealing with confrontation and conflict resolution is so important in growing and developing those healthy important relationships in our lives, AND equally important these reflect the nature of our God, and reveal how our churches function. We just HAVE to do this well.

C. Scripture.

Tami covered several stories in the Old Testament that gave us powerful examples of how constructive confrontation occurred.

But the classic one she used was **Matthew 18:15-19**. Read this brief description of how to have those tough conversations with someone in your life and the different aspects of it.

Healthy, productive confrontation is hard work. Usually issues are loaded with emotion, history, overlapping issues, lack of self-awareness, cloudy understanding of underlying issues, waited too long to address or confronted too quickly without having all the info, etc.

? What makes caring confrontation so difficult?

? Why do we avoid caring confrontation?

? Why do we not do this well?

When we choose not to confront:

1. We're giving implied consent or approval to the offense.
2. Our resentment grows when the person repeats the offense.
3. We're not being honest.

The key to doing this well is growing your spiritual maturity, Christlikeness, and crafting a set of 'rules', guidelines, that dictate how you specifically handle confrontation and conflict.

How to confront others for the purpose of restoring or strengthening the relationship.

1. Be respectful of the other person.
2. Confront from humility, knowing your issues are obvious also.
3. Be emotionally in control, calm, when you're sharing your concerns.
4. Choose your words thoughtfully, and be very careful with your tone and body language.
5. Use non-judgmental questions. For example "Why?" almost always implies guilt.
6. Be able to state your position clearly and factually
7. Make sure the time is good to talk and you have enough.
8. Be spiritually prepared. Make sure your motives are good and your heart is right.
9. State specific examples of the issue you wish to address.

? What are some rules you use or have found helpful?

? In what areas could you grow and improve your ability to deal with difficult situations and restore strained relationships?

The goal in healthy constructive confrontation and conflict resolution is hopefully restoration. Even if the other person isn't aware of the break or a strain in your relationship, you know you feel the distance between you two. The ultimate goal is to possibly restore or grow the relationship between you two. Now there are some relationships that are not safe, either physically or emotionally, and the most Christlike thing you can do is to put some boundaries in place and create some separation. And of course these conversations are always done from a position of humility knowing this type of conversation goes both ways. And you want the same **gentleness and kindness** from them. And we need to be reminded it's these **two things about God that bring us to repentance**.