



# LOVING CONFRONTATION

On our journey of helping people follow Jesus, there are times when we will need to lovingly confront people in a pattern of sin. These guidelines are meant to be a helpful resource as you approach this type of conversation.

*Approach the conversation with:*

**LOVE** - We want to take make sure to establish through both our words and actions that we care deeply for the individual. They must understand that you love them. Without love, you just sound like an annoying, clanging cymbal.

**PRAYER** - We need to pray before we attempt to have a conversation that the Holy Spirit would soften their heart and prepare them to receive our words. We also need to seek the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom as we offer words of truth, guidance and encouragement. We pray that the Holy Spirit would already be speaking to their heart - we simply echo what he's already saying.

**HONESTY** - We mustn't shy away from speaking the truth or giving the false impression that we condone outright sin. We may feel pressure to minimize their sin to make things feel less awkward. However, the pressure, tension and discomfort that comes from hearing the truth can play an important role in inspiring change.

**RESPECT** - If possible, try not to push the conversation into an area where you have not been invited. Wait for them to open the door to a certain topic or ask their permission to talk about it.

**GENTLENESS** - There is a thought process behind why people do the things they do. While their logic may land them in sin, it's ok to say, "Hey, I can understand why you do that." or "I understand why you think that." Then you are positioned to offer God's perspective with gentleness.

**PATIENCE** - Understand that changing our patterns is a growing process. People don't usually have a massive shift in the way they think, feel or behave in a single instant. Look at the trajectory. If they are moving in a Christ-ward direction, continue to coach and support them with each baby step. Resist the temptation to force them to decide in the moment - before they are ready. Be willing to have an ongoing dialogue with people as they sort through their response to what God is speaking to them. It could take months or years, but the results are eternal.

**CLARITY** - Be clear about the implications of their decision. There is much grace for people who are processing and figuring things out. However, if they should decide that they disagree with Biblical teaching and don't seek to change, we must be clear about boundaries for Church involvement. Rarely will we ask people to stop attending Sunday Worship Gatherings, but we DO prohibit these people from membership, leadership, small groups and service roles within the church.