

SESSION TWO - A Paradigm for Personal Ministry

Galatians 5:25-6:5 25 *If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.* 26 *Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another* 6.1: *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.* 2*Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ* For *if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself.* [4] *But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor.* [5] *For each will have to bear his own load.*

KEY POINT:

What it does it mean to bear the burdens of others.

The operative principle is in verse 2: *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Romans 15:1 (ESV) *We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

An Obvious Question: What if I don't want to do it?

THREE WAYS WE CAN LEARN TO CARRY BURDENS

ONE: Seek to understand the person and their burden

We listen to care.

Robert Cheong (Pastor of Counseling – Sojourn Church, Louisville, KY): Listening is a gospel practice—we must listen to God, self, and others. Good listening goes hand-in-hand with good questions. We tend to talk more than listen. We tend not to explore what we hear and often make assumptions that lead to a wrong understanding of the complexities of their struggle. The goal of listening and exploring is to better understand the person’s story, which includes sin, weakness, and suffering, and point them to Christ and the gospel so that they can come to understand their own story in light of God’s larger story of redemption.¹

We Listen to Learn

Ed Welch: Are your conversations dialogues or intersecting monologues? Do you track? Do you really listen? Are your comments actually responding to what the person said? When in doubt, EDIT yourself! If the other person is troubled, they won’t hear very much. Delete advice whenever possible. Let them tell the story as naturally as possible. Follow them. Interrupt as little as possible. If you are asked questions, especially theological ones, or asked for advice, first understand why the person is asking. What moves you in their story? What is it like to be with them? Do you enjoy (value, esteem) the person? Are you scared of the person? Can you describe the person in a way that the person says, “That’s me”?²

¹ Robert K. Cheong, *An Overview of a Gospel-Centered Counseling Ministry*, Sojourn Counseling, 6

² Ed Welch, Taken from class notes, “Helping Relationships”, WTS Spring 2009.

TWO - Speak in line with the wisdom of God

Let's Speak Softly

Let's Speak humbly

Let's Speak Clearly

Ed Welch: Why don't people follow through with advice? Is it because they are unteachable? Perhaps. But more likely the advice may be good but it may not be in sync with what the Lord is doing in a person's life. We need to recognize that we may have accurate things to say, but they may not be relevant. And if we have accurate and relevant things to say we need to say them in a helpful way. If we give advice, we need to give advice that serves the person in how they process, not how we process. How you respond to someone who comes back to you having not responded to your counsel may say as much about your confidence in your counsel as it does about their desire to apply. The focus of advice should be what God is up to and what a person can hear.³

Let's Speak Simply

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³ Ed Welch – Instruction in 'Counseling Observation', WTS, Winter 2009

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Let's Speak Truthfully

Let's speak graciously

THREE - Point people to the ultimate burden bearer.

JOH 19:17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha).

Matthew 11:28 - 30 Come to me all who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

William Smith: (In counseling) *I try to keep two objectives in mind – to help people see Christ, and to help them deal with things that keep them from seeing Christ.*⁵

⁴ Ed Welch – Instruction in ‘Counseling Observation’, WTS, Winter 2009

⁵ Bill Smith, Class Lecture, “Dynamics of Biblical Change”, WTS/CCEF – Fall 2007