Introduction: Piercing words – wounded lives

The root cause of interpersonal conflicts is our consuming passion for **SELF GRATIFICATION**.

1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.

James 4:1-3 (NASB)

- Our problem =

- The symptoms =

- Our strategy =

- The results =
God’s diagnosis:

- We’ve believed a lie.
- We’ve betrayed a trust.
- We’ve become an enemy.

4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? 6 But He gives a greater grace Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE."

James 4:4-6 (NASB)
God’s prescription: **HUMBLE YOURSELF**

and God will heal your relationships.

> Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.

James 4:7-10 (NASB)

**Four steps to diffuse conflict:**

1. **GIVE IN TO GOD**
   
   “Submit yourselves therefore to God . . .”

   James 4:7a

2. **GET TOUGH WITH SATAN**
   
   “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.”

   James 4:7b

3. **GET CLOSE TO GOD**
   
   “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.”

   James 4:8a

4. **GET RIGHT WITH OTHERS**
   
   “Cleanse your hands . . . purify your hearts . . .”
   
   “Let there be tears for the wrong you’ve done . . .”

   James 4:8b

   James 4:9

**God’s promise:**

_Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you._

James 4:10 (NASB)
Personal Application and Discussion Questions:

1. What is at the core of our conflicts with other people? Briefly define “hedonism” in your own words.

2. Why is hedonism a lie? How are we influenced to unconsciously “buy into” its philosophy daily?

3. How does God view our strategies to gratify ourselves apart from Him?

4. What is the solution to interpersonal conflict? What specifically is involved in “humbling ourselves” before God and others?

5. Is there a specific relationship that needs attention in your life? What would humbling yourself look like in this situation?
Introduction: Anger is a secondary emotion

- Anger is not the problem. Anger is the red warning light on the dashboard – something under the hood is amiss.

- It is easier to be angry than to face the deeper, more sensitive issues of anger.

- We cover stuff inside that God wants to heal, forgive, and restore.

Three root issues behind anger:

1. **HURT** = Real or perceived unmet needs

   - A person’s own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the Lord.
   
   Proverbs 19:3 (NIV)

   - Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

   Proverbs 27:4 (NIV)

   - **Tool:** “I feel….” Messages – Attack the Issue not the Person
2. **FRUSTRATION** = Real or perceived unmet expectations

- Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.

  Proverbs 14:29 (NIV)

  ➢ **Tool**: “I desire…” vs. “I demand…” Statements

3. **INSECURITY** = Real or perceived attacks on my worth

- A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

  Proverbs 15:1 (NIV)

- A brother wronged is more unyielding than a fortified city; disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.

  Proverbs 18:19 (NIV)

  ➢ **Tool**: Ask yourself, “Why am I feeling threatened?”

  - What is being attacked?
  
  - Who is attacking me?
  
  - Is the threat meaningful?
  
  - Whose approval am I seeking?
Summary: The first step in overcoming the destructive power of anger is the COURAGE to look below the surface.

- Anger – is the light on the dashboard; something’s wrong under the hood.

- Anger – is our way of protecting ourselves from painful, hard-to-deal-with hurts, frustrations, and insecurities.

- Anger – has many faces and despite its power for good, it destroys, unless we learn to...

  Acknowledge it

  Back-track to the 1st emotion

  Consider the real cause

  Determine to rightly respond
Discussion Questions:

1. Discuss the concept of anger as a secondary emotion. What insight does this give you with your anger?

2. Which of the root issues do you tend to struggle with the most? How could you see anger as a means to help you grow in Christ and relationships with others? Be specific.

3. What was most helpful to you from this message? Why?

Reference: *The Strong and the Weak* by Paul Tournier
Introduction:

How important is living in harmony?
Jesus prayed for it - John 17:20-23

Scripture commands it -
Romans 12:16
Romans 14:19
Romans 15:5-6
Ephesians 4:3
Philippians 1:27
Philippians 2:1-2

The Church practiced it -
Acts 2:46
Acts 4:32-35

The world was transformed by it -
Acts 2:47
Acts 6:7

What causes disharmony or conflict?

Growth / Unmet needs -
Acts 6:1-6

Theological differences -
Acts 15:1-15

Philosophical differences -
Acts 15:16-41
Personality Differences -

Carnality -

- Critic
- Martyr
- Wet blanket
- Steam roller
- Gossip
- Control freak
- Back stabber
- Cold shoulder
- Volcano
- Sponge
- Workhorse
- Chameleon

How can we restore harmony in relationships?

1. Refuse to **TOLERATE** disunity. Romans 12:18

   “…as far as it depends on you…”

   - Don’t avoid it!
   - Don’t procrastinate!
   - Don’t delegate it!
   - Don’t rationalize it!
2. Embrace **CONFLICT** as normal and unavoidable.  
   
   John 16:33

3. Be the **INITIATOR** in conflict resolution.
   
   ➢ When it is perceived to be **your** fault.  
     Matthew 5:24
   
   ➢ When you perceive it to be **their** fault.  
     Matthew 18:15

4. Deal with **YOU** before you deal with them.  
   Luke 6:41-42

5. Meet together **ASAP** and outline the issue!
   
   • The **WHAT** - Calmly describe what you perceive the other person is doing to cause the issue.
   
   • The **HOW** - Tell how this makes you feel.
   
   • The **WHY** - Tell why this is important to you.
   
