



I WANT TO TALK!

Following the revenge killing of his brother, Absalom and King David were estranged for 5 years.

- Throughout this time Absalom wished to talk with his father, but David refused.
- Facing pressure, David finally had Absalom summoned to the palace. (*II Samuel 14:33*)

There is NO mention of conversation, restoration, or resolution. Apparently, this meeting was a photo op for David rather than an attempt at reconciliation. Just a **kiss**.

*Soon thereafter Absalom began working to overthrow his father.

How does a Christian obey God's expectations and convey God's character in these hurtful, shocking, emotional, contradictory situations?

1. **PREVENT** in every way possible by recognizing the **differences** and **tension** and TALKING ABOUT IT openly, honestly, and courageously.

Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, blown here and there ... instead, speaking the truth in love, we will (in all things) grow up into ... Christ (*Ephesians 4:15*)

Clearly define the possible consequences of estrangement.

- Affirm love
- Communicate your heart
- Talk now while you can

2. **Take initiative** for conversation
seeking to resolve differences

If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you (*Matthew 18:15*)

*If this goes nowhere, seek to involve a third party (*Matthew 18:16*)

Sometimes talking is useless and compromise is impossible (for the Christian). In these situations, we must **accept** that a close relationship is **not possible** at this time and move forward with life, realizing that God is our source of joy rather than this person/relationship.

If he refuses to listen even to the church [third party] treat him as you would a pagan or tax collector. (*Matthew 15:17*)

“ ... You must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a person do not even eat. *(1 Corinthians 5:11)*

Warn a divisive person once then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a person is warped and sinful and self condemned. (*Titus 3:10*)

Withdrawing fellowship or initiative from someone does not mean:

- apathy about them
- hostility toward them
- unwillingness to talk to them

It is an acknowledgement of the futility and distraction of continued argument. It is a statement regarding your own character and conviction and a demonstration that the call of Christ on your life trumps any human relationship.

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life [popularity, loved by everyone?] will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. *(Matthew 16:24)*

If anyone comes to me and does not hate [submit, sub prioritize] his father/mother/wife/children/sibling, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. *(Luke 14:26-27)*

Prodigal children present an excruciatingly difficult balance.

- a) Courageously share your own standard.
- b) Refuse to abet or facilitate their sin.
- c) Willingly communicate and forgive when such is earnestly sought.

POINT: Even if you no longer initiate conversation with someone, if they say, “I wish to talk”, it is the Christian responsibility to give them an ear. You do not know when/how God is working in their life.

He who builds a high gate invites destruction.
(Proverbs 14:19)