

LEMONADE

Conflict Resolution

Matthew 18:15 (KJV) 15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

What is conflict?

- Conflict in relationships is described as *the disagreement or discord that comes from a difference in ideas, values, understanding, or how a situation is viewed or interpreted*
- We must realize in the family unit conflict is going to happen
- The likelihood of family members agreeing on everything all the time is just about zero
- Conflict is going to happen because people are different, they may have different upbringing, what the value is different, their temperament is different, what they value is different, challenges may affect us differently, etc.
- Conflict is inevitable because of the added financial, employment, education concerns and responsibilities related to the pandemic
- It is true conflict is inevitable, but it doesn't have to create major problems in our homes

How Do You Handle Conflict?

Dennis Rainey describes four reactions to conflict in his book *Preparing for Marriage*

1. *Fight to Win* – It's an "I win, you lose" approach to conflict
2. *Withdraw* – It's the "silent treatment" approach
 - a. We may be making the problem worse for ourselves by not talking about it
3. *Yield* – It's the "I surrender" to avoid another argument approach
4. *Payback* – It's "I'm going to get even with you" approach
5. *Medicate it* – through alcohol and drugs
6. *Lovingly Confront* – You carefully and sensitively address the issue
 - a. It's the only one of these approaches that will help solve our problems

Conflict Resolution for Christians

Pray about the problem Psalm 139:23-24 (KJV) 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: 24 And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- Start with prayer
- Ask God to search your heart, your thoughts and point out any sinful ways
- We want God to examine us
- You're asking God to show anything that may be *causing* or *contributing* to the problem
- You're asking God to cleanse your heart and put you back on the right path
- Then we God shows us, we can repent and be forgiven

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Look at yourself before looking at others Matthew 7:3 (KJV) 3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

- It is easy to see a family member's fault and be oblivious to our own faults
- We can see the "small problems" in a spouse or family member but are "totally blind" to our own problems
- We often focus on the imperfections of others and are blind to our own issues
- How can we be of any help to others if we are blind ourselves?
- That's not to say that the other person did not contribute to the conflict, but we can't resolve the conflict if we ignore our "role" in it
- To aid in resolving conflict we must see our part in it **Matthew 7:5 (NLT2) 5 Hypocrite! First get rid of the log in your own eye; then you will see well enough to deal with the speck in your friend's eye.**
- We must recognize our attitude and behavior is *hypocritical* if we only see the faults of others
- Deal with your own life's issues, problems and sins first and it will open the door for resolving problems

Sow Seeds of Kindness Romans 12:19-21 (KJV) 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. 21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.

- Sometimes when there is unresolved conflict, we get "personal"
- It's easy to tell when conflict has gotten personal because we try to pay them back in some sort of way
- If we plant "seeds of discord", we can't expect "a harvest" of peace, love and unity
- We must continue be kind, loving, thoughtful during conflict
- Still be prayerful, helpful, supportive, kind, even while you're resolving conflict
- We overcome evil with good
- **What seeds are you planting your home right now?**
- **Will these seeds produce the 'harvest' you were expecting?**

Lovingly Confront the Issue Matthew 18:15 (KJV) 15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

- Jesus saying if you have an issue with someone go to them and them alone
 - It is critical to go *personally and privately* to the person you have the conflict with
- We go to the person we have the conflict with first because:
- it shows you have respect for them
 - Our friends, family, and social media followers are "biased" toward us and it's hard for them to be objective
 - Our friends and family may not be at the right spiritual level to help with us through the problem

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- Other people are only getting “one side” of the story
- You family member may feel betrayed because you got “others” involved before trying to work things out
- This doesn't mean we never talk to people qualified (i.e. a pastor, spiritually mature friend, marriage/family counselor, etc.) to help, but only *after* we have tried to resolve the conflict internally with our spouse or family member

Don't Just Talk – Communicate!

- Conflict resolution requires good communication which involves both listening and speaking
- God wants us to develop good listening and speaking skills
- Listening
 - Do more listening than talking **James 1:19 (KJV) 19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:**
 - Everyone deserves to be heard, even if it's something we disagree with
 - The other person deserves to be completely heard before we form an opinion or allow it to make us angry
- Listen and learn **Proverbs 1:5 (KJV) 5 A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels:**
 - Your spouse or children may have wisdom or information that you were not aware of and learn from
- Speaking
- Speak at the right time **Ecclesiastes 3:1 (KJV) 1 To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: 7b a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;**
 - Saying the right words at the right time is critical to conflict resolution
- We may make things worse if we keep talking **Proverbs 10:19 (KJV) 19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise.**
 - It is not wise to say all we think or feel
 - The mouth is the “container” of words lips are the “gate” that will *release* or *restrain* the words in our mouth

Tell the truth Ephesians 4:25 (KJV) 25 Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another.

- Conflict resolution requires truth telling
- Lying makes the conflict resolution more difficult and destroys trust
- Honesty moves us closer to resolution because there is nothing hidden or concealed

Control your anger Ephesians 4:26 (KJV) 26 Be ye angry, and sin not:

- Anger is an emotion, but that emotion should cross the line into sin

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- The Bible doesn't say we shouldn't feel angry, but it does say we must handle our anger properly
- Anger out of control is sin
- Don't allow anger to build, but resolve it quickly

*Don't give the devil an opportunity **Ephesians 4:26-27** "...let not the sun go down upon your wrath: 27 Neither give place to the devil."*

- God says "don't let the sun go down on your wrath" or work to resolve your issues as quickly as possible
- The longer we wait the easier it is for the devil to get a foothold in the relationship
- Don't give the enemy the satisfaction of ruining your family

*Watch your words **Ephesians 4:29 (KJV) 29 Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.***

- Words have power and words can hurt
- The most hurtful words can come from the people we love the most
- God says let no corrupt, foul, distasteful words come out of our mouths
- Speak words that build up each other, not tear each other down
- Even in conflict our words are still wholesome and God honoring

*Forgive **Ephesians 4:32 (KJV) 32 And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.***

- There are three important words in this passage; kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness
 - *Kindness* is grace that's willing to wipe the slate clean and not hold a grudge
 - *Tenderness* speaks of compassion for the other person
 - *Forgiveness* speaks of Jesus Christ and the how He always forgives us
 - Just as God forgives us, we must forgive others

*Peace **1 Peter 3:11 (KJV) 11 Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.***

- The goal of conflict resolution is not winning but peace
- It's being a peacemaker
- But an effective peacemaker actively pursues peace by building good relationships, knowing that peace is a by-product of commitment to the relationship
- Making peace is hard work—you have to search for it and work to maintain it—but it results in God's blessing.
- **Matthew 5:9 (KJV) 9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.**