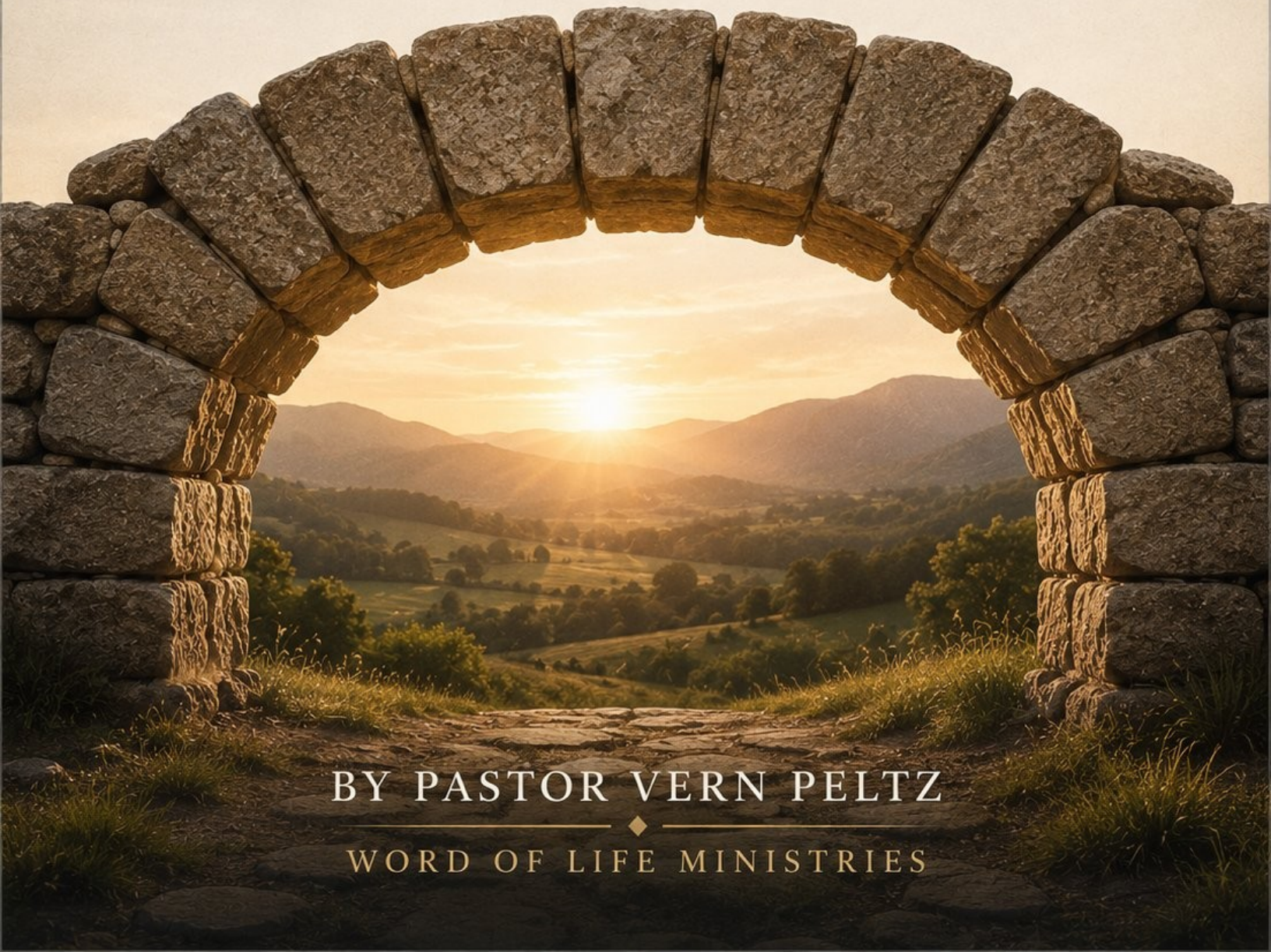


UNITY & COMMUNICATION

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS
THROUGH TRUTH AND LOVE



BY PASTOR VERN PELTZ

WORD OF LIFE MINISTRIES

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Introduction

One of the most difficult things to create and sustain in any relationship — whether spousal, parents to children, children to parents, among relatives, friends, the workplace, etc. — is UNITY.

Unity can be established only one way — GOOD, CONSTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION.

The purpose of this booklet is to help all of us have more unity with those around us, as well as learn some of the basic scriptural elements of communication needed in our relationships.

The Bible talks about the right ways to communicate, and it also talks about the wrong ways to communicate. We're going to take a look at both sides of this picture.

We will first take a look at unity and its benefits.

In a church setting, disunity is devastating. There are many different scriptural words that are used to describe disunity and the process that creates it. Words like strife, division, separation, gossip, slander, evil speaking, contention, etc. We will be looking at some of these later in this study. But without exception — if these things are let loose to operate in a relationship — ANY RELATIONSHIP — they will destroy that relationship. This seems to be especially true in marriages, families and churches.

DISUNITY IS SOMETHING WE MUST ALWAYS BE ON GUARD AGAINST.

So let's take a look at unity.

Note: the translations used in this study:

King James

New International Version

New King James

God's Word Translation

Amplified Version

Unity Principles

"I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united (joined) in mind and thought."

I Cor. 1:10 (Greek: also rendered "judgment")

I. Being in 'Unity', or 'One Accord' is absolutely essential to the moving of the Spirit in the church. Lose the 'Unity', and you lose the anointing. Have the 'Unity' and anything is possible.

"And the Lord said, 'Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them.'"

Gen. 11:6

"Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven."

Matt. 18:19

II. Disunity (Strife & Division) are Satan's ONLY TOOL to stop the church.

"But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.'"

Matt. 12:25

III. If he can get the church divided against itself, it will eventually destroy us. The sad part of the whole thing is, too many Christians and churches let him use the various tools of disunity. Even though the Bible tells us what to do and what not to do, many of us still listen to the wrong side of the spirit realm and allow the demonic to speak to us and operate through us. 'Conflict' or 'Disunity' is a carnal/fleshly tendency. Anytime we're in it, we are active with demonic spirits because it's not of God's kingdom, but of the fallen/sinful flesh.

"And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, 'I am of Paul,' and another, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal?"

I Cor. 3:1-4

IV. Disunity is generally associated with the more immature Christian. (Remember: we can be saved for 50 years and still be an immature Christian) Strife and Disunity come when someone magnifies the differences they have with someone else. Unity always magnifies the things that are in common between people.

Scripture gives specific principles concerning 'Unity'. Listed below are a few of the very important and necessary ones.

A. Unity & Agreement are our Strongest Force and Greatest Tool.

1. Anything is possible when people can stay in agreement/unity.

- Gen. 11:6 — "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them."
- Matt. 18:19 — "If two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them."

2. God operates in Unity.

- Gen. 1:26 — "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness"
- Gen. 11:7 — "Come, let us go down and confuse/confound their language"
- John 17:20-23 — "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me."
- Acts 2:1 — "When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

3. In Christ, we are all to be united and one.

- Rom. 12:5 — "So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others."
- Gal. 3:28 — "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- Eph. 4:13 — "Until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

4. We are exhorted to get into and stay in unity.

- Ps. 133:1-3 — "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, running down on the beard, the beard of Aaron, running down on the edge of his garments. It is like the dew of Hermon, Descending upon the mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing — Life forevermore."

- I Cor. 1:10 — “Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
- II Cor. 13:11 — “Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.”
- Eph. 4:1-6 — “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with long suffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”
- Phil. 1:27 — “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.”
- Phil. 2:2 — “Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, or one mind.”
- I Pet. 3:8 — “Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble.”

B. Communication is key to having true Unity. Let me give you just one example from the many found in scripture.

“Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, ‘I am of Paul,’ or ‘I am of Apollos,’ or ‘I am of Cephas,’ or ‘I am of Christ.’ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?”

I Cor. 1:10-12

Can you see how Unity and/or Division is revolving around communication in these verses? That’s how it is in all relationships. COMMUNICATION IS VITAL TO PRESERVING UNITY.

If there was ONE KEY to keeping unity, it is:

COMMUNICATE — COMMUNICATE — COMMUNICATE
COMMUNICATE — COMMUNICATE — COMMUNICATE
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Disunity

Disunity is one of the most devastating things that can happen to a relationship. (Church, Marriage, Family, Relatives, Work Environment, Etc.) Over time that relationship will disintegrate and be destroyed. DISUNITY IS NOT OF GOD. IT'S DEMONIC.

Webster defines the word 'Dis' as: "The god of the lower world. Identified by the Greeks as Pluto. Hades."

Once UNITY comes under the influence of the god of the lower world, (Hell — Hades) now you have DIS-UNITY. (As I said, Disunity is not of God. It is Demonic in origin)

Once disunity has taken hold, a myriad of other things appear. Things the scripture refers to as:

Offenses — Strife — Evil Reports — Evil Speaking — Slander — Jealousy —
Selfish Ambitions — Disorder — Bitterness — Envy — Evil Suspicions —
Division — Gossip — Busybodies.

**HERE IS THE LARGEST PROBLEM TO RESOLVING ANY RELATIONSHIP:
ONE PERSON/PARTY DOESN'T WANT TO RESOLVE.**

They may say they do, but their actions don't follow through with what they are saying. If you really want to fix something with someone — GO TO THEM AND GET THE PROCESS STARTED. FIX IT!!!

That's when we hear all the excuses, reasons, accusations, gossip, slander, railing, defending, etc. as to why they can't. It Will Never Work! These people are too unreasonable, stubborn, etc.

Can I be BOLD here and say what is really going on? Some of the reasons we're hearing all this could be any of the following:

1. They don't really believe the Word.
2. They don't really want to live by what the Word has to say.
3. They think they are smarter than God. They already know what will work and what won't. God obviously doesn't, or he wouldn't have come up with such a ridiculous idea as restoring this relationship and the steps needed to go through to do it.
4. They can predict the future. They'll say things like: there's no use in doing that, it'll never work.
5. God probably doesn't know what these people are REALLY like.
6. Their emotions are running their decisions. They're hiding behind their feelings.
7. They actually feel they have tried. Even though they didn't do it the scriptural way, and go through the scriptural steps laid out in the Word, the

deception has gotten thick enough that they actually think they've done everything that can be done.

Once one person or party does not want to resolve, the relationship will usually take a turn to go down a road of Bad Communication. The things I listed above usually come into play. Maybe not all of them, but some of them will. Scripture refers to them this way:

Offenses — Strife — Evil Reports — Evil Speaking — Slander — Jealousy — Selfish Ambitions — Disorder — Bitterness — Envy — Evil Suspicions — Division — Gossip — Busybodies.

These are not all Spoken. The absolute worst thing that can happen is one of the people (one party) refuses to talk about it. They just shut down.

IN CHURCHES THAT USUALLY PLAYS OUT IN PEOPLE NOT COMING BACK TO CHURCH. They will say nice religious things like:

"We feel our time is up at Word of Life."

"God is moving us on to a different work/church."

"There are some things we don't agree with at Word of Life."

"We're just praying to see what God wants us to do."

"Pray with us for the Lord's leading."

"It seems that the things of the Spirit are not happening at Word of Life the way they used to/or should be."

"Etc. — Etc. — Etc."

IN MOST CASES THE TRUTH IS:

- They've been offended.
- Someone said or did something that bothers them or hurt their feelings.
- They aren't getting their way about something.
- They realize they can't buy or earn a position in the church.
- They are suspicious about something.
- They disagree with something.
- They've come to realize that they're not going to be allowed to stir up problems.
- Or they might be church hoppers, and it's time to jump.

If they are not paying very close attention at this point, they will quickly fall into many of the Bad and Destructive forms of Communication listed above.

Here's a couple of verses that in a general sense forbid the above things:

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.”

Eph. 4:29

“Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification.”

Rom. 14:19

“Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully.”

Eph. 4:25

Dealing with that last scripture about “putting off falsehood and speak truthfully”, most people who are struggling with something will not do that scripture. We won’t let ourselves get in the position where we can tell THE PEOPLE THAT CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE what we really feel or think. In fact, if we talk to them we usually LIE. We won’t say what we really feel.

We’ll get into the Bad Communication and tell THE PEOPLE WHO CAN’T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE to what is happening. And that is exactly what scripture forbids. It is destructive. It creates Disunity. It’s not of God.

We use excuses like:

- We don’t want to cause any problems.
- We don’t want to be a trouble maker.
- We don’t want to hurt anyone or make them angry.
- We don’t want to disappoint them.
- We don’t want to make too big a deal out of it.
- It’s maybe just me anyway.

So we won’t talk to the right people. The relationship gets damaged, or worse yet it falls apart. All because we didn’t use Good Communication.

I have found that many times people have not been instructed who they should say what to. Or we’ve been in a church where there has been tons of Bad Communication, and we honestly think that is how it’s supposed to be done. By the time you’ve read through this booklet, you should have a good idea of how communication is supposed to go. For example:

Who is THE RIGHT PERSON TO TALK TO? It’s the people WHO CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE SITUATION. (DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT)

#1 — The person/people who can make the biggest difference is the one you are having the problem with. The one you’re talking about. Scripturally you need to talk to them first.

#2 — In a church setting, it would be the people who are the Elders, or Deacons. They are responsible before God to run the organization. They are the ones referred to as the 'church' in Matt. 18:17.

This process will be covered more in depth later in this booklet. But I thought it would be good to at least mention it here.

Let me give you a Rule of Thumb to help remember how to do it.

RULE OF THUMB:

BAD COMMUNICATION IS WHEN WE TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE NEGATIVELY — AND THE PERSON WE'RE TALKING TO IS:

(1) NOT THE PERSON WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

(2) IS NOT SOMEONE WHO CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

(Spouses are Excluded from this rule)

The problem is that if we are talking about someone in this way, we are likely giving an Evil Report, In Gossip, Have an Offense, Creating Strife, Speaking Evil, Slandering, Spreading Evil Suspicions, Etc.

This will not only cause Disunity, we are likely judging the person we're talking about. Judging other people is something we are told not to do in the Word. I KNOW, I KNOW — we don't think it is judging. We're just talking to someone to get their opinion. The problem is, now is not the time to be talking to other people. YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO GO TALK TO THE PERSON FIRST. (Matt. 18:15) Then if they don't listen, now it's time to get a witness. (Matt. 18:16) Now you have to talk to someone else about it and get their opinion so they can go with you and be a witness to what you're trying to say.

The sad part is: they probably haven't even talked to THE PERSON THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT!!! They're just out there talking to other people.

If that's what is happening: THAT IS WRONG. YOU ARE IN SIN.

