



BIBLICAL TRUTH TO ADDRESS CONFLICT (MORE THAN RESOLUTION)

counsel • self-study • teaching • cell group • life

Christians are not exempt from conflict. There are many accounts in the Bible where believers disagreed. Sometimes it was an issue of opinion, while at other times such disagreements were centered on issues of disobedience and sin. In either case, the primary objective of addressing conflict is not resolution, but loving God and loving neighbor. If these two objectives stand at the center of human conflict (for both parties) then resolution often becomes a natural by-product. Following are several Biblical principles to remember when dealing with conflict.

I. DISCIPLINE YOUR MIND TO BE CONSCIOUS OF CHRIST IN CONFLICT

"For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Matthew 18:20

- Remember where two believers meet to discuss any issue, Christ is always in the midst.
- If anger ensues, seek to fellowship with Christ ALONE.

II. DETERMINE TO TAKE REFUGE ALONE WITH GOD BEFORE HARSH WORDS ARE SPOKEN OR VIOLENT ACTION IS TAKEN

"God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in time of trouble." Ps. 46:1

- Remove yourself (if possible) from the situation the moment you begin to feel angry.
- Do this by simply asking for a break. Make sure to establish a specific time to resume your conversation. You should come back together to talk as soon as possible.
- Take a few minutes to meditate on God and His Word (music, scripture, prayer; Eph. 5:11-20).

III. DISTINGUISH YOUR UNBRIDLED DESIRES

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from desires that battle within you?" James 4:1-2

- Ask yourself: "What is my agenda: God or self?"
- "What expectations are potentially ruling my heart?"
- "What do I think I deserve in this situation?" (above all else)
- "What 'rights' am I worshipping?"

IV. DEVELOP BIBLICAL PRIORITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF CONFLICT

"So...whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:21

- Keep in mind, "This moment/conversation is taking place that I may (1) glorify God, (2) seek conformity to the image of Jesus, (3) love others, (4) resolve the presenting issue.
- Ask yourself, "Which of these is most important to me in this moment?"



V. DISPLAY OBEDIENCE THROUGH REPENTANCE

"If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9

- If your anger, thoughts, words, motives, etc. are sinful ask God to forgive you, and submit your agenda to His agenda (holiness/righteousness, loving God/neighbor, etc.).
- Renounce all "rights" that produce a conflict within your heart towards God and His will.

VI. DISPLAY GENUINE REPENTANCE BY YOUR ACTIONS

"First to those in Damascus...I preach that they should repent and turn to God and prove their repentance by their deeds." Acts 26:20

- If you have sinned against someone else (in attitude, thought, word, or deed) go to that individual and seek his/her forgiveness by confessing your sin, and asking him/her to forgive you.
- Allow time for him/her to reply: Pray together. Resume your discussion.

VII. DEMONSTRATE GODLINESS BY GENUINELY LISTENING

"My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires." James. 1:19-20

- Seek to love your neighbor by allowing him/her time to speak.
- Discipline yourself to become a better listener.
- Do not be quick to argue your point. Ask yourself, "Is my ultimate goal to win the argument or to bring about the righteousness of Christ in myself and my neighbor?"

VIII. DIRECT YOUR WORDS OF TRUTH IN LOVE

"Speak the truth to each other...do not plot evil against your neighbor." Zechariah 8:16

- If your spouse/neighbor is in sin, lovingly speak the truth to him/her. This is a godly rebuke. If he/she repents, grant immediate forgiveness (Luke 17:3-10).
- If your conflict is an issue of opinion, consult the Bible for direction.

IX. DESPISE PRIDE, AND EMBRACE HUMILITY

"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves...to God." Js. 4:6-7

- Be willing to submit to the authority of Scripture.
- View this moment as an opportunity to grow in His grace.