

## *I have a friend who...keeps making poor choices*

April 18 & 19, 2009

### **Most of us run from these conversations...why??**

#### We have a wrong view of love

- We're wrong to think that love = never confronting hard issues
- **Correct the wise, and they will love you.** Proverbs chapter 9 verse 8 (486)
- **In the end, people appreciate honest criticism far more than flattery.**  
Proverbs chapter 28 verse 23 (502)

#### We have a wrong view of our responsibility to & our effect on each other

- We think wrong things like, "I can't say anything?" or "What they do is between them & God!"
- **Let us tell our neighbors the truth, for we are all parts of the same body.**  
Ephesians chapter 4 verse 25 (897)
- My sin not only affects me, it affects my family, Bethel, and more!

#### We have a wrong understanding of the Bible

- **Jesus said, "Do not judge others, and you will not be judged."** Matthew chapter 7 verse 1 (738)
- The Bible does not forbid correction; it forbids hypocritical & judgmental correction!
- **Jesus said, "How can you think of saying to your friend, 'Let me help you get rid of that speck in your eye,' when you can't see past the log in your own eye? Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye."**  
Matthew chapter 7 verses 4 & 5 (738)

### **God knows that these discussions are brutal, so why does He still ask us to have them??**

#### God wants us to follow Jesus' example

- No two words capture Jesus' heart better than "truth" & "grace"
- Jesus always spoke the truth & typically seasoned it with grace
- Truth without grace = mean spirited judgment
- Grace without truth = spoiled rotten

#### True love demands tough talks

- **I wrote that letter in great anguish, with a troubled heart and many tears. I didn't want to grieve you, but I wanted to let you know how much love I have for you.**  
2 Corinthians chapter 2 verse 4 (883)
- Even though it's painful & so difficult, true love requires speaking the truth with grace!

#### We can't grow until we confront the truth about ourselves

- **We will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ...**  
Ephesians chapter 4 verse 15 (897)
- When I speak the truth in love into someone's life, I give them an opportunity to experience real growth by dealing with their sin, their blind-spots, etc.
- Husbands & wives, this is an incredible opportunity!

#### The stakes are huge

- **If someone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back, you can be sure that whoever brings the sinner back will save that person from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.** James chapter 5 verses 19 & 20 (933)
- I must care more about the person's relationship with God than the person's relationship with me
- I must be willing to be misunderstood & rejected

**So how do I do this right??** (based on 2 Samuel chapters 11 & 12)

1. Get very clear about the issue

- ***The Lord was displeased with what David had done.*** 2 Samuel chapter 11 verse 27 (243)
- Make sure it's a sin issue & not an issue of preference

2. Make sure God's sending you

- ***So the Lord sent Nathan the prophet....*** 2 Samuel chapter 12 verse 1 (243)
- Is God sending me or am I sending myself?
- The stronger the relationship, the greater the capacity to handle truth in a positive way
- When I allow God to use me to do this, I allow God to send others to do the same in me

3. Address the issue face-to-face

- ***If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense.***  
*Matthew chapter 18 verse 15 (749)*
- Don't do this by phone, letter, email or text
- This needs to be done in person and in private!
- Remember that 85% of communication is non-verbal

4. Be gentle, wise & honest

- ***If So the Lord sent Nathan the prophet to tell David this story...***  
*2 Samuel chapter 12 verse 1 (243)*
- It's not just about speaking the truth, it's HOW the truth is spoken!!
- ***...If another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path.*** Galatians chapter 6 verse 1 (893)

Before you go...

- Pray for yourself & your heart, that you go in love
- Go with a sense of brokenness, not self-righteousness or pride - If you're looking forward to it, you're probably not the right person to go!
- Consider the timing – Is the person at a place where they can receive this? Is this the right time, place, occasion?
- Stay away from accusing or condemning words
- Identify with this struggle in your own life. Share your own story & brokenness in this area

5. Pray that God will make them open & receptive - ***David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."*** 2 Samuel chapter 12 verses 13 (243)

6. Repentance ≠ no consequences - ***David confessed to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord."***  
***Nathan replied, "Yes, but the Lord has forgiven you, and you won't die for this sin...your child will die."***  
*2 Samuel chapter 12 verses 13 & 14 (243)*

7. Assure them of God's forgiveness

- ***Nathan replied, "the Lord has forgiven you..."*** 2 Samuel chapter 12 verse 13 (243)
- The goal of this process is restoration, NOT revenge or winning!
- Help the person receive forgiveness & hope

Lord, I love \_\_\_\_\_ too much not to get involved. Please give me the courage, grace & love to help.

**Next weekend:** I have a friend who...has a terrible self-image