

Master Planned Community

“Confrontation” – Matthew 18:15-17 – September 17, 2006

Overview of Our Series Together

MASTER PLANNED COMMUNITY		
A 40-Day Emphasis on Community at Grace Fellowship UMC		
Date	Message Title	Description
Aug. 13	<i>Created for Community</i>	We were made for true community in our marriages, families, friendships, small groups, and church
Aug. 20	<i>Authenticity</i>	The environment for true community in our marriages, families, friendships, small groups, and church
Aug. 27	<i>Support and Encouragement</i>	The air for true community in our marriages, families, friendships, small groups, and church
Sept 3	<i>Doing Life Together</i>	The food for true community in our marriages, families, friendships, small groups, and church
Sept 10	<i>Worshipping Together</i>	The fuel for true community in our marriages, families, friendships, small groups, and church [10 hrs A-1]
Sept 17	<i>Confrontation</i>	The aerobics for true community in our marriages, families, friendships, small groups, and church
Sept 24	<i>Forgiving Each Other</i>	The healing necessary for true community in our marriages, families, friendships, small groups, church

Review

- God is community: Father, Son, Holy Spirit, and He created us (in His image) for community, togetherness, relationships, fellowship.
- God has given us His Spirit to live inside of us in order to give us the power to live the relational principles He has given us:
 1. Be transparent and authentic with one another (Ephesians 4:25).
 2. Love, support, and encourage one another (Romans 12:9-16).
 3. Spend time together doing life (Acts 2:42-47).
 4. Worship together (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:25).
 5. Go to your brother when he hurts you and speak the truth in love about how he has hurt you (Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Ephesians 4:15).
 6. Forgive one another when you hurt each other (Ephesians 4:30-32; Matt 18:21-35).

Relational Principle #5: Confrontation

True, biblical community with your spouse, family, and fellow believers occurs as we risk seeking peace in these relationships through initiating difficult conversations.

Why Risk These Difficult Conversations?

1. Because the Bible calls us to peace in our relationships
 - **Romans 12:18** - *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*
 - **Matthew 5:9** - *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*
 - **James 3:13-18** - *Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you*

harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

2. Because the Bible calls us to guard our hearts
 - **Proverbs 4:23** - *Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.*
 - Cane borers
 - Not obeying these principles gives the devil a foothold in our lives (Ephesians 4:26-27)
3. Because God commands you to (Matt 5:23-24; 18:15-17; Rom 12:18)
4. Because confrontation is an act of love and prioritizes the relationship
 - **Proverbs 27:6** - *Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.*
 - *confrontation* (Latin) = “to turn your face toward; to look at frontally”
 - Cloud/Townsend: “The extent to which two people in a relationship can bring up and resolve issues is a critical marker of the soundness of the relationship.” (Townsend will be at GFUMC, Sat., Feb 10th, 9am-4pm)

How to Seek Peace in Our Relationships According to the Bible

SCENARIO #1 – WHEN YOU HAVE HURT SOMEONE (Matthew 5:23-24)

1. Remember (v.23)
 - We should regularly spend some time asking God to show us any ways that we have hurt others
 - **Psalm 139:23-24** – *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*
2. Stop everything (including worship) (v.24a)
3. Go to the person you have hurt (v.24b)
4. Be reconciled (v.24c)
 - *diallasso* = to change thoroughly (mentally); to conciliate; to reconcile
 - Say “I’m sorry”
 - Ask for forgiveness
 - Make right any wrong (to the extent possible)
 - Possible wording: “Can you share with me how I’ve hurt you and how it made you feel? I want to fully understand and make it right... I now see that I hurt you by my _____ and that was wrong of me. I’m deeply sorry. Will you forgive me?”
5. Worship (v.24d)

Application #1 – Take a few moments to remember. Pray Psalm 139:23-24. Ask God’s Spirit to show you any ways that you have hurt others (wife, husband, children, parents, siblings, co-workers, neighbors, people in this church, people in a past church, others). What God is showing me: _____

SCENARIO #2 – WHEN SOMEONE HAS HURT YOU (Matthew 18:15-17)

Notice context: Fellow believer (“brother”) who sins against you

Step #1: Private _____ confrontation (v.15)