God and Communication

He has designed it that almost everything he does is done with his words. (Gen. 1; Rom. 4:17b)

Interestingly, two members of the trinity were named after the elements needed for speech. The Holy Spirit's name literally means: "A breath, wind that is separate and set apart". Before Jesus was given his earthly name, he was called 'The Word'. Both breath and words are needed for speech.

God is very communicative. There seemed to be a special time set aside to communicate with his creation known as 'man'. (Gen. 3:8)

When God met with man in the Old Covenant, it always surrounded around language:

- His Covenants with man were always spoken: Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc.
- Even though the Ten Commandments were written by God, the greatest bulk of that covenant was spoken to Moses by God.
- The Angel of the Lord and Abraham.
- The Prophets.
- Etc.

In the New Covenant he did one better. Via the Holy Spirit, he moved right inside of us to speak to us. (John 14; 16) His focus was to:

- Counsel us.
- Teach us.
- Lead us.
- Remind us.
- Convict and Convince us.
- Etc.

Verbal Communication is absolutely designed by God, he is in favor of it, and wants it to happen in his creation. Speaking of creation, all of his creation that has intelligence, has been given a voice and some form of audible communication abilities. It's another way of seeing that God is big into communication. (Rom. 1:20)

Good Communication Principles

The Bible has a lot to say about communication. It deals with both good and bad forms of communicating. In this section we're going to look at some of the principles of good communication.

I. Below are listed a few of the scriptures that deal with the subject.

A. Notice — Instruction and Boundaries are good things. They prosper us in life.

"My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother; For they will be a graceful ornament on your head, and chains about your neck."

Prov. 1:8-9

B. Commands & Instruction, bring life, wisdom, and understanding.

"Hear, my children, the instruction of a father, and give attention to know understanding; For I give you good doctrine: do not forsake my law. When I was my father's son, tender and the only one in the sight of my mother, he also taught me, and said to me: 'Let your heart retain my words; Keep my commands, and live. Get wisdom! Get understanding!'"

Prov. 4:1-5

C. We must guard our heart. To do that we must:

1. Get rid of any deceit that comes out of our mouths. (False and Dishonest Speech — AMP.)

2. And get rid of willful and contrary talk. (AMP.) ('Perverse' — KJV)

"Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you."

Prov. 4:23-24

D. When we misspeak, or say something, agree to something we shouldn't have, we need to immediately go and get it set right.

"You are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth. So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; for you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and humble yourself; Plead with your friend. Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, and like a bird from the hand of the fowler."

Prov. 6:2-5

E. Good communication speaks about:

1. Noble things.

2. What is right.

3. The truth.
4. Stays away from wickedness.
5. Everything said is fair.
6. Nothing is said that is twisted or crooked. (Deception or not True)
7. It seeks to make things clear (understandable).
8. It seeks to set things right. (Back into correct standing)
9. It hates words that are twisted to mean different things.
10. Advice and Priceless Wisdom (Based on the Word. — Ps. 1:1-3) flow in Good Communication.

“Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise its voice? You gullible people, learn how to be sensible. You fools, get a heart that has understanding. Listen! I am speaking about noble things, and my lips will say what is right. My mouth expresses the truth, and wickedness is disgusting to my lips. Everything I say is fair, and there is nothing twisted or crooked in it. All of it is clear to a person who has understanding and right to those who have acquired knowledge. Take my discipline, not silver, and my knowledge rather than fine gold, because wisdom is better than jewels. Nothing you desire can equal it. Wisdom’s Authority ‘I, Wisdom, live with insight, and I acquire knowledge and foresight. To fear the LORD is to hate evil. I hate pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and twisted speech. Advice and priceless wisdom are mine. I, Understanding, have strength.’”

Prov. 8:1, 5-14 — God’s Word Translation

F. Good communication does not use language and words that devalue or tear down another person. It communicates for:

1. The Good of others.
2. The Benefit of others.
3. To help the spiritual progress of others.
4. Fits the situation and the need.
5. Is a Blessing to those who hear it. (Empowers them to prosper)
6. And gives Grace to the people it’s communicating with.

“Let no foul or polluting language, nor evil word nor unwholesome or worthless talk ever come out of your mouth, but only such speech as is good and beneficial to the spiritual progress of others, as is fitting to the need and the occasion, that it may be a blessing and give grace (God’s favor) to those who hear it.”

Eph. 4:29 — AMP.

G. Good communication is:

1. Kind. Sympathetic. And Forgiving.

"Don't give God's Holy Spirit any reason to be upset with you. He has put his seal on you for the day you will be set free from the world of sin. Get rid of your bitterness, hot tempers, anger, loud quarreling, cursing, and hatred. Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ."

Eph. 4:30-32 — God's Word Translation

H. Thankfulness to God should always show up if we're in good communication.

"...let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

Eph. 5:3-4 — NKJV

I. Good communication does not use the devil's/sin's tools or methods to express itself.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret."

Eph. 5:11-12 — NKJV

J. Good communication comes from someone filled with the Holy Spirit. It manifests in:

1. Speaking of the Word, and things of the Word to each other.
2. A joyful heart before the Lord.
3. Thankfulness.

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Eph. 5:19-20 — NKJV

K. People who use good communication try to speak:

1. As someone under the authority of Christ.
2. With the other person in mind and for their benefit.

"Have you been thinking all along that we're trying to defend ourselves to you? We speak as Christ's people in God's sight. Everything we do, dear friends, is for your benefit."

II Cor. 12:19 — God's Word Translation

L. Truthfulness and Honesty are promoted for Good Communication.

"Truthful lips endure forever, but a lying tongue lasts only a moment"

Prov. 12:19

"These are the things you are to do; Speak the truth to each other, and render true and sound judgment in your courts."

Zech. 8:16

"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body."

Eph. 4:25

"Stand firm then with the belt of truth buckled around your waist"

Eph. 6:14

"...as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way...in truthful speech..."

II Cor. 6:4, 7

"...they perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved"

II Thes. 2:10

Anger and Good Communication

Anger is a very misunderstood subject for most believers. In most cases, we have simply been taught we are not to be angry. To have anger is wrong. It is sin. Where in reality, at times we need to get angry. Our communication needs to reflect that we're angry. **ANGER IS NOT SIN!!!** If it were, God Would Be A Sinner. Not only did he get angry, but he let people know he was angry. The key to communicating correctly in anger is that we need to mature enough to be able to express our anger without getting into sin. (Eph. 4:26)

Anger is a God given emotion and response. He has it. We are made in his image. We are to have it. When you look through scripture, you find God (and Jesus) becoming very angry. It is a Godly Characteristic to be able to get angry and express our anger. Scripturally speaking, it's not expressing anger that is wrong. It's how it's expressed that makes it wrong.

When someone is Angry, what are they really trying to say? Scripturally speaking, an angry person is expressing the fact that they want something to stop. That is the Godly core and purpose for Anger. It is the emotional and adrenaline burst inside of us that tells us something is off, it's wrong, and from our perspective — **IT NEEDS TO STOP**. The problem is that in the middle of the raw emotion and energy burst, we can verbalize and express it in a very ungodly way.

Typically speaking — the bad/wrong expression of anger comes from our feeling out of control. We don't feel we can do anything about the situation. Our experience and perspective tell us that what we say, think, feel, etc. won't matter anyway. We believe we're not going to be heard anyway. So we use all the wrong tools to try to get the other person's attention and help them realize that we are serious about what we're feeling. We're trying to gain some control. We're trying to get people to listen to us. We do things like: Yell, Shout, Cuss, Hit, Throw Things, Slam Doors, Become Violent, Devalue the Other Person, Go Silent and Shut the Other Person Out, Acting Out, Acting In, Become Passive/Aggressive, Etc.

In reality it's not just the person throwing the fit and trying to be heard who is wrong. It's also the people who are not giving enough credence to the opinions, feelings, desires, priorities, thoughts, ideas of the person who is angry. **THE PERSON FEELS UNHEARD, BECAUSE LIKELY THE OTHER PEOPLE ARE NOT LISTENING, OR DON'T TAKE SERIOUSLY AND/OR DEVALUE WHAT IS BEING SAID.**

Good communication always values the other person and what they are saying. **EVEN IF THEY ARE WRONG.** The conversation must leave everyone feeling heard and understood. Even if we don't always agree with each other.

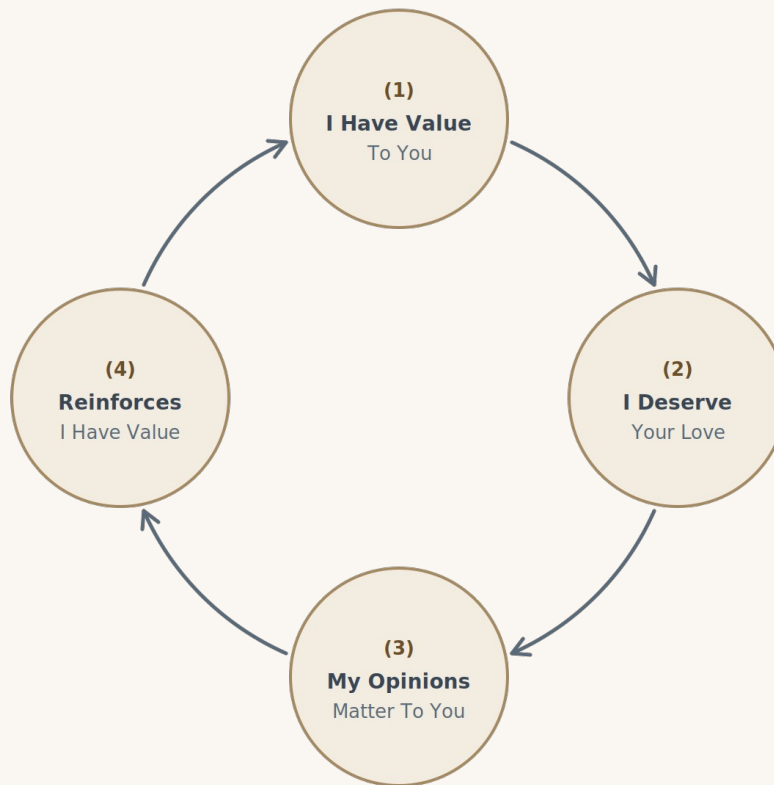
This little chart should help to illustrate this concept.

- (1) Because I have value as a human being, and if I really do have value to you,
- (2) I am worthy of and deserve your Love. (God loves me and so should you)

(3) If I'm truly Loved by you, my opinions, beliefs, desires, goals, hopes, etc. really do matter to you. You will listen to me. You will respect my thoughts. You will care. Because that's how it works with God. Because that is Love.

(4) Which to me will reinforce — I have Value to You.

The Value & Love Cycle



That one little principle — if genuinely applied and lived — will renovate most relationships with anger problems. Huge problems develop when we don't get our anger resolved correctly. The anger tends to build up and get worse. That escalation process is described in the scripture below. All of Eph. 4:26-32 deals with good and bad ways of communication and anger.

I. Three Levels of Anger. (Eph. 4:31)

A. "Anger"

- a. The emotion of indignation or wrath.

B. "Bitterness"

- a. 'Aged' Anger. Begins to affect our personality.

C. "Rage" (KJV — Wrath)

- a. Violent People. Through word or deed they violate others.

II. Three Levels of Destructive/Negative Communication. (Eph. 4:31)

- A. “Brawling” (KJV — Clamour)
 - a. “Yelling or Shouting”
 - b. If you have to yell to control, you don’t have control.
 - B. “Slander” (KJV — Evil Speaking)
 - a. “Damaging speech that misrepresents the nature of another person”
 - C. “Malice”
 - a. “Wicked speech that is designed to injure and is not ashamed to break all rules”
- *** (For a deeper study on this subject, see the “Resolving Anger in Relationships” Series)

Communicating When You’re Angry

(Speaking the Truth In Love)

I. Eph. 4:29 — “...Talk...only what is helpful for building others up ACCORDING TO THEIR NEEDS that it may benefit those who listen.”

A. The Communication is based around the other person!!! (Servanthood Principle)

*** A Major Key: Once relationship is broken and there are no other options, the only way back to restoration is through servanthood. (The most basic example of this is how God restored the human race back to himself — Matt. 20:28)

II. Principles on how we accomplish that servanthood type of communication.

A. When the conversation begins, NO MATTER WHAT IS BEING SAID, INFERRED, ETC. this is not about defending Yourself, IT IS ABOUT UNDERSTANDING THEM. SO DON’T START TRYING TO EXPLAIN WHAT YOU DID, WHY YOU DID IT, AND WHY IT WAS RIGHT TO DO IT.

1. Servants don’t defend themselves. (Phil. 2:5-8)

2. Dead people don’t defend themselves. (Gal. 2:20)

B. Communicate with them at this point by asking the angry person questions. Like:

1. What do you need from me?

2. How can I make you feel safe?

3. Where am I failing you?

4. What’s making you so angry? (What do you want to stop?) (What were you expecting that never happened? Or, did not expect that did happen? — Unmet Expectations)

5. What do you think that scripture says about...?

6. What are you feeling?
7. What do you think our options are for changing this?
8. Do you feel heard and understood? (If no, why? Please explain)
9. Do you feel I value your opinion and beliefs?

*** No matter how the person may respond, YOU DO NOT DEFEND YOURSELF!!! This is a listening time for you. Just let them talk. (Bleed their anger) Take notes if you have to so you can remember what they're saying.

ALWAYS REMEMBER: They are angry. They're venting on you. No matter what they say — do not take it personally. Let them express themselves. (Don't let it turn abusive toward you. — If it does take a break/time-out) Don't defend. Don't explain. LET THEM TALK AND GET IT OUT IN SAFETY!!!

C. Now you have a basis to start moving forward on the issues.

D. KEEP YOUR SPIRIT STRONG. Don't get into old, sinful ways of thinking and communicating.

E. Take a break; A time-out — if you find yourself escalating too much. (It's best to predetermine with the other person how long the break will be)

F. Deal with ONE ISSUE AT A TIME. Do not allow a few issues to get mixed together.

III. Matt. 6:21 — Make yourself their 'Treasure' and you will win their 'Heart'.

A. Treasure (Greek Def.) — "The place in which goods and precious things are collected"

— "A receptacle in which valuables are kept"

— "Collected treasures. Something Precious"

B. Heart (Greek Def.) — "The soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the Thoughts, Passions, Desires, Appetites, Affections, Purposes, Endeavors."

