



Shiloh Messenger

January 2018

Relationships: How We Treat Others, Pt.4

This relational paradigm is tested when people disagree with you. It isn't hard to empower people who agree with you or not control people who are making good choices. It is when they're making dumb choices and running people (or you) over in the process, making your ability to stay true to your choice to honor others difficult.

People are people though, and so conflict is inevitable. There will always be disagreements, differences in values, and miscommunication, so we will always have opportunities to get better at building up one another.

The key to successfully navigating conflict in relationship is to properly handle the tension that arises as a result of disagreement. This tension will naturally arise in any relationship within the process of conflict. It's actually a good thing; it means you value the relationship. You don't feel tension with people unless there is something you care about at stake.

The way we handle that tension makes all the difference. The important thing is to distinguish between the tension that arises within the relationship and the issue that is provoking the disagreement. The issue may affect the relationship, but it really is outside the relationship. Where people go wrong is they lose the relationship as the context for addressing the problem. When this happens, people wind up letting the issue come into the middle of their relationship and split them to opposite sides of it.

A better approach is to navigate the conflict within the context of the relationship. When a conflict arises, the conflict does not mean the relationship is fractured. As a result, we still honor and value the person, and we address the conflict as a unit together. We stand together both addressing the issue, not as two individuals on opposite sides of the issue.

In God's Family, no issue is big enough to sacrifice our relationships. God defines His relationships with covenants; He's not splitting relationships over disagreements. His commitment is bigger than any issue we may not see eye-to-eye on. As a result, we can approach conflict safely. We don't tiptoe into conflict worried about losing the relationship because our commitment to each other as people goes deeper than whatever issue is at hand. We have The Holy Spirit to lead us in Wisdom.

When handling a conflict within the context of hierarchical relationships, there are a few principles that are helpful to keep in mind. In order to successfully navigate conflict while honoring and empowering others, our goals are to:

- Introduce consequences into a situation in order to teach and strengthen.
- Bring to the surface what people forget about themselves after they've failed.
- Send an invitation to strengthen a relational bond with someone.
- Apply pressure strategically in order to expose areas needing strength and grace.

There is a difference between consequences and punishment. The difference is that with consequences, people are empowered to clean up their own mess whereas with punishment, people are forced into compliance and hence disempowered. Every choice has consequences; there may be a breaking of trust in a relationship, or loss of privileges that the person is no longer considered worthy of. When people face the consequences of their actions, a road back to intimacy is created. If someone intentionally makes a choice to hurt us, one consequence is that we may not feel safe around that person anymore. We make it clear to that person that as a result of what he or she has done, we don't feel safe with him or her anymore; and until he or she is ready to own the fact that his or her actions have hurt you and work through that, you're not going to be around him or her. This informs the person you still love him or her, empowers the person to clean up the mess, and extends an invitation to restored relationship when the person is ready to take responsibility for the consequences of his or her actions.

To learn how to manage relationships this way is a complete change for most of us. Take time out to pray and ask The Lord to lead you by The Holy Spirit in all your relationships. "Father God help me to model You in all my relationships." Amen!

Update: New Dorm & Classroom

Please pray about what The Lord would have you to do about some important items that need to be purchased for our student rooms and new classroom. These items are furniture & electronics. For the bedrooms, the items are: Bunk Beds. For the classroom the items are: tables, chairs & electronic equipment for teaching (sound system, screen & projector). Debbie & I are very thankful for having such awesome brothers & sisters in Christ, who see the fruit of what Jesus is doing at Shiloh and sow into it. We are enriched, blessed & encourage by you!

We love all of you, blessings multiplied & have a blessed New Year!!

Rocky & Debbie Fondren

(Shiloh Ministries is recognized by the IRS as a 501c3 charitable organization. All financial gifts are tax deductible at the end of the year)

Graduates Testimony

Hello, my name is Steve Dandridge, and I am 54 years old. I grew up in Odessa, Texas. I have a wonderful mother who raised me and gave me an excellent childhood. I grew up in the church, but never really took it seriously. I would always say I believed in Jesus, yet never really got to know Him on a personal level. I was on the football team in high school and that's where I first was introduced to drugs and alcohol. I graduated high school and went to work in the oil fields. It was a very lucrative job, and surrounded me with less than favorable group of people. I ended up getting married and my wife gave birth to a beautiful daughter. My life on the outside looked so good, yet there was a ticking time bomb inside me. I started drinking more and more. My wife ended up leaving me and taking our daughter with her. Even after losing my family I still, continued to try and medicate my pain through drugs and alcohol. Before long I was homeless. No one in my family wanted anything to do with me and my only friends were other drunks with no hope. Then God entered my life. I met Tim and Pauline, two believers with a heart for the homeless. They became my friends and listened to my story. They gave me food and cared for me more than I cared for myself. They sincerely wanted to help me get my life back and told me about Shiloh Ministries. I agreed to go and the day they came to pick me up I fled. I was so scared of facing reality. They did not give up though. They knew many homeless people in the area and pursued me. Eventually they tracked me down and took me to their house for two weeks until the day they could take me to Shiloh. They fed me, clothed me, prayed over me, and loved on me. I stepped on to Shiloh grounds still going through alcohol withdrawals, but I never looked back. God saved me from who I was and set me on the right path. I graduated and now I have a relationship with my family. I am helping take care of my elderly mother and my daughter has her father back. God loved me when I did not even love myself. I am so grateful for Shiloh Ministries and all they do for men who have lost their way.



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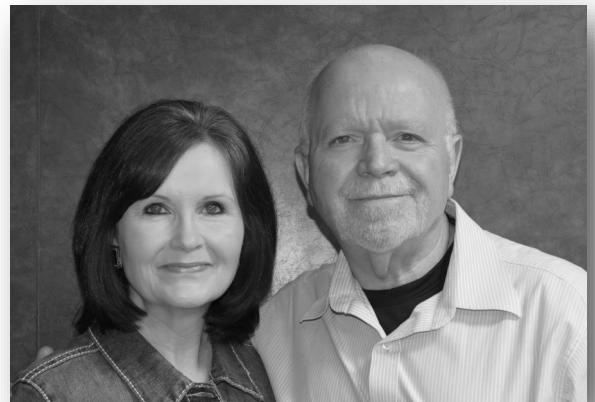
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**Rocky & Debbie Fondren
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