

THE CONNECTION

KINGSTON *wesleyan* CHURCH

Fight for Peace

by Pastor Len



After a recent discussion in Sunday School, I thought it might be helpful to revisit a sermon from several years ago entitled, FIGHT FOR PEACE. You see, peace in the heart and the home is worth fighting for. And you often don't get peace without a fight, because there's a huge difference between doing everything to keep peace and living to make peace.

The Bible clearly tells us to pursue peace. Jesus said it this way, "Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God." In Romans, Paul encourages — "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutual edification."

Before we go any further, I think it's important to establish that true peace can't be attained by shortcutting purity. Saying what you think someone wants you to say or avoiding what saying what you really think and feel might seem to be the best way to keep peace, but in the end — it doesn't actually bring PEACE. Lying or turning a blind eye to a problem doesn't make things better in the long run. It just kicks the can down the road.

When it comes to fighting for peace, it's critical that we each understand that a lack of peace isn't just someone else's problem. We often contribute to the problem — usually more than we know, and almost always more than we want to acknowledge.

That's where something called the Johari Window can be helpful. The Johari Window uses four windows to illustrate what often is at the root of most conflict and Kevin Myers of 12Stone Church provided some great insight in how to leverage the Johari Window as we fight for peace.

First, let's take a look at the 4 windows that make up the Johari Window. The Arena is what I know about me AND you know about me. The Blind Spot is what you know about me that I don't. The Mask is what I know about me, but you don't. And the Unknown is not known by either myself or you.

Pastor Kevin suggests that families, especially spouses, give these five gifts in order to experience peace in the home.

1. Give others the freedom to unmask. The key to freedom is trust. It's not uncommon for people to cause hurt by something they say or something they do because they're hiding behind a mask. This doesn't mean that it's okay for them to cause hurt, that's not what I'm saying. What I am saying is that peace is often on the other side of the mask. To get there, they have to know that they can trust you with whatever they're hiding.
2. Give others a view behind your mask. James 5:16 tells us to confess our sins to one another. This isn't always easy and it's definitely not fun. However, it's often a significant step to experiencing freedom. And when you're walking in freedom, you're usually walking in peace with yourself and with others.
3. Give others blind spot love. This isn't a free pass. It's something way more powerful. It's choosing to fight for peace by forgiving. Now, keep in mind - forgiveness is granted and not earned while trust is earned and not granted. Proverbs 10:12 says, "Hatred stirs up conflict, but love covers over a multitude of offense." Do you tend to take offense or offer forgiveness? The other part of giving blind spot love is helping those you love become



more self-aware. James 5:19-20 tells us of the importance of giving loving correction. A couple filters that I try to use are a) Should it be said? b) Should it be said now? I have found that it's extremely important to seek the discernment of the Holy Spirit in whether or not to proceed as well as how to proceed. One important piece of advice from God's Word when helping someone become aware of their own blind spot is to "speak the truth in love" (Eph 4:15).

4. Give others permission to reveal your blind spots. We each need to be aware of how our mannerisms, tone, actions, etc effect those around us and especially those who live with us. Giving permission to reveal your blind spots isn't just a matter of asking for it. It's having the humility to receive it without getting defensive or offensive.
5. Give everything to One who knows everything. Give God what you know of yourself and what you don't know of yourself. Invite Him to do everything that He needs to do IN you and THROUGH you.

I believe that if we'll do these five things we'll be well on our way to experiencing the peace God wants in our homes and in our hearts. What are you waiting for? It's worth the fight!



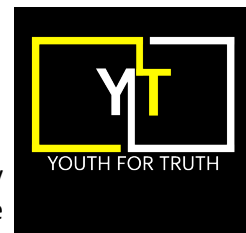
Food Distribution by Pastor Len



After a busy few months of serving our community by offering mobile food pantries, we will be taking a little break. Other organizations are picking up now that the weather is getting warmer and the Food Bank didn't have any Saturday openings for delivery until June. So, our next food distribution is scheduled for June 1.

As before, we will need volunteers to help sort items beginning at 9am and then help distribute until noon. It usually takes us about half an hour to an hour to clean up afterwards.

Youth For Truth by Pastor Len



Youth For Truth completed its second year this last month. And what a year it was! Matt Kiley (Director) reported that YFT met twenty-four times. Sixty-seven students attended at least one week with an average of forty-three per week! Thirty-six students attended 75% of the time or more and three students had perfect attendance.

Even more encouraging than the numbers that Matt reported, Matt shared with me several times throughout the year how different students were having a-ha moments as the truth of God's Word came alive in their hearts and minds.

Thank you, KWC family, for partnering with Matt & Crystal to provide such an impactful student ministry. And, WAY TO GO Matt & Crystal! Thank you for allowing God to use how He has shaped you to serve this community!

