**SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR GOOD COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS**

**I**. Here are seven principles which can be used to cultivate and keep relationships healthy and strong. We have discovered that friendships are not held together by sincerity and love alone, but by covenantal agreements. When we agree to walk together according to Godly standards and ethics, we find God’s favor and truly prove that friends love at all times (Prov. 17:17)

 **1.** **The Forgiveness Principle** – I will choose to walk in forgiveness and not easily take offense against me.

 **Scriptures**: **Acts 24:16-17** "In view of this, I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men.

**\*Question: Can you just forgive and move on?**

 **Matt 6:14-15 “**For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 "But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

 **Matt 18:21** Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?

 **2. The First Word Principle** – You will be the first person to hear about any problem I have with you.

 **Scripture**: **Matt 18:15**"And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

 **Question: Have you spoken to any else about this offense?**

 **3. The Faithfulness Principle** – Faithfulness to our relationship outweighs the importance of any offense between us. I will not allow any problem to override the principles by which I live.

 **Scripture:** **Prov. 27:6** Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

 **Question: Is this problem a threat to our relationship?**

 **Gal 6:1** Brethren, even if a man is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness; each one looking to yourself, lest you too be tempted.

**4. The Friendship Principle:** It is my responsibility to approach you if I need your help. I will not expect you to interpret my actions or recognize my heart’s condition.

 **Scripture:** **Prov. 18:24** A man of many friends comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.

 **Question:** Are you offended that I did not recognize you were in trouble?

**5. The Four-Day Principle:**  I will not allow any problem I have with you go unresolved for more than four (4) days.

 **Scripture: Prov. 28:13 He** who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, But he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion.

 **Question: How long have you been troubled about this problem?**

 **Eph. 4:26-28** Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and do not give the devil an opportunity**.**

**6. The Frustration Principle:** When all efforts to apply these principles have failed to the point of frustration, we will commit ourselves to appeal to a higher authority for the sake of the relationship.

 **Scripture: Heb. 13:17**  Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.

 **Question: Have you followed through with all the other principles?**

**7. The Covenant Principle:**  When all is said and done I will not forsake my covenant commitment to my spouse, my family, my friends or my local church.

 **Matt 18:15-17** And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16 But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every fact may be confirmed.

**A BIBLICAL MANDATE TO RESOLVE CONFLICT & OFFENSE**

 I am committed to solving conflicts and offenses in a Biblical manner and honoring relationships. Cherish the Body and mission of Freedom Fellowship Church. Therefore:

 1). I covenant seek out anyone I have an offense with or that has affected me in a negative manner, or that I know I have offended so as not to let the enemy blemish Christ’s Body with division, and limit my witness and fruitfulness.

 2). I covenant to talk to no one else at all until I have first worked through the offense/issue myself, (i.e. considered whether it was borne out of my own insecurity, misunderstanding, immaturity, etc.) I will wait until I discern whether it is truly significant before I communicate with the person I believe has offended me.

 3). I will not allow more than four days passing before acting on the covenantal mandate to Biblically resolve a conflict or deal with an offense.

 4). I will make it clear that this issue will not cause us to break fellowship one with another and with the Body of Believers I am covenantally bound to.

 5). I covenant that if a conclusion cannot be reached in critical matter (i.e. we cannot agree to disagree), that I will follow protocol which is:

 A. I will approach an elder of the church and be committed to follow their counsel. If this does not bring peace, I will then request a meeting with the elders.

 B. If there is no resolution; I will then request one of our presbyters (Pastor Bruce Gunkle, Pastor Keith Tucci, and Pastor Rod Aguillard) to review the facts.

 C. I realize that during this time and process, it is a private matter that may not be discussed at all with others. If I talk to others, I have jeopardized God’s process.

 D. If one of our presbyters cannot bring peace, they will then contact Pastor’s Relational Network (Brother Rod Aguillard). I agree to abide by their conclusion, in faith to give God the glory.

 E. I will not separate myself and leave Freedom Fellowship Church without agreement by the Elders that it is the only reasonable conclusion. I will leave then with a blessing and honor God in the process.

**Matt 5:23-25** If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that

your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar, and go your

way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.