

[00:00:00] But the first idea, I think there's three deeply spiritual things and I would describe this as this tool, and this comes from Intimate Life folks, David Ferguson down in, in Austin. Um, it's the best one I've seen. I haven't seen them all. There's others that are really good. Others I would go, um, I'm not sure connection really occurs in that.

So I like it for those reasons. It leads, the confession and forgiveness process actually leads to a moment of connection and care. And, and, and so that's, that's why this is really helpful to me when I think about what makes, what causes something to be damaged or, or broken asunder in relationship, whatever causes the, the discord that causes us not to be reconciled, um, there's going to be either real or [00:01:00] interpreted wrong to it.

And so, uh, when we think about the first part of this, it's this idea of confession. Confession is a unique spiritual thing. We as human beings, I believe this is true. Um, you can wrestle this through, but confession, when we say I was wrong or it was wrong, We are offering a judgment on our behavior or actions or speech or something.

We're saying, declaring something wrong, and we're going to confess it was wrong. And this proverb, 2813, I think, really sets up a spiritual truth as human beings. Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper. If we're people who won't admit our wrongness, then somehow, and we won't acknowledge it, somehow that's going to keep us from prospering.

But he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. Now, I believe the first meaning of this is before God, for sure. But I also think there's a predisposed, [00:02:00] um, process in the human heart that if you will say you were wrong and acknowledge it, I am predisposed as a human being to show mercy. And you can watch anecdotally so often.

When someone in culture, an athlete or a musician or a politician, if they try to hide it and say, no, I didn't do anything wrong, I didn't do anything wrong. We just go, jerk, you know, I, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna, I'm not gonna think well of you. And if they humbly come and say, you know what, that was just wrong.

I, I, I am, uh, I'm so sorry. That was, I just did wrong. We'll go, oh, okay. When we begin to want to show mercy. And so part of what we're doing when we confess something is we're setting up the person we've offended. To be able to, be free to, be predisposed to offer that mercy to us by, by saying we see it the same way you do.

We see it the way God sees it. [00:03:00] It was wrong. Uh, just as an example, a couple anecdotes I usually use when I'm, I'm teaching through this. I, I could probably find others. If you hear of others, please pass them along. But I, I can think of two athletes, um, well loved, incredibly famous, um, athletes that will not say I was wrong.

and public will not forgive them. That's Pete Rose and Lance Armstrong. If Pete Rose would have just said, You know what? I cheat on baseball was stupid. Please forgive me. It was wrong. He'd probably be back in baseball and in the Hall of Fame. My guess would be. Because we're such a merciful people. But he's just, nope, I didn't.

I never bet against my team, so I wasn't wrong to bet on baseball. Everybody knows he was wrong. But he won't say it. And so he stays outside. Lance Armstrong, same thing. He's absolutely right. Everybody was cheating. It doesn't make it okay. You cheated. You cheated. Say it. [00:04:00] Say it was wrong, and I, he lost 7 percent of Trek.

You ever do the math on that? Um, that's a lot of money because he won't say, You know what? I was just wrong. Please forgive me. And people who defended him cannot forgive him because he won't, he won't agree with the wrongness of it. And so this is, it is a spiritual thing to say I was wrong and leave it there and let mercy flow.

And this is why I think, um, then what you were talking about, this is, this is the part I think it can get, get muddied. If we add, I didn't mean to be wrong. It was not my fault I was wrong or something else. It's just to let it be something that lets them be God like and, and show mercy to us. And I don't want, as I think about this process, I'm trying to help people not have anything muddy that up that just deal with this.

I agree with you. What I did to you was wrong. What you're feeling is real. I acknowledge it. I stand with you and with God in [00:05:00] looking at it that way. Okay? So, the script is very simple and confession is one of the ways I hurt you is, and to name a specific event, this is one of the other places where being precise can be helpful.

Um, I've, I've struggled with harsh speech towards Cindy, uh, for good chunks of our, our married life. And so, um, my, my propensity would be, be to say, one of the first ways I've hurt you is, I, I, I've just spoken to you harshly and, and, and what's better than that because it's her pain, her wounding, her hurt is, is associated with actual words spoken, not big mega themes, okay?

