



Confession and Forgiveness (Part 3)

January 27, 2019
THRIVE Groups

Quotable

Conflict happens when you are at odds with another person over what you think, want, or do . . . and it begins when you do not get what you want.

*Resentment is like drinking poison and then hoping it will kill your enemies.
(Nelson Mandela)*

Forgiveness is a radical decision not to hold an offense against the offender.

*None but the well-bred knows how to confess a fault, or acknowledge himself in an error.
(Benjamin Franklin)*

*We pardon to the extent that we love.
(Duc de La Rochefoucauld)*

"Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they shall be called sons of God" (ESV Matthew 5:9).

Ice Breaker: Name one unrelated friend you have. What is one trait that makes his or her company enjoyable?

Questions for Discussion

What will real confession and forgiveness look like in our lives?

Step #1: Extract Your Log! Genuine peace begins with honest confession (Matt. 7:1-5).

1. Before reading question two, list a few behaviors (sins?) in others that bother you. If willing, share a few behaviors from your list.
2. Samuel Johnson observed that "men do not suspect faults which they do not commit." In Pastor Michael's words, "It is easy to point out sin in others that we have in our own lives." The "speck" of sawdust in our brother's eye is often a smaller version of the "beam" in our own eye. Which behaviors in others bother you, that you know that *you* have? How will you change those negative behaviors or sins?

Step #2: Put Out the Fire! Confession ushers compassion into a conflict (Prov. 28:13; James 5:16).

3. Why is confession an effective way to "put out the fire"? How can we learn to confess as soon as we realize our fault?
4. Ken Sande provides "The Seven A's of Confession" (www.rw360.org): **A**ddress everyone involved; **A**void "if," "but," and "maybe"; **A**dmit specifically; **A**cknowledge the hurt; **A**ccept the consequences; **A**lter your behavior; **A**sk for forgiveness. As a group, discuss the practical application of each step, how it is best administered. Which of the seven A's do you struggle with the most?
5. Pastor defined idols as "anything we look to for our ultimate sense of security, happiness, or fulfillment." He claimed that "Idolatry of the heart always starts the fire of conflict." What did he mean by these strong claims? How is the understanding of these truths about idolatry essential for avoiding conflict?
6. Had you previously considered idols in discussions on conflict? What are some contemporary idols in our culture that we might be likely to worship? What are some idols with which you personally struggle?
7. The question we need to ask is, What is the heart of the conflict? Specifically, What are my idols, my expectations? Recall the progression that Pastor outlined: Idols—unmet expectations—loss of joy—conflict. What happens at each stage? How have you found this progression to be true in your life?

Step #3: Mirror God's Grace! We are enabled to forgive because God has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32; Col 3:12-15; Matt. 5:43-48; Luke 6:27-28).

8. We all know this truth: Since God has forgiven us, his former enemies, we can forgive those who have harmed us. Why is forgiveness so difficult that we sometimes harbor bitterness for years?
9. What in your life sparks conflict on a regular basis? How can you eradicate this contentious behavior? Are you currently in the midst of conflict—or potential conflict—for which you need prayer?
10. If your group did not meet last week, you may find it helpful and fun to consider Scenarios #1-3 on the second page. Based on this study so far and your personal experiences, decide on which advice to give, even if you do not know the backstories ☺.



How have I escaped?

How can I make peace?

How have I attacked?



Obtained on January 13, 2019, from <https://peacemaker.training/response-spectrum-help-card/>

Scenarios

Scenario #1: Miranda and Ferdinand have been married for almost ten years. They agreed to budget their money, which had initially worked well. Since the children were born, however, the “emergency fund” category has slowly been giving way to fairly expensive new clothing for the children. This has been eating away at Ferdinand, because his sisters have been providing good quality, “hand-me-down” clothing, which Miranda refuses to use. Instead, she spends a significant amount on name-brand clothing that the kids outgrow in a season. Whenever Ferdinand tells her that her spending exceeds the clothing budget—and reminds her about the hand-me-downs that remain unused in the basement—she becomes defensive and fails to take him seriously, reminding him that their friends buy the same brands of clothes for their children. How can Ferdinand best resolve this conflict biblically?

Scenario #2: Benedick and Beatrice are two years into a four-year, co-operative project at work. Since the beginning, Beatrice has had difficulty keeping Benedick on track. He has fallen even more behind in the past few months, which makes both of them look incompetent. When Beatrice tries to talk with Benedick about their lack of progress, Benedick only says that everything will be fine and walks away. Lately, Beatrice has secretly been completing some of Benedick’s work so that they can keep up. However, with children at home and plenty of work of her own, she is failing. How can Beatrice best resolve this conflict biblically?

Scenario #3: After a somewhat turbulent engagement, Petruchio and Katherine have had a fairly stable marriage. Lately, however, Petruchio’s habit of leaving drawers and cupboards opened and used utensils, clothing, cups, etc. around the house for Kate to clean up has gotten the best of her nerves. Now, their four teenagers behave just like their father in this manner, and Kate is continually cleaning up after all of them. Despite several talks with Petruchio and the four children, the situation remains unchanged. How can Kate best resolve this conflict biblically?