

Relationship Success

Lesson 4: Confront and Forgive with Love

This course follows Jim Tucker's Relationship Success class audio found on the Relationship Success page of Connect the Nations. Please read this lesson while listening to the audio, or just listen and answer the questions.

Vocabulary: (yellow = vocabulary; green = idioms)

to confront (n. confrontation)	to counsel (n. counseling, counselor)	to insulate	stronghold
to cast out (idiom)	correction	bubble	regulation
to shake	gentle	evidence	grievance
to straighten	soft	to label	to wrap up (idiom)
to blast away (idiom)	to yell	thread	
tender	glove	bondage	
tough	stiff	demeanor	
destructive	combat	assembly	
delicate	countenance	lust	
to discern	posture	circuit	

Discussion:

How many of you have had a situation in your life where you had to tell somebody something that was hard to tell them, and you had to **confront** them about something, and it was difficult? Right, how did it turn out? You should be up here looking at your faces, just like "Hmm."

Lord, we just thank you tonight for your love, and your words that equip us to love people, to have relationships that honor you. Lead us tonight, Lord – our words be from your heart. Equip us to be effective in our world for your glory just to be loving people, just to be walking in love and truth. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Okay, we're gonna go to **confrontation**, and we're gonna go back to forgiveness. We're gonna end with that, okay? Because really confrontation is one of the things we hate the most. In fact, if you're here tonight cuz' you got an email about this: "This is gonna be about confrontation," and it excites you, you may not be the best one to do the confrontation. If you're like the person that goes, "Yeah, I love this! I love it!" Well, you may not be the best one, okay? Because it's about you. It's not about the other person. Confrontation is primarily for the other person. Sometimes it's because of boundaries. You need to have boundaries in your life. How many know we have to have boundaries? Loving people doesn't mean that we just give in and let people run over us.

When you let people control you and manipulate you, that's not love. That's fear. Everybody gets that? And that isn't love-motivated, that's fear-based. And perfect love casts out fear, the scripture says. But the opposite is also true: Fear **casts out** love. When you're afraid of people, it's really hard to love them. I see you **shaking** your heads. You know what I'm saying.

Now, we, we all have people that just irritate us, you know? If right now somebody comes to mind, okay, kinda push that out, alright? You know, for just a minute. But we all have those, you know, times and people that just irritate us, and you don't confront everything. If you're the kind of person who has

to **straighten** everything out, you know, I'm real glad you're here. Because, really, you don't have to. If we have any high-powered people like that in the room – the kind that, you know, anytime there's something wrong, you gotta fix it? You gotta straighten it out. You see a bad attitude, you gotta fix it. Well, that's not what we're talking about, because some things you just gotta let it go. Let it go. Some things you don't have to straighten out. Some things you just gotta let 'em go.

But confrontation is a really difficult thing. There are times when people do us wrong. There are times that we have to speak the truth in love. There are some situations that we need to do something about. We live in a world where either people are just **blasting away** at people, or they don't do anything about anything. Actually, God's Word says, "In these days that we are living in, people will call evil good and good evil." Alright?

What type of person are you? How do you respond when you have a problem with another person? Do you go to them to talk about it? Do you stop talking to the person, avoid them, or just ignore the problem?

When you do confront people, does it usually go well or just cause more problems? Explain.

Why do you think healthy confrontation is important?

Well, bringing it down to an individual, there are times when you've got to just say something about something that is just wrong. You all are looking at me real serious right now. Is it okay what I just said? Okay, y'all [you all] smile, alright? 'Cuz if it's not, I'm still right. No, yeah, right? I'm kidding, I'm kidding. God's love in your notes here is both **tender** and **tough**, is tender and tough. In other words, you don't just always go around and, "Everybody's fine. Everybody's wonderful. Everybody's ok." Everything is fine. Everybody's not ok.

Years ago, somebody wrote a book entitled, "I'm Ok. You're Ok." "I'm Ok. You're Ok." And it was right about that same time, there was a Christian author who wrote a book, "Love, Acceptance, and Forgiveness." And in his book, it was just, "Love everybody, accept everybody, forgive everybody." It was basically, "Everybody is wonderful." Four years later, the same man wrote a book entitled, "What I Learned, Since I Knew It All." And basically, he was saying that everybody's not wonderful.

