

Weekly Study of Sunday's Message.

Sunday August 25, 2019. "At the Movies: Shrek"

I. Intro.

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

II Recap.

Sunday was our fourth in our "***At the Movies***" series and a deep dive into the inner workings of relationships. Over the past weeks we've looked at; why relationships are important, how to look past the exterior of people and find the inner worth, and fighting the tendency of being overly self-reliant. All of those messages, and a devotional guide, are available on our website or through our app. There is some practical wisdom, and scriptures, that can help in all of your relationships.

III Sunday.

This past Sunday we hit what is probably THE most important aspect of any relationship, and that is conflict resolution. The ability to navigate the choppy waters of disagreements, and we'll just throw this out there...sometimes 'fights', and how to work through those tough moments and find restoration and reconciliation with those people in our lives.

How do you handle conflict with others?

What is your default style, (avoid, sulk, explode, talk it out, simmer, hide, etc.)?

Where do you struggle, wish you were better, in handling conflict and working through it?

There were three 'understandings' to help frame the conversation around conflict.

1. Maintain yourself.

Has to be this understanding and awareness of self-control. It means don't become abusive, shaming, name calling, hyperbolic, a power play. Be aware of your emotions in the conflict.

2. Engage.

Some people are uncomfortable with conflict. And the least engaged person is the most powerful person in the relationship. In order for the issue to be resolved, and relationship restored, both people have to be committed to standing 'in there' with each other, and doing the work.

3. Differentiate between emotion, hurt feelings about conflict, and the actual source of the conflict.

Sometimes you have to vent, deal with, drain the emotions, (how that thing 'felt' to you), BEFORE you can begin to address the actual issue. Most conflict, if it becomes serious, begins to fork, split into multiple branches. All of these will muddy, complicate the actual issue, and make resolving the conflict even more complicated. Often you have to get on the same page before resolving.

A. How to do conflict well.

1. Don't see everything as conflict.

Ephesians 4:2-3.

This is; *'this may not actually be as big as it feels in the moment'*. Not all disagreement, or issues have to devolve into actual conflict. Not every rub, disagreement, has to be a battle. Do some work to determine how big of an issue it actually is.

2. Own your own stuff FIRST.

Matthew 7:1-5. James 4:1.

Questions to ask; What part of the issue should you own? What's going on inside of you?

How did you contribute to what happened?

We all bear some responsibility for conflicts we find ourselves in. If you do some work before the conversation, figure out what you may be dealing with, it will help create some perspective, and soften your approach to the other person.

3. Fight the natural urge for revenge.

Matthew 5:38-42. Romans 12:17-19.

Often our anger or feelings can be just pent up resentment. Sometimes it's keeping score, labeling, dealing with a continual difficult person or situation and there's this thing inside of you to make that issue your 'final stand'. Cumulative anger, and it's root hurt, can cloud future relationships and the ability to work through conflict. Be aware of larger emotions than the situation calls for.

4. Keep it as private as possible.

Could this be this you?

"Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll over your tongue the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back--in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you."

— **Frederick Buechner**

1 Corinthians 6:1-8.

Let's unpack this in our regular relationships. We use Social Media as our courtroom, friends, family as our jurors don't we? Conflict rarely goes well once we place it out in the public. The importance of respecting the other persons...personhood. And shaming them ANYWHERE where others can see is just wrong.

5. Have an attitude bent towards reconciliation.

Ephesians 4:26, 31-32. Hebrews 12:14-15.

Reconciliation, moving thru conflict, is really hard. When you're dealing with conflict, you HAVE TO KNOW WHAT YOUR ENDGAME IS. Is it to work things out, to end a relationship, whatever, know what you want to accomplish. And...unless it's just impossible, the goal should always be towards

reconciliation. Everything said, done, thought, HAS to be run through the filter of; “*will this bring us closer or farther away from restoring the relationship?*”

6. WORK to be kind.

Galatians 6:1-2.

Everyone is an important person to someone else...remember that. Kindness is the baseline to any kind of conflict resolution, especially reconciliation. And yes in the midst of conflict, kindness is hard work. Kindness says; even if you did a horrible thing, possibly the worst thing ever, betrayed, lied, took advantage of, abandoned, you still are a person, and whether this relationship continues or not, I want to respect that in you.

THIS IS HARD STUFF. If you're not able to do this at some point, and things don't have to be ironed out right away, then just put some space between you and the other person.

IV Challenge.

There was a three step process of reconciliation and restoration from **Matthew 18:15-19**.

It basically stated.

- 1. Speak to the person directly.**
- 2. Bring unbiased people who know both of you.**
- 3. Find a third party to hear out your sides, and help you decide.**
- 4. And if that didn't work we treat them like a pagan, a lost person.**

And how do we treat lost people? We move them out of our inner circle, but we love them and hope to win them over...again.

Conflict resolution is THE most important skill we can learn, and tool in our toolbox to help us make our relationships stronger. We will always disagree with important people in our lives, have tough situations to deal with, and learning to do this well, will help us make our relationships stronger, and help us to be better representatives of Jesus.

It's THAT important.

How can you grow your conflict resolution game?

Bonus passages about conflict.

All in Proverbs.

10:12. 12:18. 15:1. 17:14. 15:18. 18:13. 16:28. 19:11. 28:25. Eccles 7:9.