

Confrontations That Cure

How Difficult Conversations Can Redeem Broken Relationships!

Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.

- How would you summarize the central idea of this week's message in one sentence? Was there anything significant that stood out to you from the message that you would share with the group? (Hint: What was your personal “aha” moment?)
- Living a separated life unto God doesn't mean withdrawing from the world. Instead, it means that we have dedicated ourselves to living a life that pleases and glorifies the Lord in the midst of the world. Without becoming self righteous in our answers, did God make you aware this week of moments where you were living an elevated life? Perhaps God showed you an area where you needed to yield to Godly living?

Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.

- Paul's difficult and unpleasant confrontation with the Corinthians was done with the intent of helping the Corinthians to be righteous in their own walk with God. Let's talk about how important it is in personal confrontations to have an “others centered” point of view, and not just a personal desire to be vindicated, to vent, rage, or to “tell it like it is.” How are confrontations more effective if our motives are greater than just being right...and more aligned with each party to the conversation being right with God?
- “Relational Equity” is the idea that over time, there is growing value in our relationships as we invest the time to build greater camaraderie and trust with others. Paul exercised a boldness with the Corinthians that was based on at least four points of equity: (1) Paul founded the church, (2) Paul brought the gospel to Corinth, (3) Paul served the church for two years, and (4) Paul's letters were a long distance investment in the church. In spite of the difficult conversation, the Corinthians could see that Paul valued them and had invested in them in a significant way. How do difficult conversations benefit from our purposeful investment in deeper relationships with others...when they know that we love and care for them before confronting them?
- When Paul heard the good news that the Corinthians had responded well to his “Sorrowful Letter” and were turning in the right direction, it brought him joy and encouragement in the midst of his own personal hardships at Macedonia. How can good news at just the right moment give us strength to stand with joy in our own times of hardship? Why is it important to focus on the victories, and minimize our defeats?

- Based on our teaching from chapter seven, what is the difference between sorrow and repentance? How would you describe “Godly sorrow” which leads to life, and “worldly sorrow” which leads to death?

Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:

- Matthew 5:21-25 Be reconciled quickly with your brother.
- John 2:13-17 Jesus cleanses the temple; an example of righteous anger.
- 2 Samuel 12:1-14 Nathan confronts David about his sin, and David repents.
- Hebrews 12:14-15 Avoiding a root of bitterness.
- Matthew 18:15-17 A Biblical process for addressing sin against us.

Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?

- Is there a difficult conversation that you have been putting off, but that would result in a cure to an otherwise damaged or broken relationship? What would the Lord say to you about addressing that in light of our teaching this week?
- Has there been an instance when, looking back on how you handled a situation, you did not necessarily have the other person’s best interests in mind? As you think through how you can learn from that situation, how could you have addressed confrontation with a mindfulness of a Jesus oriented outcome for the other person?
- How might the joy of your testimony be an encouragement to others in times of tribulation? How have the testimonies of others encouraged you in times of hardship?
- As you think about your relationship to sin, have you addressed sin with Godly sorrow leading to a desire to change, or with worldly sorrow that only regrets the consequences?