

Turning the Crap of Life, Into the Fruit of the Spirit Confrontation

During this past week have you had a confrontation where you work? If so, was it pleasant? Did you enjoy it? Were you the one being confronted or the confronter? If you are working, chances are you have had to deal with confrontation at work. Perhaps you have an enforcer at your work, someone who relishes an opportunity to confront. Maybe you are that enforcer. How we handle confrontation at work in particular really speaks to who we are as Christians.

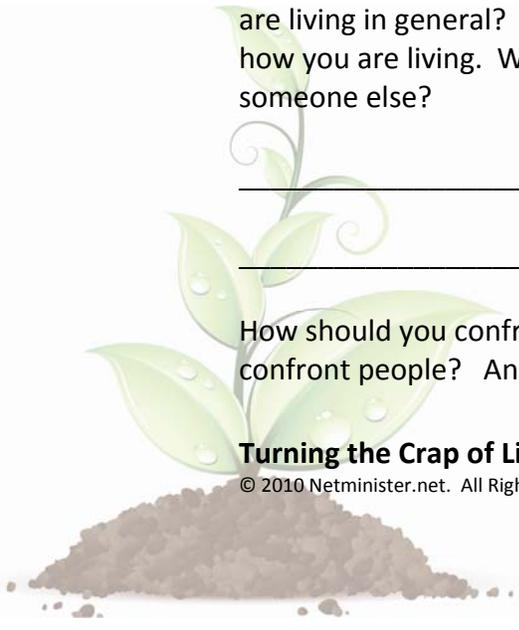
Head to a little league baseball game this afternoon. Look at the young children running around in their uniforms that are mirrored on major league uniforms. See the crowd yelling at the umpires, screaming at the kids and oh yes, the fight that breaks out in the stands. Good thing these folks are all Christians. This is just one example of how confrontation and how we confront is a witness to what and who we say we are in Christ.

Confrontation, do you really need to know what that is? Most people don't need much help identifying confrontation. Whether it is work, family or friends, there is going to be confrontation in your life. Most confrontation we think about work. Being confronted about not giving enough effort, making a mistake or being a jerk all are things we have dealt with in some aspect or another. Who do you need to confront? And what should you confront them about?

Are there areas in your own life right now that you need some self-confrontation? Areas that you need to address such as pride, sex, the way you use people or how you are living in general? Think about some of the things God needs to confront you for how you are living. What are they? How would you address them if they were someone else?

How should you confront people as a Christian? Does the bible really tell us how to confront people? And should we confront people?

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2 Sam 12:1-15

Then the LORD sent Nathan to David. And he came to him, and said to him: "There were two men in one city, one rich and the other poor.² The rich man had exceedingly many flocks and herds.³ But the poor man had nothing, except one little ewe lamb which he had bought and nourished; and it grew up together with him and with his children. It ate of his own food and drank from his own cup and lay in his bosom; and it was like a daughter to him.⁴ And a traveler came to the rich man, who refused to take from his own flock and from his own herd to prepare one for the wayfaring man who had come to him; but he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him."⁵ So David's anger was greatly aroused against the man, and he said to Nathan, "As the LORD lives, the man who has done this shall surely die!⁶ And he shall restore fourfold for the lamb, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."⁷ Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the LORD God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul.⁸ I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more!⁹ Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.¹⁰ Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'¹¹ Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.¹² For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.'" ¹³ So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." And Nathan said to David, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.¹⁴ However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die."¹⁵ Then Nathan departed to his house.

Nathan is sent to confront David about his sin with Bathsheeba. David has had sex with a married woman, had her husband killed and taken her as his wife. Thinking all this has been accomplished without being caught, David seems to have returned to his normal life without any repercussions. But God knew what he had done. Nathan is sent to David, the king, he is told by God to confront the king, the most powerful man. How did he do it?

1. He boldly accepted the responsibility of confronting over something that needed to be addressed

Nathan was called to go to the king. This isn't a small task. Going to the king was difficult enough, but he was called to not only go to the king but to speak to him about an issue that it would be well assumed he didn't want to talk about.

The first problem couldn't have been covered well. David had asked his servants who Bathsheeba was when she was bathing. They had brought her to David. So chances are

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that everyone knew what was going on. The white elephant in the room was the relationship – which everyone would have known about. Sound familiar?

Ever seen that kind of white elephant in your relationship with others? Work at an office where a supervisor is having an inappropriate relationship with someone in the office? Everyone knows, they gossip about the relationship, but no one confronts the situation.

Someone at the office is taking money. You know they are taking money, you have seen it, but you don't say anything about it. Looking the other way is much easier and ensures that you stay employed. Everyone talks about it, but no one says anything about it.

You have a family member that causes nothing but problems. Every holiday is a nightmare. You dread it going in, you dread if the day of and you are tense for weeks afterwards. Knowing what needs to be done would lead to more problems, so you avoid that confrontation to be at peace.

Confronting a situation is going to cost you; might as well know that ahead of time. Either telling a boss something that might cost you a job; giving up your freedom because you knew what was going on but said nothing; or losing a relationship with a family member that makes life more difficult with family all of them represent a costs you will have to pay by confronting. Unlike those areas, Nathan was risking his life. If the king didn't like what was said, it could mean Nathan's life. Rarely are we in a situation with where a confrontation could cost us our life. Would you be willing to risk something important, your job, your financial status or your family member or even your life if God had called you?

2. Used a story to separate the person he was confronting from what had happened.

Nathan started by telling David a story. He gives us an example of how to deal with confrontation by not starting with a judgmental statement. Instead he tells David a story about lambs. David listens to Nathan and is enraged. He demanded that the person that did this be punished. He demanded that the man in the story be killed, and repay his theft four times. That was until he realizes it was him. Hit with the reality of his actions was easier than being confronted angrily, initially. David realizes his position in the story and is racked with remorse. He immediately changes his behavior.

Jesus would commonly use parables to tell stories that would illustrate how a certain set of behaviors, which someone was doing, would have results without saying outright. It is a way He used to communicate with those who needed to understand.

So have you ever confronted someone with a story that provides a unique view of the situation without personally involving them? It helps for them to realize how they would feel as an outsider rather than the center of the issue.

3. The Word of God is always the basis for the Confrontation

The first thing we must always remember in confrontation is to understand how we are when confronted with sin in our life. We are resistant to being told becoming defensive almost immediately. I didn't do that or you don't know what you are talking about it generally our first response. But when we consider what we are told we should know when we are wrong by examining God's word. Not just examining His word, but also following the procedure laid out within.

Matt 18:15-17

"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.¹⁶ But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.'¹⁷ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.

Go alone to start with. Talk to the person. Use the Nathan approach. If that doesn't work, go with another person. Someone you can gently confront with. However if that doesn't work you take the issue before the church or larger authority if in a work setting. But ultimately, if there is no change you treat that person as someone that is not a part of your life.

In the end, the goal of confrontation is to change the behavior of a person from sinful. It is to save a brother. If by turning someone out, not in a way to abandon them but to treat them as someone lost, may turn them back. This is God's overwhelming goal for everyone to turn us from our sin.

Final Analysis: Confrontation is not something most people like. While there are those that really enjoy being confrontational, most people shy away from it. We are called to be Biblical confronters, i.e., to know God's word and to hide it in our hearts so that we can confront with the love of Christ, not in anger or hate, but in a loving caring manner that gets people's attention and ultimately shows them the love that Jesus showed us when He confronted us of our own sin.

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