- (a) Go to the person who hurt you (privately)
 - Notice it does not say “Go to your friend and tell her all about it.”
 - **Proverbs 16:28** - *A perverse man stirs up dissension, and a gossip separates close friends.*
 - Rick Warren: “Listening to gossip is like accepting stolen property, and it makes you just as guilty of the crime. When someone begins to gossip to you, have the courage to say, ‘Please stop. I don’t need to know this. Have you talked directly to that person?’ People who gossip *to* you will also gossip *about* you. They cannot be trusted. If you listen to gossip, God says you are a troublemaker (Proverbs 17:4).”
- (b) Show him his fault
 - Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). Tell the truth about how you were hurt or sinned against, but do so with respect and love.
 - You are never persuasive when you’re abrasive.
 - **Galatians 6:1** – *Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.*
- (c) Hopeful response: He listens to you
 - *akouo* = to hear; to understand; to heed

Step #2: Semi-private _____ confrontation (v.16)

- (a) Go with 1 or 2 others (Deut. 19:15)
- (b) Show him his fault
- (c) Hopeful response: He listens to ya’ll

Step #3: Public _____ confrontation (v.17)

- (a) Tell it to the church
 - *ekklesia* = assembly; a small body of the Lord’s followers
- (b) Hopeful response: He listens to ya’ll

Step #4: Excommunication (v.17)

- Treat him as an unbeliever
- Example: 1 Corinthians 5

Some Broad Applications For All Your Relationships

1. Whether you have done the hurting or whether you have been hurt, either way, God puts the responsibility on you _____ to go and initiate and pursue peace in that relationship (Matthew 5:23; 18:15; Romans 12:18)
2. Always speak the truth in love _____ (Ephesians 4:15). Tell how you have been hurt. Tell how you have hurt and then apologize.
3. When the two of you cannot resolve it together, then seek the help of another together.
 - Small group member or leader or fellow believer
 - Professional Christian counselor (see yellow brochure on care wall for list of recommended Christian counselors)
 - A pastor

Application #2 – Are you hurt? Has someone hurt you (and the two of you have not processed it together)? Are you carrying hurt? _____

My gameplan for going to this person is: _____

Some Closing Thoughts and Questions

1. Taking these steps does not _____ guarantee that everything is going to work out all rosy and pretty... but we are still called to take these steps out of obedience to God and His Word (Romans 12:18; Matthew 5:23-24; 18:15-17).
2. Question: What if the other person is not safe or approachable?
 - a. Have you done Step #1?
 - b. Move on to Step #2 and bring along someone who is safe and strong.
3. When you do this confrontation process with older _____ persons, do it with lots of respect.
 - **1 Timothy 5:1** - *Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father.*
4. You need God’s power _____ to have these difficult conversations.
 - **John 15:5** - *I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing.*
 - **Psalms 127:1** - *Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain.*
 - **Zechariah 4:6** – *“Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,” says the LORD Almighty.*
5. God makes some promises to you as you seek to be a peacemaker:
 - a. You will be happier _____ (Matthew 5:9)
 - b. You will raise a harvest of righteousness (James 3:18)
 - c. You will stay out of jail (Matthew 5:25-26)
6. Regardless of the choices the other person makes, God calls us to forgive _____ them (next week’s message; Ephesians 4:30-32; Matthew 18:21-35)

Discussion Questions with Family, Friends, and Small Group

1. When it comes to conflict and confrontation, are you more like a skunk or a turtle? Do you tend to fight or flight?
2. Read Romans 12:18, Matthew 5:9, James 3:13-18, Proverbs 4:23; 27:6, and Ephesians 4:26-27. Why should we risk having some of these difficult conversations?
3. Read Matthew 5:23-24 and discuss what we are supposed to do in Scenario #1. Can anyone give a story of seeing Matthew 5:23-24 in action?
4. Read Matthew 18:15-17 and discuss what we are supposed to do in Scenario #2. Can anyone give a story of seeing Matthew 18:15-17 in action?
5. To the extent that you are willing to share (and without violating anyone else’s confidences), do you feel like there are any difficult conversations you need to have? How can this group pray for you on this?
6. Discuss the “Closing Thoughts” and associated Scriptures. How does this apply to any difficult conversations you might need to have?