

Proverbs 1Q 2015 Lesson 7 Dealing With Fights

I received these two email recently:

I would like to thank you for changing the way our family now looks at God, the Bible and the plan of salvation especially in the light of the great controversy. I will say that together with the books and discussion materials of Graham Maxwell and your work our spiritual lives have been fundamentally changed. Our children now frequently comment how much clearer the Bible is and how much more sense looking at the law from a design protocol standpoint as compared to the imposed constructs that we grew up with. Understanding things this way has resulted in so much more freedom but without compromising anything since we essentially live the same lives (and follow the same rules) not because we HAVE to but because we WANT to and understand WHY and because it is RIGHT not just because the Bible, someone else, or even God says that we said so. Thank you once again for your ministry.

I want to start out by Praising God for who He is. He is most loving and gracious. I also want to thank God for the message of love and the true picture of God and His character that He uses you to tell the world. I was raised in a SDA home, went to SDA schools through high school. I am 65 years old now but when I was about 35 or so I started to question the God that we were preaching. I started to look into it but was afraid to say too much for I sounded like I was not following the "truth". Every time I would say something some pastor or an elder would stop me, saying that if I do not believe what the church was teaching than I wasn't a true follower of the teaching of the "remnant church".

My curiosity peaked and in the late nineties I wanted to leave the church because I could not stand the God that we were preaching. I did not leave but was not active either. Meanwhile I decided to dig into the Bible, searching for the God that My mind was looking for. In the year 2003 I started to be active again and in the year 2005 I began to teach Sabbath School. I decided that I would start to teach what I've found in my search. Something amazing happened. My class grew but the leaders of the church I went to started to look at me closely and were not wanting me in a leading position. I was determined.

It was studying the lessons of the Glimpses of God that really got to me. I hated that quarterly and threw the whole book away, wrote to the Sabbath School Department at the GC and complained about the trash that we allow to be taught around the world. But something good came out of it. I was still teaching Sabbath School and I needed something to teach. I went searching in the Internet and God be the glory, I found Come And Reason by Dr. Jennings. This has been the best find in my whole life. Now I speak with authority. Not because of Dr. Jennings, but because of the materials I find that support the Bible teaching of the God I love best.

Thank you again and may God be glorified.

May God continue to bless you and your ministry.

SABBATH

What fights are we dealing with?

- Wars between nations?
- Fights between political parties?
- Fights between factions in the church?
- Fights between our children?
- Fights between spouses?
- Fights with coworkers?
- Fights between police officers and citizens?
- Fights between parents and their children?
- Fights between students, or students and teachers or teachers and the school boards....

Is there really a limit on the places where we find fights in this world of sin? Read memory verse,

“Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife.” Prov 17:1

The text is focusing our attention on the home – which is a good place to start, since the family is the social bedrock of our society. If our families are in conflict, then our society will suffer.

What is the point of the proverb? Here is the GNT:

Better to eat a dry crust of bread with peace of mind than to have a banquet in a house full of trouble.

Isn't the point that mental and relational peace, health, and wellbeing, is worth more than riches or extravagance? Is this limited to food? Do you believe this is true? Well science tells us the following:

- Individuals with major mental health disorders that have a primary biological cause, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, do much worse if they live in homes with high conflict. This is true even if the mentally ill person is not directly involved in the conflict.
- Divorce is less damaging to children than living in a home with high parental conflict.
 - The research has found that children do the best, i.e. grow up to have less mental health problems, less substance use problems, have greater academic achievement, better sense of personal wellness if they come from homes in which there is a mother and father who get along, operate maturely in love.
 - The next best outcome for children is when they come from single parent home in which there is low conflict.
 - Children did better and grew up with less problems in single parent, low conflict homes, than in homes in with both parents but where there was high levels of argument, fighting and stress.
 - And the worst for children is single parent homes in which there is high conflict



- Such high conflict homes actually alter brain development such that children grow up with upregulated fear circuitry and less developed prefrontal cortex ability to problem solve and calm their fear circuitry. They also have distorted internalizations of events that negatively alter their sense of self, contributing to poor decision-making later in life.
- An 11 years study of 10,000 men and women ages 36-54, found those who had highest family conflict had 2-3 times the risk of dying in middle age as those who did not have family conflict. The cause of the deaths were cancer, heart disease, suicide, liver disease and alcohol abuse.
 - High stress causes inflammatory cascades which increase risk of heart disease, obesity and DMII, also interfere with immune system thus increasing cancer risks, cause glial brain damage contributing to depression and thus increased suicide, and increased use of alcohol contributing to liver disease.
- A 32-year prospective study of over 800 individuals, which identified three measures of childhood adversity, overt physical or sexual abuse, severe neglect, or severe socioeconomic deprivation. They broke the subjects into three groups, those with none of these adverse events, those with one, and those with two or three. Then followed them for 32 years and documented who developed depression, 11% of those with no adverse events developed depression, 20% with 1 adverse event developed depression and 30% of those with two or three adverse events. They also examined who developed DMII, obesity and hypercholesterolemia, and the percentages were the same as those for depression.

