

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Resolving Unresolved Conflicts

Ephesians 4:1-3, 25-32

Unity in the Church

Ephesians 4:1-3 (NLT2) ¹ ***Therefore I, a prisoner for serving the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of your calling, for you have been called by God.*** ² ***Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.*** ³ ***Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace.***

- Apostle Paul begins Ephesians 4 with the word, *therefore*. What is, *therefore*, there for?
- Therefore, is referring to the doctrinal foundation Paul laid in Ephesians chapters 1-3
- Apostle Paul told us that we were adopted into God's family, chosen before the foundation of the world, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, sealed with the Holy Spirit
- In light of all that Jesus has done for us, there are responsibilities for us the church
- Paul literally *begs* believers to lead a life worthy of our calling as Christians
- When we truly understand how much God did for us, we will want to live for Him, serve Him, and obey Him out of a heart of gratitude
- As believers we are to live (walk):
 - Humility – It's knowing ourselves, accepting ourselves, and being ourselves to the glory of God
 - Gentleness (meekness) – Gentleness is is power under control
 - Patience - it is the ability to endure discomfort without fighting back
 - Making allowances for each other's faults (forbearance) - the ability to show tolerance for others and seeking their well-being
- We need to put into practice these Christian virtues because it is inevitable that we will be at odds with a fellow believers
- When we live this way, we'll be able to make *ever effort* to keep the unity of the Spirit with the bond of peace
- We are called preserve, maintain, and guard what God has already created
- ***Illus.: You didn't make the car you drive, but if you want it to give you years of dependable service, you'll follow the maintenance schedule***
- Building unity is one of the important roles of the Holy Spirit
- Unity is maintained by believers as they make peace with one another their *priority* instead of acting selfishly for personal gain or recognition

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Resolving Unresolved Conflicts

Ephesians 4:1-3, 25-32

- What Paul is telling us is that conflict natural part of human of human relationships not only in the church, but families, the workplace, and society
- We are to walk worthy or our calling as Christians and strive to conduct ourselves in humility, gentleness, patience forbearance, and love, which are all required to maintain unity in body of Christ

What Keeps the Conflict Going?

Ephesians 4:25-32 (NLT2) ²⁵ So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body. ²⁶ And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ for anger gives a foothold to the devil. ²⁸ If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need. ²⁹ Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. ³⁰ And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption.

- What causes and hinders resolution of conflicts?
- There are consequences to unresolved conflict
- Lying to each other breaks the unity in the church by creating conflicts and destroying trust
 - It creates problems in relationships and can lead to strife and warfare in the church
 - We can't truly be a community of believers unless we honestly admit our faults ,failures, weaknesses
- Anger - People in the church are going to make you mad from time to time, but our anger should never become sinful
 - We are not allow our anger to cause us to behave or to speak in a way that's sinful
 - We are not to let the sun go down or the day go by and remain angry
 - Many times the ones we say we love, we tend to hold onto the anger against them (i.e., our spouses, our children, our friends, fellow believers in the church, etc.)
 - When we keep our anger bottled up inside, we give the devil an opportunity
- Stealing - taking from another person what does not belong to you

HOW TO TALK TO PEOPLE

Resolving Unresolved Conflicts

Ephesians 4:1-3, 25-32

- When a person knows you stole from them and you don't acknowledge it or return it, the conflict is not resolved and gets worse
- Foul or abusive language, the KJV calls it "corrupt communication"
 - Corrupt communication means rotten, foul, polluted, slanderous, coarse talk
 - Many times conflict may start from the words we speak to each other
 - We are to speak words that build up and not to tear down
- Grieving the Holy Spirit – Unresolved conflict offends, saddens the Holy Spirit
 - The Holy Spirit is grieved because we're allowing the conflict to go on without working to resolve it
 - The Holy Spirit is not grieved by how our conduct, our speech or anger *affects Him*, the Holy Spirit is grieved by how our conduct, speech and anger *affects us*
 - We must remember we are sealed or *identified* as belonging to God
 - We are to conduct ourselves so we reflect the seal of the Holy Spirit on our lives

The Path to Resolution

³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. ³² Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

- The pathway to resolving unresolved conflict starts with our own conduct
- We are commanded to get rid of any behavior, attitude, or conduct that refuses to reconcile us with other believers
- Instead we are to be:
 - Kind – Gentle, caring, courteous, helpful
 - We are brothers and sisters in Christ
 - Tenderhearted – showing compassion, mercy, and understanding
 - Forgiving – to be able to pardon someone for the wrong they've done
 - The goal is unity and reconciliation with the body of Christ
- For believers to live in a manner worthy of their calling, we must pursue peace, unity, and be promoters of reconciliation in our relationships