



## I. By God's Grace We Must Grow in Compassion & Courage -

To be a friend committed to hard conversations we must have compassion & courage.

### 1. A word to those who err on the side of Courage - (Truth Teller)

***Ephesians 4:25*** – *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

SLOW DOWN - your natural inclination is to be armed with truth grenades and you're ready to let 'em fly on command! Tonight I want you to consider another way, a supernatural way to be filled with grace & truth.

TRUTH TELLER - You'll know when you're depending on the Spirit of God when you find yourself bearing patiently with a friend. When you must speak a word of correction, you do it in love, maybe your eye starts to sweat, just a little - as you bring God's Word to a friend in need.

TRUTH TELLER - Begin to beg God to grow you in COMPASSION.

### 2. A word to those who err on the side of Compassion - (Grace Giver)

***Ephesians 4:29*** – *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

For the rest of us in the room, we may be GRACE GIVERS. Gospel Motivated Friendship Speaks God's Truth. Let me remind you of the Flesh response from the notes last week:

FLESH: In order to preserve friendships, we tolerate carnality and we normalize sin. We don't want to rock the boat or be cut off, so we remain silent on matters that God clearly cares about.

GOSPEL: Because we are fully accepted by God in Christ, we are free to speak God's truth in difficult moments so that more might learn to walk with God by faith.



Maybe you've been confusing silence with enduring by faith. The FEAR OF MAN may have the best of you and me, and we would rather say nothing, than to have hard conversations with others.

GRACE GIVER - maybe you're not giving grace, letting a friend suffer long in their sin is not gracious. God may be prompting you tonight to grow in the area of SPEAKING TRUTH to your neighbor. My hope is that tonight's talk helps embolden you with godly COURAGE to speak God's truth in love.

GRACE GIVER - Begin to beg God to grow you in COURAGE

**PRINCIPLE:**

Since we've been called to a ministry of GRACE & TRUTH we must have hard conversations.

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**TABLE DISCUSSION:** How have you seen the pros & cons of erring on the side of a truth teller or a grace giver in your life?

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**II. The WHAT - What Exactly Are We Committing To?**

What are we filling these hard conversations with?

**2 Timothy 3:16** – *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness*

**Committed to the Scriptures****1. All Scripture is breathed out by God -**

The statement that "All scripture is breathed out by God" is captured with 1 word in the Greek - **Theopneustos** - which literally means God-breathed. The coolest compound word in the Bible and the only place this word is used in all the scriptures is right here in 2Tim 3:16. When we speak out the words of the Bible, we are speaking the very words that God has spoken out to us.

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**GUARDRAIL:** Because The Bible is God-Breathed, it carries a weight to it, so we do not use or speak God's words flippantly. We gotta be careful that our attempts to speak truth in love are not filled with our opinions or man-centered wisdom.

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Like we have said in the past, we do not want to make disciples in our own image, we want to help others walk with Jesus by faith so that they look more like Jesus and less like us.

So we have to know God's Word in order to speak truth to others.

### ***Committed to Teaching***

#### **2. The Grace of Teaching**

We give instruction from the word as the primary means to train God's people. As we read, explain and apply the text for ourselves we grow in knowledge and understanding. Personal time in God's Word, Sunday morning sermons, biblical literature are classic ways to get the Word into your heart.

So many hard conversations can be prevented through biblical teaching. We gain wisdom through teaching and grow in the fear of the Lord.

### ***Committed to Reproof***

#### **3. The Grace of Reproof (Exposing Sin & Convicting)**

**Reproof: Exposing sin to bring about conviction of sin and also correction.** This is a loaded word. There is no better (or worse) example of a reproof than Nathan & David.

This reproof comes after Uriah's funeral, when King David took Bathsheba to be his wife after committing sexual immorality with her, the text says that what David had done displeased the Lord.

#### ***2 Samuel 12:1-15 -***

V1-4 - **Exposing Sin** - Nathan give an account to King David of a cruel injustice that has happened in the city. The account is a parallel of what King David has just done to Uriah. This was the opportunity David had to come clean - he should have connected the dots to say, "I have done this very thing in my kingdom today!"

