

APRIL DEVOTIONAL - RELATIONAL & EMOTIONAL

In this session, we are going to combine the One Degree of change for March (Relational) and April (Emotional). It would seem quite apparent that there is an inseparable connection between our emotional health and our relational health. However, it seems we try to solve the one without addressing the other at times.

The good news is approaching either will directly lead to addressing the other, at least it should. Relational challenges can be evidence of an emotional health issue, and an emotional health issue is going to most likely impact our relationships.

In Week 4 of the One Degree series, the illustration of a sponge was used. A sponge both stores what is poured in, and it excretes out under pressure what has been stored. This is the reality of the human soul. It receives (the pains, joys, the heartaches, the happiness etc..) the experiences of life, stores them and unless processed properly they are uncontrollable under the pressures of life. Especially in our interpersonal relationships.

Let us remember this: our interpersonal relationships are directly affected by our inner person health. Here are some of the symptoms that may arise during relational conflict or difficulties that can be evidence that we might have an inner person issue to address:

SULKING – unhealthy emotional distancing when we are not able to influence the situation or person in order to bring about what we perceive as a satisfactory solution.

SPEAKING – the Bible is very clear that out of the overflow of our heart does our mouth speak. (Luke 6:45) Also, James says entire forests are set ablaze by the small spark of the mouth.

SILENT TREATMENT – while this might seem to be the answer to the one above, this is really just a very passive but aggressive way of manipulating the situation and other people's emotions.

TASK

The answer to these and many other responses, many of which produce tremendous relational harm, is the fruit of self-control (Gal 5:23). The beauty of this word is that the root word is power. Our restrained responses are actually expressions of power not weakness. We have the ability to control our power in any and every relational situation!

Here are some suggestions to put into practice to take control of yourself and NOT the situation!

ASK – in the moment of great pressure simply ask, ‘can I have just a moment to think before I respond.’ This means a moment to think, not a delay tactic to deal with the confrontation.

A minute means a minute, but you will quickly see how much this minute can matter.

SPEAK – try and start every portion of the conversation with a very low tone. With each exchange in a conflict, lower the volume! You may end at a higher volume by the end of your sentences but the next time it is your turn to talk, turn the volume down (no matter how loud the other person is!)

RESTRAIN – if this conflict is with a loved one (child, spouse, sibling, etc..) hold one of or both of their hands. Hands say so much more than we believe while we are in conflict. If not in close relationship, either stick your hands under your thighs or if standing, in your pockets!

PACE – control the pace of the exchange by slowing it down! Take longer breaths (3 seconds, in 2 second hold, while exhaling start speaking). Start kindly restating what you are hearing. Finally, listen. Do not interrupt or be focusing your response at the expense of hearing what they said. The first two will deeply affect this practice.

Now, choose ONE! One relation expression of self-control and we will see you again next month!