And so if I can say, when I said that to you in this situation, these words. When I hurt you, when I was short with you and cut you off and didn't let you complete your, and corrected what you said, harshly. Then it becomes a real event in time because our wounds, the things that hurt, [00:06:00] come one at a time.

And this whole process, what we want to do is heal that wound. We want to go from a place of tenderness and an open wound to a place of scar. That's what we're trying to accomplish here. And so any tool we can use to help that healing occur is going to be, we interpret things, we take those hurts, and then we begin to cope, we begin to adapt to who we're living with and what they're saying is important, um, and how they're treating us.

What they're saying was important by their actions. And so we're trying to redirect that with this acknowledgement of wrong. And I was wrong to treat you this way because You are, you are, I, I, this is where you can use relational language. And, and this, this, the wrong idea is the declaration you want to make sure, but why you understand it was wrong.

I am called to love you. I'm called to bear with you in patience. It's, I'm just wrong whenever I don't allow you to speak freely or I try to, to, [00:07:00] to, you know, muscle over you with, with, with strong speech or, you know, try to push you down in any way. That's just wrong. So that again, that helps the, the, the hearer know, okay, you get this, you understand we're seeing this the same.

That's exactly how it landed on me up until this point, by the way, you are, you are, um, trying to express how you understand it. We're going to come back in a moment to, to giving them a chance to speak on their own hurt. But right now that's, that's what we're trying to do is express how we understand it.

And so this is the, these are the two verses. This, this care, this empathy and comfort is the next piece. Where we, we say godly sorrow produces repentance that leads to salvation without regret. And this is the difference between I'm sorry I got caught and I'm sad because I wronged you, I hurt you. This, this, the story we share in this.

In this time is about a couple and you're going to listen to these as you as you [00:08:00] work this material because you're going to find your own stories. But basically, the, the, the, there's a wonderful leader couple that attended one of our, our four week classes, and we're sitting in the all day event, and, and, uh, just dear, dear couple.

The wife was very intuitive, very, very soft to things that are relational, and, and, uh, the husband was a strong leader, uh, dear guy. But, but harder to, to have a sense of what's hurtful and what wasn't. He grew up in a family where teasing, kind of poking fun, was just kind of, it was probably an expression of affection.

But it was just like, you know, kind of the put down that, that kind of, um, dinging each other with little comments was a way to express love. And, and the whole, for 17 years they've been married, she would say, please don't do that. That hurts. I don't like it. And he would offer, okay, I'm sorry, I guess, I'm sorry if that hurts you.

That's, you know, almost annoyed by her sensitivity. [00:09:00] Um, and, and,

hundreds of times, probably, he had apologized, she'd said, that hurts me, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. Nothing ever changed, and they kept having that conversation. They showed up on our Sunday, or our Saturday all day retreat. They walked through this, and the spirit, one of the things we ask couples to do is go ask the spirit.

What do you need to reconcile it? What do you need to walk through? Um, and even though probably dozens of times he'd apologized for this behavior, the Spirit again prompted him, yes, this is, this is something you need to get right. So, he walked back through it, used the script, and after it was done, we come back in, and the way we do it after people practice it a little bit, we try to learn and continue to say, how did that go?

What was hard? What was good? Um, let's, let's, let's kind of discuss your experience, um, after people have practiced and this guy, again, he's brilliant, talented, [00:10:00] mature guy. I, he's just, just like just an all star dude. Um, he comes in and he starts telling his story. He goes, you know what? Well, first of all, for the first time in 17 years, I really, really cried and, and I finally understood.

Um, what, what, what, what's going on in this, this habit? And he ex and he expressed, here's, here's what I apologized for, and this is our history. This is our story. And, and, and then he, and he said these words, and this kind of speaks back to this second Corinthians seven, and this is why I believe this verse is so powerful in this tool and helps lead us to different behavior just to repentance.