C. If we don't treasure someone — it's likely from one (or both) of 2 reasons:

1. They haven't made themselves a treasure for us.
2. We are taking them for granted.

IV. The 3 things that stop the process of "Speaking The Truth In Love"

A. I'm Afraid to Bring _____ up to the person.

B. I don't want to hurt them.

C. I don't want to make them angry.

**ONLY THE TRUTH (with Love) WILL MATURE (Eph. 4:15, 25) & SET FREE.
(John 8:31-32)**

Practical Suggestions That Promote Positive Communication

- 1) Create an atmosphere of Safety. (Be a safe place to land)
- 2) Identify the other's hot buttons, and don't push them.
- 3) One Issue At A Time.
- 4) Attack the Issue/Problem — Not the person.
- 5) Stay Calm.
- 6) No taking things personally. This is about a problem, not a person.
- 7) In reality the person is not the problem. Their behavior, attitudes, choices, etc. may be the problem, but they are not the problem. (To make them the problem — devalues them)
- 8) Be more interested in what they have to say than in what you have to say.
- 9) "I" statements of perception — Not "You" statements of conclusion.
- 10) Mirroring, or rephrasing.
- 11) Recognition of Statement/Position.
- 12) Valuing of Statement/Position.
- 13) When the other person disagrees, or says No to your statement, LET THEM EXPLAIN. Keep digging for their perspective. No Convincing/Salesman Tactics — Or rebuking them.
- 14) What may seem REAL in your PERSPECTIVE, may not really be what's real.
- 15) Stay Concise. No Building a case. No Proving the other person to be wrong.
- 16) "What did I do to make you feel that way?"
- 17) "What do you need from me?"
- 18) No Interrupting/Interruptions.
- 19) No defending yourself.
- 20) No Distractions.
- 21) 100% Attention.
- 22) Eye Contact.
- 23) Use Time-Outs.
- 24) No Devaluing.
- 25) No Elevated Voice Levels.
- 26) No Negative Body Language.

- 27) Guys: Listen and be a support. Don't try to fix something until you're asked.
- 28) 100 Year Rule on Objectivity. (Is it really that big of a deal?)
- 29) Watch out for Double Messages. (Body Language, Voice Tone, Vs. Verbal)
- 30) How to disagree. (Guard against anything that causes division. Listed Above.) (No taking things personally. Stay on the Issue/Problem.)
- 31) Common goal must be a WIN — WIN perspective.
- 32) Guard against negative old habits.
- 33) Separate from past pain. Decisions are not made from past experiences.
- 34) Agree before you set expectations. (No right to expect without prior agreement)
- 35) There must be closure. (Spiritually, Mentally/Emotionally (Soul), and Physically)
- 36) Remind yourself Mentally & Verbally: this is not my mother, father, ex-_____.
- 37) Between Passive, Aggressive, and Assertive: we want Assertive.

Passive - Assertive - Aggressive

Between the two extremes, we want Assertive.



Practical Helps for Mature/Godly Communication

- 1) One person speaks at a time. Nobody dominates the conversation.
- 2) Speaking Truthfully in Love.
- 3) Speaking Honestly.
- 4) Attacking the Problem/Issue, Not the person.
- 5) Remembering: No right of refusal except for either Destiny, or Sin.
- 6) Agree to discussion rules which govern conversations.
- 7) Stay with and resolve one issue at a time.
- 8) Look for how both of you can come away from the issue feeling good about it.
- 9) Sharing of specific perspectives and emotions. (No generalizing: Always, Never, Etc.)
- 10) No Witchcraft: Manipulation, Domination, and Control.
- 11) Value and Respect the other person. (Their opinions, desires, beliefs, etc.)
- 12) Clearly stating positions. (No mind-reading) If it's not said, it doesn't count.
- 13) Admit when you're wrong.
- 14) Agreement is reached before Expectations are established.
- 15) Make rules for and abide by Time-Outs. (No Exceptions)
- 16) To begin with: WRITE DOWN ALL CONCLUSIONS.

IMMATURE/UNGODLY COMMUNICATION

***** OPPOSITE OF THE ABOVE LIST!!!**

'ARBITRATOR'

When someone is called in as an Arbi-TRATOR, inevitably that person will become a 'Traitor' to someone. So if you agree to Arbitrate — be ready for it.

Bad Communication Principles

Now we're going to look at some scriptures that deal with Bad Communication. You will notice some of the verses used here that were used under Good Communication. That's because the same verse deals with both. Wherever that is the case, I have underlined the part that deals with the Bad Communication.

A. When bad communication is being used, our mouths/words/speech gets us into trouble.

"You are snared by the words of your mouth; you are taken by the words of your mouth. So do this, my son, and deliver yourself; for you have come into the hand of your friend: Go and humble yourself; Plead with your friend. Give no sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids. Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hand of the hunter, and like a bird from the hand of the fowler."

Prov. 6:2-5

B. The following scripture gives many characteristics of bad communication:

1. Dishonesty. (Doesn't say what they really feel, or the truth)
2. Signaling with winking the eye, moving the foot, and pointing with the fingers in such a way that it is either trying to deceive the other person, or it is trying to draw the other person in on something.
3. The mind is not pure. It's looking for the wrong result. (Evil)
4. Conflict follows.
5. When it comes to communication, God hates: Arrogant Eyes.

Lying.

Minds that devise ungodly plans.

Dishonest witnesses that speak lies.

And people who spread conflict among the relatives.

"A good-for-nothing scoundrel is a person who has a dishonest mouth. He winks his eye, makes a signal with his foot, and points with his fingers. He devises evil all the time with a twisted mind. He spreads conflict. That is why disaster will come on him suddenly. In a moment he will be crushed beyond recovery. There are six things that the LORD hates, even seven that are disgusting to him: arrogant eyes, a lying tongue, hands that kill innocent people, a mind devising wicked plans, feet that are quick to do wrong, a dishonest witness spitting out lies, and a person who spreads conflict among relatives."

Prov. 6:12-19 — God's Word Translation

C. Wickedness (AMP. — Wrong-doing) in a conversation, whether about you or another person, is disgusting to God. Twisted (Contrary to Truth — AMP.)

and/or Crooked (Deceitful or Misleading) statements, inferences, etc. are used in Bad Communication.

"Does not wisdom call out? Does not understanding raise its voice? You gullible people, learn how to be sensible. You fools, get a heart that has understanding. Listen! I am speaking about noble things, and my lips will say what is right. My mouth expresses the truth, and wickedness is disgusting to my lips. Everything I say is fair, and there is nothing twisted or crooked in it. All of it is clear to a person who has understanding and right to those who have acquired knowledge. Take my discipline, not silver, and my knowledge rather than fine gold, because wisdom is better than jewels. Nothing you desire can equal it. Wisdom's Authority 'I, Wisdom, live with insight, and I acquire knowledge and foresight. To fear the LORD is to hate evil. I hate pride, arrogance, evil behavior, and twisted speech. Advice and priceless wisdom are mine. I, Understanding, have strength.'"

Prov. 8:1, 5-14 — God's Word Translation

D. Bitterness, Hot Tempers, Anger, Loud Quarreling, (Disagreeing) Cursing, (Not Cussing, it said Cursing) and Hatred are all evidences of a Bad Conversation or Communication.

"Don't give God's Holy Spirit any reason to be upset with you. He has put his seal on you for the day you will be set free from the world of sin. Get rid of your bitterness, hot tempers, anger, loud quarreling, cursing, and hatred. Be kind to each other, sympathetic, forgiving each other as God has forgiven you through Christ."

Eph. 4:30-32 — God's Word Translation

E. Four things that are in the wrong kind of communication.

1. Filthiness: Gr. Def. — "Obscenity"

a. "Obscene" — Webster Def. — "Offensive to one's feelings, or to prevailing notions of modesty or decency; lewd"

2. Foolish Talking: Gr. Def. — "Silly talk; buffoonery"

a. "Buffoonery" — Webster Def. — "A person who is always clowning and trying to be funny; clown"

3. Jestings: Gr. Def. — "Well turned, (that is) ready at repartee, jocose; witticism in a vulgar sense — ribaldry"

a. Well Turned: Taking a situation, statement, joke, conversation, etc. and turning it back on the other person.

b. Repartee — Webster Def. — "A quick and witty reply; skilled in quick and witty replies"

4. "Not Fitting" — Gr. Def. — "To have come up to, arrived at, to reach to; to pertain to what is due, duty, as was fitting"

— In other words, these types of communication are not fitting for, and don't reach up to what needs to be arrived at for good, Godly conversation and communication.

"...let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks."

Eph. 5:3-4 — NKJV

F. Communication that is done while under the influence of alcohol is bad communication. Alcohol dissipates the person.

1. "Dissipation" — Gr. Def. — "Unsavedness; profligacy; prodigality"

a. "Unsavedness" — I think we can figure out what that means. Acting like the unsaved.

b. "Profligacy" — Webster Def. — "Immoral and shameless; dissolute; extremely wasteful; recklessly extravagant"

c. "Prodigality" — Webster Def. — "Exceedingly or recklessly wasteful; a person who wastes his means; spendthrift"

"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Eph. 5:19-20 — NKJV

G. Self-Defensive communication is Bad Communication.

"Have you been thinking all along that we're trying to defend ourselves to you? We speak as Christ's people in God's sight. Everything we do, dear friends, is for your benefit."

II Cor. 12:19 — God's Word Translation

H. Unwholesome talk is in bad communication. Also bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice are in the wrong kind of communication.

1. "Unwholesome" ("Corrupt" — KJV) — Gr. Def. — "Rotten, worthless, literally or morally bad or corrupt"

2. "Bitterness" — Gr. Def. — "Acridity; esp. poison"

a. "Acridity" — Webster Def. — "Sharp, bitter, stinging, or irritating to the taste or smell; bitter or sarcastic in speech"

b. "Poison" — Something in the speech that will kill the relationship.

3. "Rage" ("Wrath" — KJV) — Gr. Def. — "Passion, heat, anger forthwith boiling up and soon subsiding again; breathing hard, fierceness"

4. “Anger” — Gr. Def. — “Desire as reaching forth or excitement of the mind; by analogy: violent passion; by implication: punishment”

a. So when God is angry, he doesn’t have this going on inside of him. He is making a decision, rather than being driven by emotion.

5. “Brawling” (“Clamour” — KJV) — Gr. Def. — “A crying, outcry; outcry in notification, tumult or grief”

6. “Slander” (“Evil Speaking” — KJV) — Gr. Def. — “Slander, detraction, speech injurious to another’s good name; vilification; blasphemy; evil speaking; railing”

7. “Malice” — Gr. Def. — “Malignity, ill-will, desire to injure; wickedness that is not ashamed to break laws; (Specifically God’s laws) evil, trouble”

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Eph. 4:29-32

I. Lying and Deceit are Bad Communication methods.

“Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another.”

Lev. 19:11

“You destroy those who tell lies; bloodthirsty and deceitful men the Lord abhors.”

Ps. 5:6

“No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.”

Ps. 101:7

“The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in men who are truthful.”

Prov. 12:22

“A false witness will not go unpunished, and he who pours out lies will perish.”

Prov. 19:9

“You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

John 8:44

"...who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen."

Rom. 1:25

"Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully."

Eph. 4:25

"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices."

Col. 3:9

"...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began"

Titus 1:2

"I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth."

I John 2:21

"...and all liars. Their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

Rev. 21:8

"But outside are dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and whoever loves and practices a lie."

Rev. 22:15

Resolving Problems Via 'Positive Communication'

The first thing that needs to be established here is the fact that IN GOD'S OPINION, THERE IS NO OPTION OTHER THAN RESOLVING OUR DIFFERENCES/PROBLEMS. I can't find any scripture that says its OK for two people (Esp. Christians) to carry a grudge, stay angry with each other, avoid each other, not have anything to do with the other, blame the other for problems, talk about them behind their back, be unforgiving or bitter with them, etc., etc.

LEAVING A PROBLEM, PERSON, RELATIONSHIP, CHURCH, ETC. — WITHOUT RESOLVING IS NOT OF GOD — IT IS DEMONIC IN ORIGIN. The Holy Spirit will NEVER LEAD YOU TO DO THIS!!! It is Contrary to Everything the scripture teaches.

We are responsible to make every effort possible to Resolve the Unresolved Issues!!!

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Rom. 12:9-21

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."

II Cor. 13:11

"And we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. Be at peace among yourselves. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all."

I Thes. 5:12-13, 15

"Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest

any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled"

Heb. 12:14-15

I. When is it my responsibility to do something about it?

A. IT'S ALWAYS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO BE THE FIRST ONE TO STEP UP AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!!!

"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny."

Matt. 5:23-26

"And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father in heaven forgive your trespasses."

Mark 11:25-26

Either way, whether we know someone has a problem with us, (Matt. 5:23) or if we have a problem with someone else — EITHER WAY it is our responsibility to make the effort to fix it. We must Initiate.

II. Let's look at the Matt. 5:23-26 principle first.

- A. We are the one realizing that there is a problem between us and another.
- B. We are the one who is to take initiative and go do something about it.
- C. NOTICE — Not Reconciling is not an option. Jesus didn't even consider it. He said: "Be Reconciled". There was no question in his mind about the other person not being willing to reconcile. Why??

1. As Christians, we have no right to refuse reconciliation. To refuse, is unscriptural. When someone asks forgiveness and wants to make things right — We must reciprocate! There is no other option!
2. When a person refuses to reconcile, they are holding on to an offense. They have become the monkey holding on to the bait stick.
3. We are commanded to forgive, as Christ forgave us. (Col. 3:13)
4. We have no right to hold on to unforgiveness, bitterness, resentment, hurt feelings, suspicions, fear, etc.
5. Forgive as Christ forgave us. How did Christ forgive?

- a. He responds to true repentance. He does not respond to manipulation, witchcraft, lies, dishonesty, games, etc.
- b. If there is true repentance, (Willingness to change) he always restores relationship with the person. To break the relationship from our side is not of God. It's opposite of how Jesus does things. Therefore, it must be Demonic.
- c. Once he knew they had a weakness in an area, he would not fully invest himself into the relationship as though there were no problems. He would give the other person what they could handle. He allowed room for trust to grow again.
- d. As trust grows, the relationship becomes more intimate and vulnerable again.

III. Following God's Example.

- A. God reconciles with everyone who comes to him. (John 6:37-40)
- B. We're to imitate God as children. (Eph. 5:1)
- C. It's one of the things that sets us apart and makes us different from the world.

- 1. WE ACTUALLY WORK THROUGH ISSUES.
- 2. WE ACTUALLY RECONCILE.
- 3. OUR ATTITUDE IS ONE OF RECONCILIATION, NOT SEPARATION.

IV. Now let's look at the Mark 11:25-26 Principle.

- A. In Mark 11:25-26 it says if we have an issue with someone, we are to forgive.

- 1. I've heard people say: 'I forgive them, I just don't want anything to do with them'. THAT'S NOT SCRIPTURAL!!! What does scripture say forgiveness is and does? So if we truly forgive them, we must do what scripture says forgiveness is and does.

Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

G863 (Forgive)

“(to send; an intensive form of *עָלַם* *eimi* (to go)); to send forth, in various applications:—cry, forgive, forsake, lay aside, leave, let (alone, be, go, have), omit, put (send) away, remit, suffer, yield up.” From G575

G575 (Root word for Forgive)

“A primary particle; “off“, that is, away (from something near), in various senses (of place, time, or relation; literally or figuratively):—(X here-) after, ago, at, because of, before, by (the space of), for (-th), from, in, (out) of, off, (up-) on (-ce),

since, with. In composition (as a prefix) it usually denotes separation, departure, cessation, completion, reversal, etc.”

Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

G859 (Forgiveness)

“Freedom; (figuratively) pardon:—deliverance, forgiveness, liberty, remission.”

B. What are we to forgive? THE SIN. (Matt. 6:14-15) God doesn’t send us out of his life or get rid of us when we sin. What does God do when a person sins against him, and wants to restore the relationship? When we ask forgiveness and repent, he welcomes us back and embraces us. We’re to follow his example.

Remember: That means we are to send the sin away, leave it, forsake it, — NOT THE PERSON. Too often we reverse that. We send the person away, not the sin. If you ask someone why they no longer have a relationship with _____, they will remember what the problem is, and they are able to tell you what happened. (Sometimes in great detail) That is NOT FORGIVING the sin. It was not sent away to never be remembered against them again. (Heb. 8:12; 10:17)

That is doing EXACTLY what scripture says we’re not to do. IT’S SENDING AWAY THE PERSON, BUT HANGING ON TO THE SIN!!!

C. Forgiving Pastors and Leadership in a Church and Restoring with them

1. Often we hear things like:

“I forgive you.” “I have no feelings against you.” “I just can’t follow, or submit myself to someone who does that kind of thing.”

2. And that is the end of the relationship. It’s over. The person walks away. If the pastor or Leader doesn’t do everything just right — i.e., perfectly — we’re out of here.

3. There is no room allowed for growth, maturing, restoration, etc.

4. Scripture must always be the rule book for what we do and don’t do in the realm of how we handle people in forgiveness, restoration, etc.

5. The, “I can’t follow someone who is wrong, or doesn’t have their act completely together” kind of attitude is really (1) NOT OF GOD. And (2) Very Hypocritical.

(1) There are certain requirements for leadership in the scripture, but I don’t remember perfection, or not making any mistakes, not doing anything wrong being in the list. (I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9)

(2) It’s Hypocritical, because we don’t apply the same rule to ourselves.

6. Examples of the hypocritical point:

- What about your husband?
- What about your wife?
- What about your children — toward you?
- What about your Prayer group, Bible study group, etc. — toward you?
- What about your friends — toward you?
- What about your employees or customers — toward you?
- What about when you make a suggestion to anyone that you'd like them to consider?

7. Why does the church leadership have to be perfect and you don't?

8. That kind of thinking is Hypocritical. It has 2 sets of rules.

- One set is for you and what you run your life like and what people should expect of you.
- The other set is for other people, and what you expect of them.

9. We need to remember — the qualifications God looks at when choosing people to minister.

- where the people are chosen out of.

a. Qualifications:

"For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence. But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— that, as it is written, 'He who glories, let him glory in the Lord.'"

I Cor. 1:26-31

b. Where they were chosen out of: The regular saved person.

- We know that none of them are perfect. Nor do we expect them to be. We allow room for them to grow.
- Then shouldn't the same be done for the leadership and the pastors?

V. Now let's deal with another excuse that often is brought up right here.

A. It goes something like:

“I don’t feel/think they sinned against me.” Or, “I don’t feel sinned against, I think it’s just the way they are, and they’re wrong.” “It’s really not that big a deal that I need to make an issue out of it.” “I just don’t see where I have to put up with them/their behavior/their attitude/etc. I don’t have anything against them.” “I really do love them.” “We just have our differences.” “I just think it’s better we stay away from each other.”

B. Let’s see the error in that line of thinking. Because what it is doing is trying to make excuses for separating relationship with people on the basis of Love, and It’s Right. Where in reality, we are upset about something, and probably have gotten our feelings hurt.

If something was done that is substantial enough for us to be willing to break relationship with the person — because of it, THEN WE’VE BEEN SINNED AGAINST!!! And it needs to be dealt with accordingly.

C. Here is what the word sin means in Matt. 6:14-15:

Strong’s Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries

G3900 (‘Sins’ — NIV ‘Trespass’ — KJV)

“A side slip (lapse or deviation), that is, (unintentional) error or (wilful) transgression:—fall, fault, offence, sin, trespass.”

NOTICE: It refers to both intentional and unintentional — slips, errors, transgressions, falls, faults, offenses, trespasses.

THAT COVERS PRETTY MUCH EVERYTHING!! IF THERE IS A PROBLEM BETWEEN PEOPLE, WE ARE TO TAKE CARE OF IT. (Not try to reason our way out of our responsibility to deal with it) If something has been or is being done that has caused, or is causing problems in the relationship — IT NEEDS TO BE TAKEN CARE OF — BECAUSE IT COMES UNDER THAT DEFINITION OF SIN.

No matter what the situation, WHEN FORGIVENESS IS GRANTED, RELATIONSHIPS MUST BE RESTORED — OR SCRIPTURAL FORGIVENESS HAS NOT BEEN GRANTED!!! We cannot cut and run. There is a scriptural process that needs to be worked through before any breaking of relationship can take place.

What is the Scriptural Way to Take Care of Problems and Breaks in Relationships?

(1) We already saw that it is our responsibility to initiate in EVERY SITUATION. It's not scriptural for us to wait until they approach us, avoid them, try to make it obvious that we have been hurt, or that we have a problem with someone, etc. We are not allowed in scripture to expect the other person to make the first move. WE ARE COMMANDED TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE!!!

(2) How is that done?

- Matt. 5:23-26 and Mark 11:25-26 listed above tell us what to do.
- If they have a problem with us, we go to them and try to get it fixed. (Matt. 5:23-26)
- If we have a problem with them, we are to forgive. (Mark 11:25-26) Forgiveness by definition demands that we restore our relationship with them.

(3) What if they don't want to restore?

"If a believer does something wrong, go, confront him when the two of you are alone. If he listens to you, you have won back that believer. But if he does not listen, take one or two others with you so that every accusation may be verified by two or three witnesses. If he ignores these witnesses, tell it to the community of believers. If he also ignores the community, deal with him as you would a heathen or a tax collector. I can guarantee this truth: Whatever you imprison, God will imprison. And whatever you set free, God will set free. 'I can guarantee again that if two of you agree on anything here on earth, my Father in heaven will accept it. Where two or three have come together in my name, I am there among them.' Then Peter came to Jesus and asked him, 'Lord, how often do I have to forgive a believer who wrongs me? Seven times?' Jesus answered him, 'I tell you, not just seven times, but seventy times seven.'"

Matt. 18:15-22 — God's Word Translation

There is a process set up in the church to deal with these kinds of problems. The sad part is, it's rarely enforced. And when it is, usually the person trying to do what is right and do the scriptural thing — ends up being the bad guy, or the one with the attitude. Jesus walked us through the process. So let me say again, believers have no right to bypass this process. We are commanded to do it this way by the Lord himself.

Is this process uncomfortable? (Yes) Will it cause some stress? (Yes) Will it make us feel vulnerable? (Probably Yes) But it is God's prescribed method for dealing with issues between people.

The Apostle Paul talked about it this way:

"But some Jews from the province of Asia were there. They should be here in front of you to accuse me if they have anything against me. Otherwise, these men who are accusing me should tell what I was charged with when I stood in front of their council."

Acts 24:19-20 — God's Word Translation

"When one of you has a complaint against another, how dare you go to court to settle the matter in front of wicked people. Why don't you settle it in front of God's holy people? Don't you know that God's people will judge the world? So if you're going to judge the world, aren't you capable of judging insignificant cases? Don't you know that we will judge angels, not to mention things in this life? When you have cases dealing with this life, why do you allow people whom the church has a low opinion of to be your judges? You should be ashamed of yourselves! Don't you have at least one wise person who is able to settle disagreements between believers? Instead, one believer goes to court against another believer, and this happens in front of unbelievers."

I Cor. 6:1-6 — God's Word Translation

(4) At Word of Life, our desire and goal is to be spiritually mature enough to actually 'Walk Out' and do what the scripture says about the process of resolution. Rather than pretending we're praying about it, pretending we're seeking God about the situation — but we never do what the Word already said we're supposed to be doing: GETTING TOGETHER AND SETTLING IT. That's not spirituality. That's hypocrisy.

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 'But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.'"

Matt. 7:24-27

NOW I'M GOING TO MAKE A BIG STATEMENT:

THE HEART OF BAD COMMUNICATION CAN INEVITABLY BE TRACED BACK TO “SELFISHNESS”

Look at the scripture below and see if you don't agree.

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Aren't they caused by the selfish desires that fight to control you? You want what you don't have, so you commit murder. You're determined to have things, but you can't get what you want. You quarrel and fight. You don't have the things you want, because you don't pray for them. When you pray for things, you don't get them because you want them for the wrong reason—for your own pleasure. You unfaithful people! Don't you know that love for this evil world is hatred toward God? Whoever wants to be a friend of this world is an enemy of God. Do you think this passage means nothing? It says, 'The Spirit that lives in us wants us to be his own. But God shows us even more kindness. Scripture says, 'God opposes arrogant people, but he is kind to humble people.'”

(He's still talking about Communication)

“So place yourselves under God's authority. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you. Come close to God, and he will come close to you. Clean up your lives, you sinners, and clear your minds, you doubters. Be miserable, mourn, and cry. Turn your laughter into mourning and your joy into gloom. Humble yourselves in the Lord's presence. Then he will give you a high position. Brothers and sisters, stop slandering each other.”

(I told you he was still talking about Communication)

“Those who slander and judge other believers slander and judge God's teachings. If you judge God's teachings, you are no longer following them. Instead, you are judging them. There is only one teacher and judge. He is able to save or destroy you. So who are you to judge your neighbor.”

“Pay attention to this! You're saying, 'Today or tomorrow we will go into some city, stay there a year, conduct business, and make money.' You don't know what will happen tomorrow. What is life? You are a mist that is seen for a moment and then disappears. Instead, you should say, 'If the Lord wants us to, we will live and carry out our plans.' However, you brag because you're arrogant. All such bragging is evil. Whoever knows what is right but doesn't do it is sinning.”

James 4:1-17

And he ended by talking about Communication that stems from Selfishness.

The whole chapter is built on the theme of 'selfishness'. He shows how it forms ungodly attitudes in us, affects our relationship with God, as well as our communication with people.

THE HEART OF BAD COMMUNICATION CAN INEVITABLY BE TRACED BACK TO "SELFISHNESS"

We want what we want. We want it when we want it. We're going to deal with people the way we think is best for us. If that causes a quarrel or a fight, so be it. We're willing to run people over to get what we want.

In v. 2, he talked about murder/killing. Before we whitewash our hands of that and say that's not me, remember what Jesus said in Matt. 5:21-22 — anyone who is angry with someone is committing murder. (Obviously not following the guidelines of Eph. 4:26 and resolving the anger) A lot of disunity and bad communication come out of unresolved issues where people are still angry. In God's eyes, that makes us murderers!

Now here is where the problem comes in. When people are unwilling to do what needs to be done to stay in Unity, a slow disintegration begins to take place. Why? Because they are taking themselves out from under the headship of Jesus (who operates in Unity) and placing themselves under the headship of the god of the underworld (Satan) through their Dis-unity.

Scriptural Definitions

The place it becomes evident the quickest is in our speech. I think that is because God is all about communication, using his words to create, etc. So when we back away from his way of doing things, we automatically lose the ability to keep our speech like his. That's when the list of things I mentioned earlier starts showing up. Here is the list again, so we can look at the definitions of these words.

Offenses — Strife — Evil Reports — Evil Speaking — Slander — Jealousy — Selfish Ambitions — Disorder — Bitterness — Envy — Evil Suspicions — Division — Gossip — Busybodies.

1) "Offense" — Gr. Def. — "The movable stick or trigger of a trap, a trap stick; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall; a stumbling block; a scandal; any person or thing by which one is entrapped or drawn into error or sin"

The definition is a word picture. It's describing how to catch animals — like monkeys. To trap a monkey, what will be done is put a piece of bait inside a live animal trap. Tie the bait to a stick, or trigger of the trap. The monkey is smart enough to realize it is a trap, so he won't go inside to get the bait. What he will do is reach through the bars of the trap and grab on to the bait and try to get it out of the trap that way. Since it's tied to the trap stick, the door on the trap closes. Now the monkey is sure he's outwitted the trap, because he's still not caught — but has his hand on the bait. He will sit there pulling and jerking on the bait for hours and days. When the person who set the trap comes along, the monkey won't let go of the bait and run. He'll sit there hanging on to his bait. (Offense — remember the moveable stick has the bait on it) The trapper simply goes up and clubs him to death.

That's how it works for people who grab on to offenses, (the bait) and not let go of them. They become sitting targets waiting for the enemy to come and club them to death.

"But He turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.'"

Matt. 16:23

"Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!"

Matt. 18:7

"I have hope in God, which they themselves also accept, that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust. This being so, I myself always strive to have a conscience without offense toward God and men."

Acts 24:15-16

"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those

who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.”
Rom. 16:17-18

“Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense, either to the Jews or to the Greeks or to the church of God, just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.”
I Cor. 10:31-33

“And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ”
Phil. 1:9-10

Something that needs to be mentioned here is 2nd and 3rd person offenses. This is when we pick up the offense of another person. It never really happened to us. It happened to a friend, relative, neighbor, etc. But we get the same bad attitudes, emotions, etc. — as if it happened to us. That is just as deadly and wrong as the 1st person offense.

2) “Strife” — (Dissension & Selfish Ambition — NIV — Factions — KJV)

— Gr. Def. — 1) “Contention, strife, wrangling; a quarrel; contention; debate”

2) self-seeking (NKJV)

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

Rom. 13:12-14

“For you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men?”

I Cor. 3:3

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these...wrath, strife, seditions...”

Gal. 5:19-20

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Phil. 2:3-4

“But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is

earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."

James 3:14-16

3) "Evil Reports" — Gr. Def. — "the condition of one who is defamed; ill-repute, and the action of one who uses disgraceful language"

— Heb. Def. — "(in the sense of furtive motion); slander:—defaming, evil report, infamy, slander."

— furtive — Webster Def. — "Done or acting in a stealthy manner, as if to hinder observation; sneaky"

"Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."

Ex. 23:1

"And they brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched unto the children of Israel."

Num. 13:32

"Even those men that did bring up the evil report upon the land, died by the plague before the LORD."

