

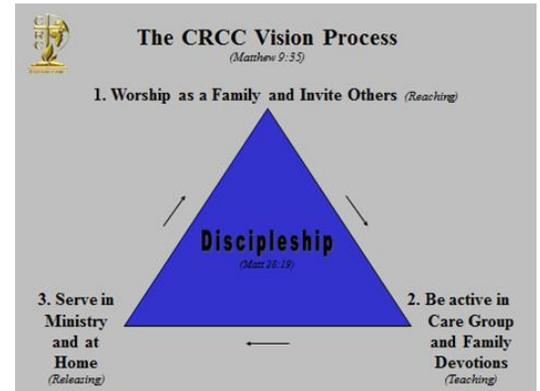


Protecting the House: Defeating Gossip, Forgiving Others, and “One-Anothering!”

May 19, 2013

Text: Ephesians 4:29-32

- These verses encapsulate what I believe the Lord wants to remind of us of today . . .
 - Guarding out **tongues** and speaking kindly to one another; (v29)
 - Forgiving** one another; (v32)
 - And doing all of it in the power of the Holy Spirit’s love, Who we refuse to grieve with corrupting talk, bitterness, wrath, clamor, and slanderous malice. (vv30-31)
- Ya’ll know I love triangles. ☺ I love them so much I pretty much have a triangle analogy for everything! →
 - Marriage: Christ at the top, husband a wife on the other two points. This is strong marriage!
 - CRCC Vision: Reaching, Teaching, and Release, all connected through family. A strong church!
- I love them because they are strong; they can support lots of weight with a small, simple structure.
- Today, I offer another “3-fold cord” to help protect our church. As we go forward in our mission and core distinctives, we’ll continue to be **attacked**. Every good church will in this day. So I offer you today a **3-fold process to promote unity and harmony, even in the midst of our war**.
- PLEASE do not underestimate how important this is! These are primary operating areas of the enemy, where tares are sowed, misunderstandings cultivated, and hearts hardened.**
- Not that we have HUGE issues here, but only a foolish leader lets down his guard. Our enemy is sneaky, and works this way . . .



Mat 13:24-30 ESV He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, (25) but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. (26) So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. (27) And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?' (28) He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.' So the servants said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' (29) But he said, 'No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. (30) Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

Remember, "the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom." (Son 2:15)

Defeating Gossip

- First, let’s establish that gossip (and its first cousins, slander and grumbling) is not a good thing:
 - Pro 11:13 ESV Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy in spirit keeps a thing covered.*
 - Pro 20:19 ESV Whoever goes about slandering reveals secrets; therefore do not associate with a simple babblers.*
 - Php 2:14-15 ESV Do all things without grumbling or questioning, (15) that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*

- 1Ti 5:13 ESV Besides that, they learn to be idlers, going about from house to house, and not only idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying what they should not.
 - 2Co 12:20 ESV For I fear that perhaps when I come I may find you not as I wish, and that you may find me not as you wish--that perhaps there may be quarreling, jealousy, anger, hostility, slander, gossip, conceit, and disorder.
2. In James 3:1-10, we find that the tongue:
 - a. Is a place of **stumbling**. We all do it. (Jam 3:2)
 - b. Contributes greatly to our **direction**. What we say and to whom . . . matters! (Jam 3:3-4)
 - c. Though small, can start BIG **fires**! (Jam 3:5)
 - d. Is itself, called a fire. You have fire in your mouth! LOL! "A world of unrighteousness."
 - Jas 3:6 ESV And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.
 - e. Is **untamable**. This means it has to be crucified daily like any other fleshly member. (Jam 3:8, Gal 5:24)
 - f. Blesses and curses. This should not be! (Jam 3:10)
 3. The Greek word sometimes used for slanderer is, believe it or not, *diabolos*. Wow. Another word used in Greek for gossips means to be a *whisperer*. Neither one of those sounds good! ☺
 - a. 2Ti 3:1-3 ESV But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. (2) For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, (3) heartless, unappeasable, **slanderous**, without self-control, brutal, not loving good,
 - b. Rom 1:28-32 ESV And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. (29) They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. **They are gossips**, (30) slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, (31) foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. (32) Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them.
 4. So here is how you put your foot on the neck of gossip:
 - a. Use a method to identify it before it happens. Here is ours:

