**Class 4**

**Speak the Truth in Love**

For me, **knowing when to say something** is the hardest part…

I struggle with whether or not I’m really trying to help my brother, or if I’m just wanting

 them to conform to my standards and be more like me

I have found that the suggestions from last class have been very helpful

Is what they are doing **Dishonoring God?**

Is what they are doing **Damaging our Relationship?**

Is what they are doing **Hurting Others?**

Is what they are doing **Hurting Themselves?**

Too many people ascribe to the view that you can *“do your own thing as long as you don’t hurt anyone”*

But what if that is hurting you!?!

This class we want to talk about some suggestions to keep in mind when you do go

 talk to someone

You’ve worked up the courage, you’ve made the appointment, and now you are

 actually going to go and sit down and talk about it

What you say can either help to heal the Conflict, or drive people further apart

Our natural tendency when someone has offended us, is to come at them with “the

 law”

Show them clearly from the Scriptures what they have done wrong, and what they need to do to make things right

**SOMETIMES** this actually does work

There are a few people out there who are spiritually minded and influenced by a

 Biblical Argument

Generally, this will put people on the defensive, and make the conflict worse

Instead of bringing them the **Law**, try bringing them the **Gospel**

Instead of focusing on what people have failed to do, try focusing on what God has

 done for them

Focus on the redemption we have through Christ, and the forgiveness, mercy and grace we all receive

Begin your discussion by reminding them that God is eager to help us change our ways

**SLIDE**

Then: **Just Listen**

Try to actually understand what they are trying to say

**SLIDE**

James 1:19

 19) Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be **quick to hear**, slow to speak, slow to anger

Interestingly enough **MOST** people don’t just do things for random reasons

**MOST** people don’t do things for no reason at all

If you are actually patient and polite they might just be willing to expose to you the reason behind what they are doing

**AND** it’s often **NOT** what you might have expected

I remember sitting across from a weeping Sister, and discovering that the reason she

 hadn’t been attending meeting for quite some time was that her husband was cheating on her and she couldn’t bring herself to sit next to him at the Memorial Service

Even if you can’t agree with everything that they say, your willingness to listen demonstrates that you are trying to understand

Often when drugs or any type of addiction is involved it’s not the person that is speaking but the addiction

To be able to patiently, lovingly sit through that and here the pain of the person beneath the sin speaking is the goal

**SLIDE**

**5 Keys** to **Careful Listening**

**1) Wait**

Waiting while others talk is key!

Without this you will often fail to understand the root cause of the conflict

Now I know that this is especially difficult out there for half of you

Men want to solve the problem

We’re not necessarily as good at listening to the problem as we are at thinking that we

 can solve it

We don’t listen as much as we should

At least one man understood that

Solomon did

**SLIDE**

Proverbs 18:13

 13) If one gives an answer **before he hears**, it is his **folly and shame**.

Literally!

I find myself doing this **SO OFTEN**

Just listen

Don’t jump to conclusions about what they are saying

People all think differently, so don’t try to finish their thoughts for them, because you are different than them

Not everyone thinks the same, and some people don’t think very good at all

Don’t waste your time taking what they are saying to it’s “Logical Conclusions” because they may not be going there in their minds

Learn to be comfortable with silence, because they might need time to think before

 they speak

Be patient

Don’t offer immediate solutions to the problem, lots of time they already know what they should do, they just need someone to talk it through with

Job’s friends were terrible friends but I will give them one thing: For **SEVEN DAYS** they sat there next to him in **SILENCE**

They gave him time to work through his emotions and organize his thoughts

**SLIDE**

**2) Pay Attention**

You can think about four times faster than someone can talk

So, you are tempted to start rehearsing your response

This problem describes me to a Tee

They are blabbering on about something, and I’m over here craftily composing my next

 sentence and scanning my memory for the perfect verse to go along with it

Blah. Blah. Blah. I know they’re saying something, but I’m literally just waiting for them

 to finish so that I can unleash this tidal wave of wisdom upon them

If you do this, you may miss something important that they are trying to say to you

Also, they can tell when you are distracted, and it discourages them from trying to communicate

They can tell when aren’t really paying attention to what they are saying

They can see it in your eyes and read it in your face

Nothing makes someone want to shut down quicker than realizing that they are not being listened to

**SLIDE**

**3) Clarify**

Make sure you understand what they are saying

Ask questions to confirm you understand correctly

This has so many great results

Not only does it clarify that we are all talking about the same thing

But it really makes them feel like you are paying attention to them

AND it really helps make sure that you are actually listening to what they said instead of thinking about what you are going to say next

**SLIDE**

**4) Reflect**

Summarize their issues in your own words

It’s an old Psychologist trick and it’s easy to make fun of, but it’s there for a reason –

 Because it actually works

Repeat back to them what you thought you heard

You don’t have to agree, just say, “Do I understand you correctly?”

