

# WHEN MARRIAGE AND MERCY COLLIDE

## *The Power of the Gospel in Marriage*

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### **Doing Surgery - part 2**

#### *The Neglected Practice of Loving Correction*

*Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Brad Bigney / Nov. 22, 2009*

### **Two Steps for Biblical Correction**

- I. Invite and Pursue Correction from Your Spouse – Don't Wait for Them to Come to You!**
  
- II. Always Start with a Personal 'Heart-Check' – but then have the Courage to Allow God to Use You to Do Surgery on Your Spouse**

2 Samuel 11:1-15, 26-27; 12:1-9, 13

**#1 God pursues sinners.**

**#2 God uses sinners to pursue other sinners.**

When someone close to you is running from the truth, love demands that you speak.

“Aren't you glad Nathan had enough courage to deliver truth to a king in the grip of 'sin and spin'? We may not undermine kingdoms by our sin, but the effect of unrepentant sin harms ourselves, families, relationships, churches, businesses, ministries, and careers in often devastating ways. Over time, even 'moral misdemeanors' and sins that may seem petty compared to David's can do deep damage. We all need a Nathan. We all need someone who can discern a slow drift or a rapid freefall from God, look us in the eye, and say, 'You are the one.'”

... from time to time your spouse will experience a pattern of sin that extinguishes joy and saps the soul, revealing dangerous corrosion in one's character or relationship with God. Perhaps, just like David, your spouse will even be locked in denial and doing everything possible to hide the truth. Such sin cannot, must not, go unaddressed.

Look around. Who can play the Nathan role for your spouse? Who will take on the ministry of reconciliation? This needs to be someone appointed by God, close enough to see, and humble enough to be concerned more about God's righteousness than about people's opinions. There's really only one likely candidate: You.

What will you do in those times when truth is absolutely necessary? What will you do when your spouse needs a Nathan?” *When Sinners Say 'I Do'*, David Harvey, pp. 117-118

The New Testament calls us as believers under this new covenant of grace, to be ambassadors of reconciliation!

**2 Corinthians 5:17-6:1** <sup>17</sup> Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. <sup>18</sup> Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup> For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. <sup>6:1</sup> We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

### ***"Pre-op" questions you should ask:***

#### **1. Have I Prayed or Am I Just Reacting and Going in the Flesh?**

**Colossians 4:2,6** "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving... Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one."

#### **2. Am I Going because I See a Pattern or Am I Just Reacting to a Single Incident?**

Guard against '*Sola Illustrata*' – and make sure you're going because there's a sin pattern.

**I Peter 4:7-11** <sup>7</sup> But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers. <sup>8</sup> And above all things have fervent love for one another, for 'love will cover a multitude of sins.' <sup>9</sup> Be hospitable to one another without grumbling. <sup>10</sup> As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. <sup>11</sup> If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen."

#### **3. Am I Focused on One Area or Am I Going in with a 'Laundry List' of Concerns?**

Do I use a rifle or a shot gun? *"If I'm finally gonna risk going to my spouse and saying something... I'm just gonna say it all... I might as well just get it all out!"*

#### **4. Can I be Concise or Am I just Going to 'Unload' and Pontificate?**

**Proverbs 12:18** "There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

**Proverbs 10:19** "In a multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise."

## 5. Is this a ‘Hit and Run’ or Am I Willing to See this Problem through to the End?

“So often, couples can treat confrontation like a hand grenade - pop the pin, let it fly, and run for cover. But biblical reproof is not some kind of commando raid. It’s careful, committed, surgical care for the soul. A good surgeon is committed not only to the operation, but to post-operative care as well... repentance and change simply take time. When sinners say ‘I do’ we must be committed to the entire process of helping each other grow in godliness through life.” *When Sinners Say “I Do”*, David Harvey, pg. 127

## 6. Am I Ready to Ask Questions or Am I in a Hurry to Make Accusations?

Go asking questions - not making accusations. Don’t jump to conclusions. God uses sinners to pursue other sinners... but you’ll never have perfect insight into another person’s heart... not even your spouse.

**I Corinthians 13:4-7** “<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

## 7. Am I Focused on Promoting God’s Truth or My Own Preference?

The best reproof is one that’s motivated by our desire to help our spouse become more like Christ... and to please God... not just make our lives more comfortable.

### ‘Check-List’ When Bringing Correction to Others

*Adapted from Workshop notes, “Accountable Pastors”, Kenneth Moresco, Sovereign Grace Ministries*

A. Am I asking questions or making accusations. Am I going with questions or conclusions?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

B. Am I open to allowing different or additional facts they may give to change my perspective?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

D. Am I willing to give them time or am I demanding an immediate response?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

E. Am I correcting in a “spirit of gentleness”? - **Galatians 6:1-2**

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

F. Have I waited too long to bring these concerns or questions?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

G. Am I guilty of ‘blitzing’ or overwhelming them with details or lists of sins?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

H. Am I patient - remembering the deceitfulness of sin in all of us – including the one I’m trying to correct?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

I. Do I avoid extreme language (‘You always’ ‘You never’ etc.)?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

J. Have I obeyed Matthew 7 first (Get the ‘log’ out of your own eye first)?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

K. Am I asking questions that will draw them out and pursue clarifying details?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

L. Am I condemning or am I helping them to move toward conviction and repentance?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

M. Am I pointing them to the gospel or am I just focused on their sin?

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

N. Am I maintaining a posture of humility by asking, “Do you have any concerns regarding my attitude or approach in the way that I have shared these things with you?”

I ----- I  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10