

## *Arbor Foundations*

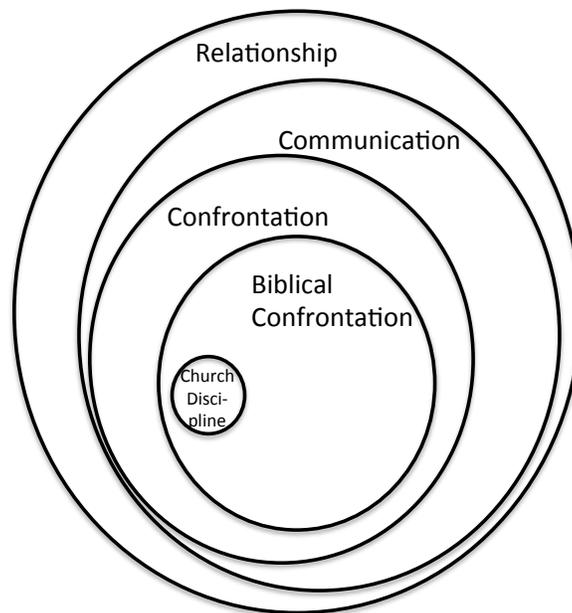
### 18 – Biblical Confrontation and Church Discipline

Feb 17, 2019 – John Raquet

Note: Most of the material in this lesson was adapted from a set of Sunday School lessons previously taught by Steve Woodman, which adapted material from several books shown in the “For Further Study” section at the end of this lesson.

#### **Key Ideas / Biblical Basis**

Where do the topics of “Biblical Confrontation” and “Church Discipline” relate to each other and fit in the overall scheme of relationships?



#### **Definition of Biblical Confrontation:**

*Biblical Confrontation is dealing openly with a relationship problem in a God-ordained fashion with the goal of advancing God's agenda.*

#### **Four introductory passages that touch on many of the topics associated with Biblical confrontation:**

***Eph 4:25-32:*** <sup>25</sup>Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another. <sup>26</sup>“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, <sup>27</sup>nor give place to the devil. <sup>28</sup>Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. <sup>29</sup>Let no corrupt word

proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. <sup>30</sup>And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup>Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. <sup>32</sup>And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

**Heb 3:12-13:** <sup>12</sup>Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; <sup>13</sup>but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

**Rom 12:18:** <sup>18</sup>If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

**Matt 18:15-17:** <sup>15</sup>“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup>But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ <sup>17</sup>And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

### **Biblical Examples of Biblical Confrontation**

- A. Gen. 3:9-13--God confronts Adam and Eve; 3:15, 20; 4:25-26
- B. Ex. 18:1-6, 13-26--Jethro confronts Moses
- C. II Sam. 12:1-15--Nathan confronts David
- D. Matt. 12:9-14--Jesus confronts the Pharisees
- E. Luke 9:46-48--Jesus confronts the disciples
- F. John 3--Jesus confronts Nicodemus; 7:45-52; 19:38-40
- G. Paul confronts Peter, Barnabas, and Mark
  - Gal. 2:11-16
  - Acts 15:36-41
  - I Cor. 9:6 (Paul mentions Barnabas in a good light)
  - II Tim. 4:11 (Paul mentions Mark in a good light)
- H. The prophets confront Israel, Judah, heathen nations
- I. Elders confront false teachers, wayward sheep

## **General Principles of Biblical Confrontation**

1. Biblical confrontation is often necessary because of sin
  - Offenses are committed against God
  - Offenses are committed against people
  - Biblical confrontation is necessary in both cases
2. Biblical confrontation is not always because of sin
  - The need for Biblical confrontation might be a lack of wisdom or experience
3. Biblical confrontation is a major element in ministry
  - We see the example in the prophets
  - Pastors
  - Parents
  - *Brothers and sisters in Christ*
4. Biblical confrontation should be handled in a way that is most appropriate for a specific relationship
  - Husband/wife
  - Pastor/sheep
  - Parent/child
  - Boss/employee
  - Believer/believer
  - Believer/unbeliever
  - Believers together in a local church
  - Believers not together in a local church
5. Biblical confrontation is often difficult
  - Hard to do
  - Hard to receive
  - See section below that gives reasons why this is the case.
6. Biblical confrontation is an important part of our sanctification
  - As we are confronted
  - As we confront others