   • The **QUESTION** - What are we going to do to fix it?
     
     o **ENCOURAGE** their response and feedback.
     
     o **WRITE** down the desired action to be taken.
     
     o **SET** a specific time to revisit the issue.
     
     o **COMMITMENT** by both sides to put the issue in the past once solved.
6. If resolution does not occur, follow the Biblical guidelines of Matthew 18

15 “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. 16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ 17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV)

Conclusion:

“How good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.” Psalm 133:1

Discussion Questions:

1. Is there a relationship in your life that is out of harmony?

2. Why is it so important we guard the unity of Christ’s Body, the Church? What is at stake?

3. Why do you think following God’s pattern of conflict resolution is so difficult for us?

4. What would trusting God in obedience look like in your life in response to this message?

See: “Making Peace At Home”
http://www.psychologytoday.com/articles/200404/making-peace-home
Introduction: “Chronic-relatatitis”

Definition:

People in your relational network who act or treat you in a way that either causes inward concern or outward conflict.

Principle #8: The only person I can change is me

Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

Luke 6:38 (NIV)

The relational application:

Give away what you most want to receive in a relationship.
Jesus’ relational model

27 “But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. 29 Whoever hits you on
the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold
your shirt from him either. 30 Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes
away what is yours, do not demand it back. 31 Treat others the same way you want them
to treat you.

Luke 6:27-31 (NASB)

Summary: Give the very OPPOSITE of what the person deserves.

32 If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those
who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to
you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you expect to
receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back
the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing
in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He
Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Luke 6:32-36 (NASB)

Summary: LOVE your enemies.
39 And He also spoke a parable to them: “A blind man cannot guide a blind man, can he? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 A pupil is not above his teacher; but everyone, after he has been fully trained, will be like his teacher. 41 Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 42 Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,’ when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.

Luke 6:39-42 (NASB)

Summary: Deal with your own stuff FIRST.

43 For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit, nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. 44 For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. 45 The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

Luke 6:43-45 (NASB)

Summary: My SPEECH will reveal my HEART.
Practice:

Ask God what He wants to change in YOU rather than focusing on what needs to change in the other person. Then go to work on it, by His GRACE.

Discussion Questions:

1. What is “chronic-relatatitis”? Who in your relational network would you say you are experiencing “chronic-relatatitis” with?

2. How do you think they would react or respond if you give them the opposite of what they deserve?

3. If your speech reveals what is in your heart, what does your speech reveal about you?

4. In Luke 6:42 Jesus mentions, “first take the log out of your own eye.” Are there any areas in your life that you need to deal with right now? What steps will you take to make these changes?
Introduction:

“The best, the deepest, and the closest friends I have, or have ever had, all have one thing in common … they have each loved me enough to tell me some things about my life that no one else cared enough to tell me.”

A Critical Command:

And concerning you, my brethren, I myself also am convinced that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able also to admonish one another.

Romans 15:14 (NASB)

Admonition – What is it?

I. Definition: To exert influence upon another (by life and word) to guide him / her into obedience of God’s will as revealed in Scripture. “It consists of reminding, warning, counseling, correcting, reproving, and rebuking a person with the intention that he / she will carry it out.”

Colin Brown, Dictionary of the New Testament

II. Clarification: What admonition is not!

- It is not JUDGING another’s life that does not conform to your standards.
- It is not a SUPERIOR or more spiritual person speaking down to an inferior or unspiritual person.
- It is not allowing things to remain the way they are for fear of REJECTION.
- It is not making GENERAL / VEILED STATEMENTS to a group, hoping that the one you want to hear it will catch it.
- It is not a ONE - TIME shot and if they don’t respond, then I have done my duty.
Why must we admonish one another?

- It is a **COMMAND**. 
  - Colossians 3:16
  - 1 Thessalonians 5:14

- Because we all have “**BLIND SPOTS**.” 
  - Psalm 19:12
  - Psalm 139:23-24

- To become godly, holy, **MATURE CHRISTIANS**. 
  - Colossians 1:28-29

- It cultivates deep, **LOVING RELATIONSHIPS**. 
  - 1 Thessalonians 2:8

- Because sin **DESTROYS** a believer’s life. 
  - Romans 6:23

- Because we are **MEMBERS** of one another. Unchecked sin impacts the whole body 
  - Romans 12:4-5

Why we don’t admonish one another:
Who is competent to admonish?

1. **It requires a life “full of goodness”**
   - In general terms, we are living a holy, righteous life. Matthew 7:3-5
   - We must “clean up our own act” before we can help others clean up theirs.

2. **It requires a life “filled with knowledge”**
   - …of God’s Word Colossians 3:16
   - We must be careful to admonish with regard to the absolutes of Scripture, not in areas that are extra-Biblical.

3. **It requires a “heart filled with love”**
   - “not to shame, but as beloved children…” 1 Corinthians 4:14
   - “night and day with tears …” Acts 20:31
   - “as a brother …” 2 Thessalonians 3:15
   - “as a father with his children …” Ephesians 6:4
How to admonish – “the process”

Step #1: Examine your own life.  
Matthew 7:3-5

Step #2: Examine the Word.  
2 Timothy 2:15

Step #3: Examine your motives.  
1 Corinthians 4:14

Step #4: Set a time to meet privately.  
Matthew 18:15

Step #5: Ask specific questions to confirm data, and disarm the situation.

Step #6: Tenderly point out the sin; show them the Scripture that applies to them.

Step #7: If possible, develop a game-plan, timetable, and follow-up meeting for support and follow-through.

Conclusion:

Admonition is God’s antibiotic for the church; done Biblically, it is the most loving thing you can do … for all concerned.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is there a relationship or situation that needs my attention?

2. Do you love this person enough to “speak the truth in love?”

3. With God’s help, I will …

   ➢ pray
   ➢ examine my life
   ➢ act ________________ (day of this week)