

Tyson Ziegler

## SESSION 4 | Mercy's Response – Charity & Constructive Conflict

### I. RESPONDING TO WRONGS WITH THE CONSTRUCTIVE DISPLEASURE OF MERCY

**Constructive** – responding to a situation in a way that builds up.

**Displeasure** – the feeling of annoyance or disapproval experienced through offense or injury.

**Mercy** – the willing disposition to not treat someone the way their actions deserve.

**Patience** - the willingness to respond slowly to wrongs and work with them over time.

Jas. 1 – Be quick to listen...slow to speak...slow to anger

**Forgiveness** – taking the debt that is rightfully owed to you when you are wronged and, instead of extracting payment, cancelling it.

Mt. 18 – Treating others unfairly

### II. RESPONDING WITH MERCY REQUIRES CHARITY

**Charity** – undeserved kindness

Charity looks at what happened and says, “That’s wrong,” and then it displays the unexpected generous act of kindness. This calls for the most difficult self-confrontation of all; “Love your enemies.”<sup>1</sup> – Pgs. 88-89

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<sup>1</sup> All comments in quotes are taken from David Powlison’s book Good and Angry unless stated otherwise.

Mt 5:43–48

“Magnanimous...means being large-hearted. Refusing to be petty and sectarian. Willing to forgive. Pursuing a consistent policy of generosity and kindness in dealing with fellow human beings.” – Pg. 93

### **III. RESPONDING WITH MERCY REQUIRES CONFLICT**

**Constructive Conflict** – the willingness to start a necessary conflict in order to solve a real problem. – Pg. 94

“The displeasure of Mercy enters forcefully in the conflict in order to redeem...constructive anger steps into wrongs with conviction and force. It tackles evils head on... [The Displeasure of Mercy] means a willingness to go through the messy process of engaging in constructive conflict...You raise the problem that wrong creates. Do that in the right kind of way, and you create the right kind of trouble.” – Pg. 96

“Jesus was a redemptive troublemaker.”- Pg. 96

### **IV. RESPONDING WITH MERCY REQUIRES WISE ACTION**

Abraham and Lot – Gen. 13

Conflict provides opportunity<sup>2</sup>

- Glorify God
- Serve other people
- Grow to be like Christ

4 Principles of Conflict Resolution

- Glorify God
- Get the log out of your own eye
- Gently restore
- Go and be reconciled

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<sup>2 2</sup> This point and the next have been adapted from the Peacemaking Principles Pamphlet

## **GOOD & ANGRY: OVERCOMING IRRITATION, OUTBURSTS, & EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN**

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The Four Rules of Communication – Eph. 4:25-31

- Be Honest – v. 25 – speak the truth in grace
- Keep Current – v. 26
- Attack the Problem not the Person – v. 28-29
- Act, Don't React – v. 30-31
- Forgive, as God in Christ forgave you (v.32)

### **CASE STUDY:**

Bob and Sally are in a dating relationship. Sally, had been working for weeks planning a trip for the two of them to visit her parents. But, when the big weekend came, Bob forgot all about it. He double-booked himself and went to the beach with his buddies. He forgot to take his cell phone charger and was unavailable all weekend.

When he finally does call Sally, she is fuming. His string of lame excuses reveals that he doesn't treat what happened seriously and is mainly concerned about defending his actions. Sally goes ballistic. She recounts all his present and past faults in graphic detail. She charges him with a number of malicious motives. She screams, "You don't care! You always forget things I care about! You never pay attention to what is important to me!"

Bob gets increasingly defensive and hostile. So, Sally calls in the heavy artillery. She vents expletives, calls Bob names, and pronounces curses. Then she again trumpets her own righteousness, "I would never ever do that! When I promise to do something for you, I do it! I make the effort with you and your family!" Then she storms off leaving Bob to baste in his own guilt.

Later, Sally feels bad for her angry outburst. She goes back to Bob and says, "I'm sorry for what I said. I didn't mean it. I was overtired and upset." "That's OK," Bob answers. Then they kiss and make up.

1. When thinking through the Constructive Displeasure of Mercy framework, which manifestations were missing?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Did forgiveness take place in this scenario? If not, what was missing?

**GOOD & ANGRY: OVERCOMING IRRITATION, OUTBURSTS,  
& EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN**

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3. What manifestations of mercy could Sally have displayed toward Bob? How would this situation have played out differently if she had taken time for “attitudinal forgiveness” before she talked with Bob after he returned?
  
4. Did Sally mean what she said? How could Sally have worked toward constructive conflict resolution with Bob?
  
5. What did Bob need to do better in resolving this situation?

Taken from Good and Angry, Pg. 96-97. Look at the list below. Put a check mark by the words that characterize your speech toward those closest to you. Include a Scripture reference for each attribute to serve in your personal study.

**List 1**

**List 2**

Rebuke	Attack
Reprove	Criticize
Admonish	Accuse
Exhort	Moralize
Confront	Condemn
Judge Fairly	Be Judgmental
Warn	Threaten
Talk Directly	Talk Aggressively
Righteous Indignation	Self-righteous Hostility

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List 1 includes the redemptive words that characterize energetic mercy in the midst of dealing with conflict. List 2 includes words that characterize destructive speech. Eph. 4:22-24 commands us to put off the old man with its deceitful desires by the renewing of our minds. Take time this week to write out a prayer confessing the actions and motives reflected in List 2 you see in your life, and ask the Holy Spirit to help you put on the corresponding speech attributes from List 1 as you seek to extend charity and Christ-likeness in your speech toward others.

Self-confrontation exercise. Complete this exercise after working through conflict resolution whether you responded with constructive mercy in your anger or not.

## Journal of Upsets/Joy

For each instance record:

- Day / Time
- Circumstances / context
- What happened?
- What did you **think** about what happened?
- What did you **say** or **do** in response to what happened?
- What were you wanting at that moment? What did you think you had to have?
- What does God say about what you did or said or were wanting?
- How must you respond next time a similar situation occurs to please God?