

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

(...Continued from page 5)

Despite the inner turmoil often associated with taking responsibility for our words and actions, Jesus told us that this was the first thing we must do when it comes to addressing conflict.

Read His teaching again... (Matthew 7:3-5)

1. What does Jesus say you will be able to do if you first take responsibility for your contribution to an ongoing conflict (no matter how small)?
2. This can be a hard question for some people...
3. Do you really want to see clearly, to understand everything that is factually true about what's behind any given conflict?
4. If so, then you first must look to yourself.
5. If not, then the core issues of any given conflict will never be resolved.
6. What effect will acknowledging our contribution to a problem do to the "idols" in our hearts that may be pushing us toward sinful conflict?
7. What kinds of desperate thoughts will these idols express in our minds in order to stay alive in our hearts?

React to the following statement... *"God simply wants us to acknowledge, in our own hearts, what He can plainly see is true..."*

1. Despite the initial discomfort, why is acknowledging our contribution to a conflict such an emotionally freeing thing to do?
2. In what ways will owning up to our words and actions free us from guilt, defensiveness, and the need to constantly justify bad decisions?
3. Is it possible to go too far in this—to accept responsibility for issues that do not belong to you?
4. If so, how do you know where to draw the line between responsibility that belongs to you and that which clearly belongs to someone else?
5. When you find yourself in conflict with someone, when do you tend to get defensive?
6. What could this reaction be telling you?

According to what we've talked about in this session, what can you do to take ownership for what truly belongs to you in any given conflict?

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WHAT WE LEARN FROM THE LOG IN OUR EYE

We explore perhaps the most missed and crucial teaching of Jesus and how to apply it. So much of real-life peace-making hinges on getting this right in our cultural-war, cancel-culture, scorched earth, politics-is-religion, North American context.

KEY TEXTS: *Matthew 7:1-5, Luke 6:36-42*

BIG IDEAS: Getting the Log out of Your Eye is the key to judging correctly. And understanding our capacity for self-deception is huge!

- We never see the whole picture—only God does. The question is, will we enter the tunnel of chaos with ourselves and others to come through to depth?
- *How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?*

Take it into your heart that your sins are like this beam, and that your brother's sins are like this wisp of straw.

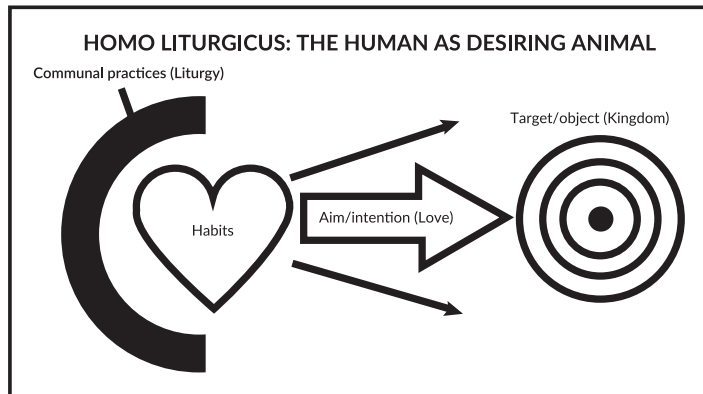
—Sayings of the Desert Fathers, translated by Owen Chadwick, in *Western Asceticism* (Westminster 1983)

Be not angry that you cannot make others as you want them to be, since you cannot make yourself as you wish to be.

—Thomas à Kempis

C. Dealing with Heart Idols

1. Repent and confess it to God. Acts 3:19
2. Replace idol with worship Ps 37:4
3. Hearts are idol factories ...
4. [SEE GRAPHIC] James Smith, Part 1: Chapter 1 Homo Liturgicus: The Human Person as Lover Desiring the Kingdom 39ff.



D. Define Issues

1. **Material issues.** That which involve substantive matters: property, money, rights, and responsibilities.
2. **Personal Issues.** What goes on inside or between persons. Involve our attitudes and feelings towards others that result from how we have treated one another.
 - a) In most conflicts Material and Personal issues are tangled up. E.g. Luke 12:13-15 a family inheritance issue. Personal and Material. And when the two types of issues can feed on each other and make small stuff blow up huge.

