

Ohana

“Healthy Confrontation”

June 1-2

Introduction

Hey everyone! I’m Mark and I want to welcome you to our service as we continue our series, *Ohana*. We’ve been exploring what it means to be Ohana — the family of God. Each of us was born into different families but we are born again into the same family. So what does it mean to be part of God’s Ohana?

Week 1

In Week 1 we dug down to the very bedrock of what it means to be God’s Ohana. We asked ourselves the question, “If we had to distill everything — the very essence of what it means to be the family of God into one word, what would it be? What defines us as God’s people and sets us apart. What is the hill we will fight and die on? If you were American you might say “Life or Liberty”. If you were Roman you might say, “Strength & Honor”. In Japan you might say “Tradition or Harmony”. Greeks might say “Wisdom or Philosophy”. But as Christians we say, “Love”. Yes! “Love” is the essence of who we are, it is what defines us and sets us apart. It is the hill that we fight and die on. Jesus literally died on that hill. It was love that sent Jesus to the cross and love that rose Him from the grave.

And Jesus instructed us, as His people, His Ohana, to love one another as He loved us. So how does that love manifest practically speaking? How did Jesus love us? The Bible tells us that God demonstrates His own love for us. It is not a love of this world. It is undeserved and sacrificial. God’s love manifests as undeserved gifts of grace.

Week 2

A couple weeks ago Pastor Theresa delivered a timely message on the power of forgiveness and reconciliation. Forgiveness is an undeserved gift of grace. It is undeserved, it is unmerited, and it stems from the gift of forgiveness God has given to us.

Week 3

Last week Pastor Earl delivered a phenomenal message on the power of listening. Listening is a gift of grace. Listening flows from a deep love for the other person. Imagine a world where more people extended the gift of forgiveness and reconciliation. Imagine a world where more people truly listened to one another. Imagine our government, our homes, and Churches if more people extended this kind of divine grace to one another! The world would be unrecognizable! It would be on earth as it is in heaven!

Correction

This week we are going to discover another gift that we, as God’s Ohana, should give one another in love. I’m talking about the gift of correction. Correction? A gift? Let me guess. You’re one of those people who passes out apples or tooth brushes to trick-or-treaters! But the Bible says that correction, when given and received in love, is a precious gift.

¹² “*Like* an earring of gold and a jewelry piece of fine gold,
Is a wise person who offers rebukes to a listening ear,” (Proverbs 25:12).

Listen to this beautiful imagery! The Bible is saying when we take the time to carefully craft correction in love (not just vent or lash out at people) but intentionally and deliberately craft correction in love it is like presenting someone with a gift of untold value. And if the person receiving it is humble and wise, they will recognize correction for the precious gift that it is and they will adorn it with pride knowing that it elevates their character and maturity.

5

“Better is open rebuke
than hidden love.

6

Wounds from a friend can be trusted,
but an enemy multiplies kisses,” (Proverbs 27:5-6).

We live in a hyper-sensitive culture where everyone wants to play the victim and nobody wants to offend. People are quick to flatter and offer insincere praise, but the Bible says those people are not your friends. They are your enemies and they don't have your best interest at heart. A true friend is the one who will be open and honest with you, even if it's painful, because they genuinely care about you.

As God's Ohana we need to be people who can lovingly and intentionally craft correction and deliver it with grace. We also need to be those who recognize and receive correction as the precious gift that it is. To be honest, I can't remember the last time I heard a message on the gift of correction but we are going to correct that today. If you're with me say, “Amen!”

The Rewards of Mastering Correction

The Bible promises that if we master the art of both giving and receiving correction, the rewards will be limitless.

On a personal level, correction leads to greater wisdom and understanding.

Wisdom & Understanding

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*“Whoever heeds life-giving correction
will be at home among the wise.*

32

*Those who disregard discipline despise themselves,
but the one who heeds correction gains understanding,” (Proverbs 15:31-32).*

I once heard a story about a reporter and a monk. There was a reporter who was very interested in Buddhism. He studied Buddhism for years and considered himself an “expert” on the topic despite having never actually met a Buddhist monk.

One day he had the opportunity to sit down with a real Buddhist monk. From the moment they sat, the reporter immediately began telling the monk everything he knew about Buddhism. He went on and on as if he knew everything there was to know. Five minutes became ten, and then fifteen. Meanwhile, the monk sat in silence.

As the reporter continued to talk the monk set down two cups on the table for tea. He began pouring the tea and as the reporter continued on he realized that there was tea pouring all over his legs. The monk continued to pour the tea into the cup, even as it overflowed over the table and onto the reporter's legs.

Finally, the reporter interjected and asked the monk, “What are you doing?!”

The monk replied, “You can't fill a cup that is already full.”

The truth is that there is a wealth of wisdom all around you. Every person you meet has something valuable to offer. The question is, “Are you able to receive or are you already full?” Too often we miss the gem, the treasure, the wisdom because we’re too full. Too full of pride, too full of ourselves, too full of our sense of importance. God has hidden a wealth of wisdom and knowledge all around us. If we can humble ourselves and empty our hearts of pride then God will be able to pour a wealth of understanding into us. But if we are full, then all of that treasure will fall onto the floor.