Now, here's what I'm saying, in our culture, would you agree we're living in a time that sometimes with individual people, or group, or whatever, you have to be able to say, "This is not right." And how do you do that? What do you do? God's love is both tender and tough. We must learn to speak the truth in love. That's from Ephesians chapter 4: "Speak the truth in love that you would grow up in Christ." Undisciplined love is **destructive**. You know, it's like the mom or the dad that has a child who just says, "Oh, I just love you so much, and there's never any discipline."

Undisciplined love is destructive. Okay, check this out. You can only speak the truth to the degree you're willing to love, and you can only love to the degree you're willing to speak the truth. It's such a **delicate** balance, and only the Holy Spirit can lead that. You don't just blast away at people. There's a time to speak the truth in love. And one of the things that I've learned in life is that sometimes people don't know how far off they are. They really don't know. And you kinda have to **discern** and love them.

How many have ever been confronted by somebody and it helped you? Have you had that? Have you ever been confronted by somebody, and it just hurt you? Nothing good came out of it? You see, to speak the truth in love is to speak the truth in a way the person can receive it. If they cannot, if it's impossible for them to receive it... Now, I'm not saying they may not have a reaction, but I'm saying if you're doing it in a way that's all about you, it's just about your frustration, your anger, well, it's not gonna do any good. That's about you.

How many have ever been confronted by somebody and it helped you? Describe that time.

Have you ever been confronted by somebody, and it just hurt you? Describe that time.

If you remember day one of this: "It's not about you." Everybody say it, "It's not about me." Look at the person next to you and say, "It's not about me. It's about you." Just tell him. Look right at 'em, alright. And now you tell them, "I'll never say that again." Alright, alright. You will, you will. Okay, you can only speak the truth to the degree you're willing to love. You can only love to the degree you're willing to speak the truth. You can't just say, "I just love everybody," but there's never any truth that you walk in. Our culture needs courageous people that will say, "That's wrong. That's wrong. This is right." Bless the good. Point out when something's wrong. We tend to judge ourselves by our intentions. We judge others by their actions. How many understand that? When it comes to us, we go, "Well, you just need to know my heart." But as you know, the Lord says for us to love each other the way we love ourself.

We're involved in a marriage ministry here at the church – in crisis marriage – and so often the thing that makes the difference is just loving confrontation. Just to say, very often it's the man, you know? But I find that most men, if they come in for **counseling**, there's something good in them. How many would agree with that? I see all the women going, "Yeah, if they will, that's great!" Well, I mean, I really feel that way. If you get a man that is willing to be open to truth and **correction**, just bless, I mean, God bless 'em, because most men are too prideful.

Now, one time we had a lady, sweet lady that was just very angry. She was just angry, angry, angry, angry, really angry. And she'd been angry for a long time. And she comes in, and I mean, she scared me. I mean, she did. I was thinking, "Lord, I just want this one to be over." She just scared me. We talk along for a while, and I'm trying to approach it from every way that I can, trying to be very **gentle** and **soft** and just trying to get somewhere with this precious couple. And finally, she **yells** at me, and she says, "You don't have to handle me with kid **gloves**!" And I'm thinking, "Well, alright, sister!" I looked at Tracy, and she looked at me. We know each other so well. I knew that her look said, "I know what you're gonna do right now. I wish you wouldn't do it. I'm not sure, but I think you're gonna do it anyway. I know you're hearing God. I hope you're hearing God because I know what you are about to do."

And all I did... I mean, I waited, trying to listen to the Holy Spirit, and she told about all the churches she's been to. She's mad at everybody. Every church she'd been to had done her wrong, and just a whole list of stuff. And I just looked at her, and I just said, "Okay." I said, "Well, here it is then. The reason you're so angry is because you're very self-centered. You are so selfish. You process everything by the way it affects you. That's why you're so angry." And it was as quiet as it is here right now. And you know, her husband was just **stiff**. This poor man had been beat up by his wife. I mean she didn't just wear the pants in the family; she wore the pants, the **combat** boots. I mean, she ruled. But I thought I

was hearing the Lord. So, we waited a minute. She looks at me, and she says, “You know, that’s right. That’s why I’m so angry.” And she looked at him, and she said, “That’s really true.”

