

## Confrontation Done Right

- I. **We should look for ways to identify with the person we're confronting.** Acts 22:1-2
  - **We need to speak their language.** There's wisdom in choosing our words so that they'll be understandable.
  - **We need to use loving language.** He communicated with them in a way so that it would be hard for them to deny that he truly cared for them.
- II. **We need to be honest about our temptations and sins.** Acts 22:3-20
  - It requires humility from us to acknowledge to the one we're confronting that we too are sinners and that we're tempted and fail in the same ways they do.
  - But it also shows our love because instead of creating an us versus them moment, it becomes a you and I together moment where we're both recognizing our need for God
- III. **We need to say things that people might allow to offend them.**
  - Truth is not inherently offensive. When one responds to truth in the right way, it's a joy. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Blessed is the reproof of those who love us. The only people offended by truth are those who choose to be offended because they don't want to be confronted by it
- IV. **We need to speak the words of God.**
  - Bad confrontation sets your opinion against theirs.
  - We need to confront using the Bible—God's Word. We need to open the Scriptures so that they understand this is not merely my opinion versus yours, but God's opinion versus the bent of our sinful flesh.
- V. **We need to confront strongly.** Acts 23:1-3
  - Being gentle does not mean you can't speak the truth strongly. The gentleness of which the Bible speaks is a strength under control. It's not weak or wimpy. It can stand before the most aggressive attackers. Of course, it's not sinful either. Yes it's strength, but it's still loving and patient and kind and holy.
  - Far too many people swing to the extremes. The angry people justify their sinful responses by pointing to the fact that Jesus flipped over tables and Paul called the high priest a whitewashed wall whom God would strike. But just because loving truth can—and often must—be spoken with raised voices, that doesn't make sinful clamor righteous.
  - On the other side of the debate are those who claim that all raising of voices is always sinful, but a careful reading of the Scripture will reveal that to be patently false.
- VI. **We must be humble enough to admit our present faults.** Acts 23:4-5
  - Quite often in confrontation we respond sinfully. In those moments we must be humble and honest enough to address our current sin before continuing.
  - How many of our arguments would fizzle out if we—the parents—were willing to acknowledge our own sin in the moment?
- VII. **We must recognize that although they are attacking you personally, they're ultimately attacking the truth for which you stand.** Acts 23:6

- Paul recognized his accusers had significant theological differences, and he knew those differences were far more important to them than even their joint condemnation of him.
- Every time we confront someone in rebuke, reproof, admonition, or the like, if they fight back against it—whether they want to admit it or not—their real argument is with the Scriptures. The caveat is that we must be confronting them with the Scripture and in a Christ-honoring way.

#### **VIII. We need to explain the reality of the situation. Acts 24:10-16**

- First, you need to know what the Bible has to say about the issue.
- Second, there's a difference between being defensive and giving a defense. A defense is not about us. We're defending God's glory with His Word.

#### **IX. We must realize that sometimes people have ulterior motives for listening to your confrontation. Acts 24:24-26**

- Sometimes our kids will grin and bear our lecture in order to avoid additional consequences. Sometimes they hope that if they act in a contrite way, we'll think well of them.
- We need to be experts at asking heart-revealing questions in order to expose ulterior motives for this person's participation in the confrontation. Do they really see the truth? Do they really agree with God? Do they really want to change?

#### **X. We need to realize that hard hearts will twist our confrontation. Acts 25:7-8**

- Even if you had been perfect. Even if you had said and done nothing inappropriate, sinful, calloused hearts will interpret what you did in the worst possible way.
- An unregenerate or unrepentant heart can only reflect on the truth and be moved by it or obsess over how terrible it was for you to say those things—most of which they will wrongly remember. Be prepared for this.

#### **XI. We must be prepared to be insulted. Acts 26:24-25**

- You can always tell when a person engaged in confrontation has completely run out of any kind of legitimate defense. They will default to nothing but name calling.
- We should never stoop to malicious name-calling simply to cause the other person pain or gaslight them. But we should definitely expect that those who cannot answer God's Word with anything more than impotent feelings and opinions will likely become frustrated enough that they will.

#### **XII. We must be prepared to fight discontentment. Acts 26:1-25**

- We too must be thankful to engage in Christ-honoring confrontation. Whether it be parenting or one-anothering or discipleship or counseling, this is God's greatest will for us in that moment. For that we can be exceptionally thankful.

#### **XIII. We must always emphasize the Gospel so that the person we're confronting may experience the same freedom we have in Christ. Acts 26:27-32**

- Whether we're confronting an unbeliever about their need for Christ or a believer about their sin against Christ, the Gospel needs to be the warp and woof, the bread and butter, and the motive and the method.
- We all need to be set free from our sin. Christians may be free of the eternal consequences of sin, but we're not free of the current temptations and consequences. The most loving thing we can do is to confront in the truth of the Gospel—whether that be in evangelism or discipleship.