

Good News Church GA
For A Whole Healthy Life - "Stewardship of Relationships"
Scripture: Luke 6:27-36, Revelation 3:14-20
by Drue Warner
3-26-23

"Generosity is a part of love. You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving."
- Nicky Gumbel

Love is at the core of the health of relationships, and is displayed in how we handle conflict, both as the one who is offended and the one who is offender.

OFFENDED – Pursue & Forgive

Luke 6:27-36

*"But to you who are listening I say: **Love your enemies**, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. **And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.** And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because **he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.**"*

Key Learnings

- Love is a decision more than a feeling.
- Love isn't love until it's undeserved. If it's deserved, then it's reward.

Paul adds to Jesus' teaching on love...

- *4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails. – 1 Corinthians 13:4-8*
- **Words** - *Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up. – Ephesians 4:29*
- **Deeds** - *Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. - Colossians 3:12*

Biblical Summary on Relationships:

- Love God. Love your neighbor. (Mark 12, Matthew 22)
- Love your enemy. (Matthew 5, Luke 6)
- You were reconciled to God, so be reconciled to each other. (2 Cor. 5:18-19)
- Seek peace and pursue it. (Psalm 34:14)
 - Shake the dust from your sandals and keep moving. (Matt. 10:14)

Pursuing Peace

Within the family of God (i.e., friendships, children, marriage, and church), there is an element of accountability of love, such that when we have been offended, there is a process in the pursuit of peace that includes bringing others in to help us in our troubled relationships. See Matthew 18:15-20.

- There are too many relationships within the family of God that are living in a dangerous state of “unhealth” and not being tended to appropriately.
- When we neglect the pursuit of peace with our brothers and sisters in Christ, it affects our impact in relationships with those outside of the family of God. (Hypocrisy)
- We can’t give the love of Jesus away to those outside of the family of faith if we are living in broken relationship with brothers and sisters within our own family (i.e., church, children, spouse).

Hope for Broken People in Broken Relationships

We are broken people in relationship with other broken people, resulting in brokenness in our relationships. But the great hope of the gospel is that, in spite of our individual and collective brokenness, the love of Christ and the power of His Spirit are fully capable of bringing healing to our brokenness WHEN we humbly submit ourselves to Him and to one another.

If we have not sought and pursued peace and love in those broken relationships within the family of God (church, children, spouse), then we are outside of God’s will.

In all of our relationships, pursuing peace and reconciliation with one another is our priority.

- *“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. – Matthew 5:23-24*

Because of our propensity towards avoiding discomfort, it is our nature to not agitate the wounds that exist in our relationships, but it is NOT loving (or in alignment with the love of God) to allow unhealth in our relationships to exist.

Jesus did not do that. He pursued everyone around Him with love, and whenever it was necessary, He was also willing to confront them in their sin (always for the sake of healing and

restoration). Some responded with repentance and others with unrepentance. “None of the above” was not an option.

Avoiding conflict doesn't lend to the health of our relationships.

Addressing conflict, in love, does.

Marriage

There are a lot of marriages dealing with hard stuff that are not pursuing peace and love in those broken areas. This is not what God wants from us. Stay married, YES! But, if we're not going to love our spouse, then staying married isn't earning us any brownie points with God. A marriage relationship without love is not what God wants for our marriages. It's not just about NOT getting divorced. It's about loving your spouse.

Love presses.

- The person we are in conflict with will either respond in brokenness and humility (often resulting in relational healing) or anger and pride (possibly resulting in relational severing).
- When we love our enemies and those who have hurt us, it forces the issue, which is exactly what God wants.
- This is ultimately what led to Jesus' execution. Nevertheless, He still loved those who murdered Him (“*Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.*” – Luke 23:34)

Lukewarm

Jesus doesn't want us to languish in “lukewarm” (apathetic) relationships.

*14 “To the angel of the church in Laodicea write: These are the words of the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the ruler of God’s creation. 15 I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! 16 So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. 17 You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked. 18 I counsel you to buy from me gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see. 19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So **be earnest and repent.** 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me. – Revelation 3:14-20*

OFFENDER – Repent & Respond

Let there be tears for the wrong things you have done. Let there be sorrow and deep grief. Let there be sadness instead of laughter, and gloom instead of joy. When you bow down before the Lord and admit your dependence on Him, He will lift you up and give you honor. - James 4:9,10

Remorse (def): feelings from wrongdoing

Repentance (def): taking action to repair

- *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself in love. – Galatians 5:6a*

How to Say “I’m Sorry”

- 1) **I’m sorry for...** *Be specific.*
- 2) **This is wrong because...** *Focus on the hurt that you’ve caused.*
- 3) **In the future, I will...** *Use positive language (i.e., what you WILL do, not what you won’t do)*
- 4) **Will you forgive me?** *the key to reconciliation and the first step in restoration*

APPLICATION

When you and I think of our broken relationships (in which you have been offended or been the offender), who comes to mind? Write down their name, present them to God, ask Him for help, and apply what you’ve heard.

If you’re struggling and need help, come to the church. Don’t let the enemy hold you hostage in your struggling relationships.

CONCLUSION

God knows that it’s our bent to avoid conflict, to not seek peace, to not love others. He knows our hurt, our fear, our anger, our selfishness, and our pride. And He loves us anyway. Jesus came for sinners like you and me.

When we understand, experience, and submit ourselves to the love of Christ for us (i.e., ungrateful, wicked, unmerciful, etc.), He meets us where we are and begins walking with us in our relationships, such that we will more and more love others the way that He has loved us.

And THAT’S Good News!

ADDITIONAL VERSES FOR CONSIDERATION

Come, my children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord. Whoever of you loves life and desires to see many good days, keep your tongue from evil and your lips from telling lies. Turn from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it. - Psalm 34:11-14

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. 2 If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. 3 If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. 4 Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. 5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. 6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. 7 It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. 8 Love never fails.

– 1 Corinthians 13:1-8a

25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body... 29 Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. 32 Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. – Ephesians 4:25, 29-32

1 Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3 For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God... 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. – Colossians 3:1-3, 12-14

Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. - 1 Peter 3:9

Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. - 1 Peter 4:8-9