Num. 14:37

"Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me."

Neh. 6:13

"By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report"

II Cor. 6:8

4) "Evil Speaking" — Gr. Def. — "Slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name; vilification"

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Eph. 4:29-32

5) "Slander" — ("Evil Speaking" — "Blasphemy(ies)" — Backbitings — KJV)

— Gr. Def. — "Slander, detraction, speech injurious to another's good name; vilification; blasphemy; evil speaking; railing"

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man 'unclean'."

Matt. 15:19-20 — NIV

"Backbiters, (Slanderers — NIV) haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents"

Rom. 1:30 — KJV

"I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, (backbitings) gossip, arrogance and disorder"

II Cor. 12:20 — NIV

"Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice."

Eph. 4:31 — NIV

"But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips."

Col. 3:8

"To slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate, and to show true humility toward all men."

Titus 3:2

"Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him speaks against the law and judges it. When you judge the law, you are not keeping it, but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one Lawgiver and Judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you — who are you to judge your neighbor?"

James 3:11-12

"Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind."

I Pet. 2:1

"Keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

I Pet. 3:16

6) "Jealousy" — (Envy, Envying — KJV) (#2205)

— Gr. Def. — 1) excitement of mind, ardour, fervour of spirit

1a) zeal, ardour in embracing, pursuing, defending anything

1a1) zeal in behalf of, for a person or thing

1a2) the fierceness of indignation, punitive zeal

1b) an envious and contentious rivalry, jealousy

2) Heat; zeal

"When the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and talked abusively against what Paul was saying."

Acts 13:45 — NIV

"Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, ...not in dissension and jealousy."

Rom. 13:12-14 — NIV

"You are still worldly. For since there is jealous and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?"

I Cor. 3:3 — NIV

"...I fear that there may be quarreling, jealousy, outbursts of anger, factions, slander, gossip, arrogance and disorder."

II Cor. 12:20 — NIV

"The acts of the sinful nature are obvious...hatred, discord, jealous, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy..."

Gal. 5:19-21 — NIV

7) "Selfish Ambitions" — NIV — The same as Strife in KJV

8) "Disorder" — (Tumults — KJV) — Gr. Def. — "Instability, a state of disorder, confusion"

"For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace."

I Cor. 14:33 — NIV

"...I fear there may be...arrogance and disorder."

II Cor. 12:20 — NIV

"For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice."

James 3:16 — NIV

9) "Bitterness" — Gr. Def. — "Acridity; esp. poison"

a. "Acridity" — Webster Def. — "Sharp, bitter, stinging, or irritating to the taste or smell; bitter or sarcastic in speech"

b. "Poison" — Something in the speech that will kill the relationship.

"Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."

Rom. 3:14-18 — NIV

"Get rid of all bitterness..."

Eph. 4:31 — NIV

10) “Envy” — Gr. Def. — “Envy, ill will; jealousy; spite”

“...They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, slanderers.”

Rom. 1:29-30 — NIV

“...He has an unhealthy interest in controversies and arguments that result in envy, quarreling, malicious talk, evil suspicions, and constant friction...”

I Tim. 6:4 — NIV

“At one time we too...lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, he saved us...”

Titus 3:3-5 — NIV

11) “Evil Suspicions” — (“Evil Surmisings” — KJV)

— Gr. Def. — “Suspicion; surmising”

“He has an unhealthy interest in...that result in...evil suspicions.”

I Tim. 6:4 — NIV

12) “Division” — Gr. Def. — “Dissension; division, disunion; sedition”

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

Rom. 16:17-18 — KJV

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

I Cor. 1:10

“For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

I Cor. 3:3

13) “Gossip” — (“Whisperings” — “Malicious Words” — “Tattlers” — KJV)

— Gr. Def. for “Whisperings” — 1) “a whispering, i.e. secret slandering”

2) “of the magical murmuring of a charmer of snakes”

3) “secret detraction:—whispering”

— Gr. Def. for “Malicious” — “hurtful, that is, evil (properly in effect or influence)”

— “figuratively calamitous; also (passively) ill, that is, diseased; but especially (morally) culpable, that is, derelict, vicious, facinorous; mischief, malice, guilt; bad, evil, grievous, harm, lewd, malicious, wicked (-ness)”

— Gr. Def. for “Words” — “Something said (including the thought); by implication a topic (subject of discourse), also reasoning (the mental faculty) or motive; by extension a computation”

“...I fear there may be...gossip, arrogance, and disorder.”

II Cor. 12:20 — NIV

“So if I come, I will call attention to what he is doing, gossiping maliciously about us.”

II John 1:10 — NIV

“...They are gossips, slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant...”

Rom. 1:29-30 — NIV

“...they get into the habit of being idle...also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to.”

I Tim. 5:13 — NIV

14) “Busybodies” —

— Gr. Def. — 1) “busy about trifles and neglectful of important matters”

1a) “especially busy about other folks’ affairs, a busybody”

1b) “of things: impertinent and superfluous”

1b1) “of magic arts”

2) “working all around, that is, officious (meddlesome) busybody, curious arts”

3) “used apparently of a person officiously inquisitive about other’s affairs”

“And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”

I Tim. 5:13 — KJV

“For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.”

II Thes. 3:11-12 — KJV

Once these things start happening in a relationship, (Church, Marriage, Family, Relatives, Friends, Work-place, Etc.) it is only a matter of time — the whole relationship will begin to split up. THAT IS WHY THESE TYPE OF THINGS CANNOT BE TOLERATED IN RELATIONSHIPS.

THEY ESPECIALLY CANNOT BE TOLERATED IN CHURCH:

- 1) It is contrary to God and his character/word. So it will immediately kill the anointing.
- 2) The Holy Spirit will be Grieved and Quenched. He will withdraw from working and moving freely in the church.
- 3) Obviously the Anointing is now severely hampered, or even gone.
- 4) Some people's hearts will become hard and have only their selfish agenda on their minds, and care very little (or not at all) about what it's doing to the rest of the people.
- 5) Other people will become dry spiritually, weary from the continual struggle, discontent, and eventually give up on a move of God, or simply go someplace else where they feel there is hope of seeing a move of the Spirit.

DISUNITY (AND ALL THE SINFUL SPEECH THAT GOES WITH IT) MUST BE GUARDED AGAINST LIKE IT IS A DEADLY DISEASE!!!

BECAUSE IF IT GETS LOOSE IN THE CHURCH — IT WILL DAMAGE MANY PEOPLE, AND KILL WHAT THE LORD IS TRYING TO DO!!!

Identifying Wolf Activity

If by some unfortunate situation, it does begin to progress and gain momentum in a church. Then we begin seeing “Wolf” activity. This is not a good thing, since we as Christians are referred to as “Sheep”.

So we need to do a study on how to Identify Wolf Activity.

- (1) The greatest attacks to A Church will be: Strife, Division, Disloyalty.
(Remember: IT'S THE ONLY TOOL SATAN HAS)

FOR ANYTHING TO STOP WHAT GOD IS DOING, IT WILL ALWAYS ARISE FROM WITHIN THE PEOPLE OR CONGREGATION. NO OUTSIDE WEAPON FORMED AGAINST US CAN PROSPER.

John Stocker: “To build a church building, realize that every demon in that church will stir up. To build a church building — debt free — realize that every demon in that region will stir up.”

- a. Demons can't do much without accessing the physical realm. They will find the weakest link/weakest person (Weakest typically means the most immature) and use them.
- b. Demonic influence will turn a Sheep into a Wolf. It happens when people are not willing to resolve relationship issues — God's Way. They get hurt feelings, pick up offenses, etc. — and don't do what scripture says is supposed to be done in those situations. NOW YOU HAVE FERTILE GROUND FOR THE DEMONIC TO WORK IN AND CAUSE ALL KINDS OF PROBLEMS.
- c. The problem deepens when these people are not recognized for what they really have become — Wolves. They are now in disobedience and probably rebellion.
- d. These individuals will intentionally try to present themselves as faithful, loyal sheep who have simply been hurt, taken advantage of, or have gotten the bad end of the deal. Yet inwardly they've become a Wolf. So we need to learn what a Wolf looks like in scripture.

- (2) Characteristics of Wolves: (Please look up the scriptures and read them)

- a. Matt. 7:15-20 — Their fruit is not consistent with their positioning and words. (Their words and public actions say one thing, but everything of them and around them behind the scenes says differently — see comments on John 10:12-13 and Acts 20:29-30 — Below. The people usually become what we call — Passive/Aggressive)
- b. John 10:1-18:

The Facts:

- v. 1-6 — The sheep/shepherd principle/illustration. (How it works)

v. 7, 11, 14 — Jesus is the Shepherd, and the Gate.

v. 2-4, 16 — The sheep recognize his voice and follow him.

v. 11, 15 — The Shepherd lays down his life (*Psuche*) for the sheep.

v. 14-15 — The Shepherd has relationship with the sheep.

The Application:

v. 1-3 — There is a correct way to gain access to the sheep. It is via the shepherd. Trying to get to the sheep via bypassing the shepherd is the way of a thief and a robber. (Wolf)

v. 4-5 — It's the shepherd who is supposed to lead the sheep. No one else. The sheep should not entertain input that bypasses the shepherd. In fact they should run from it. (Wolf)

v. 7-8 — Thieves & robbers (Wolves) will try to gain access to the sheep.

v. 9 — The best protection for the sheep is the shepherd.

v. 10 — Thieves & robbers (Wolves) only have their agenda in mind. They want the thing to go their way. Shepherds want to bring life (*Zoe*) and the best to the sheep.

v. 11-13 — It's the shepherd who is willing to lay down his life for the sheep. Hired hands will run when it looks like they could be in danger. They are more concerned about their welfare, than that of the flock. It's the shepherd/owner who has the most to lose in the flock, so he's willing to risk his life (*Psuche*) for them.

v. 12-13 — Wolves (Thieves & Robbers) always come. The wolf will always attack, devour, and scatter. (That is the fruit of their work that Jesus said we're to recognize — Matt. 7:15-20)

v. 14-15 — The heart of a shepherd is relationship and wanting the best for the sheep, even at the expense of their own lives. (*Psuche*)

c. Acts 20:28-31:

v. 28 — The Overseers (Elders, Bishops — I Tim. 3:1-6; Titus 1:5-9) are the Under-Shepherds. (Shepherds under the Chief Shepherd — I Pet. 5:1-4) They are the best defense against Wolves. (Thieves & Robbers) (John 10:3, 9-13) That is because they are to be the Gate (Entry point) and the Watchman (Overseer) to the flock, and they're willing to lay down their lives to defend the flock. (John 10:1-3, 7-8)

v. 29 — Wolves always come. They are out to destroy the flock. They will do that by putting their own interests, opinions, purposes above what's best for the sheep — because they are

thieves and robbers who are listening to the wrong side, they're being INSPIRED BY THE DEMONIC REALM. (Eph. 6:12)

v. 30 — They arise out of the sheep/church itself. They distort the truth in order to plant doubt, dissension, strife, disloyalty, division. It might be the truth of the Word. It might be the truth the vision, shepherd, or other leaders. Their intent is to get people turned away from the group and follow their thinking, plans, purposes. Ultimately members of the flock will be drawn away and scattered. (John 10)

v. 31 — The Shepherds/Elders/Overseers need to stay on their guard against this happening. The people must be continually warned from the sincere and humble hearts of the Shepherds.

d. When dealing with wolves, we cannot ignore the fact they are around. We can't let them do whatever they want. Jesus already told us the outcome of that. (John 10:10) Besides the instructions given above, Jesus did tell us something else on how to handle the situation.

— Matt. 10:16-17a: "I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard against men."

Wisdom and Innocence produce protection. Snakes are constantly sensing their surroundings. We are to do that, be very aware of what is happening around us. But we're to be gentle in our approach — like a dove. Snakes are quick to strike. Doves are not harmful and striking like a snake.

Then Jesus goes on and explains the kind of things that wolves will do. (v. 17-39) In the middle of it Jesus drops some very powerful bits of advice. Below are the scriptures where he gives that advice.

— Matt. 10:19b-20: "Do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you."

— Matt. 10:22b: "He who stands firm to the end will be saved."

— Matt. 10:26-28: "So do not be afraid of them. There is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the housetops. Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in hell."

— Matt. 10:29-31: God takes care of the sparrow, and we're worth more to God than a sparrow, "So don't be afraid".

- Matt. 10:32-33: Acknowledge God, don't disown him.
- Matt. 10:34-39: Sometimes dealing with the wolf, will separate relationships. Even family relationships. Here is where we must be careful not to disown God for the sake of those relationships.
- Matt. 10:40-42: There are rewards for doing what is right before God.

(3) To affect a church the most, Division/Strife/Disloyalty (The Wolf) will try to reach the leadership, or at least a position of public influence. Because they are the ones with the most accessibility and influence over the other people/sheep.

It is the overseers' job to watch for this. Here is where a realm of trust has to come from the people. Too often a decision is made by the leadership or pastors about a particular person, and then the congregation (or certain people in it) get upset over it. They don't think it's fair or correct.

The problem is this: not all the information about a person that the leadership, or pastor knows is divulged to the rest of the church people. That would be slanderous, divisive, causing strife, and breaking confidentiality. So they make the decision and put individuals into positions and remove them from positions — without a lot of public discussion.

For the carnal Christian, that causes problems. They want to know what is going on and why it's going on. So instead of going to the pastor or leadership and asking them, they start doing what the scripture says we're not to do. They go behind the back and try to figure it out for themselves. This is where gossip, strife, division, dissension, disunity, etc. will begin.

The real reason immature people do this is:

- a. They personally have trust issues with everyone. They don't trust anyone. Everyone is a suspect in their mind and lives. Suspicion fills their thinking. So it is normal for them to deal with church leadership this way. They deal with everyone this way.
- b. They don't trust their pastors or leadership. To fix that, they need to deal with whatever has broken the trust and is now causing the distrust.

If they refuse to do that, it would probably be better for them to find a church where they feel they can trust the pastors and leadership. Because in this setting, they are not really submitted and following anyway. It's only a matter of time and Trouble will develop around them because of their Dis-Trust.

If the right steps to restore Trust are not taken — it will turn into Dis-Loyalty. Obviously causing more Disunity.

‘Development of Disloyalty’

By Jim Kaseman

1) In the person's personal ambition/goals, they're not genuinely caring about the church. On the surface it looks good, but there is an independent spirit with hidden ulterior motives. What is needed for Loyalty is a servant's heart for the church, pastor, and the people. In Disloyalty, there is no 'Real Submission' to the leadership. It is talked and acted, but it's not coming from the heart.

