

**MID-MORNING FEATURING DR. MITCHELL KRUSE**

**APRIL 15, 2014**

**Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How of Wise Confrontation**

**NEXT SHOW: MAY 20, 2014**

*Confront* literally means “face to face.” Only after first taking our conflict to God, ignoring insults, turning the other cheek, and overlooking an offense, can we wisely and lovingly confront another person.

**1. Who**

Examine the relationship you have with the person. Have you earned the right to be heard?

Solomon counseled: “Perfume and incense bring joy to the heart, and the pleasantness of one’s friend springs from his earnest counsel” (Proverbs 27:9). If we have invested in the relationship, prior to any confrontation, then it is likely we have built a bridge to our friend’s heart, making it relationally appropriate for us to walk across and offer sincere advice.

**2. What**

Choose your words wisely.

Our words must be fitting: “The lips of the righteous know what is fitting, but the mouth of the wicked only what is perverse” (Proverbs 10:32). *Fitting* is translated from the Hebrew word, *ratson*. The NASB translates *ratson* as *acceptable*, which means “bringing favor, or good will.” When our words are fitting, we bring favor and good will to our conversations.

When we have wisdom in our hearts, our words will be wise and convicting through the power of the Holy Spirit. Solomon taught: “A wise man’s heart guides his mouth, and his lips promote instruction” (Proverbs 16:23). Our most powerful source of instruction is the Word of God. The more we get into the Word, the more the Word gets into us. In order to transfer the wisdom of God in a confrontation, we must humbly teach the Word, as if we could commit the same sin we see in our counterpart.

**3. Where**

Confront in private, just between the two of you, in an unthreatening setting, not in front of others.

Jesus taught: “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over” (Matthew 18:15). In doing so, we must not betray another party’s confidence.

Solomon warned: “If you argue your case with a neighbor, do not betray another man’s confidence, or he who hears it may shame you and you will never lose your bad reputation” (Proverbs 25:9-10).

#### **4. When**

Timing is everything, not too early, not too late, not in the heat of the battle.

Solomon penned: “A man finds joy in giving an apt reply—and how good is a timely word” (Proverbs 15:23). The wise king warned of reaching out too early: “If a man loudly blesses his neighbor early in the morning, it will be taken as a curse” (Proverbs 27:14). He illustrated the value of the right word spoken at the right time: “A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver” (Proverbs 25:11). In order to speak the right word at the right time, we must have one ear toward God and one ear to those we encounter, avoiding confrontation during the heat of the battle (Proverbs 29:11).

#### **5. Why**

Ask yourself, *“Is it for your benefit or theirs? Is your motive to advance the heart of Christ?”*

Solomon revealed: “All a man’s ways seem right to him, but the LORD weighs the heart” (Proverbs 21:2). God examines our motives. Consequently, we must verify through the Holy Spirit that our intentions are noble, for the benefit of others and to advance the heart of Christ. Usually, we confront out of our own pride, under the illusion that we will feel better on the inside. However, that is rarely the case.

Paul reasoned: “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18). Our goal is to reconcile, owning any contribution we have made toward the conflict. Too often, we go on autopilot with those closest to us and confront harshly. Consequently, it helps when we first define our conflict, determining what two objects are attempting to occupy the same space at the same time.

#### **6. How**

Communicate humbly and gently in your nonverbal cues. Do not confront by text, email, social media, or letter, unless there is no other option.

Tone of voice, body posture, hand gestures, eye contact, and facial expressions should communicate humility and gentleness. Solomon noted: “A happy heart makes the face cheerful, but heartache crushes the spirit” (Proverbs 15:13); and “A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger” (Proverbs 15:1).

When we communicate humbly and gently, our speech is gracious. Solomon

said: “He who loves a pure heart and whose speech is gracious will have the king for his friend” (Proverbs 22:11). He noted: “A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control” (Proverbs 29:11). Paul taught: “Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted” (Galatians 6:1).

### **Conclusion**

When we confront wisely—only after taking our conflict to God, ignoring insults, turning the other cheek, and overlooking an offense—the Restorer uses us to advance His kingdom in the hearts and lives of those around us, as He deepens our communion with Him and our community with others.