

## CONFLICT & FORGIVENESS

- Conflict is inevitable in community.
- Goal is not to be conflict free but to handle it correctly when it occurs.
- Healthy conflict resolution occurs when we are willing to seek and grant forgiveness.
- Christians MUST be committed to resolving conflict.
- Resolving conflict requires loving confrontation.

### A PATH TO RESOLVING CONFLICT

1. Before you confront, examine the offense. Determine if it requires confrontation.
2. Consider your contribution to the conflict.
3. Examine your heart. Are you trying to... retaliate or restore; punish or pursue peace?
4. Remember this person is your brother or sister, not your enemy.
5. Speak the truth in love.
6. Approach confrontation carefully – with the right timing and focus.

#### FOCUS ON...

one issue  
the problem  
behavior  
specifics  
facts  
"I" statements  
Understanding

#### RATHER THAN...

many issues  
the person  
character  
generalizations  
judgment of motive  
"you" statements  
who's winning or losing

- Resolving conflict requires forgiveness.  
*"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. – Eph 4:23"*
- The Bible teaches that all Christians are responsible to God to seek and grant forgiveness.  
*"Forgiveness is the obligation of the forgiven."*
- The offender needs to seek forgiveness.  
Begin by admitting to yourself and God that you were wrong.

- Humbly go seek forgiveness
  - Be willing to say you were wrong: "I was wrong. I shouldn't have \_\_\_\_\_."
  - Be willing to say you are sorry: "I am sorry I did \_\_\_\_\_, and that I caused you to feel \_\_\_\_\_."
  - Be willing to repent: "I know that I have hurt you, and I don't want to ever do that again."
  - Be willing to ask for forgiveness: "Will you forgive me for doing \_\_\_\_\_?"
- The offended person needs to grant forgiveness.
  - True forgiveness is not pretending that something didn't happen, conditional, forgetting, an automatic cure for hurt.
  - Granting forgiveness is a choice to set them free from the debt of their offense, and attitude of letting go of resentment the first step toward rebuilding trust, an act of obedience to god.

### WHAT IF MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND IS LIVING IN ONGOING SIN?

- Every Christian commits sin. But sometimes, a Christian can become caught in ongoing, unrepentant sin that damages their relationship with God and damages Jesus's reputation.
- Christians have an obligation to follow Jesus's teaching in Matthew 18:15-17.
- "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.' If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."
- We must, in love... (1) Talk to them. (2) Take along another. (3) Take it before the church.

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