Another thing correction brings is honor and respect.

Honor & Respect

“Whoever disregards discipline comes to poverty and shame, but whoever heeds correction is honored,” (Proverbs 13:18).

At face-value this passage might seem counterintuitive. In our culture, to be corrected is seen as something shameful but the Bible tells us that heeding correction brings honor. The most successful people in life got there, not because they never faced criticism, but because they were committed to growth, learning from their mistakes, and receiving feedback from others. Warren Buffet, Oprah Winfrey, Bill Gates. Each one shares this trait.

Pastor Jack Hayford once told a powerful story about worship leader Matt Redman. Early in his career, before becoming a famous worship artist, Matt Redman was serving on his Church’s worship team when their Pastor confronted them. The Pastor said that while they were proud of their musical prowess, they were neglecting true worship. Insulted by the correction, the members of the worship team each left the Church — all, that is, except Redman. After a time of prayer and seeking the Lord, He penned the words, “I’m coming back to the heart of worship, and it’s all about you, Jesus.” We might never have heard of Matt Redman if he hadn’t humbled himself and heeded correction, but because he did God honored him and his music has touched millions.

To those who heed correction, God bestows wisdom and understanding. To those who humble themselves under correction God honors. There is so much more that God promises for the one who heeds correction. Life, provision, avoiding destruction, a blessed future, and more.

Relational Blessing

But correction not only blesses us on a personal level, it also blesses our relationships. When we are able to give and heed correction in love, our relationships with one another grows and our relationship with God deepens. How many of us have ever been corrected by God? I have!

Reminds me of a funny story I heard about a painter named Johnny. Johnny was infamous for cutting corners so he could pocket a bigger profit. One day a Church hired him to paint their wooden chapel. As usual, he thinned his latex paint with water to stretch it.

He was up on the scaffolding finishing the last bit of the job, when all of a sudden he heard a loud burst of thunder followed by torrential rain. The heavy rain washed all of the thinned paint off of the Church and a strong gust of wind blew Johnny off of his scaffolding.

Johnny took this as a sign from God so he got on his knees and cried out, “Oh God! Please forgive me! What should I do?”

All of a sudden the skies cleared, the clouds parted and God’s voice thundered from the heavens saying, “Repaint and thin no more!”

We all need correction from time to time. If you think about the thing that separates us it can really be boiled down to one thing — sin. Sin, in its various forms, separates us from one another and separates us from God. Sin never brings people together, it always divides, always isolates, always separates. Think about anytime you experienced a falling out, a break up, a divorce, a separation. What was at the center of it? Sin! Your sin, their sin, selfishness, greed, addiction, perversion, you name it. Sin separates us from God and it separates us from each other. But God has given us a powerful weapon to combat the divisive power of sin — correction. Correction, when given and received in love, can bring reconciliation, restoration, and unity.

"Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted," (Galatians 6:1).

¹⁹ "My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, ²⁰ remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins," (James 5:19-20).

Sin damages, sin corrupts, sin divides, but Godly correction has the power to restore and to save. Whether it is at home, at work, in your small group, or at Church, each of us will face moments where the most loving thing we can do is to offer correction. Likewise, each of us will also face moments where we will need to receive correction from others. So, I want to offer some practical insights to help us we deliver and receive correction.

Whenever we offer correction we want to do it with C.A.R.E. The first step when offering correction is to,

C - Check Your Heart

The Bible says that before we correct others we should examine ourselves.

³ "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴ How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵ You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye," (Matthew 7:3-5).

Before we offer correction to anyone we should first "C" check our hearts. Why are we bringing correction? What is our motive? Is it really from a place of love? Do we have the other's best interest in mind? Is there something we might be doing that is contributing to the issue? Before offering correction we should always take it to the Lord in prayer and ask Him to reveal anything we might have missed. Once you have checked your heart and taken it to the Lord.

A - Address The Issue

Now there is a right way and a wrong way to go about this. Firstly, the Bible says,

¹⁵ "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'

¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector," (Matthew 18:15-17).

Correction should always start privately, one-on-one, face-to-face. If the issue persists the Bible says to bring in others. These others should be objective, mature, believers who can help to resolve the matter fairly.

Remember, the Bible says we should restore a person *gently*. The gift of correction should always be wrapped in gentleness and love. Some people are conflict-avoidant or they shy away from confrontation. But confrontation does not have to be adversarial. To confront literally means to face something. Is there a certain reality that is not being faced? Maybe it's a blindspot. When you confront someone in love you are helping them to face a reality they may not be seeing. Like pointing out the booger hanging out of their nose. You're giving them a gift.