And I looked at his face. I know what he’s thinking: “I ain’t [am not] goin’ [going] there. I ain’t saying nothin’ [nothing].” But what came out of that, that hour and a half with this precious couple: The truth in love made a complete turn-around. They walked out happy; she owned her stuff. It was just beautiful – prayed. Her whole **countenance** changed. Everything changed. He was just amazed. It was just an amazing time. It was truth in love. Now, can you do that all the time? No. That’s why I said it has to be led by the Holy Spirit. God’s love loves the unlovely. It takes humility to move toward people that we would normally avoid.

Think back to the situation where a person confronted you, and it just hurt you. Describe what truth in love would look like in that situation. How could the person have confronted you differently? What did you need from them?

Okay, let me move into this really quick, okay? Forgiveness. Anybody ever had to forgive somebody? Anybody ever had to be forgiven? I believe to turn the other cheek, as Jesus talked about... One application of that, is to lead in life with the unhurt side. Here’s what I mean by that; I think I said it. I think you’ve heard me say this before, but so many people go through life having been hurt, and they live their life. Some people go through life either with this kind of **posture** or this kind of posture. It’s just like either “Don’t mess with me,” or “I’m just gonna [going to] protect myself at all cost.” You see, if you **insulate** yourself from hurt, you also insulate yourself from love. You can’t build a **bubble** that keeps everybody out, without also keeping out being touched by the love of people. To lead in life with the hurt side goes, “Look everybody, I’ve been hurt. I have a right to be bitter. I have a right to be angry. I have a right to go through the next twenty years of counseling. I don’t really want to be healed. I have a right to have this attitude. Look at this, and I’m staying this way.” Don’t get me wrong; I’m not against counseling. I am one. I am a counselor. What I am saying is, don’t go through life like that. Turn the other cheek and lead in life with the unhurt side. Let the Lord heal this up. Don’t live your life with the hurt side. If you live out of hurt, let me tell you what will happen. You’ll become a judgmental person. You will begin to judge people according to that filter of the way things affect you.

Does anybody here understand judgment? See, a judgmental spirit creates its own **evidence**. Anybody here ever been judged by somebody? Mislabeled? You had somebody **label** you, think something bad about you, whatever. And maybe there was something in there that might be a **thread** of truth. But often judgement that we put on people is coming from our own stuff. It’s coming from what’s in us. We’re projecting onto other people something that is really in us. And they may make us feel something, so we project onto them something that justifies us staying in **bondage**. That’s what the enemy wants: “Let me judge you. You’re affecting me this way.” It could be a **demeanor**. It could be a look. It could be...

There’s a certain kind of man that I feel insecure around. Can I tell you what it's like? Who it is? And you are all lookin’ [looking] at me like, “What kind of person is it?” Bookkeeper kind of people. If you’re a bookkeeper kinda person, I love you. But I have to overcome if... I’ve lost you now. It’s like, “What are you talkin’ [talking] about?” If you’re a bookkeeper here now, now you’re judging me. Right? You’re going, “I don’t like you either.” I have to overcome. I have to actually move toward that person and understand them because extreme non-feeling-just-numbers people – I gotta be careful, or I will think they are rejecting me. I’ll interpret it that way.

Now, here's what the scripture says: "Judge not, lest [unless] you be judged. For the way that you judge and the measure that you use to judge, it will come back to you." In dealing with people, you can project onto somebody something that isn't really them. If you would say this out loud with me: "Don't judge. For the way that you judge, it will come back to you. And the measure that you use, it'll [it will] come back."

