



Feedback

Devotional featuring Lynn Swaner



 **Watch Here**

Take a minute and think about something you probably take for granted every day—a mirror. As adults, we have a bit of a complicated relationship with mirrors. Sometimes what we see reflected looks pretty good—and sometimes it does not. But no matter how we appear on any given day, a mirror helps us to take stock of where we might need to make some adjustments. Looking in the mirror provides us with actual data—with real time feedback—that we can use to make changes and adjustments, as well as affirm and keep those things that are going well.

What we see in the mirror—and our ability to act on that to make changes—is entirely dependent on the overall quality and accuracy of the mirror. And the same is true of the feedback we receive and that we give to others. Ephesians 4:15 puts it this way: “Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” We know from this scripture that we are called to give accurate, truthful feedback—both from a place of love, and in a loving way—that helps others to grow into all that Christ has called them to be.

So what does helpful, high quality, and loving feedback look like? One of the top articles published in 2019 by *Harvard Business Review* was a piece called “The Feedback Fallacy.” Through a review of the research, the authors of this article came to the following conclusion: “We humans do not do well when someone whose intentions are unclear tells us where we stand, how good we ‘really’ are, and what we must do to fix ourselves. We excel only when people who know us and care about us tell us what they experience and what they feel, and in particular when they see something within us that really works.” Quality feedback is given with clear motives of love, care, and respect. It is strengths-based and strengths-focused so that others can keep going with those things that they do well, versus only trying to fix their weaknesses.

As you hold up the mirror to how you give feedback in your school, think about diverse strategies and formats—like peer-to-peer drop-ins, co-teaching days, and other ways to build an instructional atmosphere of trust, collaboration, ongoing communication, and shared improvement goals. Using a broader mirror than one where you can only see yourself—one that’s big enough where we can see all of us, as a team—can help us develop an instructional culture where teachers and students alike are excited to learn, to change, to grow, and to flourish together.

MEDITATE

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.” —EPHESIANS 4:15

REFLECT

What do we learn about God in Ephesians 4:15?

What kind of feedback do your teachers receive?

Is the intention clear that feedback is for their growth and that it is given from a place of love and care?