

CHEMISTRY | Boiling Point: Moving Through Conflict | Week 3

June 23, 2019

Genesis 37; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 17:1-4

Opening: The greatest influence on how we experience the world comes through our relationships. These connections can bring us great joy or pain and they shape how we engage with both the stressors and opportunities in our life. We have considered our reactions, our position on the “Periodic Table” of relationship and what happens to us in interactions with others—self awareness. We have considered the impact we have, or could have on those around us—leading by example. Now we look at a conundrum of relationships—disagreement—that often leads to debilitating anger.

Context: A material’s boiling point is the temperature where it changes from liquid to gas. Think of water boiling. The metaphor of going from our true substance, like liquid water, to a drifting vapor that is difficult to capture, might be illustrative. *What causes you to “boil?” Do you have a low or high “boiling point?”*

Conflict in Process: Aaron Foster says “Conflict, when handled well, can actually bring about the type of transformation in relationships that Christ longs for us to experience.” *How do you handle conflict? In simple terms, do you seek it or run from it? Share a story that shows your tendency. Do you know why you respond this way?*

Unforced Error: Read Genesis 37:6-8. *What does the text say about why Joseph’s brothers hated him? What part of that is in Joseph’s control? What attitude is communicated by Joseph?*

The Pot Boils: Read Genesis 37:19-20. Consider Aaron’s quote: “This kid is so full of himself.” Relationships operate in two directions. We’ve learned we have impact on others and others invoke responses within us. *How do you react to the brothers’ feelings? Have you had similar feelings in response to others? Who? How did you handle it?*

Rational Balance?: Are relationships balanced with “give” and “get?” Aaron mentioned Social Exchange Theory. S.E.T. gives us a framework for “calculating” our satisfaction in relationship. *How does that work in conflict? What do you want to receive when you are in conflict? What do you want to give when you are angry? Try to apply these questions to a time when you were angry with someone. Talk about it with the group.*

Jesus' Intentional Attitude: Read Philippians 2:1-11. Here is an attitude of relationship that is other worldly. Think of one phrase (a slight rearrangement) "consider better others". *What does this change in relationship? Tell a story where you have experienced this kind of attitude. How did it make you feel? What is the confidence or "power" that allows one to "consider better others?" Talk about it with the group.*

Changing the Goal: We are taught to enter conflict to win, that's our culture. Aaron talks about moving beyond what we are taught in culture, and beyond what our personal response to conflict might be. He proposes that God might be at work in the relationship. That we might find a higher outcome, a more mature relationship, a more intimate result, if we are open to new outcomes. *What does this bring up in you? Share a time when you have experienced a conflict that resulted in growth and transformation of the relationship? How did it impact you?*

Priority—Relationship and Forgiveness: Read Luke 17:1-4. *What is Jesus saying about relationship in this passage? What actions are available to us? What is the goal, the ultimate end to be preserved?*

Practice of the Week: Filling the Tank of Forgiveness

Read Matthew 7:1-5 each morning. Pray that God would show you any unforgiveness that you are harboring. These can be deep wounds so give it time to surface. In the humility of Matthew 7 admit that you are not the judge and give judgement over to God. Release it. Ask God to show you His love for you and for the other person. Pray for openness to that person and restored relationship if possible. Thank God for the peace of not carrying the baggage anymore. Journal your reactions and thanks.

Family Formation: Be Angry and Do Not Sin

What can we pray about? Using last week's posted prayer requests, talk about things going on and pray for requests and thanksgiving where appropriate. There is always opportunity to talk about anger in a young household. Sometimes it's difficult to balance legitimacy and control. Read Ephesians 4:25-27. Anger is not wrong but how we handle and process our anger is important. In an age appropriate way, talk about being angry without sin, and about processing it in relationship soon. There might be an opportunity for you to apologize for your anger to your kids. Humility can be modelled more easily than taught.

Additional Resources: *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* , by Peter Scazzaro

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

Roger Peer: [contact through Eric](#) * Eric Haskins: ehaskins@christchurch.us