

CANDY COVERED HAND GRENADES – PART THREE

(If you can, use these notes with the coordinating Power Point File.)

RESOLVING CONFLICT - HOW TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

INTRODUCTION: Briefly recap the first two lessons from this series. Then, give your audience opening remarks from your heart and ministry experiences about how bitterness and unforgiveness are such great issues in the lives of young people.

At this point, insert a STORY/TESTIMONY regarding healthy conflict: _____

Many of us know people who have been hurt by the church and no longer come; or who no longer serve God because of conflict they witnessed. Give an illustration or use the one below.

ILLUSTRATION FROM PASTOR JONATHAN COOK (You may substitute your own.)

My Grandfather was a good man in a lot of ways, we called him "Pa." He was involved in the church as a young man. In fact, he was actively serving as a deacon. Pa was a very straight-forward person. You never had to wonder what he was thinking. He was a very honest man. While serving as a young deacon in his particular church, several incidents happened that brought to light a lot of the hypocrisy that had infested the church. In the course of time, Pa got very disillusioned with what was happening in and around him. Because he began to focus his eyes on people instead of God, he became bitter and left the church. There was a lack of forgiveness in his heart toward those in the church. This bitterness caused him to stay away from church for 40 years. In fact, my entire life I never knew him as a Christian. My grandmother (granny) was faithful in her walk with God and church attendance every week, but Pa would never go. Bitterness and unforgiveness can rob you of your relationship with God. I am happy to say that Pa gave his heart back to Christ before he died of cancer, and I'm convinced that he is in heaven right now. I still cannot help but wonder though, what more of an impact he could have had on this earth, had he served God all those years he walked in unforgiveness.

Here is a key biblical truth that we all need to understand.

POINT 1 INTENTIONAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION IS ONE OF THE KEYS TO HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

(You can ask why the conflict resolution has to be “intentional.” Otherwise, it normally does not get done. Qualify this with the times when it is better to walk away because of abuse or a potentially dangerous situation.)

Ask your listeners to think carefully about this statement:

PEACE IS NOT THE ABSENCE OF CONFLICT. PEACE IS A BY-PRODUCT OF YOUR WILLINGNESS TO RESOLVE DISPUTES.

Harmony does not come from conformity, but rather from an appreciation for differences.

READ ALOUD: ROMANS 12:18

POINT 2 MAKE PEACE A GOAL, BUT NOT AT ALL COSTS!

Qualify this statement by speaking about the following three things:

- It may not be possible for peace, because of circumstances beyond your control.
- When your efforts to make peace seem to be of no effect, you are, nevertheless, required by God to do your part. (Again, be careful not to put yourself in an abusive or dangerous situation)
- In Romans 12:18, the word “everyone” means even people that rub you the wrong way. ☺ (You can find additional Scriptures and give some of your thoughts about this.)

Tell your listeners “WE WILL TALK ABOUT TWO THINGS TONIGHT:”

1. Reconciling the Offended Brother. Define for them what it means to reconcile.
2. How do we ask for forgiveness?

RECONCILING THE OFFENDED BROTHER:

One of the first concepts of conflict resolution is: REPENTANCE FOR YOUR OWN SIN.

- In most cases, you know someone is offended with you.
 - Search your heart – do you need to repent?
 - Did you do something wrong?
 - Will you refuse to allow your feelings to keep you from asking God for forgiveness?

READ ALOUD: MATTHEW 5:23-24

Find a couple easily understood translations. Then make these points.

- God sees the need for reconciliation to be such a priority that even WORSHIP does not take precedent. God says, “Leave your gift at the altar.” In other words...take care of this RIGHT NOW!
- The context of the Scripture is about offenses that you “know.” It says you “remember” that your brother has something against you.
- A word of caution: Do not worry excessively, trying to constantly see if you have offended someone.

SKITS

At this point, you might want to pull a few kids out of the audience (who you have prepared beforehand), and have them illustrate what **NOT** to do in asking for forgiveness. Look at the five points below in "HOW TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS" to get some ideas as to how to illustrate **NOT** asking for forgiveness properly. Remember to exaggerate the point you are illustrating. For example, you could have someone play the part of a person who continually says, “I am sorry,” but keeps messing up. Get some out-going kids so they can make it funny. Humor is a great way to keep students attention.

Use your creativity and do one or more additional skits.

Go to the next page.

HOW TO ASK FOR FORGIVENESS

1. The one seeking forgiveness should have a clear concept of his sin. What did I do wrong? This should not be vague. If you do not know what you did wrong, then ask the person with whom you are trying to reconcile.
2. Go to the person prepared to repent regardless of their response. If they refuse to forgive you, then it is between them and God. You have done your part. You are released and free from the bondage of guilt or other feelings that would keep you enslaved to the original issue.
3. **DO NOT USE THE WORDS, "I AM SORRY," AS AN EASY WAY OUT.**
 - a. We have diluted these words. They are easily used facing the truth, or to avoid a healthy resolution of the conflict. They can become the easy way out.
 - b. It is better to say "I was wrong..."
 - c. Here is an example: "I just want you to know how bad I feel about my actions. I see how wrong I was, and I have been convicted about it. It grieves me to see how I have hurt you. It was not right. I was wrong. Would you please forgive me?"
4. Stay away from phrases like "**IF** I offended you..." or "I **PROBABLY** should not have done that..."
5. If the person responds inappropriately, it is important that you humble yourself for true reconciliation.

POINT 3 ONE OF THE GREAT CHARACTERISTICS OF MATURITY IS YOUR WILLINGNESS TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

POINT 4 BY HUMBLING YOURSELF, YOU ARE ALLOWING THE HOLY SPIRIT TO WORK ON YOUR BEHALF.

ALTAR MINISTRY

PRAYER FOR WISDOM TO SEE IF YOU HAVE OFFENDED SOMEONE.

PRAY FOR HUMILITY TO DO THE RIGHT THING TO BRING RECONCILIATION.

PRAY FOR THE PERSON YOU HAVE OFFENDED.

PRAY FOR SALVATION