

- I. ONE THING—The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

II. MEDITATION

- A. Review your class notes from Tuesday.
- Take some time to think about the main ideas of the lesson. If you want to add details to your notes, you'll find the audio message on our website under the Resources tab. (www.DivineDesignDiscipleship.com).
 - Which of the scriptures referenced were particularly meaningful to you? Write out those verses below and spend some time studying them this week.
- B. Rewrite your One Thing into a prayer, expressing your heart's desire for God to make this truth become your experience.

III. PRINCIPLES

The following principles will aid you in overcoming anxiety, worry, and fear of conflict:

A. JESUS AND CONFRONTATION

- The Jesus we see in the Gospel accounts was not afraid of conflict!
- He did not avoid having uncomfortable conversations for the purpose of:
 1. Revealing the truth about Himself
 2. Revealing the truth about those with whom He sought authentic relationship
- “Confront” = *com* (“together”) + *frons* (“forehead”) Together these Latin root words imply that conflict is “to stand in front of an issue with someone.”
- Jesus practiced confrontation regularly. His approach included both grace and truth: Jn 1:14--The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth
- Without truth, we’re not living in reality. Both people must bring the truth and their true selves to the table.
- We won’t feel free to tell the truth without grace. Grace means showing the other person you are for them and for the relationship.
- “Regardless of our reluctance to confront tough issues or challenging people, we need to. We can’t advance, succeed, or grow without confrontation. Engaging in productive confrontation paves the way for diversity of thought, developing healthy boundaries, arriving at new, innovative approaches, better decision-making, and challenging the status quo, all of which are essential if we want to thrive in our lives and work.” (Kathy Caprino)
- Confrontation anxiety diminishes when we remember its purpose: Pr 10:10 MSG-- An evasive eye is a sign of trouble ahead, but an open, face-to-face meeting results in peace.

Insights:

B. PRINCIPLES OF LOVING CONFRONTATION

- It takes courage, wisdom, and intentionality to do confrontation in a way that keeps our relationships fresh and growing.
- It’s been said that relationships need upgrading every 5 years to keep them working. An even better option would be to stay in a continual place of growth and restoration.
- The biblical word for restoration (*katartidso*) literally means “the mending of a net.”
- The growth, freshness, restoration/mending that we desire cannot happen without engaging in difficult conversations or confrontation.
- “Unskilled confronting can lead to negative outcomes, as well as additional problems such as emotional woundedness.” (Eric Scalise)
- Here are some principles for confrontation that we see in the life of Jesus:
 1. Start with God and your own heart
 - Let relational tension bring about transformation in us first. Ask: “What can I own in this situation?” and “Where can I repent?”
 - Mt 7:5-- First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

- God will grow you and your relationship with Him every time: Ps 62:1-- For God alone my soul waits in silence; from Him comes my salvation
- Ex: Jesus sought God's wisdom about people first: Jn 2:24 AMP-- But Jesus, for His part, did not entrust Himself to them, because He knew all *people* [and understood the superficiality and fickleness of human nature]
- Jesus was spiritually and emotionally mature. We need to evaluate our EQ (emotional intelligence) and tackle those areas where we lack maturity. See the handout "Tools & Techniques: Emotional Maturity Levels" for help in this pursuit.

Insights:

2. Choose Forgiveness

- Before you have a conversation, begin the process of forgiving. This will cleanse you and enable you to approach the other person in a loving and merciful way.
- Initially, forgiveness is a choice made in obedience to God's command: Eph 4:32 MSG-- Forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as God in Christ forgave you.
- In situations where an offense is repeated again and again, forgiveness is often a process. It begins with a decision to forgive. It continues as individual instances come to mind and each one is brought to God to receive His forgiving grace and freedom.
- See the handout "Tools & Techniques: Understanding Forgiveness" to help you negotiate this huge principle of healthy relationships.
- Ex: Jesus practiced forgiveness even in His darkest hour: Luke 23:34 NLT--Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing."

Insights:

3. Care more about the relationship than your comfort

- We open the door to the enemy when we don't handle our conflicts quickly and honestly: Eph 4:26-27 NLT-- Don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry, for anger gives a foothold to the devil.
- Spiritual forces that can gain access include:
 - A spirit of fear may be given entrance by self-protection
 - A spirit of separation can enter with denial or avoidance
 - A spirit of deceit might hide beneath lack of honesty and truth
- Ex: Jesus said uncomfortable things in order to set relationships straight: Jn 8:8 JBP-- "Let the one among you who has never sinned throw the first stone at her." Then he stooped down again and continued writing with his finger on the ground. And when they heard what he said, they were convicted by their own consciences and went out, one by one, beginning with the eldest until they had all gone.

Insights:

4. Appropriate a non-anxious demeanor

- Pray as you prepare for a confrontation. Ask Him:
 - To guard your heart and mind with His peace (Phil 4:6)
 - To give you courage and to keep you from fear (Ps 27:14)

- To help you not take the bait of manipulation or petty insults (Pr 12:16)
- To give you His love for the other individual (Luke 6:35)
- Trust God to provide you with His words, self-control, and a “cool spirit”: Pr 17:27 NAS-- He who restrains his words has knowledge, and he who has a cool spirit is a man of understanding.
- Ex: The religious leaders tried to trap Jesus with their questions. At least one listener was drawn closer by His peaceful and wise answers: Mk 12: 28ff NLT-- One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”²⁹ Jesus replied, “The most important commandment is this: ‘Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord.’³⁰ And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.’³¹ The second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ No other commandment is greater than these.”³² The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other.”³³ And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.”³⁴ Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.

