

Flint Hills Bible Church
Biblical Soul Care Sunday School
Resolving Conflict Chapter 12: You Put the Words Right Into My Mouth

I. Introduction

How do you become good at something? We become good at something by practicing the right things in the right way, consistently. For example, when considering how to improve a new skill. Take home improvement projects for example. If I was going to learn how to tile my bathroom shower, How would I begin to do this?

First I would need to gain knowledge about how to do it - tools, materials, techniques, Second, I would need to see it in action- I would need someone to show me what it looks like to tile a bathroom.

Third, I would need to practice - begin tiling bathrooms!

Over time the techniques and knowledge that I had gained would become automatic. I would develop habits that would make tiling much easier and more efficient.

Biblical conflict resolution is a skill. It must be learned, planned, and developed through practice. In chapter 12, Lou Priolo is giving us a practice regimen. We will learn a few ways to practice speech that is clear, biblical, and effective in training our minds and mouths to honor our Lord Jesus when we are in conflict.

Objectives:

- Review the prerequisites for biblical conflict resolution.
- Consider gracious ways to correct sinful speech in ourselves and others.
- Deal with some objections that may come up as we consider clear biblical speech.

II. Review of the Prerequisites

We have been talking about words for the last several weeks. Specifically, John taught through chapter 11 where Lou Priolo gives many different questions that we can ask while in conflict that will help us get to the key issues of disagreement. I want to briefly review the core text of our book and emphasize the 4 prerequisites that Priolo gave us in the opening chapters.

1. POP QUIZ! What were the four prerequisites and where were they found in Scripture?

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Ephesians 4:1-3

1 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. (ESV)

2. What happens to our efforts to maintain unity if these prerequisites are missing?
3. If you and I have failed to approach conflict resolution with these prerequisites, what harm could result?
4. What should we do if we have failed in one or more of these traits in past conflicts?
5. What difficulties should we be prepared to face in conflict with people we have wronged before?

Summary:

We can spend all of our time formulating the proper question or response for every conversation that we have without being effective, biblical conflict resolvers. If we do not approach people with humility, gentleness, patience, and loving forbearance, we will not resolve conflicts for the glory of God. At the same time, if we pursue these four prerequisites with genuine love for people, our intentions will shine through our imperfect speech.

III. Forming habits through practice

Old habits die hard - when we begin to implement changes to our practice, or to our speech, we will meet resistance.

6. Where will resistance come from as we try to change sinful habits?
7. What is the alternative to forming godly habits?

2 Peter 2:12-14

12 But these, like irrational animals, creatures of instinct, born to be caught and destroyed, blaspheming about matters of which they are ignorant, will also be destroyed in their destruction, **13** suffering wrong as the wage for their wrongdoing. They count it pleasure to revel in the daytime. They are blots and blemishes, reveling in their deceptions, while they feast with you. **14** They have eyes full of adultery,

**insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed.
Accursed children!**

8. What are the false teachers training themselves in? What habits characterize their lives?

1 Timothy 4:6-8

6 If you put these things before the brothers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, being trained in the words of the faith and of the good doctrine that you have followed. 7 Have nothing to do with irreverent, silly myths. Rather train yourself for godliness; 8 for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.

9. Is it possible to be spiritually neutral in your training regimen? Why or why not?

Summary:

We are all training for something. It is not as if we are either training ourselves for godliness or we are staying put spiritually. By not waking up in the morning when the alarm goes off, I am training myself to sleep in. By not reading God's word daily, I am training myself to think like the world, and not like Christ. By not considering how to work through conflict biblically, I am training myself to work through them in whatever way comes naturally to my flesh!

IV. Conflict resolution drill

Lou Priolo spends the bulk of this chapter detailing a habit of reminders for biblical conflict resolution. At first, his system may seem unrealistic or perhaps oversimplified, but give it a chance. We will have the opportunity to consider and discuss it as we go.

a. The reason for the drill:

Proverbs 15:28

**28 The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer,
but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.**

Proverbs 16:23

**23 The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious
and adds persuasiveness to his lips.**

10. According to these verses what are traits of the wise and righteous person?

If we are going to be righteous and wise, what will we have to do ? (see also Prov. 27:12, 27:6)

b. Describing the Drill:

Marriage example: on page 264

Reactions: if you are like me and you hear that example it is easy to immediately dismiss. There seems to be something unrealistic or unreasonable about it. We imagine that there is no way that would work in my close relationships. However, before we make a final judgment, let's analyze this example.

Based on the information we have, who is in the wrong?

What is Kim's biblical responsibility to her husband?

What would you recommend Kim do?

What is Lou's biblical responsibility to his wife?

What would you recommend Lou do?

We see in this example that before we can make any intentional plan to help build new habits of godly communication, we have to know what God desires for us to be and say in the midst of conflicts. This requires the following:

- Renewed minds according to the Word of God (Romans 12:2)
- Eyes (minds, hearts) fixed on the perfect model revealed in the person of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:11-16)
- Awareness that God expects us to put off sinful attitudes, desires and words, and put on Christ (Ephesians 4:17-32)

c. Planning for the Drill

When you are in a conversation with people and someone makes a comment that is harsh, insulting, or ungodly in some way, use a predetermined phrase, question, or example to gently prompt them to rephrase it. Depending on the specific sinful attitude or words that make up our sinful communication habits, we may need a different "drill."

Lou Priolo gives four variations of prompts that you could give in different situations and relationships.

Prompting questions:

The following examples are found on pages 265-266

- “Would you please try that again by asking me a question rather than something that comes across as an accusation?”
- Would you ~~like to~~ try that again, as per our agreement, without the sarcasm?”
- “Would you mind asking me what my motives for doing that were instead of uncharitably judging them?”
- “Honey, do you think you could please repeat those instructions so as to make it clear that you are talking to your ‘co-heir,’ ‘weaker vessel’ wife rather than one of your subordinates at work?”

Coaching Prompts: pg266

- “Let’s try that again with a little more grace and a lot less salt.”
- “Honey, that was kind of harsh. I think that can be said with more gentleness.”
- “Son, that really came across disrespectfully. Please see if you can make that point more politely.”
- “Please say that again without rolling your eyes.”

Suggestion Prompts: pg 266

- “May I suggest a more gracious way to say that?”
- “I think it would be more appropriate if you were to say it this way...”
- “Please try it this way...”
- “It would really make it much easier for me to do what you are asking if you made your request like this...”

“Put the words right in their mouth” Prompts: for family members- kids in particular- pgs 266-267

- “Sweetheart, would you mind helping me locate my keys? I seem to have misplaced them again”
- “I’m going to need your undivided attention for a few minutes. When would be a good time for us to talk?”
- “Dad, I was wrong for being so disrespectful to you. Will you forgive me?”
- “Honey, would you mind very much stopping at the next gas station to ask for directions?”

Ending caveat: Sometimes there is a comment made that really should not be repeated - there is really no way to “redeem it.” If it is really a difference of preference, we can and should overlook it in loving forbearance. If it is something insulting and without any merit, gently prompt the person to ask forgiveness.