## A Model of Biblical Confrontation

**E**xamine your heart. (Indwelling sin—Psalm 139:23-24)

**N**ote your calling. (Ambassador of the kingdom—Phil 3:17-21, Phil 2:3)

**C**heck your attitude. (How are your words spoken?—Eph 4:29, 31-32; Col 4:5-6)

**O**wn your own faults. (Know you you really are—Eph 4:32, Rom 2:21-25)

**U**se words wisely. (Plan words with His message—Prov 25:11-12)

**R**eflect on Scripture. (The Bible guides content and manner—Ps 25:4-5)

**A**lways be prepared to listen. (Real communication—Prov 18:17, John 3, John 4)

**G**rant time for a response. (Change takes time—John 7:50-51, John 19:38-39)

**E**ncourage the person. (Gospel = truth *and* grace—Rom 2:4)

## Why We Hate Confrontation

Fundamentally, confrontation is difficult spiritual work, for both the confronter and confronted.

Here are 9 reasons Paul Tripp identifies in *War of Words*:

1. Confrontation often confuses personal irritation and anger with biblical perspectives and purposes. (We are tempted to let someone “have it”.)
2. Poor data gathering can lead to incorrect assumptions about the facts, which derails confrontation.
3. Confrontation is often marred by a judgment of motives.
4. Inflammatory language, condemning words, and emotional tones often stain confrontation. (Instead of what is meant by the definition of Biblical confrontation, we sometimes deal openly with a relationship problem in a sinful fashion with the goal of advancing our agenda.)
5. Confrontations are often adversarial rather than moments of loving concern for the person who needs your rebuke. (As brothers and sisters in Christ, you are on the same team.)
6. In confrontation, Scripture is often used more as a club than as a mirror of self-awareness and a guide to change.
7. Confrontation often confuses human expectations with God's will.
8. Confrontation often takes place in the context of a broken relationship.
9. Confrontation often demands that change be an immediate event rather than a process.

## A Special Case of Biblical Confrontation: Church Discipline

Church discipline is a form of Biblical confrontation that involves the church, and not just an individual.

### When is Church Discipline Necessary?

- Church discipline is necessary when heretical doctrine or disorderly, immoral, or scandalous conduct appears among the members of the church.
  - o Requires lack of repentance
  - o Not intended simply when there is a struggle with sin (or we would all fall under church discipline!)
- Principles outlined in Matt 18:15-17 should be followed:
  - o Attempt to resolve the issue privately
  - o If that doesn't work, attempt to resolve the issue with a few people involved
  - o If that doesn't work, then it can be brought to the church (the elders)
- The goal is spiritual restoration/repentance, not to adhere to a precise, predefined process. The person, not the process, is what is most important.
- Church discipline is not a replacement for punishment by civil authorities if a crime has been committed.
- Other Biblical passages that must be considered:
  - o Rom. 16:17-20
  - o 1 Cor. 5:1-13
  - o 2 Thess. 3:6-15
  - o 1 Tim. 5:19-20
  - o Titus 3:10

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### What Does Church Discipline Involve?

- Depends upon the specifics of the situation (not “one size fits all”)
- Can include:
  - o Verbal reproof (1 Tim 5:20, Matt 18:17)
  - o Social avoidance (Rom 16:17, 1 Cor. 5:9-11; 2 Thess. 3:6, 14)
  - o Suspension from the Lord's supper or other privileges of church membership (1 Cor 5:11)
  - o Excommunication—removal from church membership and treating them as unbelievers (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13)

### Goals of Church Discipline

1. Spiritual restoration of the offender (1 Cor 5:5, 2 Cor 2:5-8, Gal 6:1)
2. The welfare and purity of the church (1 Cor 5:6)
3. The glory of God

**So What?**

If we live life attempting to avoid all conflict, especially between and among fellow believers, we will be missing out on a means of sanctification that God intends for us.

However, confronting others can be done well or poorly. This principles described in this lesson can help us to confront each other when necessary in a Biblical manner, yielding fruit through the work of God.

Also, we should recognize that church discipline, should we ever fall under it, is for our good.

**For Further Study**

Paul Tripp, *War of Words*

Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*

Paul Tripp, *Instruments in the Redeemer's Hands*