

This past Sunday Pastor Ernest shared with us on the topic of "Navigating Conflict".

Effects of Unresolved Conflict:

1. Stress
2. Distance in the relationship
3. Depression
4. Pre-occupied thought life
5. Hurt/grief
6. Anger
7. Bitterness (Hebrews 12:14-15)

The way of LOVE:

L - Learn God's Perspective

1. Clarify the issue specifically. What is God asking you to do? (John 8:32, Psalm 51:6)
2. Allow for self-examination. Do you contribute to the problem in any way? (Matthew 7:1-5, Romans 12:1-2, James 1:5)
3. Overlook the offense if you can. Can you healthily absorb the loss? Don't bring it up if it doesn't affect the relationship. (1 Peter 4:8, Proverbs 10:12, 19:11, 17:14)

O - Outline the Issue

4. If you can't overlook it, set an appropriate time and place to discuss the issue. (Ecclesiastes 3:7, Matthew 5:24)
5. Stick to this issue. Don't bleed into other issues. (Matthew 18:15)
6. Use statements like, "I would like..." or "when you do 'A' I feel 'B'..." (Ephesians 4:25, Philippians 4:6)

V - Validate the Other

7. Avoid accusing language ("You make me..." or "You always..." or "You never..."), name calling, verbal abuse. Control your tongue. (James 3:5-6, Galatians 5:20, Proverbs 17:9, Ephesians 4:29, Proverbs 15:18, 29:11)
8. Listen attentively until you understand the other person. (James 1:19-20)
9. Repeat back what you heard them say. (Proverbs 18:13)
10. Affirm and impart worth to the other both verbally and non-verbally. (Philippians 2:4)

E - Engage in Change

11. Brainstorm possible positive solutions. (Proverbs 11:14)
12. Set proper boundaries as needed. (Titus 3:10, Matthew 18:15-17)
13. Evaluate the process. (1 Thessalonians 5:21)
14. Try a new solution if last one did not work. (Matthew 18:15-17)
15. Seek mediation if you can't work it out between the two of you. (Matthew 18:15-17)

Practical Application

1. Unresolved conflict has negative effects on us. What have been some effects that you have experienced in your life?
2. Would you say that those effects were worth the trouble in the end?
3. The principles laid out in LOVE above shows us how to handle and deal with conflict. Does it seem like something that you could use?
4. What effect would this process have on conflict in our lives?
5. How would we benefit from utilizing this process of "LOVE"?

What is forgiveness? “When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish them well, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them”. (Thomas Watson, Body of Divinity)