2) Disloyal people promote themselves instead of God. They are looking for recognition and to build their ministry and image. Ulterior motive becomes personal gain/recognition instead of really helping people. (Matt. 6:1-4)

3) They won't seriously listen to others suggestions. They will act like they are listening, but they are never 'Really' listening. Spiritual pride develops and their ideas are best because they know better, or have heard from God. Since they don't see the whole picture, but just their little revelation, they feel they're more spiritual than the leadership. (Luke 18:10)

4) The person starts speaking lies to themselves in their own heart regarding the leadership, when their ideas are rejected. They feel people don't understand and are looking down on them spiritually. (Matt. 18:15-30)

5) A critical spirit starts developing toward the leadership because they think/feel they were rejected. So they try to make themselves look better. Now they are justifying their own independent spirit. 'Something is wrong with the leadership and their spirituality. Obviously, I'm the only one right in this belief/issue.' (Prov. 25:19)

6) They deceive themselves and develop a competitive spirit to get recognition from people around them. They distort the view of leadership and try to push blame on them by trying to make the leadership appear unfair, unloving, at fault, and guilty. (Gal. 6:3)

7) Because of the fear of failure, they try to stir up discontent within the church. They start challenging the leadership and accuse it of not listening to the people enough. They claim they have heard from God, or are just trying to do the right thing, and try to get people behind them. Financial support dwindles or disappears. (Num. 16)

8) The Disloyal people start feeding others what they've fed themselves: LIES. They feel they need to save people/the church from the pastor and leadership. They gossip, give evil reports, slander, and make things up about those over them in the authority structure. There is a definite lack of submission. IF IT HASN'T HAPPENED YET, THEY MUST BE REMOVED FROM LEADERSHIP — IMMEDIATELY. (Prov. 26:27-28)

9) Now they are easily noticed as Disloyal. The followers and church people may feel they need to make a decision who to follow. People can feel forced

to choose sides. This is where the Demonic will really make its effort to speak to people. Causing an “It’s us against them” type of attitude to develop. (Division/Strife/Dissension/Gossip/Etc.) If the congregation is too immature to recognize what is happening, this can cause church splits. It must be immediately addressed — publicly. (I Cor. 3:1-4)

10) The Disloyal person will pick at and make decisions over the ‘Minor’ issues and not the real problem. They leave the church and move on to what ‘GOD IS REALLY DOING OR CALLING THEM TO’. They will now present themselves as ‘Doing so Well’; ‘God is Doing so Much in Their Lives’; ‘They Sense Such a Release in Their Spirit’; ‘They Believe God is Telling Them It’s Time To Move On’; ‘God’s Blessing on Them is So Strong Since They’ve Made The Decision to Back Off Ministry or Leave the Church’; ‘Etc.’; ‘Etc.’; ‘Etc.’.

Let’s check our hearts and learn to recognize and get rid of Disloyalty before it starts. Keep the Unity of the Spirit and the Bond of Peace.

Hindering the Moving of the Holy Spirit

(1) If we lose the moving of the Spirit, we've lost it all.

"As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

Eph. 4:1-3

It is by the Spirit that God works on this earth. If we stifle the Spirit, we will have nothing more than a form of Godliness, without the power. That won't help change anyone. We must make an effort to keep the Unity of the Spirit. It's done by staying in the Bond of Peace. Below are listed some of the ways that we can stifle the Holy Spirit. These are the things we want to stay far away from.

(2) The Spirit can be:

a. "Grieved" (Eph. 4:30)

— "to distress; reflexively or passively to be sad"

— "to make sorrowful; to affect with sadness, cause grief, throw into sorrow"

— "to grieve, offend; to make one uneasy, cause him a scruple"

b. "Quenched" (I Thes. 5:19)

— "to extinguish, quench; of fire or things on fire"

— "to be quenched, to go out"

— "metaphorically to quench, to suppress, stifle of divine influence"

c. "Vexed" (Is. 63:10)

— "to hurt, pain, to be in pain, be pained, be grieved"

— "to vex, torture, to cause pain; to feel grieved, be vexed"

— "to shape, fashion, make, form, stretch into shape"

— "to shape, form, to form, copy, fashion"

d. "Blasphemed" (Matt. 12:31-32)

— "vilification; slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name"

— "impious and reproachful speech injurious to divine majesty"

e. "Insulted" (Despite — KJV) (Heb. 10:29)

— "to insult; do despite unto"

— Despite — “a contemptuous act, insult, injury, malice, spite”
(Web.)

Communication and Resolving Issues and Problems

(1) Communication is Essential to Preserving Unity.

a. If there are problems, disagreements, frustrations, anger, confusion, hurt feelings, etc. IT MUST BE BROUGHT INTO THE OPEN SO IT CAN BE COMMUNICATED ABOUT AND RESOLVED. If the negative thinking and emotions are kept hidden and secret, they will fester and continue to grow larger.

b. The overseers need to know immediately if there is dissension. (Why? See comments under 'Identifying Wolf Activity'. They are the sheep's best protection.) No Secrets, Hidden things should ever be entertained or allowed. It will damage you and the others involved. TALK TO THE LEADERS, AND PASTORS.

c. It must be resolved. (The Matt. 18:15-17 format.)

d. If one party refuses to resolve, Matt. 18:17b applies. If they are in a position in the church, they need to step down or be removed.

e. Matt. 5:21-26; 18:15-17; Titus 3:9-11; James 3:13-18.

f. Evil Reports, Gossip, Slander, Dissension need to be dealt with immediately. Here is the 'Rule of Thumb' to remember:

RULE OF THUMB:

BAD COMMUNICATION IS WHEN WE TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT SOMEONE ELSE NEGATIVELY — AND THE PERSON WE'RE TALKING TO IS:

(1) NOT THE PERSON WE'RE TALKING ABOUT.

(2) IS NOT SOMEONE WHO CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

(Spouses are Excluded from this rule)

If you find yourself caught in these type of situations, offer to take them to the person they are talking about, so this thing can be cleared up. If they refuse, go to an overseer and make them aware of the problem. Any of these type of things that are kept hidden, kept in darkness, quiet, or a secret, will draw demonic activity. (John 1:4-5; 3:19-21; II Cor. 6:14-18; Eph. 2:1-3; 4:17-20; 5:6-14; I Pet. 2:9; I John 1:5-7; 2:8-11.) God's way is to bring everything out into the light, out into the open and in plain view, so that it can all be easily seen and hopefully dealt with. (Luke 8:16-18; 11:33-36; John 1:4-5; 3:19-21; Rom. 13:11-14; II Cor. 4:4-6; Eph. 5:6-15; I Thes. 5:4-11; II Pet. 1:19)

(2) There will always be Big Decisions that need to be made. We want to make them with unified goals in mind. (1) Doing what pleases Jesus. (2) Doing what is best for the church. To accomplish that, the number of people involved in making the decisions has to be limited. That's why God set up

leadership in the church. Otherwise we find ourselves in gossip, slander, accusations, division, disunity, etc. — while we're trying to resolve an issue.

(3) To avoid that kind of confusion, or disunity, there is an order of flow in decision making: Those with the most responsibility must have the most authority. If you are carrying the responsibility for doing something, but don't have the authority to make the right decisions to do the job — that doesn't work very well and can be very frustrating. The ones who are investing the most time, effort, and energy — should have the most input into the final decisions. They're carrying the responsibility. Therefore, they need the authority. Scripturally speaking, these are the ones known as Deacons, Elders, Overseers, Bishops.

In a flow chart, it looks like this:



Decisions are made on the level where the people who are carrying the greatest responsibilities are involved. The more people affected by the situation, the higher up the ladder it goes.

(4) Always remember Eph. 6:12:

"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."

The real problem in Disunity is not the people. It is the spirits they are listening to and submitting themselves to. We cannot allow ourselves to become bitter, angry, frustrated, unforgiving, resentful, etc. with the person. No matter how poorly they may be acting, talking, living, etc. — It is the spirits working through them that are the real problem. Focus on the spirit realm as the problem. Don't get drawn into sin by having issues with the person.

Too many churches have gone by the way-side because of Disunity, Strife, Division. We will not let it happen at Word of Life. Our goal is to flow with the Holy Spirit and be in the Blessing of the Lord. That's when the Spiritual Gates and Doors will open before us, and we'll have the greatest impact on this area and world. The scripture below really sums it up nicely.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, (O God of) Jacob. Lift up your heads, Oh ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, Oh ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory."

Ps. 24:3-10 (KJV)

(5) The Process of Resolving Difficult Situations. (Matt. 18:15-22)

- a. Go to them one-on-one and try to talk about it and resolve it. (v. 15)
- b. If there is no resolve, take a witness or two with you and try again. (v. 16)
- c. If there is still no resolve, it goes before the leadership and overseers. (v. 17)
- d. If there still is no resolve — at Word of Life — anyone has the right to have an official from AFCM come and hear the situation to try and find resolve. (v. 17) This church is submitted to AFCM and Bro. Kaseman. We all answer to AFCM.
- e. If there still is no resolve, the person who is unwilling to resolve the problem must leave the church. (v. 17)
- f. When this process is done correctly, All of Heaven will stand behind and support it. (v. 18-19)
- g. How long do we keep working with someone who keeps coming back and asking for forgiveness, restoration, and help. The answer is: 'Indefinitely'. (v. 21-22)

(6) Sad to say, most of the time this process is not adhered to.

(7) In v. 17, something is referred to that usually causes problems in the church. Removing someone from the church. The reason this causes problems is because of the immaturity of the people/congregation. Points under 'Identifying Wolf Activity' above typically identify why this happens in churches.

There are times people need to be removed from the church. There are numerous scriptures that deal with this issue. (Matt. 18:17; Titus 3:9-11; Rom. 16:17-18)

Should they repent and want to be restored, that is supposed to be done. (I Cor. 5; II Cor. 2)

(8) Here is where a realm of trust and maturity is going to be required from the congregation. The leadership and pastors will not be able to share everything that has happened in each situation. (Reasons already given) YOU WILL NEED TO TRUST THAT THEY ARE TRYING TO DO THEIR BEST TO BE GODLY IN ALL THAT IS HAPPENING. They will give an account of it and be judged for it. (II Cor. 5:10; James 3:1)

If your pastors and leadership are corrupt. Neither God nor You will be able to do anything about it. So there is really no reason for all the details to be shared then either.

(9) So how will the congregation know if the leadership and pastors are wrong, or corrupt in the way they are dealing with things? What should they use to base their trust and judgment upon?

- a. Realize, God knows and sees everything. If they are wrong, or have wrong attitudes, God knows it.
- b. God does not Bless Disobedience, Sin, or Rebellion.
- c. Here are the Questions you need to Ask. Here is What You Need to be Looking For.

“Is God Still In The House?”

“Is the Holy Spirit Still Among Us and Active?”

“Is the Sweet Presence of the Lord Still in the Church Services?”

“Is The Kingdom Still Moving Forward In the Church In: Salvations, Baptisms in the Holy Spirit, Healings, Miracles, Deliverances, Etc.?”

“Is The Anointing Still In the Place?”

d. If the answer is Yes — God is still here. He is OK with what is going on. You don't have to be concerned. IF IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR GOD, IT SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH FOR US.

e. If the answer is No — God is no longer here, and no one is wanting to do anything to change the fact the presence and anointing are no

longer in the house, then I would say it's time to be concerned. WHEN GOD IS NO LONGER SHOWING UP, THERE IS A PROBLEM.

Extra Stuff

EXTRA — EXTRA — EXTRA STUFF

The more there is at stake in a person's life or relationship, the more difficult it is to stay in Unity and to be able to communicate about the issues in an adult manner. In I Cor. 13:11 we are told to put away childish ways of talking, thinking, and reasoning. THESE THREE SUM UP THE HEART OF WHY COMMUNICATION FAILS. It all stems back to immaturity/childishness. CHILDREN ARE SELFISH!!!

God has no problem communicating, but then again God is mature. (Matt. 5:48) Since God is mature, and we're told to be mature like him; we are on a lifelong quest to become more like God. So the church should be one of the first places we take a good long look at immaturity. Maturing human beings is one of the main reasons the 5-fold ministry gifts were given to the church. (Eph. 4:11-16) As we mature, our talking, thinking, and reasoning all change. So our communication style, ability, and desires will also change.

One of the strongest characteristics in most children is 'Selfishness'. That immature characteristic is devastating to good communication. Yet it is one of the most common problems in both Unity and Communication.

Below is a real life example of what happens when Disunity gets in and is allowed to stay in the church. It shows how the talk and speech of gossip, slander, backbiting, evil speaking and reports, etc. affects the moving of the spirit and the things he wants to do in us. (Healing, signs, wonders, miracles, etc.)

Let's do the best we can to stay away from Disunity.

Birth of a Prayer

Dr. Paul L. Cox

Where did the Prayer of Release from Chronic Physical, Mental, and Spiritual Disorders come from?

The ministry school had started like any other. I was in Sugar Hill, Georgia and a little over 50 of us had assembled to see what the Lord would do. The group included two medical doctors and several that were familiar with medical issues. We had no idea what the Lord was about to do!

One lady had asked for prayer for a personal complex set of medical issues including sugar diabetes, breathing problems, and fibromyalgia. I then remembered that I had previously discerned a spiritual spider on a person who had sugar diabetes. I approached the woman and placed my hand over the Isle of Langerhans which is located on the top portion of the pancreas. As I suspected, I could feel the spider with its fangs inserted into the Isle of Langerhans. We agreed to pray against the spider. Others began to raise their hands for prayer and we found ourselves ministering to one another for healing. The journey had begun!

The students then started bombarding me with questions: Why was there a spider in that particular place in the body? Why does the spider have fangs? What does this have to do with diabetes? The Lord had revealed the answer to these questions to me several years ago. The key text is in Is. 59:4-5 —

“No one calls for justice, nor does any plead for truth. They trust in empty words and speak lies; they conceive evil and bring forth iniquity. They hatch vipers’ eggs and weave the spider’s web; he who eats of their eggs dies, and from that which is crushed, a viper breaks out.”

After reviewing these verses, a consensus started forming that there may be some keys implanted in Is. 59 for aspects of physical, emotional and spiritual healing. The framework for a new prayer had begun. It would take several hours of revelation and unity before the document was finished.

Is. 59 has to do with the negative words of our mouth. The writer begins by declaring that the Lord does have the ability to save and to hear our prayers. The problem is that we, as His people, do not know how to control our mouths. These sins are generational. The Hebrew word iniquity in Is. 59:2-4 is rendered “twisted” and would indicate a twisting in the generational line. The sin has not just been a current difficulty. It has happened repeatedly in the past. “Your lips have spoken lies, your tongues have muttered perversity.” The issue is that the tongue is lying. The Hebrew word is best translated lie, deception, falsehood, and deceit. This negative evaluation of others has no basis in fact. The words have no support from truth. There is also a passive agreement in one’s failure to call for justice and to plead for the truth. These verbal acts are so violent that these spoken assaults “shed” innocent blood. Individuals are literally destroyed by these false statements.

