

Central Study Hour – Sabbath School Lesson Notes

“Oneness in Christ”: Lesson 10, “Unity and Broken Relationships”

Sabbath Afternoon: Read the Title.

It’s hard to miss the irony of the NAD rejection of the GC Annual Council vote to move toward compliance with things voted in GC sessions and GC annual councils. Right now, we have a broken relationship between the NAD and the GC. Hopefully, the important principles in this quarter’s lessons will help. We all should be praying for our church; our division, the worldwide church, and our home church.

Read the memory text. *Shouldn’t this lead to reconciliation of fellow believers?*

“The New Testament records repeated examples of the way that church leaders and individual members dealt with the challenges of conflict.”

What are some NT examples of dealing with conflict? (The conflict between Paul and Barnabas over John Mark, and the crisis that led to the Jerusalem Council stand out the most.)

There are biblical principles to learn for getting positive results in dealing with conflict so that our oneness in Christ can be preserved. These principles are for our world church, our conference, our local church, and for families and friends.

The Holy Spirit is always working to bring people closer to God and to one another; “breaking down barriers in our relationship with God” and “with one another.”

“The greatest demonstration of the power of the gospel is not necessarily what the church says but how the church lives.” *Does that apply to our church here in _____?*

Read the last paragraph of the narrative.

SUNDAY: “Restored Relationships”

Share highlights from the first two paragraphs.

This disagreement broke up the greatest missionary team in history – a tragedy!

Is there a positive side to this? (now two missionary teams).

Share the third paragraph.

Is there biblical evidence that Paul and John Mark had true reconciliation?

Read Colossians 4:10-11.

How do these verses show that Paul had confidence in John Mark? (His endorsement of Mark shows in the words “if he comes to you receive him,” and he calls him his “fellow worker.”)

Read 2 Tim. 4:11.

How does this verse show Paul’s renewed relationship with John Mark? (He requested Timothy to bring John Mark when he comes because Mark “is profitable” in “the ministry.”)

Read the questions in the box at the bottom of the page. (Answer to 2nd Ques – Forgiveness should always happen, but it may not lead to reconciliation because one side may not be willing or may not even be sorry. Answer to 3rd ques – It’s always better to have reconciliation, but if genuine forgiveness has happened that person can still have peace and move forward).

MONDAY: "From Slave to Son"

Read the first paragraph.

Share highlights from the second paragraph.

What important principles about restored relationships can we find in Philemon 1-25?

Read Philemon 5, 10-12, 15b-16, 17-19a. (Some verses are shared for context.)

(Repeat above question.)

The gospel breaks down barriers of class distinction making all brethren and co-laborers. They take care of one another.

Why doesn't Paul speak out more forcefully against the evils of slavery? Being free would still leave Onesimus destitute and in poverty unless...Philemon accepted him as a brother in Christ.

Share highlights from the last paragraph.

Read the question from the bottom of the box at the bottom of the page.

TUESDAY: "Spiritual Gifts for unity"

The church in Corinth had problems with conflict and needed healing and restoration.

Read 1 Cor. 3:6-9.

What does Paul see as the solution for the rivalry between followers of Apollos and the followers of Paul? (They needed to see Apollos and Paul as each doing a different part but working in cooperation with God Who was overall).

What principles does Paul give in 1 Corinthians 12 that are vital to church unity?

Read 1 Cor. 12:1, 7, 11-12a, 13a, 22+25. (Some of the verses are shared for context.)

(Repeat the above question.)

Verses 12a+13a show that spiritual gifts are for unity and teamwork.

Verses 22+25 show that gifts should not be for comparing ourselves with others as that leads to boasting and schisms. We should be in cooperation not competition.

Read 2 Cor. 10:12-13a.

What does Paul write is not wise to do? (Compare ourselves to others). Why is comparing to others so bad? (see the 4th and 5th paragraphs).

Read the questions from the box at the bottom of the page (for thought only).

Can we rejoice in the talents or gifts others have when they are more capable in something than we are? Can you think of a Bible character that rejoiced when his ministry declined and ended while another's became popular? (John the Baptist who said, "He must increase, but I must decrease"). How can we learn to have such an unselfish attitude?

WEDNESDAY: "Forgiveness"

* Tell what happened to John Lewis (See the "Opening Discussion" from the Teacher's Comments from page 133. Share from the first paragraph only.

Could John Lewis forgive?

Read the first paragraph on Wednesday's page. * Finish telling the John Lewis story from the 2nd paragraph on p. 133 and ask the questions at the bottom of the page.

How do each of the following passages help us to understand the biblical nature of forgiveness?

Memory verse – Romans 5:10. Christ forgave His enemies and even died for them.

Luke 23:34. Jesus said, “Forgive them for they know not what they do.”

2 Corinthians 5:21. He became “sin for us...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Share the key point or two from the first and second paragraphs and read the third paragraph.

Read Ephesians 4:26.

What does this verse have to do with forgiveness? (Field answers).

Read the last paragraph.

Share questions from the box at the bottom.

Optional: Share ideas from “Understanding Forgiveness” and “Consider This” on p. 135 and/or Activities #2 from p. 136.

THURSDAY: “Restoration and Unity”

Read Matthew 18:15-17. *What three steps does Jesus give us to help us to resolve conflicts when we are wronged by another church member?*

Verse 15 - Step #1: Try to resolve the conflict just between the two of you (See 1st paragraph).

Read *Gospel Workers*, p. 499 quotation at the bottom of the page.

Verse 16 – Step #2: If that fails, involve 1 or 2 witnesses (See 2nd paragraph).

Verse 17 – Step #3: If that fails, take it to the church (See 3rd paragraph).

Reread verse 17. If it still fails, *what does it mean that the offender is to be “as an heathen man and a publican”?* Obviously, it means he has lost membership! That’s why we should take step one and two more seriously.

Read Matt. 18:18. This is very serious! Jesus says that when the church has done the right thing to remove one from membership that it is bound or ratified in heaven.

(This is fearful to us because this responsibility of the local church was abused for centuries.

And, churches tend to not get it right today, either. Obviously, if the church has done wrong, heaven would not be bound to accept it. Never-the-less, the Bible teaches that local churches have a responsibility to exercise proper church discipline or the standards of the church erode away. This is not something to avoid simply because there are difficult challenges.)

****The key is that the church handles things so that God approves. It takes a loving and unified church to do it right.

Is this the end of hope for the disfellowshipped person?

Absolutely not! A loving and unified church sees the mission of the church is the mission of Christ; “to seek and to save that which was lost.” The church is to do all they can to win them back! Loving and unified churches can do it!

Conclusion: Close with one or both quotations at the top of Friday’s page.