V5-6 - **David's Reply** - David did not read between the lines, he came down hard on the man Nathan was speaking about with an angry judgment: "As the Lord lives, the man who has done this deserves to die! Don't you wish in this moment David has a moment of humility?"



David is blinded by his own sin and Nathan is there to expose it and also to bring about conviction....

V7-12 - **Conviction** - You Are The Man! This was a reproof from Nathan the Prophet but it was ultimately from the Lord. God spoke through Nathan to deliver the most clear reproof in the whole Bible. David's sin was now exposed and it was clear that what he did in secret would be laid out for all of Israel to see.

V13 - **David's Repentance is Met with Grace** - David owned his sin before the Lord and the Lord put away David's sin. There was still tons of consequence for his sin, but the Lord spared his life.

A reproof is meant to understand what is in someone's heart. As we commit ourselves to lovingly and carefully discipling others in the church, the hope is that others will trust us enough to let us in to the real stuff of their hearts. Their desires, their fears, their struggles, and if needed, we may be called to give a loving reproof one day.

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**GUARDRAIL: Don't be a Sin Hunter** - God has not sent you on a seek & destroy mission to identify everyone's sin and weakness to expose it and bring about conviction. You are not the Holy Spirit.

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**Proverbs 27:6** – *“Faithful are the wounds of a friend, profuse are the kisses of an enemy.”*

- Be sure your words have a careful purpose before you speak.

**Matthew 18:15** – *“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.”*

- The work of a wise reproof is meant to be restorative - the goal is to gain your brother.

**John 3:20** – *“For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be **exposed**.”*

- The work of a wise reproof is meant to expose sin.



**Ephesians 5:13** – *“Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead **expose** them.”*

- The work of a wise reproof is guard holiness in the church.

**John 16:8** – *“And when he comes, he will **convict** the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgement.”*

- The conviction comes from the word bearing on someone’s soul by the Holy Spirit.

### **Committed to Correction**

#### **4. The Grace of Correction**

When you think of correction - think of training a child. This is not a one time event in a child’s life, it is a constant instructing, guiding, & warning. Correction comes when something is out of order and needs to be put in order. It happens when a child has been taught and does not heed the lesson so you must correct the child who disobeys.

**2Timothy 2:24-25** – *“And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, **correcting** his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth.”*

**Proverbs 9:7-8** – *“Whoever corrects a scoffer gets himself abuse, and he who reproveth a wicked man incurs injury. Do not **reprove** a scoffer, or he will hate you; reprove a wise man, and he will love you.”*

- Once you give a wise & loving correction you will know who you are dealing with. A scoffer will hate you and a wise man will love you.

### **Teaching Through the Grace of Pain**

#### **5. The Grace of Training in Righteousness - as (Discipline)**

**Hebrews 12:5-11** – *“And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? “My son, do not regard lightly the **discipline** of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord **disciplines** the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives.” It is for **discipline** that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not **discipline**? If you are left without **discipline**, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who*



***disciplined** us and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits and live? For they **disciplined** us for a short time as it seemed best to them, but he **disciplines** us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment all **discipline** seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it."*

Sometimes the best lessons we learn are through the grace of pain. Like a father who warns his children of their disobedience, there comes a time when the warnings cease and the child must learn that sin produces pain.

God's Word warns us, but if we do not heed God's warnings, this training in righteousness leaves us with the painful reminder that when we go our own way in this particular way sin hurts! The reminder of the pain & sorrow are enough to humble us into loving obedience when we have been trained by the discipline of the Lord.

Spiritual spankings from a loving God are good for us, they motivate us toward holiness and they produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness for those of us who have been trained by them.

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**TABLE DISCUSSION:** How has a hard conversation trained you through discipline by the Lord? What were the benefits you experienced?