Some people have a hard time reflecting when listening to someone

You tend to say things like, “Uh huh” and “Right” and things like that

It’s intended to show that you are hearing what they are saying, but it often makes you

 feel like you are saying that you agree with what they are saying

Focus on saying things like, “Let me make sure I understand this correctly…” and then

 repeat back what your understanding of what they said is

This helps you remember what they have said

One concern is people think that a great thought has come to their mind, and they have to interrupt the person to get this zinger out there

You don’t need to do that

Let them talk

When you reflect back on what they’ve said you will have plenty of opportunity to

 remember the great thoughts that came up

This also helps to slow things down, which is helpful when emotions get high

**SLIDE**

**5) Agree**

To build towards reconciliation, it is important to Agree with what you **CAN** agree with

You don’t have to abandon your beliefs, but it is good if you can find something that they’ve said that you can agree with

This is especially important when you have been in the wrong

You may not agree with **WHY** they felt that you were wrong, but it’s good to agree that you were wrong

Ask yourself, “Is there **ANY** truth in what they are saying?” - If the answer is YES, then acknowledge what is true and identify your common ground

Agree with **SPECIFIC** items - You don’t have accept responsibility for the entire problem, but be sure to be responsible for the ones that you can

Now that you’ve listened carefully... Speak carefully!

**SLIDE**

**12 Tips** to **Speaking Carefully**

**1) Speak Gracefully**

I feel like the Fruit of the Spirit is a pretty good list of how to speak to people…

**SLIDE**

Galatians 5:22-23

 22) But the fruit of the Spirit is **love**, joy, **peace**, **patience**, **kindness**,

 goodness, faithfulness,

 23) **gentleness**, **self-control**; against such things there is no law.

Speak Lovingly

Speak Peacefully

Speak Patiently

Speak Kindly

Speak Gently

And Speak with Self-Control!

Don’t let your emotions get control of your tongue

The more we “take in” the grace of God, the easier it is for us to “give it out”

**SLIDE**

**2) Judge Lovingly**

Don’t jump to conclusions

Try to believe the best about them

**SLIDE**

Philippians 2:3-4

 3) Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in **humility** count others more significant than yourselves.

 4) Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the **interests of others**.

If people think that you have already made up your mind, then they won’t bother talking

 to you

When you are working your way through difficult conflicts you are required to make

judgments about the situation

Try your best to Judge Lovingly

Give them the benefit of the doubt

Even if they don’t deserve it

Especially if they don’t deserve it

**SLIDE**

**3) Speak the Truth in Love**

**SLIDE**

Ephesians 4:15

 15) Rather, **speaking the truth in love**, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ

Take a gentle approach first and get firmer with the person only if necessary

**SLIDE**

**4) Counsel from Beside, not Above**

Don’t talk down to people

Don’t appear sinless

Admit ways that you have wrestled with other sins

I love how one of the definitions of Fellowship is “Walking Beside”

**SLIDE**

**5) Help Others Examine their own Desires**

The root cause of most conflict is the Desires in our Hearts that have become so

 strong they control us

It’s hard enough to talk to someone about their sinful words and actions, it’s even more difficult to talk about what is going on in their hearts

So, how can you help them see their Desires?

Start by describing the things you have found in yours

Encourage them to ask themselves probing questions

**SLIDE**

**6) Choose the Right Time and Place**

Timing is essential

Seek for the **RIGHT** time, not the **CONVENIENT** time

Don’t discuss difficult issues when they are tired

Don’t discuss difficult issues in front of others

Don’t discuss difficult issues unless you have enough time

**SLIDE**

**7) Talk in Person**

Letters don’t allow you to see how the other person is taking what you say, or to clarify things that need it

Emails and Texts are even worse!

