

Conflict & Reconciliation

Purpose: To understand what causes conflict and learn God's plan for reconciliation.

Introductory Thoughts: God desires that we are unified

Ephesians 4:3 *Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

Matthew 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.*

God cares deeply about how we get along with each other in his family. We are individually expected to do everything in our power to maintain unity. Additionally, he blesses those that help to reconcile broken relationships saying, "they will be called children of God." Another way to see this; if we are God's children, we should be peacemakers!

THE NATURE OF CONFLICT

James 4:1 All parties are not assumed guilty in conflict. Sometimes one provokes an innocent person¹.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? God helps us to identify where it starts.

Desires that battle within you - Conflict begins in the heart and then "acts out."

Relational Sins from Mark 7:20-23, Galatians 5:19-21, Colossians 3:5-10

Dissension - disagreement that leads to discord

Discord - lack of agreement or harmony; remaining in conflict

Malice - desire to harm someone, ill-will

Racism - to dislike someone because of their culture or skin color

Prejudice - to pre-judge, deciding before you get to know someone what they are like

Envy - resentful longing aroused by another person's success, personal qualities, or possessions

Arrogance - an exaggerated view of one's importance or abilities

ADDRESSING CONFLICT

Matthew 18:15-16 WHEN SOMEONE HAS OFFENDED YOU

If your brother or sister sins against you - We will sin against each other over time.

Go point out their fault, just between the two of you - God expects that we address the issue directly with the offending person. The goal is repentance and reconciliation.

If they will not listen, take help - If you cannot reconcile, bring a mediator to help resolve.

FREQUENT EXCUSES

- "I tried once...it didn't work"
- "They are not acting like a disciple"
- "They are not approachable"
- "We agreed to disagree"

God calls us to do the right thing regardless of how they act or respond. We have been given STEP 2, Matthew 18:16 to involve help if we cannot resolve it ourselves.

Proverbs 18:17

The first to speak seems right - It is very easy to believe one side of the story!

Until someone comes forward to cross-examine - Both sides are critical for resolution.

Matthew 5:23-24 WHEN YOU HAVE OFFENDED SOMEONE ELSE

If you are offering...and remember - When we come before God, we examine our hearts.

Your brother or sister has something against you - We know something is wrong.

Go and be reconciled; then offer your gift - Urgency! Go and work things out.

MOTIVATIONS TO FORGIVE

1. Forgiving for yourself
2. Forgiving for the relationship
3. Forgiving for the Kingdom community
4. Forgiving for God's glory

Matthew 6:14-15

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Romans 15:5-6

Genesis 45:4-8

GETTING RECONCILED

Ephesians 6:11-12

Take your stand against the devil's schemes - Satan works to divide us.

Our struggle is not against flesh and blood - Remember the enemy! Its not your brother.

James 2:12-13

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged - God watches how we handle US.

Judgment without mercy for anyone who has not been merciful

Mercy triumphs over judgment - It is always better to preserve the relationship over needing to have our way or win an argument.

2 Corinthians 7:10-11

Godly sorrow brings repentance - Real reconciliation comes from repentance of the sin.

Eagerness to clear yourself, concern, ready to see justice done - DESIRE to change.

You have proved yourself to be innocent - You have done everything, thoroughly.

MEMORY SCRIPTURE

James 2:12-13 (NIV 2011)

Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment!

KEY QUESTIONS

Q: Are you a peacemaker? If not, what can you do to become one?

Q: Is there anyone that has offended you that you need to talk with? What will you do now?

Q: Is there anyone that you know has something against you that you need to reconcile with?