

Resolving Conflict Biblically / Church of the Open Bible / 05.22.16

Introduction: We need to learn the _____ - _____, spiritual way of handling conflict, obeying God's revelation and trusting him with the results.

Mindset: Our goal in conflict has to be to glorify _____, not to win or protect our pride. We need to live up to Christ as our standard, live to please Christ, and seek to bring glory to Christ.

Principle 1: Continue to _____: Leviticus 19.17; 1 John 3.14; Luke 6.27-28.

Principle 2: When you are hurting, try to _____, not hurt: Philippians 2.3-4; Romans 12.17-18.

Principle 3: Prayerfully consider whether _____ need to change. We are to admonish each other to help us stay close to God: Leviticus 19.17; Colossians 3.16; 1 Thessalonians 5.12-13. Still, we should proceed cautiously, lovingly, discerningly as we admonish someone else: 1 Timothy 5.19-20; Luke 6.41-42.

In any conflict, we should ask whether any of the _____ lies with us. If we sense conviction from God, we should repentantly confess to him and then approach the other person for forgiveness and an opportunity to make restitution [if necessary]: Proverbs 28.13; Numbers 5.5-7.

Principle 4: If possible, let it go; in any case, _____: Colossians 3.13; Matthew 6.14-15. Forgive as many times as God has forgiven you [!]: Luke 17.3-4; Matthew 18.21-22. Forgiveness is an active, deliberate decision, not a passive feeling, so you can forgive someone even though you identify their behavior as sin and you are upset about it.

Principle 5: Seek to restore _____: Galatians 6.1-2; Ephesians 4.1-3.

Principle 6: Speak in an _____ way: Romans 14.19; Ephesians 4.29 [body language too!].

Principle 7: Work _____ to work things out: Matthew 5.23-24; 18.15. Talk gently, lovingly: Proverbs 16.24. Say "When you do that, I feel this." This is not an accusation, it is an expression of how you feel and think, it gives them an opportunity to restore your relationship and even change their behavior [though *you* might need to change too]. Allow for the fact there might be a misunderstanding. Listen carefully to the other perspective: Proverbs 18.13. If people are difficult about resolving things, stay calm and reasonable, keep praying, keep working through these principles: Romans 12.14, 21.

If you cannot resolve the conflict on your own, bring _____ or _____ mutually respected people to talk it over with you both: Matthew 18.16. Talk about the conflict only with those who are part of the problem or can be part of the solution; do not gossip [which is sin!]. Some conflicts require church discipline: Matthew 18.17. Even then, the goals are not only to preserve honor for God, protect the purity of the church and guard others from being tempted, deceived, divided, or otherwise harmed, we also hope to restore the fallen believer to health, a walk with God, fellowship in the church, and usefulness for the mission.

Wrong Approach 1: Peace Faking or _____ responses: avoiding conflict instead of resolving it. These include denying the problem exists or refusing to do what is necessary; avoiding the other person [sometimes necessary in threatening situations, as in 1 Samuel 19.9-10, but not in church]; or suicide.

Wrong Approach 2: Peace Breaking or _____ responses: bringing pressure to win by force. These include unnecessary litigation [we should resolve things in the church when possible, see 1 Corinthians 6.1]; intimidation; or violence [see Matthew 5.21-22].

Conclusion: These principles will be the basis for our church conflict covenant. If we handle our conflict like Christians and we seek to resolve conflict biblically, then we can turn what our spiritual adversaries thought to be trouble into something that glorifies God even more: [Ephesians 6.12].