

CONFLICT, RECONCILIATION, AND IDENTITY | 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17-20

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

1. Conflict is resistance toward a threat
2. Reconciliation is an act of grace
3. Grace is only understood on the ground of our identity

RECONCILIATION AND THE HEART | MATTHEW 7:3-5

1. Jesus makes reconciliation an internal matter first

"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3-5)

2. Reconciliation is a gospel issue that requires taking responsibility

"You will not pursue Christ-centered conflict resolution if your heart is not captivated by Christ. If Christ doesn't reign supreme in your life, then your peacemaking efforts will fall short." (Tony Merida)

RECONCILIATION AND COMMUNICATION | COLOSSIANS 3:13

"First, it is utterly inappropriate for one who knows the joy and release of being forgiven to refuse to share that blessing with another. Second, it is highly presumptuous to refuse to forgive one whom Christ himself has already forgiven." (N.T. Wright)

"...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." (Colossians 3:13)

1. The goal of communication is intimacy

2. Three Principles for Communication:

- a. Speak Kindly (tone)
 - "A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath." (Proverbs 15:1)
- b. Speak Encouragingly (content)
 - "No foul language is to come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace to those who hear." (Ephesians 4:29)
- c. Speak Directly (honesty)
 - "Better an open reprimand than concealed love. The wounds of a friend are trustworthy, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive." (Proverbs 27:5-6)

What Do These Principles Have in Common? Listening!

- "A fool does not delight in understanding, but only wants to show off his opinions."
(Proverbs 18:2)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

1. Are you a natural "law speaker"? Do you bring judgment easily rather than grace?
2. Are you a natural "grace giver"? Do you extend grace easily rather than you speak the truth?