Why does the Commandment teach that if we honor our parents we will live long on the earth?

Because our child-parent relationships are our primary relationships and serve as a template upon which other relationships are built. If these primary relationships are conflictual, untrusting, fear ridden, etc. it upregulates fear circuitry, causing difficulty in calming oneself, difficulty in trusting others, difficulty in future relationships, with repeated cycles of conflict, with firing of fear circuits, increased inflammation, which contributes to metabolic illness and early death. Unless, we experience healing through God's grace and love in other healthy relationships later in life.

SUNDAY

The lesson asks us to read Proverbs 17:9 and 19:11,

Whoever would foster love covers over an offense, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends. Proverbs 17:9

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense. Proverbs 19:11

What does this mean and what does it not mean?

What does it mean to cover over an offense? Does it mean to cover up? Was destroying the Watergate tapes covering over an offense? If we destroy evidence in a criminal case are we following Bible principles?



What does cover mean? Consider the following definitions of cover, and ask which apply to Christ and us?

- to hide, conceal –
 - Does Christ hide or conceal our condition from the Father?
- but also to protect –
 - Does Christ protect us? Yes, but from whom? Does He protect us from the Father or from Satan and sin?
- or to serve as a substitute – to cover for them
 - Does Christ act as our substitute, stand in our place for us? How? In a legal action from the heavenly tribunal? No! By taking our condition and curing it, something we could never do!
 - He also stands as Adam's substitute in being the repository of God's character and law, and revealing God's character perfectly.
- to make an excuse or alibi
 - Does Christ make excuses for us? No!
- to intervene to cover their mistake
 - Does Christ cover our mistakes? Yes, how? By healing, restoring, intervening, protecting, giving multiple opportunities to try again.
- to back them up, in card game when playing partners, you can cover someone else's bad card with a higher one of your own
 - While Christ doesn't play cards with us, does He back up our decisions and sometimes "trump" or overrule what we would do, when we trust Him, for our good? Yes!
- Or merely, according to the context, not repeating it, not spreading it, to keep information confidential, to protect a person's reputation
 - Does Christ repeat our sins or failings or most shameful moments, or does He protect our reputations and not repeat it?
 - 1Cor says "love keeps no record of wrongs."

Here is the passage from the GNT:

If you want people to like you, forgive them when they wrong you. Remembering wrongs can break up a friendship.

And from the Message:

Overlook an offense and bond a friendship; fasten on to a slight and—good-bye, friend!

So what does it mean to cover an offense? Could it mean, that you see offenses as symptoms of a person's struggles, weaknesses, character flaws – and if you love them, you don't embarrass them to expose them, you seek to help them heal from what causes them to offend?

If you had a friend who received a steroid injection because of respiratory distress, but had a psychotic reaction from it, which caused them to say vulgar things, what would you do? Would you want to post their struggles on Facebook, or protect them and cover for them and get them to treatment?

What about someone struggling with fear, insecurity and selfishness, which causes them to act out? Do we see people as sick in heart and mind, needed the healing of God's love and truth, and so we seek to protect their reputation and cover for them?

When the Pharisees brought the woman caught in adultery before Jesus, they were Christ's enemies, trying to trap Him. He knew their secret sins. He could have exposed them as hypocrites, but what did He do? He wrote in the sand, no names, just the sins and each person was convicted, and left, but He didn't expose anyone. He protected the reputation of His enemies – Wow!

Read first two paragraphs, "When someone..." How can this idea of covering a sin be misunderstood and cause confusion and misrepresent God?

- When we view things through the imposed law model and present sin as breaking rules, which offends the ruling authority, causing God to be upset, wrathful, angry and needing to vent His wrath, and Jesus as the one who came to assuage or propitiate God's wrath, then we introduce the idea that we need to cover up our sin from God.
- With the imposed law model we distort the metaphor of the robe of righteousness teaching falsely that it is to cover us so God can't see our sinfulness – rather than teaching the truth that we are transformed in heart and mind to be like Christ.
- Likewise the imposed law model causes us to distort the meaning of the blood, instead of realizing it represents Christ's perfect sinless life that we partake, we falsely teach it is applied to our records to cover the records of our sins so the Father won't see it and judge against us
- When we understand design law, that we are out of harmony with God's design and in a terminal condition, and God is like Jesus – perfect love, with a longing to heal. Then we pray like David, "search me and see the wicked way in me... create in me a clean heart oh God." We don't want to cover our defects, we want our defects fully exposed before God, because He is the only one who can heal us from them!

