

January 15th, 2017

1-VIDEO: RESOLUTION TITLE

2-TITLE SLIDE

INTRO

Good morning!

We are continuing our series called Resolution where we are looking to resolve any heartache, conflict, and tension in our relationships.

We talked about a couple of ways that you can strengthen a relationship if it has been weakened. Or how you can strengthen a currently healthy relationship.

- We can build each other up with positive word and thoughts
- We can become a servant through our actions and our heart

For these next two weeks I really wanted to walk you through how we communicate in the midst of tension. How we communicate in the conflict. The struggle is, it depends. And it does not depend on what the conflict is as much as with whom we are in conflict.

We have clear rules that we are supposed to follow for conflict within the church. When there is conflict with another believer, another Christians, another part of the body of Christ.

We are also given guidance and direction for how to be in relationships with unbelievers and this leads us to conflict resolution there. These two actually look a little bit different from each other. So I decided that I was going to talk about these on two separate weeks.

The tough question then is ... which one comes first. I finally decided that I would first approach our relationships outside of the Church. Any conflict with an unbeliever.

REMEMBER THE GOAL

This can be any kind of conflict that you have with someone that is outside of the body of Christ.

- Argument at work
- Attack because of Christ
- For some, this is your marriage. One is in Christ and the other is not.

No matter what the conflict is, remember the number one most important thing. We want them to know Christ. We want them to know God. We want them to become a part of the body of Christ.

But we are in the midst of conflict and tension so what are we to do?

Paul in His letter to the Colossians gives them some final instructions as he is ending his letter to them. And it is advice for how to live in our relationships with unbelievers in all situations, whether there is conflict or not. But this advice seems to be exactly what we need to lean on when we are in the midst of conflict.

COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

3-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

4-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD OUTSIDERS

We are supposed to walk in wisdom toward outsiders, those that are outside the Church. This is hard.

We are supposed to remain humble, loving, caring, kind, and gentle. We are supposed to show love and forgiveness. In the face of cruelty, insults, intolerance, and ridicule.

We are supposed to show Jesus in the middle of our conflict, our tension, our anger, our hurt, our betrayal. This isn't easy.

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So how does wisdom help? But where does our wisdom come from? How are we able to be wise toward outsiders in the midst of the pain?

WHY IS WISDOM IMPORTANT?

Why is it so important? How does wisdom help?

PROVERBS 3:13

6-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

¹³ Blessed is the one who finds wisdom, and the one who gets understanding,

PROVERBS 24:13-14

7-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

¹³ My son, eat honey, for it is good, and the drippings of the honeycomb are sweet to your taste.

8-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

¹⁴ Know that wisdom is such to your soul; if you find it, there will be a future, and your hope will not be cut off.

Wisdom leads to a blessed life. Wisdom leads to a hope filled future.

Conflict leads to separation, quarreling, despair, and sin.

Proverbs has a continual plea to get wisdom. On one occasion wisdom is personified and this is her words:

PROVERBS 8:32-36

9-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

³² "And now, O sons, listen to me: blessed are those who keep my ways.

10-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

³³ Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.

11-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

³⁴ Blessed is the one who listens to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.

12-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

³⁵ For whoever finds me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord,

13-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

³⁶ but he who fails to find me injures himself; all who hate me love death."

Get wisdom. Wisdom leads to life and to favor from the Lord. Wisdom will lead us to resolution in our conflicts and especially in our conflicts outside of the Church. We need to be wise.

WHAT IS WISDOM?

So what is wisdom? What are the characteristics of the person who has it?

KNOWS AND FEARS GOD

PROVERBS 9:10

14-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

¹⁰ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Wisdom begins with knowing God. With knowing that He is Lord. With understanding what it would be like to be apart from Him and fearing that separation. Fearing being against Him.

When I think of fearing the Lord I think of something Kyle Idleman said in his book Not A Fan. I don't have the exact quote, but he basically said that there is going to be a battle at the end of time. Christ will be on one side leading an attack against Satan. When Christ comes riding in ... do you want to be for Him or against Him. I suggest that you fear being against Him. Because it will be swift and decisive.

We cannot have true wisdom apart from God. We can be smart, we can be intellectual, but wisdom begins with knowing and fearing God.

OBEY GOD

But it is more than just knowing and fearing God, it is also putting what He teaches into practice.

Jesus says in the middle of His sermon on the mount

MATTHEW 7:24

15-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

²⁴"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Godly wisdom is not just knowing and fearing God, but it is also obeying Him. Putting what He teaches into practice.

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HAVE MATURE JUDGMENT OR DISCERNMENT

But something more has to be said about the nature of this wisdom. It is not enough to say it is a humble hearing and doing of God's Word, because God's Word does not address itself specifically to every human dilemma.

We see one time where King Solomon has to decide who is the rightful mother of a baby. It is a strange incident, it has a strange outcome, but the bottom line is There was no biblical command to tell Solomon what to do when two harlots claim the same baby.

But when Solomon makes his ruling the people perceived that the wisdom of God was in him.

