



SECTION III – LESSON #13

SUMMARY:

This lesson discusses the essential nature of agreements in the foundation of any godly organization as well as their power to reveal what is hidden—inside of people, their strongholds, values systems, knowledge, and incompetence.

MAIN LESSON IDEAS:

- The purpose of clear rules and agreements is to give borders to our freedom, and continuity and productivity to our relationships.
- The integrity of an organization can be measured by its commitments to clear, accountable agreements, open dialogues, and repentance.
- Letting things “slide” for the sake of “peace” or because we are too busy guarantees that they will “slide” downward.

The Nature and Power of Agreements

by Dennis Peacocke

- I. The nature and purpose of laws and agreements deals with and gives us major insight into the realm of inner motivation and the management skills of dealing with people.
 - A. Successfully managing people is primarily knowing who they really are and how to bring change to them redemptively.
 1. Change usually only happens when a “breakdown” occurs, that is, when something isn’t producing the result that was promised.
 2. Life is made up of numerous breakdowns (sin, entropy, friction, etc.), so the opportunity for transformation is as frequent as the breakdowns.
 3. Who we are for *now* is revealed by how we handle the breakdowns; relationships are a continuous series of agreements or expectations, constantly being verified in the relationship.
 - B. This lesson is worth its weight a thousand fold in platinum!
 1. Men and organizations are all held together by internal agreements (values) and

are measured by their adherence to them (integrity).

2. Understanding the nature of agreements and what they reveal about people is the key to building people and structures of integrity.

II. A willing compliance to keep agreements or rules between people or within an organization is the key to relational success.

A. We must understand that how we respond to the "rules" reveals who we really are.

1. Look at Romans 7:7-14 and what scripture says about the nature and purpose of the Law (standards, covenants, agreements).

- "Keep off the grass" illustration

2. We further illustrate this principle with a story of "Meet me at McDonalds about noon for lunch."

- Integrity; "round words"; power plays; future trust

B. *Your inner conversation must be in agreement with your outer conversation in order to act in faith* (Transformation Principle #21).

1. Integrity is the product of agreement between our inner and outer conversations.
2. Agreements reveal whether we inwardly mean what we agree to outwardly. When agreements break down, the "strongholds" and defensive reasoning operate to explain why a person was "justified" / correct in the breakdown.
3. The wonderful function of breakdowns, if we are humbled and want to be people of integrity, is that they lead us to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

III. The real integrity of any organization is determined by its willingness and ability to deal with rule breaking and biblical conflict resolution.

A. The scripture is clear that conflict resolution is essential to both individual growth and organizational integrity (Matt. 18:15-18).

1. Relational breakdowns are to be handled in a very exact way because the desired result of biblical change is so precious. The steps are as follows: one-to-one; then two or more involved parties-to-one; and finally, the whole committed group-to-one. Do you have the faith to build in such a way that you could do this where you work?
2. The following diagram helps give us insight into some of the dynamics involved in agreements and their potential breakdowns.

RELATIONAL DYNAMICS WITHIN AGREEMENTS	
PRINCIPLES 1. Authority/Roles 2. Expectations 3. Discernment 4. Theological convictions	POSSIBLE DYNAMICS 1. Rebellion, independence 2. Emotional strongholds 3. Trust — mistrust 4. Ignorance, pride, humility

- B. Clear agreements require the following essential elements:
 - 1. They should be freely entered into without manipulation or coercion.
 - 2. The terms should be clearly understood and agreed to by all parties.
 - 3. The terms should be verbally agreed to (Prov. 18:21), and if an organizational agreement, attested to by a clear written agreement signed by all parties.
 - 4. If they are oral agreements, they need to be witnessed (people, biblically – stones, heaven, etc.).
 - 5. They should have a mediator established to help resolve inevitable conflicts.
- C. Agreements should be made in proportion to the strength of the relationships and not beyond them.
 - 1. Agreements form a bridge between the parties.
 - 2. The question becomes, how much weight can that bridge be expected to carry?
- D. In order to have peace, order, and productivity within an organization, it must have clear job descriptions, lines of authority, and mission statements.
 - 1. Confusion is often the result of unclear lines of responsibility, authority, accountability, and procedures. All of these must be clear in order for an organization to truly function properly.
 - 2. The true measure of the clarity of vision and agreements in any organization is each member’s ability to articulate *what they are doing in relationship to achieving the overall vision of the organization and their division within it*. This requires constant clarity and clear mission statements (Deut. 6:4-8).

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