How can we understand this in a healthy way?

- By realizing we don't want to reveal a person's struggles to those who would either be damaged by the knowledge, or use the knowledge to do harm
- Thus, we might, like a doctor, share the knowledge with another health care provider, get a consult, with someone qualified to not only help, but keep confidences. But we would not share this information with those who have no need to know, or who would be harmed by the knowledge.

Read last paragraph, "One does not..." this is well said and this focuses on what the church is supposed to be – family – in which we love each other, and when we see someone else mess up, our heart longs for their wellness, we want to see them overcome and we intervene to assist them, to minimize the pain and suffering in their lives and others.

But, when we forget we are to love each other, and instead get focused on institutional loyalty and correctness, then we believe we have a duty to report the offender, to have the offender disciplined or sanctioned, or removed from office or fired from their job in the institution. And if that doesn't work, then we believe we must spread the report of what we believe is an offense to warn others because we must protect the institution and hold up institutional standards.

Also, helping others in the church family, doesn't mean merely delivering people from their situation, relieving burdens or life problems. It means helping a person develop Christlike character, and the Bible teaches it is struggles, the difficulties, the trials that help us grow and mature.

TUESDAY

The lesson asks us to look at Proverbs 18, lets examine some of the texts and unpack what they mean. This is from the Message version:

Loners who care only for themselves spit on the common good.

What is the lesson? These people lack compassion, love, and are self-centered. They want what they want and will undermine the good of others to get it.

² Fools care nothing for thoughtful discourse; all they do is run off at the mouth.

Have you known people like this? They talk and talk, but won't listen and don't seek to understand?

³ When wickedness arrives, shame's not far behind; contempt for life is contemptible.

Is shame after wickedness imposed, inflicted, or the natural result of deviating from God's design? What does shame do? How does it impact a person? What does it do to relationships?

Why is contempt for life contemptible? The attitude, or mindset, that doesn't value life, is to be devalued. We should seek to eliminate attitudes that devalue or fail to cherish life. Why? Who is the source of life? Who is the source of death?

What about all the infatuation in society with death? Is it a sign of corrupt character?

⁴ Many words rush along like rivers in flood, but deep wisdom flows up from artesian springs.

I know some people who talk and talk and move from one subject to another constantly as a way of never dealing with reality. They have hurts, wounds, unresolved issues, and they avoid dealing with them by constantly talking, but never learning.

⁵ It's not right to go easy on the guilty, or come down hard on the innocent.

What does it mean to go easy on the guilty? Why is it not right? If we said, it is not right to easy on the sick, what would we mean? If we went easy on someone who had a broken leg, might we not push them to do PT?

Why is that not right?

⁶ The words of a fool start fights; do him a favor and gag him.

Wow, don't you like this one? Do you think society would be better off if we could do this? Yes, but notice, to whom you are doing a favor, not to society, but to the fool!

⁷ Fools are undone by their big mouths; their souls are crushed by their words.

What does this mean? How does the words of a fool crush their own soul?

Listen to this commentary from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against idle and evil words. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." **But the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character.** Men are influenced by their own words. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, expressing that which they do not really believe; **but the expression reacts on the thoughts.** They are deceived by their words, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. **Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are.** It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. **The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character,** in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." {DA 323.1}

⁸ Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you really want junk like that in your belly?

I think this is a great analogy – because it is like cheap candy, it isn't good for us, yet just like cheap candy we eat it anyway.

⁹ Slack habits and sloppy work are as bad as vandalism.

How many times have you been inconvenienced, had to do more work, call in repairmen etc. because someone did sloppy work or didn't do their job right?

Anyone in the healthcare industry who has ever had to deal with Medicare, Medicaid or insurances, knows how frustrating it is to deal with people who don't do their job right. It is like vandalism, it causes damage.

¹⁰ GOD's name is a place of protection—good people can run there and be safe.

What does this mean? God's name, calling out the words, "Jesus saves" or "God help me?" Is this what it



means? Or are we protected in our minds, souls, characters, when we abide in His character, practicing His methods?

¹⁵ Wise men and women are always learning, always listening for fresh insights.