**We hand negatives up and positives down. We talk only to the one who can fix a grievance.
If we do this, we'll almost eliminate gossip entirely.**

- b. This principle comes from Matthew 18:15-17. Go to the one who has sinned against you **first**. This normally fixes the issue! But if not, take a friend or two to hear both sides. Then go to the church if necessary.
- c. Gossip can absolutely crush the momentum of any organization; a family; a business; a church. Slander has a **satanic** quality. And grumbling just takes the life out of things. Grumblers are DRAINING!
- d. If something offends you, talk to the one who can either fix it or repent to you. **Gossip, when using such a method, dies!** ☺

Forgiving Others

1. But whenever you have more than **one** person, there will be offenses, misunderstandings, and strife! It's not whether they will come (they will! Luke 17:1), it's how you choose to handle them!
2. What breaks the back of offense? What destroys bad attitudes? What maintains peace?

- a. Good old fashioned **repentance** and **forgiveness**.
 - b. Yes, it is that simple. The words, "I repent" and "I forgive you" said in love destroys the yoke of disunity
 - c. We've gotten, in my opinion, a bit too psychiatric in our forgiving of others. Sometimes, you just . . . forgive . . . in the power of Jesus Christ.
3. The commands to forgive:
- a. *Mat 6:14-15 ESV For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, (15) but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.*
 - b. *Mat 18:21-22 ESV Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" (22) Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.*
 - c. *Mat 18:32-35 ESV Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. (33) And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' (34) And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. (35) So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."*
 - d. *Col 3:12-15 ESV Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, (13) bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. (14) And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. (15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.*
4. Repentance and Forgiveness...a dynamic duo!
- a. *Jas 5:16 ESV Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.* Here is the process:
 - 1. Be **quick** to repent and quick to forgive. Be the first one!
 - 2. Consider your own wrong, and **repent** for it. Don't wait on the other person to go first!
 - 3. Do it face to face if possible. Email/text/Facebook rarely works out well. Handwritten letters are better though.
 - 4. When someone repents, **forgive!** Holding on only keeps you in bondage.
 - 5. The higher your leadership, the more you must take responsibility and repent/forgive.
 - 6. Remember Christ, who bore our sins though He was sinless. It's His character that causes a repentant and forgiving heart. Holding a **grudge** is completely opposite of the cross of Christ.

One-Anothering

- 1. *Gal 5:25-26 ESV If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit. (26) Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying **one another**.*
- 2. *Gal 6:1-2 ESV Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. (2) Bear **one another's** burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*
- 3. *Eph 4:1-3 ESV I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, (2) with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with **one another** in love, (3) eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

4. *Eph 4:30-32 ESV And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. (31) Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. (32) Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving **one another**, as God in Christ forgave you.*
5. *1Th 5:11 ESV Therefore encourage one another and build **one another** up, just as you are doing.*
6. *Heb 10:24-25 ESV And let us consider how to stir up **one another** to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*
7. *Jas 5:9 ESV Do not grumble against **one another**, brothers, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door.*
8. *1Jn 4:10-12 ESV In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (11) Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love **one another**. (12) No one has ever seen God; if we love **one another**, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.*

Not much I can add to that!

Final Thoughts:

The goal today was to tighten a 3-fold cord around us as we fight for truth, our families, and lost souls; to anchor us in a strong triangle of love and protection against the wiles of the enemy.

Ecc 4:12 ESV And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him--a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

We will all make mistakes. Let's give one another the benefit of the doubt. Let us quickly forgive, refuse to gossip, and love one another hard. This life is SO short. Let's spend it together . . . working together, battling together and loving together.

Let it be so, Lord Christ . . .

Amen.