The individual’s sins appear to combine together with other’s sins so that a deterioration of society is empowered. This downward spiral of injustice and

falsehood collaborates together, working itself out into injustice and unrighteousness.

What are the results? A spiritual hybrid spider is released. This spider hatches viper eggs. The snake that is released from the egg leads to death with the implication that this death is a premature death. The evil words that are released from one's mouth have a cascade effect that leads to the destruction of one's life and other's lives. Until the point of death, there are physical, mental and spiritual consequences that unravel a healthy life into a life of disorder, pain, and suffering. The roots of all of this can be generational. This evil permeates society. Deception is provoked to such an extent that those who are convicted of their sin and want to turn towards righteousness, become a victim to the verbal attacks of others.

It is not necessary to simply base our premise of the consequences of oral falsehood on the Old Testament. The New Testament also speaks to us of the dangers of not controlling our tongue. James 3:5-18 indicates that the dire result of an uncontrolled tongue is a defiled body. James then says an amazing thing! The tongue is an unruly evil that is full of deadly poison. Here again we can see the effects of the tongue on the physical body. An evil tongue is a poison to the body. When I examined the word poison in the Greek, I was stunned. The word literally means venom as "venom of an asp." The tie to Is. 59 is complete. The evil words of our mouths are not an innocent release of sounds. We and others are literally damaged by these words. Instead of enjoying and savoring the delicacies of "hateful" words, we will suffer from disease, mental illness, spiritual disorder and finally death. These words have opened us up to "every evil thing."

Unity

In 2008, I was invited to do prayer ministry and training at a Roman Catholic church in Ottawa, Canada. This was the first time I had done ministry in a Catholic environment and was wondering how I would adjust to the theological differences. Before I went I kept hearing, "What are you for, not what are you against." I pondered these words, but it was not until I arrived in Ottawa, that I realized they were significant. While attending a Sunday night introductory dinner, the Lord clearly spoke to me. This priest is your brother. I realized that I must put aside our differences to focus on what we were "for." Mutually we wanted to see the Lord bring freedom and healing to His Church.

The Lord wants unity in His church. I do understand that unity does not mean "compromise" but rather that we work together for the sake of the Kingdom of God. This also means that we do not talk "against" each other. Our words have power and we must be careful not to give the enemy any ground. Such ground given away to the enemy entitles the enemy to cause physical, mental and spiritual destruction. Gossip, envy, and jealousy have no place in the Body of Christ! All these words corrupt unity and lead to a fragmented church. Ps. 133 is clear. When brothers dwell together in unity, then the anointing flows! This anointing is like the "dew of Mount Hermon." While in Jerusalem I experienced this dew. Early in the morning as we were leaving for the airport in Tel Aviv, I saw water running down the streets.

Inquiring of our tour guide, I found out that this was the dew that falls nightly on the city of God. What a thought! When we dwell in unity, then the anointing of the Lord falls in such abundance. It is like water flowing on the streets of Mount Zion!

The Prayer

I have a couple of favorite statements. One is “Nothing is as simple as it seems,” and the other is “Nothing is everything.” These phrases have an important meaning to me. I am very cautious not to convey the idea that if one prays a certain prayer that some type of healing will automatically take place. Life is far too complex for this naïve concept. However, saying that does not mean that some type of healing will “not” take place. I praise God that throughout the years we have seen the Lord heal many times. This is what happened in Sugar Hill, Georgia.

After we had worked on the prayer for many agonizing hours, we prayed the prayer together as a group. The one woman who had initiated this whole process by asking for prayer for sugar diabetes reported later that her sugar levels had significantly improved, her breathing problem was better and there had been wonderful improvement in the level of pain. Another also rejoiced in improvement with diabetes. Since the conception of the prayer, we have had many wonderful testimonies. I should also note that others have not seen improvement — “Nothing is as simple as it seems.”

So what happens as a result of this prayer? First, we are asking the Lord to remove the iniquity from our family line that has been empowered by the evils associated with our ancestors’ tongue. Second, by doing this we are declaring that we will no longer be a “prey” of the enemy. Personally, I am tired of being plundered by the enemy. How do we stop this! We must, through the Lord’s direction, find ourselves in a position of being invulnerable to the enemy’s attack. This is where Abraham found himself. In Gen. 15, after Abraham saw the Lord passing through the cut sacrifices, we are told that the “vultures” came but Abraham was able to drive them away. Why did this happen? I believe it was because the enemy could find no ground for an attack. This is what we want. I want to be in such a position that the enemy has no ground for an attack. Third, I am declaring that I will now constantly guard my tongue not to speak against others. In this prayer, I have renounced and repented for the sins of my past generation, and my personal sins. I have asked that the generational blessings in my line come down to me and because there is now no ground for the enemy for these issues. I know that the enemy’s attack (vultures) can be driven away.

How to Find a Church

Even though this is a huge issue that many people deal with in their lifetime, it is an area that remains largely un-addressed by the church. At Word of Life, we make it a goal to openly address any question, problem, or situation that may come up in life. Below is a list of points that I feel need to be looked at to make these kinds of decisions.

A. Word and Prayer.

1. WE WILL NEED TO HEAR FROM GOD TO MAKE THIS DECISION. (In reality, we need to hear from God to make any decision correctly) Without being in the Word and Prayer, WE WILL NOT HEAR GOD. If we don't hear God's voice and get his direction, we are practically guaranteed we'll make the wrong decision.

2. We must be led by the Spirit. Not Physical Sense and Reasoning. (I Cor. 2:10-16)

B. Be Honest With Yourself, and Follow Your Peace.

1. The most accurate way to hear God is via our inner peace. God will lead us by giving us peace, or taking our peace away about a church or situation.

2. Bind up any false peace, (John 14:27) and loose the true peace of God in you. Follow your peace.

3. We must be honest and sincere in this process. If we just want our own way, we will get into a false/deceptive peace. For a time, the decision will literally feel peaceful to us. Even though it is not of God. (John 14:27)

4. Is. 9:6b-7a; John 14:15-19, 25-28.

C. Anointing and Presence of the Spirit.

1. Is the Spirit of God free to flow and move? (Luke 4:18-19)

2. Is the Face of God (Presence of God and the Spirit) seen in the services? (Ex. 33:12-23; I Cor. 4:6; II Cor. 3:17)

D. What Flow/Company do we want to be in?

1. This is really a poor question, but it needs to be addressed because of human nature. The ungodly mind thinks that God is divided. It thinks that there are many different ways to choose from, when serving God. In reality God has only one way to serve him to receive his best. That way is the Scriptural Way. All the other flavors and avenues of how to serve God ARE MAN MADE. That is why portions of the Word are always left out in the other approaches of living for God. And that's why when we do it those ways, we NEVER REALLY live in the Blessing, or see the Supernatural operate.

2. There is really ONE Church, ONE Bride of Christ, ONE Correct Way of Living and Doing, Etc. (Eph. 4:1-6) In my understanding of the Word, we're to find a church that stays as scripturally accurate as possible. THERE WE'LL FIND GOD. The further away from scripture a church is, THE LESS WE FIND GOD THERE.

E. Is The Authority of the Word Supreme?

1. If the Word is not the Supreme standard we live by, then it becomes the traditions of man, or what we typically refer to as Religion or Religious Thinking. (Mark 7:13)

2. The Word is the Rule and Guide we measure EVERYTHING against. (I John 1:1-3; II Pet. 1:3-4; II Tim. 3:16-17)

F. Will I Be Fed and Matured?

1. The younger or immature we are in the Lord, the more important this point is.

2. There is a difference between being comfortable, complacent, everything is relatively easy, not much is being presented that will require growth and change on our part; Vs. being confronted with truth, choices needing to be made, lifestyles needing to be looked at and changed, habits broken, attitudes rearranged, etc.

One approach gives us the feeling of trying to be Godly, but in reality is powerless. (II Tim. 3:5) The other approach allows the Spirit to move, flow, convict and convince which produces suffering, perseverance, and ultimately — maturity. (Rom. 5:1-5; II Pet. 1:3-9; James 1:4)

3. Maturity is never easy or fun. It forces us to change in every area of our life. That is usually painful to the soul and causes suffering. But it is one of the main reasons for the 5-fold ministry in the church. (John 21:15-17; Eph. 4:7-16)

4. To be fed and matured is to cause us to grow. (Ps. 23:1-3)

G. Will I Be Pastored?

1. Another word used to try to explain 'Pastor' in scripture is 'Overseer'. (I Pet. 5:2) An Overseer is someone who 'Over Sees' someone or something. In our society, the concept of pastor or overseer is not understood anymore. We're too far removed from the ranching/sheep-herding roots the picture is drawn from.

2. To be pastored is more than attending a church, hearing a message, and shaking the person's hand and chatting occasionally. The original picture of a shepherd is someone who was continually active in the lives of the sheep. He lived with them, led them, groomed them, fed them, protected them, nurtured them, took care of them when they were sick, etc. To apply that in even a loose way, to pastor/oversee a

person requires cooperation from two people: the pastor, and the person.

3. Is the pastor willing and able to be involved in our life enough to help guide us? And secondly, is the person willing and open enough to reveal what is really going on in their life, so they can be guided? The combination produces responsibility, accountability, cooperation, maturity, etc. It produces Pastoring and Laity.

4. I Pet. 5:2; Heb. 13:17; Titus 1:5-9.

H. Will I be able to get involved and minister?

1. One of the greatest products that is to come from a maturing Christian is Ministry. It is one of the things that the Lord commanded us to do. (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-18)

2. It is true that ministry takes place outside the church. But it is also true that it is always to be tied to a church body. There are many people in our society who don't have much use for a church body any longer. However, scripturally it is the hub all spiritual activity. And all spiritual activity is to be connected to and revolve around the church and body in some manner. All ministry should lead back to a church body. That's the place designated where true growth in the individual will take place. It's also supposed to be the center of tapping the supernatural. (Eph. 4:7-16; Matt. 18:18-20; Acts 2:42-47; 4:29-31; Heb. 10:19-25)

I. Has God told me to go to this certain church?

1. A good question to ask ourselves is: Why am I going to this church? The most correct answer is that God told me to go here. Too often it revolves around other reasons; many of them can be good — but the most correct one is that we're there because we were led by God to be there. (John 15:1-8)

Remember: We're much more successful as a Christian if we don't pray that God bless what we want or what we're planning. But rather, we pray that we find what he's planning and blessing, and start doing it. That guarantees prosperity in our lives.

2. Everything in life is supposed to be led by the Spirit. He shows us what God wants. Being led by the Spirit is a sign of maturity. (Matt. 6:10; John 5:17, 19; 8:38; 12:49; Rom. 8:1-17)

3. If we are recently saved, stay with the spiritual parents who helped get you saved. Don't even consider looking for another church until you've grown up enough spiritually to be hearing God's voice and able to follow him. You may spiritually outgrow the church that led you to the Lord. But, until you've outgrown it, (which may or may not ever happen) stay with the people who parented you into the kingdom, and where you were born-again.

J. Is The Lord Jesus Christ there and active?

1. "Lord" — Gr. Def. — "Master, Possessor, Owner, Controller, One with Servants"

a. Is Jesus truly being presented as the one who needs to be the 'Lord' over our lives?

b. In All Areas of Our Lives?

2. "Jesus" — Gr. Def. — "Savior, Salvation"

a. Is Jesus being presented as the only 'Savior' for mankind.

b. How deep is that 'Salvation' being presented. True 'Salvation' must encourage us to strive for — ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE. NO LIMITS ON WHAT GOD CAN DO.

3. "Christ" — Gr. Def. — "Messiah, The Anointed One and His Anointing"

a. Is the Anointing evident in the church? Is the supernatural at work?

b. Remember, the Anointing and the Presence of the Lord work together, however they are not the same thing. We may sense the presence of the Lord, but the Anointing is not allowed to move.

K. For those who feel they're being sent to a church or place to minister and be an influence.

1. It is possible for God to tell you to go to a church where C, E, F, G, J, (Above) are very weak or missing completely. When that happens, you are there more to minister than to be ministered to.

2. If this happens, there are some important things to consider:

a. Make sure you REALLY heard God. This assignment may turn out very well, but it also may have a difficult ending. (Many examples in scripture)

b. Am I spiritually strong enough to do this? (Rom. 12:3; I Cor. 10:23 — 11:1) You'll likely be encouraging a message or flow of the Spirit that is currently not there, but God wants to get it there. This process of being an influence will likely cause you a lot of grief, disappointment, persecution, rejection by others, etc. — even if it succeeds. If it doesn't succeed, it can be devastating to the person.

c. Are you willing to become like them in areas to be an influence on them? (I Cor. 9:19-23) If you have a family, will this spiritually destroy your children? Be Sure You've Heard God. If this is God, everything will turn out fine.

d. Can you walk your faith and live your Christian life in a victorious and overcoming manner — ALL ALONE — BY YOURSELF — WITH LITTLE TO NO SUPPORT FROM OTHERS? (II Tim. 2:15; 4:9-10; 14-18) YOU MUST BE MATURE ENOUGH THAT YOU CAN FEED YOURSELF SPIRITUALLY, AND NOT NEED TO BE GOING TO OTHERS TO BE FED OR REVIVED SPIRITUALLY. If you aren't that mature yet, and you can't walk this thing by yourself, God is not asking you to do this! God will not sacrifice you for something you can do for him. He loves you more than your ministry.

When you are sent to a church to minister to them or be an influence to them, you must do just that — GET INVOLVED AND MINISTER/INFLUENCE. YOUR HEART MUST BE IN THIS FOR THE PEOPLE — NOT FOR YOURSELF IN ANY WAY.

This will not be a part time job with the rest of your time being spent at a different church, or with different believers. This Is Now Your Assignment. If the people get the feeling you are only partially there, and you are partially (or mostly) other places — you will have no ministry or influence whatsoever. They'll realize your hypocrisy and your influence and ministry will be reduced to little or nothing.

e. Count The Cost. This will cost you. One of the definitions for the word 'ministry' is "to serve another at your own expense". Don't start something, you can't, or aren't willing to finish. That will do more harm than good. (Luke 14:25-35)

***** Scripturally, WE ARE NOT TO PICK A CHURCH ON WHAT IT HAS TO OFFER ME!!! That makes the whole decision very selfish. It's an Ungodly mindset.**

1. The programs they have or don't have are not the reasons to pick a church.
2. The kind of praise and worship is not the reason to pick a church.
3. Whether it is good preaching or not, is not the reason.
4. Whether we're comfortable or not, is not the reason to pick a church.
5. The kind of building/facility is not the reason.
6. How they pray, flow in the Spirit, etc. are not reasons either.
7. Etc.