He said, you know what? I, I don't know. I can't promise my bride that I will not tease her again, but I can promise her I will never do it. And not understand how much it hurts her. That is clear to me now. I have associated with her pain. I have felt her pain. [00:11:00] So

I shared that story for five years. Five years later, they come back through the class. I don't know if their small group was doing it or whatever. And I say, hey, hey guys, I share your story. I don't even want to use your names, but I share your story. Is that okay? Are you comfortable with hearing that? And he goes, absolutely.

They both did. They're both standing there. Absolutely. And you know what? Five years, never teased her again.

It's kind of repentance. It's kind of what we want to try to walk through. When I understand my behavior hurts you, and I can associate with that, you can actually heal when I offer comfort for that, but I see it the way you see it, and I experience it the way you experience it. That empathy is so important, and that's where we live out that Romans 12 15.

By the way, that's why that's so significant to our, our, Why we teach that first and why we put it in the center, it's in the middle of everything. That, that, that, that capacity to feel with, to [00:12:00] respond, to meet emotion with emotion. Okay? So, so you must have felt, this is where we go, and this is your best understanding, and try to agree with, you must have felt really belittled, or misunderstood, or I might say with Sidney, disrespected, or like I, I don't value you, or that you, you don't have a place, or you felt like I was, Lording it over you, you must have done all kinds of things, and I feel, and you offer that comfort, and I feel horrible, sorrowful, broken hearted, and this has been where I would plug, potentially plug in, that, that idea of, I want you to know, I, I, I, my, my heart's desire is to do good to you, and I didn't, I failed you, and it makes me feel awful that I would hurt you in that way, or I would, whatever the offense might be, so we can reassure them of our desire without letting ourselves off the hook.

We see it, we understand. We failed to do that Well. [00:13:00] Okay. After we walk through our best understanding, then this is a follow up piece. We, we really encourage, I want to understand in our ways that, that this event, this situation hurts you. Is there anything else you want to tell me about how I hurt you by doing that thing now?

So as the one who is confessing, listen and receive whatever is shared with you, and then go back through the comfort and, and empathy and comfort situation. Um.

This whole process of this sets up the third spiritual thing. So the first spiritual thing is, is confession that we orient in this humble place. If I see myself as wrong, I agree with you. The second spiritual thing is when we have to offer this care for the hurt that I caused in, in Romans 12, 15 practice, it's not typically my fault.

And so it's a little safer now when I'm offering comfort, it is my fault, whatever your feeling I did, or I created, or at least participated in and probably had a larger, um, larger [00:14:00] responsibility than I would like to admit. And so when we're doing this, it's important that the one who is hurt, the one who's being confessed to, has an opportunity to really experience that care because that sets them up for the third very spiritual thing, which we'll get to in here in a moment.

But if they don't feel known, they don't feel cared for, that becomes a much bigger hurdle for people to actually offer the forgiveness. In this situation, um, There's a couple reasons if you, if the confessor is asking, is there any other hurt? You will see both of these as you're ministering with people.

There's two reasons people will not, even if there is more hurt, maybe you missed, um, in your confession you didn't get, get all the, all the details of why that hurt them, and they have things to say, sometimes people won't share, even though they're feeling, wow, there is more there, but I don't want to share it.

One is, you're doing such a great job, I'll let you off the hook. Encourage people to clean out the [00:15:00] wound. Just clean it out. Let's, let's just make sure this becomes a really nice little scar that doesn't hurt anymore when we touch it. That it becomes a place of healing. Doesn't mean you don't remember it.

There's a scar there. But it does mean it doesn't hurt to touch it anymore. The second one is, and this might be more in distressed couples, you might work with or be exposed to. They don't want to lay down all their weapons. You know, if they really let the wound get cleared out, then they lose the right to hold on to a stick to beat the other one with at some point.

And so to really encourage people to, to let that wound get cleaned out and to lay down those reasons that you might have by, by letting the person minister to that. So the last phase is this, and it is a very God like, deeply spiritual thing

when they say, can you, will you please forgive me? And, and, and this is when the, the listener, uh, [00:16:00] the one who being confessed to, um, has to pause a moment and go, okay.