Wisdom must go beyond knowing and doing the Word of God. Wisdom must include a sensitive, mature judgment or discernment of how the fear of the Lord should work itself out in all the circumstances not specifically dealt with in the Bible. There has to be what Paul calls (Romans 12:2) a "renewing of the mind" which is then able to examine and approve the will of God. He calls this a "spiritual wisdom" in Colossians (1:9)

Of course the wisdom which follows God's Word and the wisdom which discerns the way to act when there is no clear word from God are not separate. It is precisely by saturating our minds and hearts with God's Word that we gain the spiritual wisdom to guide us in all situations.

When the Bible says, "Get wisdom," it begins with the fear of the Lord and consists in humbly hearing and doing God's will perceived both in Scripture and in the unique circumstances of the moment. Such wisdom is essential because the person who has it finds life and joy, but the person who doesn't finds death and misery.

Therefore, "Get wisdom! Get wisdom!"

HOW CAN WE GET WISDOM?

How can we get wisdom?

DESIRE WISDOM

First, desire wisdom with all your might.

PROVERBS 4:8

17-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁸ Prize her highly, and she will exalt you; she will honor you if you embrace her.

These are not cheap words. To prize something and to embrace someone are signs of intense desire and love. Wisdom must be valuable for us. We must be willing to sell all in order to buy it:

PROVERBS 2:4

18-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁴ if you seek it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures,

If you want wisdom, you must desire wisdom.

STUDY THE WORD OF GOD

Second, since wisdom is found in the Word of God, we must apply ourselves in study and meditation to know the Word and do it.

PSALM 19:7

19-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁷ The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;

We must devote ourselves to know and understand the God's Word. We must not only study our Bible but also regular reading of great books of theology and Bible interpretation.

Now, I know what you are thinking: I don't have the time or the ability to get anywhere in books like that.

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Lets do the math ...

- Suppose you read about 250 words a minute and that you resolve to devote just 15 minutes a day to serious theological reading to deepen your grasp of biblical truth. In one year (365 days) you would read for 5,475 minutes.

- Multiply that times 250 words per minute and you get 1,368,750 words per year.
- Now most books have between 300 and 400 words per page. So if we take 350 words per page and divide that into 1,368,750 words per year, we get 3,910 pages per year.
- The average book has around 190 pages.
- This means that at 250 words a minute, 15 minutes a day, you could read about 20 average sized books a year!

So ... if you set aside 15 minutes a day. Before you go to sleep, right when you wake up, on your commute, while you are eating breakfast ...

So, if you set aside 15 minutes a day for the next year ... then next year at this time you will not be the same person. Your mind will be stretched, your heart enlarged, and you will have grown in wisdom.

PRAY FOR IT

The third thing we should do to get wisdom is pray. Solomon was not born a wise man. He prayed for wisdom and God gave it to him.

JAMES 1:5

21-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁵If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.

Do you want wisdom? Ask for it. But don't expect God to just snap His fingers and you are now wise. You need to desire it and study.

COME TO JESUS

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Finally, and most importantly, if you want wisdom you must come to Jesus.

- Solomon spoke God's wisdom. Jesus is the wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24, 30).
- Others had spoken truth; he is the truth.
- Others had pointed the way to life; he is the way and the life (John 14:6).
- Others had given promises, but "all the promises of God find their yes in him" (2 Corinthians 1:20).
- Others had offered God's forgiveness; Jesus bought it by his death.
- In Jesus are "hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3).

Therefore, the command, "Get wisdom," means first and foremost "Come to Jesus! Come to Jesus!" in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom.

WALK IN WISDOM TOWARD OUTSIDERS

And when we have wisdom, we can walk in wisdom toward outsiders. Towards those outside the Church, especially in our times of conflict, hardship, and tension.

COLOSSIANS 4:5-6

23-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁵Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.

24-SCRIPTURE SLIDE

⁶Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Are you struggling in a relationship with someone that is not part of the body of Christ. Someone that does not believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior.

Then remember that their salvation is essential, that their relationship with God, their coming to know God is the absolute most important thing and walk in wisdom. The wisdom that you get from pursuing God.

When you do ...

- you will make the best use of your time, you will cease every opportunity to live, act, and react in such a way that God is able to be made known.
- You will speak graciously and because you have the Lord's wisdom in you, you will know how you ought to answer each person

CHALLENGE

25-TITLE SLIDE

When there is conflict and it is outside the Church. It is someone that does not believe that Jesus is Lord, our initial reaction is to cut them off. To cut this person out of my life because they are just bringing me down. Because I don't need this conflict in my life.

But when we do that we are missing opportunities that we have to make the best use of time and make God known to them.

Some of the high points of the history of God's people are accounts not of fleeing conflict, but moving toward it in hope, believing God will be at work in the tension, pain, and the mess.

- Moses with stubborn people that he refused to give up on
- Elijah squaring off against Baal
- Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel are constantly facing conflict with a hard hearted people that they are commissioned to serve
- Paul constantly walked into conflict instead of away from it for the sake of those that he was trying to save
- Jesus marched toward Jerusalem, knowing He was going to face those that were against Him, for our sake, for our benefit

The challenge is ... Instead of running from our conflict, let us walk in wisdom and make the best use of our time. Let us seek God, know Him, understand His will, and be assured that He will let us know how we ought to respond in our tension.

I also challenge you to pick a book and begin reading it today, just 15 minutes. If you do that by next Sunday you will have half of that book finished, and you will be on the road to a wiser you.