Here's what I mean by that: If I judge you to be rejecting me or seeing something in me, I'm gonna treat you like that. Does everybody get that? Okay, raise your hand if you get that. I'm projecting it onto you. Many, many years ago, I was doing high school **assemblies**. How many understand that doing a high school assembly would be scary? To stand in front of three thousand high school students. I don't know how this happened, but this one high school asked me to teach on how to know if you're in love. And I thought, "I don't know." But I knew, I knew what **lust** was. So, I just talked about the difference in love and lust. But I remember that first time. And what the Lord spoke to me about when he first began to teach me about judgement and projecting onto people. He said, "Just don't project onto that audience that they're rejecting you. Project that they love you; they're with you; they wanna hear what you're saying. Go in there and love them and bless them. Show up with all of your heart. Give everything you've got." And then that whole **circuit** of high school assemblies began to open.

Have you ever felt like someone didn't like you or judged you, but you weren't sure? Maybe they didn't greet you, talk to you, or smile at you. Or maybe you knew they were judging you. How do you act toward people when you feel this way?

What could you do instead? What would speaking the truth in love look like?

Well, we do that with individual people. When you judge people, you're not turning the other cheek. You're living your life out of the hurt. And then by the time you get two people together judging somebody, it's over. How many know, whenever we feel rejected, the first thing we want to do is get somebody on our side. Is it right what I'm saying? Instead of trying to heal that relationship, there's judgement that has happened. Walk in forgiveness. Walk in forgiveness. Just walk in it. Forgiveness breaks **strongholds**. You go to the offended person. You go to them. You talk to them. If ever... There are so many relationships that are just destroyed, and you can be a healer – in the office, wherever you go. If you'll be that person that goes to people, and you try to bring healing. You go to them. You don't walk in that. You don't live in that realm. How many would agree the world operates in that? How many would agree what I just described happens all the time? That's our culture, we're called to change the culture. We don't do that.

I love it when somebody comes to me and wants to tell me something bad about somebody. I love it. 'Cuz I'm gonna counter it. I'm gonna change it. I'm gonna turn it. Turn the other cheek. "When you were dead in your sin, in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us our sin, having canceled the written code with its **regulations** that was against us and stood opposed to us. He took it away nailing it to the cross" (Colossians 2:13-14). That's God's love for us. "Therefore, as God's chosen people – holy, dearly loved – clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever **grievances** you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (3:12-13).

Okay, how do we forgive? Everybody, how do we forgive? As the Lord forgave us, that's how we forgive. That's your resource. That's where you pull it from. It's from the mercy of God that he's given to you. "And over all of these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (3:14).

What does Jesus's forgiveness look like? How has he forgiven you? Describe.

Okay, this is an important point: People don't hurt you because of what's wrong with you. People hurt you because of what's wrong with them. And when you know that, you kinda rise above it, and you're able to walk in forgiveness and grace.

Okay, this is an important thing. I just really would like for you to get this: To walk in the security of the love of God so that you can love. Because otherwise you spend the rest of your life judging people because you need them to approve of you. You need them to treat you right. And I believe that's how God wants us to function – that we're so secure in his love, in his provision, and his goodness to us – that when people do us wrong, we're not dependent upon people doing us right to have peace. It just doesn't matter, whatever it might be – that our identity is wrapped up in his love for us and his goodness to us.

Is there a person you need to confront or problem you need to resolve with someone? Take a minute to write down why you love this person. From there, write about the problem. Consider these questions:

- How am I thinking about myself and not the other person?
- What can you own in the situation? In what ways do you need their forgiveness?
- What do they need from you? How can you be the healer?
- What do you think could be helpful for them to grow and learn from this discussion?

Take a minute to pray and forgive this person even before you go to them. Ask the Lord to help you forgive them as he forgives you for things you don't see in your own life.

This Week:

Write in your journal:

1. Continue working on the final questions above. Set up a time to talk with this person face-to-face, if possible. We recommend reconciling face-to-face or over Zoom, not through email or text.
2. Think of a way you can bless this person who hurt you – really bless them! Make a plan to bless them this week.
3. Continue to make deposits into this person so that the healing is real and genuine.
4. Think of a person who needs this lesson and share it with them this week!