Again magnify your sins.

THE LOG REMOVAL PROCESS

I. Is it worth fighting over (review: overlook or engage)?

A. When to overlook:

1. **The offense should not have created a wall** between you and the other person or caused you to feel differently toward him or her for more than a short period of time.
2. **The offense should not be causing serious harm** to God's reputation, to others or to the offender.

II. Examine Your _____

A. Two types of faults that you must come to grips with regarding your role:

1. **You may have an overly sensitive attitude.** You are too easily offended by others' behaviour.
2. **You may have contributed to the conflict through your own sinful behavior.**
 - a) We are often blind to our faults and minimize our contribution in conflict. Own 100% of your part of a conflict. Even if it's only actually 10% of the problem, if you own and maximize your part 100% it shifts how you relate.

III. Getting to the heart of conflict

A. James 4:1-2

1. The "why" behind the thing you did. Why did you yell in anger? Usually it's that we want something so much it leads to conflict.

B. Idol: Anything, other than God, we trust to make us ultimately happy or secure.

1. Anger is an emotion that tells us something. Sometimes it's about injustice. BUT Anger usually means an idol is being poked.
2. The progression of an idol (review)
 - a) **I desire:** Desires can be good and healthy and also wrong. All idols begin with desire.
 - b) **I demand:** I must have.. Demand or "needs". Now I view the thing I desire as absolutely essential.
 - c) **I'm disappointed:** Demand leads to disappointment "You didn't X!" Most is not from what people actually did to us, but that they have failed to meet our expectations. Didn't give us what we wanted.
 - d) **I judge:** Judge, condemn, rejeestr those who do not give us what we want.
 - e) **I punish:** I am hurt and angry and strike back. Angry words, gossip, "cold shoulder", etc.

REVIEW OF THE FOUR "G"'S. IN DEALING WITH CONFLICT WELL, THERE ARE FOUR "G"'S WE WILL EXPLORE...

- **Glorify God** *1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.*
 - How can I please and honor God in this situation?
- **Get the Log Out of Your Eye** *Matthew 7:55 You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from the other person's eye.*
 - How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?
- **Gently Restore** *Galatians 6:1 Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted.*
 - How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?
- **Go and Be Reconciled** *Matthew 5:24 leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to that person; then come and offer your gift.*
 - How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?

SERMON ON THE MOUNT—THE CENTRE OF THE CENTRE—JESUS' CORE TEACHINGS *Kingdom Ethics* (Stassen and Gushee) 14 "Triads" in the SOTM.

→Traditional Torah Righteousness 

→A Vicious Cycle 

→Transforming Initiative to Breakthrough

You cannot put straight in others what is warped in yourself.

—Athanasius of Alexandria, Patriarch of Alexandria and Church Father (c. 293-373)

James: 3:18 *Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness. Do you want a different harvest in your relationships? Healing? Not bitterness, envy, strife? A church alive? A marriage renewed? Friendships deepened and open, instead of shallow, judgmental and closed to others?*

How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?

IV. Attitude Check and Change Our attitudes that are overly sensitive or obsessing/dwelling on what others have done keeps us from active peacemaking OR overlooking.

A. Rejoicing/Play

B. Cultivate Gentleness

C. Anxiety - Mental and Spiritual space making

D. See things as they really are -Clarity about your "enemy"

E. Practice, practice, Practice! What you've learned

F. Count the Cost

G. What about Rights?

Final Word

PILGRIM HOME CHURCH

FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

(From Resolving Everyday Conflict Participant Guide)

When something goes wrong, why do most people want to immediately assign responsibility for what happened?

Let's talk about the two workplace scenarios we watched...

1. What were some of the "blame shifting" phrases you remember in the first scenario?
2. What were some of the "taking responsibility" phrases you heard in the second scenario?
3. What's often at stake when a person considers taking responsibility for something that happened?
4. What are some common fears associated with that decision?
5. Given these fears, why is it common for some people to minimize their contribution to a problem and then shift blame away from themselves?

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