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### III. WHY- The End Goal

#### 1. So That We Are Equipped For Every Good Work.

*2Tim 3:17 – "So that (Purpose Statement) the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."*

The Lord wants us equipped for every good work! Isn't that good news! We go through teaching, reproof, correction & training in righteousness to be made whole & complete!

Think of it another way, when our mind and soul have been trained biblically, we begin to operate with true integrity before the Lord, even when we sin, we are trained to respond to our sin with biblical guilt that should produce repentance.



When we don't get there on our own, so often the Lord brings a friend in your life to come alongside you ready to speak truth in love.

## **2. So That We Operate From A Biblically Informed Conscience**

**1Tim 1:5** – *“The aim of our charge is **love** that issues from a **pure heart** and a **good conscience** and a **sincere faith.**”*

Paul gives Timothy the glorious end goal for our whole time together in this 1 powerful statement.

We are to be motivated by love from a pure heart. In the context of a warning against false teachers Paul charges Timothy with purpose, he urges Timothy to operate with a good conscience and a sincere faith.

**A BIBLICAL CONSCIENCE** - This whole night we've been talking about building a biblical conscience. Through teaching, reproof, correction, training in righteousness - the end goal is to produce a good conscience before the Lord.

As the Word of God Teaches us by the power of the Holy Spirit we learn by grace how to live according to the Word. When we are living consistently with what we believe, we are COMPLETE! We enjoy peace with God and we are equipped for every good work.

When we are not living according to our conscience by faith, we are in sin. A guilt overcomes us that causes sorrow over our actions and that sorrow should cause us to turn from our sin. If our conscience is tender to the Lord's leading this is often enough for us to continue walking with the Lord. When we refuse, this is often when the Lord must use other means to get our attention because he LOVES US.

This is where friends enter in, this is why we have a class on hard conversations because we want to train our conscience biblically so that we are properly calibrated to God's Word and respond with repentance when we sin.

**NOT a Jiminy Cricket Conscience** - If our conscience is not calibrated to the truth of God's Word then we will be off, we'll end up with an emotions driven conscience and be left with a Disney theology of following our heart (whether it



is pure or defiled). This conscience must be trained in righteousness with a wise, loving reproof and gentle correction. As we encourage one another, speaking the truth in love.

This work requires love, wisdom, skill, prayer and a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. It is not to be taken lightly.

#### **IV. HOW? How do we approach others?**

*2Tim 4:2b - With Complete Patience & Teaching*

**Patience:** We do not come to people with harsh opinions about their sin, we move towards sinners with patience, and grace in all humility.

**Teaching:** We continue to come along-side with instruction for the sake of their soul.

(REFER TO YOUR HANDOUTS FOR THE REST OF OUR INSTRUCTION)

**WORKSHOP SCENARIOS:**

**1. Marcus** has been pursuing a woman primarily because she is attractive and successful. At this point he does not even know whether or not she is a believer. Three dates in, a verse surfaces in his mind – "Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). He pauses, convicted. He realizes he has not prayed about this relationship or asked whether he is pursuing her for godly reasons.

**2. Robert** is casually dating three women simultaneously. He knows what the Bible says about integrity and self-control – he has heard it preached. But months of rationalizing have worn the signal down to silence. He feels no tension about it; in fact, he views it as wise to keep his options open.

**3. James** became a Christian six weeks ago. He has been dating casually his whole adult life. He doesn't feel any tension because he genuinely does not know the Bible speaks to how a man should pursue a woman. He is not rebellious – he is simply uninformed.

**4. Thomas** is 34 and unmarried. He is a sincere believer, but somewhere he absorbed the idea that an unmarried man is incomplete or even in sin. He carries constant shame about his singleness, reads every interaction with a woman as a divine sign, and has made rushed, anxious decisions in relationships driven by fear rather than faith.

**SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. What have you learned about being a Truth-Teller or a Grace-Giver tonight that will help you in the next hard conversation you must have?
2. How does knowing what kind of conscience has affect how you approach a person?
3. What situation is the Holy Spirit bringing to your mind tonight that is leaving you unsettled? How should you respond after what you just heard?