

BIBLICAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

HELPFUL SCRIPTURE:

Proverbs 6:16-19 Proverbs 17:14 Proverbs 20:3 Matthew 5:23-24
1 Peter 5:5-7 Ephesians 4:1-3 Proverbs 18:19

As believers, we are called to live in a way that stands out from the rest of the world. One of those opportunities is in the way we handle conflict. In conflict we have the opportunity to glorify God, serve others, and grow to be like Christ. Instead of focusing on ourselves, we can seek to serve and honor the Lord by depending on His wisdom, by obeying His commands, and by practicing a merciful, forgiving, and loving attitude.

1. **GET THE LOG OUT OF YOUR OWN EYE** – The first step in biblical conflict resolution is taking responsibility for our own contributions to the conflict. We need to ask God to examine our hearts, show us where we are wrong, confess our sins, ask God to help us change any attitudes that lead to conflict, and seek to repair any harm that we have caused. Before attacking the other people who are involved, we need to confess and repent to God and own up to any ways we may have contributed to the conflict.
2. **GO AND SHOW YOUR BROTHER HIS FAULT** – The next step is to determine whether or not you need to talk directly with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook (see don't sweat the small stuff). Instead of pretending the problem doesn't exist or talking about others behind their back, we are called to talk with the person(s) involved directly, graciously, and lovingly. If you have done all you can to share your concern and the situation is still too serious to overlook, you should ask one or two others to join as you confront them again (Matthew 18:16-20).
3. **GO AND BE RECONCILED** – One of the unique features of biblical peacemaking is the pursuit of genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. Sometimes it is hard for us to extend the same forgiveness we have received in Jesus. Instead of saying "I forgive her, but I just don't want to have anything to do with her again", we are called to forgive completely and open the door for complete reconciliation. Praise the Lord He doesn't forgive us on the same conditions we put on our own forgiveness of others! Forgiveness is a spiritual process that we cannot fully accomplish it on our own. So, as we purpose to forgive others, it is important to continually ask God for grace to imitate His wonderful forgiveness toward us.

DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

Proverbs 19:11 tells us that it is appropriate to overlook minor offenses. Before rushing off to confront someone about the how they contributed to the conflict, be sure it is an offense that is too serious to be overlooked. In general, it is a minor offense if you can answer "no" to these questions:

- Is the offense seriously dishonoring to God?
- Has it permanently damaged a relationship?
- Is it seriously hurting other people?
- Is it seriously hurting the offender himself?

If the answer is “yes” to any of the questions above, an offense is too serious to overlook. In this case God commands us to go talk with the offender privately and lovingly (Matthew 18:15). Remember to:

- Pray for humility and wisdom (1 Pet. 5:5)
- Plan your words carefully (Prov. 15:1-2)
- Choose the appropriate time and place – talk in person when possible
- Assume the best about the other person until facts prove otherwise (Prov. 18:17)
- Listen carefully (Prov. 18:13)
- Speak only to build others up (Eph. 4:29)
- Ask for feedback from the other person (Prov. 18:2)
- Trust God (Ps. 37:3)