Are we lovers of truth, recognizing we are finite, so there is always more to learn. Do we hunger to expand our understanding and learn more? Or are we fearful of new insights and seek to shut down new light in defense of tradition?

²² Find a good spouse, you find a good life—and even more: the favor of GOD!

This is so true – I can testify to the truth of this one! Any verses you wanted to unpack?

WEDNESDAY

^{Prov 18:17} The first speech in a court case is always convincing—until the cross-examination starts!

What is the wisdom in this proverb? This is not only true in court; it is true in life. You want to hear both sides of a story.

Sadly, many people who disagree with what we teach do so because they have listened to gossip and the allegations of some, but haven't taken the time to actually investigate for themselves or listen to our side. When people do this, almost always they are persuaded to our way of seeing things. It happened again this week in CA two people came to me and let me know that certain things were being said that I teach that concerned them, but when I explained what I actually teach, the two persons said they agree with our views.

Have any of you ever experienced this?

Read third paragraph, “Only God...” What is being said here? Is it being said that God, not needing a “second opinion,” doesn't need the input, information, testimony, evidence, perspective of others in order for Him to know the truth?

What does this mean then in regard to what we teach regarding the judgment?

Do some versions of Christianity teach God has record books and that He investigates the records to determine guilt and innocence and that He listens to the “second opinion” of Jesus who pleads to the Father in our behalf?

Have you heard Jesus can empathize with us because He suffered in human flesh, and thus He is able to share His perspective with the Father? Would that be God seeking a second opinion?

All of these ideas are false and distorted – The lesson is correct, the Father doesn't need a second opinion – which means He doesn't need to investigate evidence. He doesn't need to hear testimony. He doesn't have to

be pled with – not because He is closed minded, but because He already knows everything in 100% accurate ways. He knows every side of every argument and the secret motives of the heart. And because He is love, He is always on our side seeking to heal and restore! He doesn't have to be convinced by anyone to do so. "If God is for us..." Rom 8:31

What are further implications?

What about the presentation of blood in the OT sanctuary service? How many times have we heard the idea that the blood is being presented to God?

What is the blood symbolic of? The life of Jesus and the truth about God – does the Father need the truth about Himself, that Jesus revealed, presented to Him? Does the Father need the perfect life of Christ given to Him?

Who does? We do, we need the truth to win us to trust, and in trust we need to internalize the character of Christ, i.e. eat His flesh and drink His blood (Jn 6), so that we become partakers of the divine nature, and it is no longer "I that lives but Christ lives in me."

THURSDAY

Read proverbs 19:1 "Better to be poor and honest than a rich person no one can trust."

Read middle paragraph, "The book of Proverbs..." Why is it better? Because if we lie and cheat our recording angels will take note of it, it will be in the heavenly ledger, and it will one day show up in heavenly court and we will be punished? Or, if we lie and cheat we sear our consciences, warp our characters, damage our reasoning ability, destroy the faculties that respond to love and truth and take ourselves so out of harmony with God and His design that we are beyond healing?

Prov 19:3 People ruin their lives by their own stupidity, so why does God always get blamed?

Isn't that a great one? God gets blamed because people don't want to admit to their own folly, or take responsibility for their own actions. They want to make excuses.

And the most "stupid" action people take that ruin their own lives, is when they find themselves in bad situations, they try and fix it themselves. In other words, many people who have sinned, feel guilt and shame and don't simply return to God in humble repentance. People don't accept responsibility for their shortcomings, seeking what they can learn, how they can mature, and instead seek to hide reality from themselves and others. Learning that God is trustworthy is essential in healing!

If you find yourself in a hole – quit digging!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “True love is not blind...” What do you understand is the relationship between love and justice?

What is justice? What law lens to you understand this word through?

Through imposed law, justice is about inflicting punishment for breaking the rules. This is the theology of penal substitution and those who hold that God’s law is no different than sinful beings, rules imposed.

In the modern media the idea of justice is consistently represented as inflicting punishment, giving payback. In TV crime dramas, when talking with families of victims, law enforcement will say “help us get the person who murdered your sister, she deserves justice.” Justice is presented as catching and punishing perpetrators.

Is this the Bible view of Justice?

But, when we recognize God as Creator and His laws are the protocols reality is constructed to operate upon, then we understand justice involves restoring deviations from the design back to harmony with the design.

Thus, if you see a friend stealing and you want to do justice, you want to see your friend transformed to be honest and trustworthy, you want His mind, heart and character set right, exacting vengeance doesn’t do anything to bring about repentance – in fact, Romans says, “The kindness of God leads us to repentance.”

