

life *together.*

# RELATIONAL BREAKDOWN

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## GROUP ICE BREAKER

If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?

## REVIEW LAST WEEK'S NEXT STEPS

What, if any, next step did you commit to last week, how did it go?

- I will ask God to use the people in my life to grow me.
- I will do life with arms wide open, looking for people to include.
- I will join a small group, where the presence of Jesus is made available.

## MESSAGE SUMMARY

There is no pain in the world like the pain of relational breakdown, but Jesus has given a set of instructions on what to do. Our goal is to get maximum clarity and then to commit to living by them. He gives seven instructions.

- *Acknowledge Conflict:* You must acknowledge first in your mind and heart there has been a breakdown.
- *Take Initiative:* People who are going to do life together are people who own responsibility to deal with relational breakdown.
- *Approach, and Don't Avoid:* The number one reason for avoidance of conflict is fear of confrontation. But avoiding kills the relationship.
- *No Third Parties:* Jesus says go directly to the person, not to someone else for support or reinforcement.
- *Approach Sensitively:* You have to say no to the temptation to embarrass someone in front of friends.
- *Discuss the Problem Directly:* Sometimes, in an effort to soften the blow, people end up addressing the problem indirectly, they never name it.
- *Aim at Reconciliation:* The goal is to win back the other person, to restore the relationship.

Jesus does lay out a kind of appeals process. If you do this and it still doesn't resolve the problem, get a few people of integrity that you both can trust, wise people that you mutually respect. And if that doesn't work, as an absolute last resort, there may need to be a formal church process.

Let's commit to a lifestyle of dealing with conflict. If you take Jesus up on this, you will discover there will be joy and light released in your heart, your spirit, and in your relationships.

## ***DISCUSSION QUESTIONS***

1. What's your secret to getting along with others; or conversely, why do you have a tough time getting along with others?
2. If conflict is normal, why can acknowledging and dealing with it be so difficult? Is it difficult for you? Why or why not?
3. Read Matthew 5:23-24 and 18:15-17. Of the seven instructions listed in the summary, which is your biggest challenge and why? Which is easiest for you and why?
4. Do you think these stages work in all situations? Why or why not?
5. It's important to remember in restoration is that we should be as ready to receive it as we should be to give it. How would you respond if someone approached you and confronted you about about an offense? What would it look like for Blue Oaks to grow in this regard, being gracious and humble givers and receivers of restoration?
6. Without naming a person or situation, which of the seven steps do you need to act on this week? What do you think the effect would be?

## ***NEXT STEPS FOR THIS WEEK (COMMIT TO GROW)***

Use these as a guide to take your next step and commit to what you learned this week:

- I will follow these 7 steps when dealing with conflict.
  - I will acknowledge when there is conflict.
  - I will take initiative to resolve conflict.
  - I will approach the person and not avoid the conflict.
  - I will go directly to the person I have a problem with.
  - I will go in private and approach the person with sensitivity.
  - I will discuss the problem directly, following the 4 steps from William Backus.
  - I will make reconciliation the aim in conflict.

## ***SCRIPTURE REFERENCES***

- Matthew 18:15
- Matthew 5:23-24
- Philippians 4:2-3

## ***PRAYER REQUESTS***

Take time to share how you can be praying for each other over the next week:

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