

Issue 5 - When Families Stay Silent | The Danger of Avoiding Conflict

Practical tools for parents and couples to face hard conversations with grace, truth, and lasting faith.

Messy Story of the Week

Jim and Karen's 23-year-old son was sliding downhill — skipping work, racking up debt, staying out late. Karen felt the weight and wanted to intervene. Jim kept brushing it off: “He’s an adult. He’ll figure it out.”

But silence didn’t fix the problem. Their son drifted further, Karen grew resentful of Jim’s passivity, and Jim grew defensive at her frustration. The hard conversations they avoided with their son spilled over into their marriage.

What began as an effort to “keep the peace” only deepened the strain. Their son lost respect, their marriage carried the burden, and the silence left wounds no one was naming out loud.

Faithful God, Then and Now

David’s family tells a sobering story of what happens when conflict goes unaddressed. After Amnon violated Tamar, Scripture tells us David was angry — but he did nothing (2 Samuel 13). When Absalom killed Amnon and fled, David again avoided the confrontation. Even when Absalom returned to Jerusalem, David still refused to meet him face-to-face.

The results were devastating: unresolved pain, family estrangement, and Absalom’s eventual rebellion. And though the text doesn’t record the voices of the mothers, we know these events had to have cut deeply into the women in David’s household. Their daughters were harmed, their sons killed, and their family fractured — all under the weight of a leader who would not lead.

Avoidance didn’t prevent conflict in David’s home. It magnified it.

What We Can Learn

- Silence in the face of sin or hurt is not neutrality — it is abdication (James 4:17).
 - Avoidance shifts the burden onto others, often straining marriages and wounding children.
 - True peace comes through truth spoken in love (Ephesians 4:15), not by leaving wounds to fester.
-

Behind the Curtain

In coaching, I see this often: parents avoid confronting adult children to “protect” the relationship. In reality, the relationship erodes under the weight of unspoken truth. Respect is lost, resentment grows, and spouses quietly blame each other for the fallout.

Hard conversations require courage. But leading with humility and love can restore dignity to children, unity in marriage, and health to the whole family. Avoidance feels safe in the moment, but it always costs more in the long run.

Faith Step for the Week

Read:

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone.” — Matthew 18:15

Before your next hard conversation, try this:

1. **Pray:** “Lord, make me quick to hear, slow to speak.” (James 1:19)
2. **Name the aim:** “I want us to find a path forward, not a person to blame.”
3. **One clear ask:** “Would you be willing to talk about X tonight at 7?”
4. **One next step:** Agree on a small action and a check-in time.

Peace doesn't come from silence. It comes from truth in love (Eph. 4:15) and repair with humility.

◆ Next Week

Next issue, we'll step into the palace window with Michal, Saul's daughter and David's first wife. What began with love and loyalty ended in bitterness and contempt. Why? We'll look at how years of unresolved hurt and disappointment grew into deep discontent — and what that teaches us about resentment in marriage today.