If you have a friend involved in porn, what does justice demand? If you want to do what is right by your friend, you want to deliver your friend from this destructive behavior, not punish them for it. You want them set right again.

But, when we have an imposed law construct, we believe that broken rules require punishment and thus we seek to inflict pain and suffering and call it justice. Or worse, we teach God is the source of pain, suffering and death inflicted upon the unrepentant.

Read second paragraph, “For example...” Can a person actually be just, be right, do right, if they don’t understand how things are designed to work, what healthy looks like, what is the proper way for things to function?

Justice is doing what is actually in harmony with God’s design.

What does charity have to do with going to court? I don’t see the relationship?

But, if one is charitable in a court setting, what is one seeking for the one on trial? To get them off? Or to see that person transformed in character? So if one were charitable to a drug addict in court, if no other reasonable option exists to give their brain time to heal, one might sentence them to prison to give them opportunity to detox their brain. This would not be punitive, but redemptive.



Likewise, when one understands the nature of sin, and is dealing with someone deemed to be a recidivist criminal, who has no concern for others and blatantly states their desire to continue hurting others, what does love do? Love, wants to protect them from the ongoing damage to their own mind, conscience, soul that such unruly behavior causes, as well as protecting society at large, thus incarceration for some might be the greatest blessing we can provide.

Read last paragraph, “In His act...” Why does he not palliate the sin? Because what does sin do to the sinner?

- Had the woman already been damaged by her conduct?
- Had her esteem been lowered?
- Was she already struggling with fear, insecurity, guilt, shame, self loathing?
- Was her mind being warped by her destructive choices?

Jesus’ refusal to condemn was evidence that He knows sin doesn’t require His condemnation because it destroys. The problem with sin is not that God is angry or mad at us, but that we are damaged by it! Thus, Jesus says to her, “I don’t condemn you. I am here to save you. I know what you were doing, and even if you weren’t caught and thrown before me, you would have gone home ashamed, guilt ridden, fearful, damaged by your own choices, go home and stop damaging yourself, live a better life.”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Opportunity to Share:

The General Conference of SDA will have its meeting (which occurs every five years) in San Antonio Texas, July 1-12, 2015. 50,000-70,000 Adventist from all over the world are expected to attend. This presents an opportunity to share this healing message about God in a most impactful way.

We plan on giving away our DVDs, Dr. Jennings' Book *Could It Be This Simple?* and other materials. This will be an enormous project. If you would like to share in this opportunity, you can do so by making donations to *Come and Reason Ministries* either via Paypal, or check mailed to our address below.

New Mailing Address: PLEASE UPDATE YOUR ADDRESS BOOK:

Come and Reason Ministries
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Chattanooga, TN 37424

The Journal of the Watcher:

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Distribution: Our materials now are available in South Africa. To request materials in South Africa email comeandreason.sa@gmail.com Thanks to Samuel Jacobs who manages distribution for us.

And in Australia or New Zealand email australia@comeandreason.com and Thanks to Simon Harrison who manages our ministry down under. Dr. Jennings will be going back to Australia/New Zealand spring 2015. If you are interested in Dr. Jennings speaking at your group please contact Simon at this email address.

February 21, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be presenting the God and Your Brain Seminar at Shilo Inn. 3223 Bret Clodfelter Way, The Dalles, Oregon. For more info for this free conference contact Joyce Browne at 541-300-0111.

March 13-14, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in NYC at the Advent Hope Outreach Health Event.



March 27-28, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the University of Tennessee Health Science, Psychiatry and Family Medicine Conference in Memphis, TN.

April 10-11, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Yuba City, SDA Church, Yuba City, CA.

April 13, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the meeting of Adventist Health Systems West, Sacramento, CA.

April 13, 2015 (7 p.m.): Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Carmichael SDA church in Sacramento, CA.

April 23, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Faith and Mental Health Board in Goshen Indiana.

May 1-2 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Springwood SDA Church Brisbane, Australia.

May 3, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at St Andrews Anglican Church Lutwyche, Australia.

May 5-9, 2015: Dr. Jennings will speak in Australia specific venues pending for these dates

May 11-12, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Peer Psychology Group Seminar, Melbourne, Australia, For info contact Tamara Auora-McCulloch at ladytamara.amcc@gmail.com

May 15, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Avondale College, Cooranbong, NSW, Australia.

May 16, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be doing an all day seminar at Maitland SDA Church, Australia

May17-20, 2015: Dr. Jennings will be speaking to the Adventist Education Department, Auckland, New Zealand.

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