Can I, can I lay this down? Can I release the debt? And the more I'm, I'm in agreement with, I've been, I've been encouraged by the, uh, the agreement that this was wrong. Now I, I'm predisposed to be merciful, like God. This is, this is the God like thing we do in, in reconciliation. I'm, I'm, I'm, I've been cared for.

I've been understood. There's no reason I need to hold onto this. And then to really acknowledge I'm doing, I'm obeying, but I'm also bearing the image of God by being a grace giver and releasing the death and really laying that right to hold accountable down. So, that's, that's the completion of it. We always encourage couples to do all of these as they're looking at each other, trying to, to, to maintain physical proximity and, and, and relational contact.[00:17:00]

Um, but that's, that's the basic skill of how to walk through this in three deeply, I believe, deeply spiritual things that will help really aid reconciliation and not just, you know, that was wrong, I see it, please forgive me. But to really, in the middle, create this place of connection and care. And what we've seen, what we've experienced, is a really profound healing.

And so often you go, it'll take time. Our experience has been, it doesn't take much time if people walk through this well. There is, there is a deep healing and reconciliation. It's very, very quick. Now, that's not always true, but that's common. That's a common outcome. Um, even, even in deep, um, deep wounds to deep hurts.

So, one of the things we learned from, from Intimate Life that was really helpful when we went down for an intensive in Austin is we really encourage people to, to not make the list of how you've hurt me, [00:18:00] but to really seek the spirit as a matter of our, our normal pattern, rhythm of life, when we think about how do we maintain connection and care as a couple, as an elder team, as a small group, a mission team, whatever it might be, to, to have a regular rhythm of kind of connection.

Self assessment, allowing the spirit to bring conviction. You know, it kind of that, the psalm says that, you know, search me, oh Lord, see if there's any hurtful way in me and, and, and in your rhythm of kind of being right before the Lord, your own soul care, uh, your own self management, um, there's this opportunity to stop and say, Lord, who have I hurt?

And then to scan through and look for her countenances or allow the spirit to remind you of words that were spoken or, or missed opportunities to express care and then to really just walk this out and model it with, with, with one another. We, we really believe in the power of the spirit. Just a quick anecdote.

We, we use, we share our, uh, we went down to Austin. And, [00:19:00] uh, our instructions were to go, we had four hours, one afternoon, we had the evening free, and then we were coming back for four, four, four more hours the next day. Uh, we had a great therapist, um, that was, uh, helping us walk through this and he said build a list, things you want to hear, uh, to be apologized to, and things you feel like the spirit would ask you to apologize for, and don't show each other the list, we're going to do it tomorrow, so just prepare yourself with that list, and Cindy and I went back and beautifully did our thing, um, and, and, One of the things that became evident to us, we came back the next day, um, he sat, um, in, in our, in our, in our session, watched us walk through one and go, okay, you guys got this.

So he left and for a couple hours, at least maybe two and a half hours, Cindy and I went back and forth, uh, apologizing, confessing for things. Uh, and, and, and what we realized when we got done confessing our lists, everything. that was on her list that she felt offended [00:20:00] by, I had confessed to her and everything that I had felt offended by, she had confessed to me.

There was not one thing that we did that we confessed to one another. It was less than 30 years old. They were all 30 year old wounds and the spirit knew this was, this, this all needed to be cleaned up. There were, there were wounds. So we have a great confidence, but as you're working with couples, they'll say, well, what if I wait and I never.

And I'm, I'm, I'm, I'm deeply hurt by something that's happened. Then that's where we would use assertiveness. We would use an assertiveness statement, not, Hey, why aren't, haven't you apologized? No, use this, use the assertiveness skill to say it would help meet my need for security or respect. If we could talk through this thing, it was kind of hurtful.

Would that be okay? And then, then we can approach it. Um, but that's, it's kind of the content on this skill been immensely profitable [00:21:00] for couples as they've used it. We, we, we, we teach this everywhere to everyone, and it's been really, really helpful for those who apply it.