

Clear Relationships

Pacific Heart Attitudes - part 3 of 7

September 18, 2022

DAY 1: Clear up relationships.

1. During the 1990's, Major League Baseball was hit with the steroid era. Players mostly denied any use of steroids. A few, under extreme pressure held press conferences that *looked like* a mea culpa, an admittance of guilt and request for forgiveness. One such spectacle I dubbed the "I'm sorry" press conference. This player's grand jury testimony had been leaked, where he *admitted* to using steroids. At the press conference, he said he was "sorry" for a lot of things—that it hurt some of the fans, members of the Yankee organization, some Yankee players. He was sorry that this has distracted fans from real baseball. He was sorry for a lot of things but amazingly he sat there in that press conference saying he was sorry for the steroid fiasco without ever using the word "*steroids*" and without ever *apologizing* directly for taking steroids.

*Acts 24:16 So I **strive** always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.*

2. *What is a Clear Conscience?*

The inner freedom from knowing that no one can point a finger at you and accuse you of wrongs toward him that you have not made right.

3. When **you** have made a mess of a relationship, how do you typically handle this? What do you typically do?

4. When **someone else** has made a mess of a relationship with you, what do you do?

5. Deeper relationships occur through humility, mercy and grace.

When we mess up we fess up.

6. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 2: 2 principles of a clear conscience.

A. We're not right with God when we're wrong with people.

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," ...

1. John writes that anyone can claim, "Why yes, I love God." No one can question that, right?

2. But John also adds that we can get a true clue as to the reality of our claim that we love God!

1 John 4:20 If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar.

3. What is one of the "proofs" of whether or not we love God?

4. This principle is quite stunning. It's one thing to claim to be a Christian and claim to be in a right in a relationship with God, but when we defend our bad attitude toward another brother or sister we reveal something true about ourselves!

5. John continues...

1 John 4:21 And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.

6. Our relationship with God is also tied to how we relate in marriage.

*1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will **hinder your prayers**.*

7. Notice the direct link between the failures of a husband's prayer if he is treating his wife disrespectfully.

B. Reconciliation takes priority over worship.

*Matthew 5:23, 24 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go** and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

8. As Christians we value worship. It is a priority. But here, Jesus says that something even takes precedence over worship! What is it?

9. What strikes you from today's devotional?

DAY 3: The past is not “past” until you’re reconciled.

1. Broken relationships must be mended. We know that. What do you think keeps relationships from being mended?

2. “Why do we have to keep going over this **over and over** again? It’s past, why can’t we move on?” Why do you think this dynamic plays out over the same conflict, again and again?

3. One of the reasons is that we never fully reconcile some conflicts. We may talk about them, “discuss” them, and “agree to disagree” about them. We may pray about them, confide in a trusted friend about them. We may ask God to help us “move past” something. But the most important element is not utilized fully—complete humility.

*1 John 1:9 **If** we **confess** our sins, he is faithful and just and will **forgive** us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*

4. To “confess” sin means to agree that what I did was wrong.

5. Forgiveness involves an **admission** of **guilt** born of authentic **responsibility**.

6. Why do you think our pride so stubborn in its refusal to take personal responsibility for what we did or said?

7. Forgiveness for our sins against God is always available but is never granted without confession of sin. The same is true with people. Forgiveness is not given unless the person believes that you are genuine in taking responsibility for your wrongdoing. If the offender refuses to take responsibility for their actions or words, there cannot be reconciliation. Pretending is not forgiveness.

8. What’s your biggest take away from today’s devotional?

DAY 4: The initiative to reconcile lies with you.

1. Who should take the initiative of asking forgiveness in a conflict? Have you ever said:

a. “Why should I have to be the 1st to apologize?”

b. “I’m not going to apologize until he does!”

2. Waiting around for the other person to ask forgiveness first is not an option Jesus offers!

3. Consider scenario #1.

*Matthew 5:23, 24 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. **First go** and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.*

a. Who is the offended party, you or your “brother?”

b. Who does Jesus tell to take the initiative to reconcile, you or your brother?

4. Consider scenario #2.

*Matthew 18:15 If your brother sins against you, **go** and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.*

a. Who is the offended party, you or your “brother?”

b. Who does Jesus tell to take the initiative to reconcile, you or your brother?

5. Jesus is not interested in who’s more at fault. It doesn’t matter to him whether you’re only 1% at fault. He wants you to enjoy a clear conscience!

6. There is one word that kills reconciliation. It makes reconciliation impossible. It’s the word, “*Later.*”

7. A **caution** about this verse. This does not mean that you should bring up every offense committed against you. If you do, you’ll blow away every friend you have, kill off a marriage and antagonize your kids. There are a lot of offenses that fall into **another category**.

1 Peter 4:8 Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

8. The vast majority of time, this is **Option 1**. You only revert to the Matt. 18:15 when you run across an offense you can’t seem to “cover over” through love.

9. What is your biggest takeaway from today’s devotional?

DAY 5: Do what you can to reconcile.

1. There are some relationships where, at the time, the other person does not want to reconcile or forgive. How should think about that? What should you do?

2. Paul helps us think about this scenario.

*Romans 12:18 **If it is possible, as far as** it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

3. Let's break this important verse down.

a. "If it is possible"

What is Paul inferring in this phrase about some broken relationships?

b. "...as far as it depends on you..."

What is Paul saying and not saying in this verse?

c. "...live at peace with everyone."

With what manner of relationship is Paul telling us to move toward?

4. There are some situations that reconciliation is just not possible, yet.

5. In the book of Acts Paul and Mark had an honest difference of opinion that meant they could not work together.

6. There are situations in life where people **don't agree**. You don't have to agree in order to be reconciled. What you are hoping for is mutual understanding.

Proverbs 18:2 A fool finds no pleasure in understanding but delights in airing his own opinions.

7. This involves listening well, asking questions for clarification, seeking to understand another's point of view.

8. What strikes you from today's devotional?