In our self-driven American culture, we need to pay attention so that we don't make this decision on a selfish basis.

The reasons to go to a church are listed above.

How to Leave a Church

This is a subject that I have never heard addressed. I think there are a number of reasons:

- We like to believe that no one will ever leave.
- It is typically a very painful thing. (Even when you do it the right way)
- We don't want anyone to leave, so we won't Bless them to do so.
- We've lost sight of the Kingdom of God Principle. (God's work is bigger than our church)
- We don't like confrontation.
- We don't want to be challenged on what we believe.
- Etc.

Yet it is a very real reality that all of us face. At some point — either, someone will be leaving us; or, we are the ones who will be leaving.

THERE ARE RIGHT WAYS AND WRONG WAYS OF LEAVING A CHURCH. Sad to say, most of the time it is done the wrong way and for the wrong reasons. It's a huge reason the church in America is so powerless, and lacking in the supernatural. There are so many bad attitudes, feelings, so much unforgiveness and bitterness, etc. locked up in the people who make up the church — IT IS LITERALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOD TO MOVE AMONG US!!! Let's look at some guidelines for the right way to leave a church.

A. The Right Reasons to Leave a Church.

1. God is leading you to another church.

a. That will happen for one of three reasons:

(1) You've matured past the church you are in. They don't believe in and are not trying to practice as 'Full' a gospel as you are being led into. (Faith, Signs, Wonders, Miracles, Casting Out Demons, Healing, Baptism in the Spirit, Speaking in Tongues, Gifts of the Spirit, etc.) False Doctrine comes under this point.

(2) You're being moved for ministry reasons.

(3) You've gone through the process of Matt. 18:15-17, and no resolve can be found.

2. To my knowledge, there is no other right reason to leave a church. Most of the time we will say that God is leading us to leave. But our reasons are all the wrong reasons. When the reasons are Wrong, God isn't in it!

B. The Wrong Reasons to Leave a Church.

1. Anything not mentioned in 'A' above.

C. What does God expect of us when we don't have the right reasons to leave.

1. Stay.
2. Grow and Mature. (Grow Up)
3. Get past any problems or issues.
4. Stay involved and minister.

D. To leave a church correctly, it must originate with God.

1. Soulless reasons (Of the Mind, Will, Intellect, Reasoning, Emotions) are not Godly reasons to leave.

a. Things like: Misunderstandings, Hurt Feelings, Offenses, Being Corrected or Disciplined, Differences in Beliefs, Etc.

b. These kinds of things are grouped under 'Wisdom That is Not From Above' in James 3:13-16.

c. These kinds of problems need to be overcome and worked past. That kind of 'Wisdom is From Above'. (James 3:17-18)

2. The reasons to leave must originate by the Spirit. (I Cor. 2:10-16)

E. Talk to Your Pastor while it's still an infant question or consideration.

1. Most of the time, by the time the pastors find out it's even being considered — the person has their mind made up. It's not a discussion. It's an Announcement. THAT'S NOT SCRIPTURAL.

2. Are they our pastor or not? Are they our overseers or not?

a. If yes, they should have been included in the process. They're the ones who will answer for what goes on in the church with the people. (I Pet. 5:2-3; Heb. 13:17)

b. When they aren't included, (Esp. because of the wrong reasons) the person will be the one answering for how they left. (II Cor. 5:10)

3. Have them agree in prayer with you, and give you input concerning the decision. That's simply allowing them to be a pastor or overseer.

F. Where is he leading you?

1. Too often we confuse "Running From Something" with "Being Led".

2. When we are Being Led, there is a clear place, location, or goal in mind. God always knows where he is going, and he'll share that with us. (John 15:15-17; 16:12-15)

3. When we are Running From Something, we have no idea where we are going. Our concentration and reasoning is all about what we're leaving and why.

G. Why is he leading us to a specific church or place?

1. This is double checking the fact that we are really being led.
2. God doesn't wander aimlessly. Aimless wandering is the result of sin. (Israelites in the desert for 40 years)
3. When people leave a church and aren't in another one within a very short period of time, they are wandering. (Still trying to find where they're supposed to be) That makes it plain that they weren't being led TO something, or they'd already be there. They were running FROM something. Now they're looking for some place to be. In reality, they shouldn't give God the credit of having Led them in this kind of situation. Because they were likely Running via their own emotion or reasoning, not being Led by the Spirit.
4. The interesting part about this is the attitude that they carry. It always surrounds around them. Their thinking. Their opinions. How They See It. They are the center everything else has to fit into — including God. Now, rather than serving God, they are really serving themselves. They've become their own Idol.

And it typically carries the flavor of: they're looking for something that measures up to their level of spirituality.

a. Things are said like:

It's just so hard to find a good church.

Nobody really wants to serve God anymore.

Nobody has the truth.

There's no church that wants to preach the truth.

They don't have what I'm looking for.

They just don't do things the right way.

Etc.

b. Now if you ask what the pastor (or the board) said when they met with them about it, you get a lot of excuses. Because they never met with anyone in leadership to discuss and try to problem solve the issues. In their mind, it won't do any good anyway.

We feel they've grown past the church and the church isn't doing it correctly, but they don't hold themselves to the same standard of doing it correctly. They didn't do what the scripture says, but yet they're spiritually beyond the church. In my opinion, that's the ultimate of hypocrisy.

5. Conclusion: They probably weren't being Led by God at all, or they would have done what the Word says was to be done. They are likely Running from something or someone they don't like.

H. If God is Leading Us and We Know Why He's Leading Us:

1. Then the reasons will agree with our Calling, and Gifting.
2. We will be moving under the direction of the 5-fold Gift we lean towards in ministry. (Eph. 4:7, 11)
3. That Gift works in conjunction with the Calling we have in the Kingdom, and the part of the body that we are to supply. (Eph. 4:16)
4. What realm do we flow in: Apostle, Prophet, Evangelist, Pastor, Teacher? That is important, because that will be the focus of why God is moving us to begin with. God is expecting us to flow in our Gift.
5. How is he going to use us? What is the Focus?

I. After Prayer and Discussion, do our Pastors/Overseers agree?

1. The decision isn't based on this. But if they are truly in this for our best, there will be wisdom in what they suggest and advise.
2. If they agree, we need to get the Blessing of the church as we go.
3. If they don't agree, we need to try to get the Blessing of the church as we go.

J. Leaving Must Never Be The Result of:

1. Having been sinned against.
2. Hurt Feelings.
3. Disagreements.
4. Picking up an Offense.
5. Gossip, Slander, Evil Speaking.
6. Unresolved Conflict.
7. Etc.
8. These things are not of God and to make a decision on the basis of the IS NOT OF GOD.

K. Leaving Must Never Be An Impulsive Decision.

1. Be Directed. Not Driven.
2. This magnitude of a decision needs to be made together with the leadership over a considerable amount of time. (Eph. 2:11-3:21)
3. If God is really in this move, he knew about it since the creation of the world. (Eph. 1) It's not taking him by surprise. He hasn't forgotten about it, and now needs to move quickly. God is never in a rush. Take your time and make sure it's God.

L. Do We Feel Welcome/Comfortable to Return?

1. Are we still comfortable around the people?

2. Would they welcome our return?
3. Do we avoid — the pastors, or leadership now that we're gone.
— any of the people.
4. Are we uncomfortable when we meet them someplace?
5. Would we rather not see them or meet them?
6. If the first two are answered — No. And 3-5 are answered — Yes. We Left, or Are Leaving the Wrong Way. There are obviously things that are still unresolved.
7. Let's make sure we are clean before God. This decision will affect us and our family more than the church — Esp. if we are doing this the wrong way!!! Be sure you have walked through all the correct scriptural steps. (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15-20; Mark 11:25-26)

When we leave a church correctly, it is done in peace, mutual edification, good communication, agreement, and good will remains between the people.

When this doesn't happen, something is being done incorrectly.

WORD OF LIFE NEEDS TO BE A PLACE:

THAT IS SAFE TO COME TO.

THAT IS SAFE TO REMAIN AT.

THAT IS SAFE TO LEAVE.

Helps in Going to Someone for Resolution (Matt. 18:15-17)

1) Handle with Love

a. Matt. 22:38-40 — God is served and pleased first. Others come second. Others are on equal status with yourself. (Value, Opinions, Input, Beliefs, etc.)

— CHECK THE INTENT OF THEIR HEART. Do they want to resolve with you? Do they want the relationship with you?

— Resolution is a two-way street. Both parties must want this. If the other person doesn't want to resolve and restore the relationship, there is no reason to go any further. (The 'Intent of the Heart' is watched for throughout the conversation)

— Resolving does not make you (or them) a door-mat.

b. John 13:35 — How we handle our relationships is to set us apart as God's disciplined ones.

c. I Cor. 13:4-8 — So how do we handle each other in relationships?

— Patiently — Kindly — Not Enviously

— Not Braggish — Not Proudly — Not Rudely

— Not Self-Seeking — Not Easily Angered — Forgetting Wrongs

— Not Delighting in Evil — Rejoicing in Truth — Always Protecting

— Always Trusting — Always Hoping — Always Persevering

— Never Failing

d. Luke 6:27-36 — Principles/Commands in handling enemies. The Golden Rule.

2) Know who God is asking you to be.

a. Phil. 3:12b — Lay hold to the reason you've been laid hold to.

b. Rom. 8:28-30 — What is your purpose, predestination, call, justification, & glorification.

c. The depth and flow of a relationship is built around this!!! (Marriage, Family, Friends, Business, Leadership, Support, Etc.)

3) The Word is the Basis, Standard of Measurement, and Rule in ALL Disagreements.

a. II Pet. 1:3-4 — Everything we need for life, Godliness, and escaping worldly corruption is already given to us.

b. James 3:13-18 — The Godly kind of wisdom comes via the Word.

- c. II Tim. 3:16-17 — The scripture thoroughly equips us for every good work.
- 4) Our job is the Ministry of Reconciliation. — II Cor. 5:11-21.
 - a. It is our attitude and motive of how we approach people and situations.
 - b. Reconciliation is to be the outcome.
 - c. In ministry, you do it expecting nothing in return.
- 5) Realize you could be wrong in areas too. Rarely is it 100% the other person in every situation.
- 6) We are a body in Christ's perspective. — I Cor. 12:12-27.
 - a. Decisions must be made on the basis of that concept.
 - b. The only time you cut a piece out of the body is when it is diseased, rotting, and dying — and it refuses to be made healthy. (Matt. 18:17; I Cor. 5:9-13; Titus 3:9-11)
 - c. The process for that is found in Matt. 18:15-17.
- 7) If the relationship is not costing you something — it's not a relationship. (Relating)
 - a. Eph. 5:21 — Submit yourselves one to another.
 - b. Rom. 12:9-10 — Be devoted to each other, and in honor prefer one another.
 - c. Relationships don't flow in one direction. The flow needs to be mutual and equal.
- 8) Boundaries. (Setting Limitations — Matt. 22:38-40; I Cor. 13:4-8)
 - a. Creating a Boundary is simply stating what you need from the other person for them to have relationship with you.
 - b. To have a boundary there are times you will have to say no to someone, something, a situation, or request.
 - c. **YOU CAN NEVER DRAW A BOUNDARY ON SOMEONE ELSE. IT CAN ONLY BE SET FOR YOU AND WHAT YOU NEED.**
 - d. They are set on the basis of — The Word. (Righteousness Vs. Sin)
 - Your Purpose/Destiny.
 - Your Call.
 - Your Justification.
 - Your Glorification.
- 9) Dealing with the Patriarch/Matriarch of the family. (Immediate or Extended)

a. The concept that is generally missed by the older adults in the family is children grow up. Grown up children (Age 20 — Num. 14:26-33) are fellow covenant partners serving God with us. They have their own accountability before God. (Ezek. 18:3-20) They are to be led by the Spirit, not a fellow family member or ancestor. (Rom. 8:1-16) Once adults, they are to serve God before any other human. If they don't, the person they are allowing to run their life, (whether it's mom, dad, grandma, grandpa, etc.) literally becomes an idol to them. In an effort to help or rescue them, the family is putting them into idol worship.

b. Rom. 14:4 — We are not to judge someone else's servant.

c. Rom. 14:9-14 — Jesus needs to be their Lord, and we need to stop putting stumbling blocks in front of them.

d. James 4:11-12 — We have no right to judge another. We are to judge ourselves. (I Cor. 11)

e. Therefore, once an outsider, relative, or parent begins dictating your life in the areas of the items listed in 8-d (Above) — we must create a boundary for ourselves and our families through which we serve God.

— That includes all areas of our lives:

Who we marry.

How we handle our spouses and marriage.

How we raise our children.

What we do for a living.

Where we live. What we live in.

Etc. — Etc.

— As adults, we honor and respect our parents, BUT WE ANSWER ONLY TO GOD AND WE DO WHAT WE SENSE THE SPIRIT TELLING US HE THINKS IS BEST!!!

10) So what do we do to confront the situation? (Practical steps to Matt. 18:15-17)

a. Make an appointment with them that is convenient for them.

b. When you sit down, tell them why you're there from your perspective. (No Blaming, etc.)

c. Establish some basic guidelines — I'm here to fix something that in my perspective is broken.

— I'll share first, I need you to just listen. (Take notes??)

— Present your case from your perspective, feelings, etc. (No accusing, placing the blame on them, etc.)

— Let them share and you just listen. (Take notes??)

- I need you to not interrupt me when I'm talking.
- I need you to value my opinions, feelings, beliefs, and not judge or declare me to be wrong, stupid, etc.
- Can we agree to work toward resolve and not separation?

d. Begin sharing your side of it. KEEP IT SHORT AND CONCISE. You are not here to convince them or sell them on your perspective. You're wanting to be heard.

e. Emotion can be valuable in showing sincerity. DRAMA GETS IN THE WAY.

f. Look for ways, areas, things you can prefer the other person in. Stay Loving.

g. Do not feel obligated, or forced to compromise on the points in 8-d (Above).

h. If it does not remain relatively peaceful, offer a time-out. (a few minutes) If that does not help, ask if they think this can be reconciled between the two of you? If yes, keep working at it. If no, go to the next step in Matt. 18:15-17.

*** This is why 'Building Your Core' is so important. We must first learn to understand who we are. Then we must learn how to recognize who other people are. Without maturity and growth, neither one of these will take place. Now the relationship is handicapped.

We can only relate with someone to the level of our maturity or theirs — whichever is lower!!

To more fully understand what's happening inside of you (or the other), why you are feeling the way you are, what causes you to react the way you do, etc. — etc. — etc. — Please get the CD's for the 'Building Your Core' series.