Insights:

5. Admit your mistakes

- There is always something you could have done better. Own that and lead with that. It can be as simple as, “I am sorry that I did love you in a language you could receive.”
- Though it’s scary to say, “I was wrong,” there are no more freeing words: Jn 8:32 MSG-- Then you will experience for yourselves the truth, and the truth will free you.
- Ex: Jesus helps Peter see his mistake and admit it: Jn 13:8-10 NIV-- “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean

Insights:

6. Avoid Assumptions

- We often avoid hard conversations due to fear of disconnection. We choose educated guesses and faulty assumptions instead: Pr 18:13 NLT-- Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.
- Without a conversation, misunderstandings and resentment can build up.
- 1 Cor 13:7 TLB-- If you love someone, you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him

- In-depth sharing is required to maintain intimacy. And the degree of intimacy determines whether confrontation is appropriate or not.
- Ex: When abandoned by others, Jesus asked His closest friends if they were leaving, too: Jn 6:66-67 NLT-- Many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?"

Insights:

7. Remain true to your core values

- Determine your top 3 to 5 values for your closest relationships. This will prepare you to overcome fear and cowardice when conflicting thoughts and emotions come flooding in.
- Also ask the other person what is critically important to them in the friendship or marriage. Examples include kindness, gratitude, joy/laughter, or vulnerability.
- To be people of integrity, we want to learn to speak and act in a way that's consistent with our values for relationship: Pr 12:22 NAS-- Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal faithfully are His delight.
- Ex: Jesus showed the Rich Young Ruler the gap between his words and his true values in a painful conversation: Mk 10:20-22 NLT-- "Teacher, all these things I have kept from my youth." Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, "One thing you lack: Go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross, and follow Me." But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.

Insights:

8. Honor Boundaries

- Relational friction often involves boundary violations.
- Fear of Man may tempt us to keep our boundaries to ourselves. But if we want healthy relationships, we must make them known.
- In tough conversations, be on the alert for boundaries that are not stated directly. Body language, silence, or a change in tone can indicate you're approaching an off-limits area.
- Ex: Jesus approached the Woman at the Well gradually and cautiously: Jn 4:8-10 JBP-- A Samaritan woman arrived to draw some water. "Please give me a drink," Jesus said to her, for his disciples had gone away to the town to buy food. The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.) "If you knew what God can give," Jesus replied, "and if you knew who it is that said to you, 'Give me a drink', I think you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water!"

Insights:

9. Be Trustworthy

- "I can only trust you if you do what you say you'll do again and again." (Brene' Brown)

- FOM, FOMO and Fear of Conflict can lead us into over-committing and making promises we can't keep, especially when others are upset with us.
- Measure your words carefully: Mt 5:37 MSG--Don't say anything you don't mean. This counsel is embedded deep in our traditions. You only make things worse when you lay down a smoke screen of pious talk, saying, 'I'll pray for you,' and never doing it, or saying, 'God be with you,' and not meaning it. You don't make your words true by embellishing them with religious lace. In making your speech sound more religious, it becomes less true. Just say 'yes' and 'no.' When you manipulate words to get your own way, you go wrong.
- The time will come when we must decide whether to deliver on our word or to disappoint the other person. This creates inner conflict and relational stress!
- Ex: Jesus confronted Peter for making a promise he couldn't keep: Mk 14:29-30 NLT-- Peter said to him, "Even if everyone else deserts you, I never will." Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, Peter—this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny three times that you even know me."

Insights:

C. PREVIOUSLY ON "BE NOT ANXIOUS":

- Be alert for anxious thoughts and fearful emotions that indicate Fear of Man in your life.
- Use the Handout "Tools & Techniques: Liberation" to reinforce that truth that your love and acceptance by God are unconditional.
- Keep a journal of your 2-way prayer conversations with God. Be sure to confirm what you've heard by being sure it is consistent with the whole counsel of Scripture.
- Use "Tools & Techniques: Listening to God" for biblical support and practical suggestions.
- Find general promises for all God's children on "Tools & Techniques: Spiritual Blessings" or look up verses using an online search engine such as BibleGateway.com.
- Here is a suggested format for Listening Prayer:*
 - Pay attention to your places of fear, dread, doubt, worry, and anxiety this week. These are places you need a promise or a word from God! Choose one to share.
 - Take 5-10 minutes for Listening to the Lord:
 - Spend a few minutes focusing on God. Use a song or a Psalm to stir thanksgiving and worship in your heart.
 - ASK: "Where in my life do I need a promise from You? Is there a specific circumstance or relationship?" Let the thoughts flow. Choose the one place or relationship that rises to the top.
 - ASK: "How am I feeling about this circumstance or relationship?" Write down what comes to mind.
 - Picture yourself giving your negative emotions to the Lord. What do you see or hear?
 - ASK: "What do you want to give me in return?"
 - ASK the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth as you search the Scriptures. Record the most meaningful ones here or in your spiritual journal. Make sure the verses are in agreement with the whole counsel of Scripture.
 - Meditate on those verse(s) until they become your personal promise(s).