You really can’t just drop by unannounced, so you have to contact them first

They are going to want to know what’s up, but avoid getting into it before you arrive

**SLIDE**

**8) Engage Rather than Lecture**

If you launch into a detailed description of their faults, even if accurate, they are likely to stop listening, or even launch a counter-attack

Try broaching the subject in an indirect way that engages their heart without putting them instantly on guard

One of the best ways to do this is a story or analogy

Use popular books or movie allusions to get it started

**SLIDE**

**9) Be Clear**

Conflicts are aggravated by misunderstandings

Don’t just strive to communicate so clearly that you can be understood... Strive to communicate so clearly that you cannot be misunderstood

Think carefully about your words and look to remove anything that might be vague or imprecise

**SLIDE**

**10) Plan your Words**

Think in advance about what you are going to say

It might be helpful to write out the following things:

**SLIDE**

- **Define the problem** as narrowly as you can

**SLIDE**

- List the **things to avoid** that might be offensive

**SLIDE**

- Use **Analogies or stories** that they might value

**SLIDE**

- Use Words that **describe your feelings**

**SLIDE**

- Describe how this **problem is affecting you**

**SLIDE**

- Make suggestions for a **solution** to the problem

**SLIDE**

**11) Use “I” Statements**

You only know what **YOU** are thinking, not them

So, use statements that give information about yourself rather than the other person

Typically, “I” Statements follow a formula:

 - I feel \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when you \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and as a result I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Instead of telling a Brother that he is Irresponsible, and therefore you want to take him off the Speaking List...

Say “I feel frustrated when you fail to keep your commitments to the Ecclesia, and as a result, I’m finding it difficult to depend on you when it comes to Exhorting”

First, they show how their conduct is affecting you

Second, it clearly identifies what they have done

Third, it explains why the issue is important to you

**SLIDE**

**12) Be Objective**

Try to keep objective

While expressing your feelings may help them understand the problem, if you emphasize subjective opinions too much, you will convey condemnation

Make an effort NOT to exaggerate - Be specific instead

 “You have not been properly prepared for your past three exhortations” - Not, “You are never prepared!”

**SLIDE**

Ephesians 4:29

 29) Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is **good for building up**, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

Don’t use the Bible to tear people down, only to build them up

If you can show someone a reasonable way out of a predicament, then they may be willing to listen

Don’t pretend you have all the answers... Make it a suggestion, and ask for their suggestions

**SLIDE**

Next we move forward to that next step in Matthew 18

You’ve had your visit, and it didn’t go too well

The person really doesn’t feel that they did anything wrong

Or... They acknowledge that what they did is wrong, but they really don’t feel that repentant over it

Either way, you want to help save your Brother

**SLIDE**

Matthew 18:16

 16) But if he does not listen, **take one or two others along** with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

A general principle that we can get from Matthew 18 is that we should make every attempt to try to keep the number of people involved in a conflict as small as possible for as long as possible

Try to resolve it on your own without gossiping about it

If you can’t, then only involve **ONE** or **TWO** others

Matthew 18 refers to a simple five-step process

Sure, it’s Simple – But it’s not easy

This is one of the most important Conflict Resolution techniques that we are taught

This is so important that I made a special place for you to take notes on the back under

 the **Exhortation** Tab

Matthew 18 teaches us:

**SLIDE**

- **Overlook** Minor Offenses

**SLIDE**

- Talk in **Private**

**SLIDE**

- Take **One or Two** Others Along

**SLIDE**

- Tell it to the **Ecclesia**

**SLIDE**

- Treat Them as an **Unbeliever**

The **First Step** is the easiest

Figure out how you can make this an opportunity for you to grow to be like Christ and simply overlook what they’ve done

We talked about the **Second Step**... Getting up your courage, saying a prayer, taking the time and having a loving conversation with the person

This is the bedrock of Christian Fellowship

Talking through our problems and living together peaceably

But, if a dispute cannot be resolved in private, then Jesus tells us to ask others to get involved - The **Third Step**

In most cases, the additional people will mainly act as mediators, meeting with both parties together to facilitate better communication and offer biblical counsel

There are two ways to include someone else

**1) By Mutual Agreement** - If you and the other person can’t resolve a dispute in private, you can both agree on who to involve

**2) On Your Own Initiative** - It’s always better to both agree on it, but if you can’t, it’s not required by Matthew 18

What is the role of the one or two others?

Their primary role is to restore peaceful fellowship

The majority of the time they will probably agree with the person who asks them to come along... But, not all the time

Their role is to determine what the most Christ-like position is and to encourage BOTH parties to follow it

**Step Four** follows if even the One or Two have been unable to turn the person from

 their wrong thinking

At this point, the only avenue you have left is to “Tell it to the Ecclesia”

In theory, the whole process is about restoring Fellowship

**SLIDE**

You are doing something that **I** don’t agree with, and if you want to continue to enjoy the benefits of my fellowship, then you must change

**SLIDE**

You are doing something that **WE** don’t agree with, and if you want to continue to enjoy the benefits of our fellowship, then you must change

**SLIDE**

You are doing something that the **ENTIRE ECCLESIA** doesn’t agree with, and if you want to continue to enjoy the benefits of our fellowship, then you must change

You alone may not be enough of a motivation for them to give up their current course of action

The two or three of you together may not be either

Hopefully, the entire Ecclesia will be enough to motivate them to change

**SLIDE**

Now, this only works if:

1) Our Fellowship has **“Benefits”**

If our Ecclesia is noted for it’s upsetting, anxiety-inducing, sin riddled, un-Christlike

 behavior then they might be happy to bid us “Good riddance!”