Something that has really helped Jalee and I in our marriage is anytime we address the issue, rather than accusing the other person we start by sharing how we feel. For example, there was a time in our marriage where whenever we would come home I would immediately retreat to the couch and start vegging out while Jalee unloaded the kids and everything from the day. Now, she could have just blasted me in the heat of the moment, "Hey lazy bones! Can't you see there's stuff that needs to be unloaded? Why don't you get off your okole and help me out?" She could have done that but instead she gave me the benefit of the doubt. Later, when it was just the two of us, she said, "I'm not sure if you're aware of this but sometimes when we get home you immediately start relaxing and I feel left picking up the slack. It makes me feel unsupported." See the difference? She gave me the benefit of the doubt, "I'm not sure if you notice..." Instead of assuming the worst about me she assumes the best. Then she shares how she feels about it. "I feel left picking up the slack. I feel unsupported." This works for two reasons.

1. I can't challenge the way she feels.
2. She's not accusing me of being an unsupportive person, she's sharing how she feels.

This is a model that has worked for us. After Addressing the Issue we need to,

R - Receive Feedback

Once we have delivered correction, we need to be open and willing to receive feedback. This is where last week's message comes into play. We need to be good listeners. In some scenarios the person may have no idea they are causing any sort of harm and will receive your correction. Other times they may confront you in return. There are times at home where Jalee and I will be at odds and I'll address the issue by saying, "Hey, I don't know why but I feel like something is off. To be honest I've felt a little disrespected lately and I'm wondering if there's anything I did to make you feel unloved." Sometimes Jalee responds with, "No, I'm sorry. It's just been a crazy week and I just took it out on you." Other times she responds by telling me there is something I've done and we can reconcile from there. But in bringing correction I need to be willing to receive feedback and give the gift of listening.

E - Empathize and Encourage

Always acknowledge the struggles people are going through. A helpful reminder when restoring someone is to go hard on the sin but soft on the person. Our battle is not against flesh and blood but against powers and principalities. We're trying to eliminate the sin that separates. I need to remember that this person is not my enemy and that sin is the real issue. I can also encourage them through prayer and by offering my support.

So the next time you need to offer correction, make sure you present it with care.

Finally, how should we receive correction? If we offer correction with C.A.R.E., we receive correction with G.R.A.C.E.

G - Gratitude

*“Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge,
but whoever hates correction is stupid,” (Proverbs 12:1).*

A wise person recognizes correction for the gift that it is — an opportunity for greater wisdom, character, and maturity. Only a fool despises correction.

A man was on the practice golf course when the club pro brought out another gentleman for a lesson. The pro watched the fellow swing several times and began making suggestions for improvement. But each time the learner interrupted with his own version of what was wrong and how to correct it. After a few minutes of this interference, the pro began nodding his head in agreement. At the end of the lesson, the student paid the pro, congratulated him on his expertise as a teacher, and left in an obviously pleased frame of mind.

The observer was so astonished by this that he asked, “Why did you go along with him?” He was so obviously wrong. “Son,” the old pro said with a grin, as he carefully pocketed his fee, “I learned long ago that it’s a waste of time to sell answers to a man who wants to buy echoes.”

R - Reflect

For some people, ‘R’ could stand for ‘Respond’. I’ve heard what you have to say, now I’m going to respond. For other’s ‘R’ could stand for ‘Reject’. I’m not open to receiving anything you say. Sometimes, when receiving correction, my natural impulse is to immediately respond or write it off. That’s why this is such an important step. This step forces us to pause and reflect on what is being presented to us. May we always have the heart of David who prayed,

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Search me, God, and know my heart;
test me and know my anxious thoughts.

24

See if there is any offensive way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting,” (Psalm 139:23-24).

One of the best things we can do with correction is take it to the Lord. He will help us discern if there is any truth to it and if so, what to do next.

A - Accept

Humbly accept correction, even if it is hard to hear. There have been times when someone has brought correction to me that I did not resonate with at all. But I make it a point to always thank people for their feedback because I want to maintain a heart of openness.

C - Communicate

Receiving correction does not mean that we just need to take whatever people are offering us. Engage in dialogue, ask clarifying, but always express your thoughts calmly.

E - Execute

If you believe that the correction is Biblical and accurate, take the next steps and implement the necessary changes. “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says,” (James 1:22). Ask if the person who is offering correction can pray with you or hold you accountable.

Conclusion

Being part of God's Ohana means loving each other deeply, and part of that love is having the courage to give and receive correction. Remember, correction is not about tearing each other down but building each other up in Christ. It is a precious gift that, when delivered and received with a heart of love, brings wisdom, honor, and relational blessing.

So, as you go about your week, think about how you can embody this teaching. Is there someone you need to offer correction to with care? Or is there a piece of correction you need to receive with grace? Let's strive to make our Ohana a place where love is shown through the way we help each other grow.

Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a time when someone corrected you lovingly? In what ways have you grown from the correction you have received from others? (Coach, Parent, Teacher, Boss, etc.)
2. Can you think of a negative experience you've had either giving or receiving correction? What do you think went wrong? How can you learn from that experience?
3. What step of offering or receiving correction do you find the most challenging? Read Hebrews 12:11 for further discussion.
4. Is there a situation in your life where God is calling you to offer correction with C.A.R.E.? Pray about what steps God would have you take next.