If our Ecclesia is a place of warmth and comfort, where sins are rubbed out and not rubbed in, and everyone feels welcome no matter how different they are, then they might want to stay

If people feel that they have benefited from our relationship, that they are a better person, that they have been spiritually, emotionally, physically and financially helped by being a member of our Ecclesia, then they are not going to want to leave

If it requires effort on their behalf to even be around those people, then they are

 probably not going to be influenced by our withdrawing contact with them

**SLIDE**

2) **They have been enjoying the benefits** of our Fellowship

This doesn’t work on the disaffected

This doesn’t work on those that haven’t been coming to meeting

This doesn’t work on people that are not spiritually and emotionally connected to

 members of our Ecclesia

**SLIDE**

3) The Members of our Ecclesia all agree to **DENY** that person the benefits of our

 Fellowship

That’s where the rubber meets the road

That’s the real rub

That is **Step Five**

One of the hardest parts... Treat them as an Unbeliever

There is some pretty strong Biblical instruction on how to treat someone who is not following God’s commands

We are commanded to gently but firmly remind that person that they have important issues to take care of before they can properly worship God and Fellowship us

**SLIDE**

2nd Thessalonians 3:6

 6) Now we command you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you **keep away from any brother who is walking** in idleness and **not in accord with the tradition** that you received from us.

**SLIDE**

2nd Thessalonians 3:13-15

 13) As for you, brothers, do not grow weary in doing good.

 14) If anyone does not obey what we say in this letter, take note of that person, and **have nothing to do with him**, that he may be ashamed.

 15) **Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother**.

You think that is hard to hear?

Imagine being the one who has to stand up here and say it

This is probably the hardest part of the whole process

And it’s a tricky balance to get right

I don’t think that this is calling for some kind of “Shunning” or “Spurning”

He’s very clear, “Do not regard him as an enemy”

This is a very hard road to walk

Look at what Paul says

**SLIDE**

1st Corinthians 5:9-11

 9) I wrote to you in my letter **not to associate with sexually immoral people**

 10) **not at all meaning** the sexually immoral of **this world**, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

 11) But now I am writing to you **not to associate with anyone who bears the name of brother** if he is guilty of sexual immorality or greed, or is an idolater, reviler, drunkard, or swindler—**not even to eat with such a one.**

That is very clear

And very hard to do

Especially when it’s your uncle, or you daughter, or your mother…

As we all know, God calls us to act justly, seek peace, and be reconciled with each

 other

If a Brother or Sister refuses to do those things, then they are violating God’s will

Jesus tells us to “let him be to you **AS** a Gentile and a tax collector”

Jesus’ use of the word **AS** is significant

Since only God can know a person’s heart, we can’t decide if they really are a believer, we are only called to make a simple decision: If they behave like a nonbeliever would, then they should be treated like a nonbeliever

Don’t pretend that things are all right with people who claim to be Believers, but refuse to listen to God’s Commandments

But treating people as nonbelievers also means that we look for every opportunity to preach to them

We remind them again and again of the good news of the salvation through Christ and urge them to receive his forgiveness by repenting and turning from their sin

We treat them with love and respect and we try to find opportunities to do good to them

**SLIDE**

Disfellowship serves three important purposes:

1) It prevents the Lord from being **dishonored** if that person continues to act in

 blatantly sinful ways

**SLIDE**

2) Other believers are protected from being **led astray** by a bad example of bad

 behavior

**SLIDE**

3) It helps them to realize the **seriousness** of their sin, turn from it, and be **restored** to God

The intention of Disfellowship is **NOT** to punish or hurt them, but rather to help them see the seriousness of their sin and their need for repentance

We are held responsible by God for helping our Brothers and Sisters untangle themselves from sin

**SLIDE**

- We can’t just ignore it and hope that it goes away!

- Our best way to make this work is to concentrate on the three issues above:

1) Our Fellowship has **“Benefits”**

2) **They have been enjoying the benefits** of our Fellowship

3) The Members of our Ecclesia all agree to **DENY** that person the benefits of our

 Fellowship

Strengthening **THESE** things will make Disfellowship more effective when it comes to

 the point that we have to use it

**SLIDE**