

BIBLICAL PEACEMAKING

What to do with Conflict

Jesus is the perfect model of a peacemaker; He died for us while we were still sinners (Rom. 5:8), He suffered wrongs without retaliation (1 Peter 2:23), He confronted others only for their good (John 4:1-26), and He loved and forgave even His enemies (Luke 23:34). He promises to work in us so that we may do the same things (Phil. 2:13).

1. *Preparing Yourself for Confrontation*

“You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”
Matthew 7:5

A. *Examine Yourself First*

What kind of logs might you find?

1. Sinful attitudes.

- *Cravings* (desires that have grown into demands)
- *Judgments* (condemning others or speculating on their motives)

2. Sinful words.

- *Harsh or reckless words* (Proverbs 12:18, 15:1)
- *Grumbling, complaining, and criticizing* (Philippians 2:14, James 5:9)
- *Falsehood*—any deception or twisting of the truth (Exodus 20:16, Proverbs 24:28)
- *Gossip*—revealing or discussing personal information about others with people who are not part of the problem or the solution (Proverbs 11:13, 16:28)
- *Slander*—speaking false and malicious words (Leviticus 19:16, 2 Timothy 3:3)
- *Any “worthless” talk* (Ephesians 4:29)

3. Sinful actions.

- *Not keeping your word* (Matthew 5:37, Psalm 15:1,4)
- *Not respecting authority* (Mark 10:42-45, Romans 13:1-7)
- *Not treating others as you want to be treated* (Matthew 7:12)

B. *Confess and Repent*

Admit specifically (1 John 1:9)

Ask for forgiveness (Genesis 50:17)

Accept the consequences (Luke 15:19)

Alter (change) your behavior (Ephesians 4:22-32)

Repentance is more than a feeling.

- Mere remorse leads only to further grief (2 Corinthians 7:10)
- Godly sorrow comes when we see sin for what it is: A personal offense against God (Luke 15:18)
- Genuine repentance involves a change of heart, a different way of thinking and acting (Luke 15:17)

What if the other person won’t forgive?

- * Prayer
- * Was your confession adequate?
- * Have you followed through on your commitments?
- * Allow time and continue in repentance

C. *What About Their Specks?* (Matt. 7:5)

God commands us to overlook minor offenses. (Proverbs 12:16, 19:11)

Why? To imitate the Lord

(Psalm 103:8-10, Luke 6:36)

When? If the offense is not dishonoring God, if your relationship has not been permanently damaged, if others are not being hurt

God commands us to change our attitudes.
(Philippians 4:2-9)

- Rejoice in the Lord always (vs. 4)
- Let your gentleness be evident to all (vs. 5)
- Replace anxiety with prayer (vs. 6-7)
- See things as they really are (vs. 8)
- Practice what you've learned (vs. 9)

God commands us to count the cost of not overlooking.
(Matthew 5:25-26)
What will it cost to not resolve this offense?

2. *When and How Should you Go and Confront Someone?*

Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. Galatians 6:1

A. *When someone has something against you* (Matthew 5:21-24)

- You may be able to clarify a misunderstanding.
- You may learn that you were actually wrong.
- You may help to deliver the other person from the acid of unforgiveness.

B. *When someone's sins are too serious to overlook*

Questions to Consider

- Is it dishonoring to God? (Romans 2:21-24)
- Has it damaged your relationship?
- Is it hurting other people—including your self?
(Luke 17:2-3)
- Is it hurting the offender? (James 5:19-20)

Confrontation is needed when someone is "caught" in a sin (Galatians 6:1)

The purpose of confrontation is to "restore" the offender to usefulness to God. (Galatians 6:1)

C. *Excuses not to confront*

- "My 'log' is just too big." (Matthew 7:5)
- "Do not judge or you will be judged."
(Matthew 7:1-5; 1 Corinthians 2:15)
- "Isn't it God's job to show people where they are wrong?" (2 Samuel 12:1)
- "They could not handle it, if I told them the truth."
(Ephesians 4:15)

D. *Communication Skills Necessary For Confrontation*

- Speak only to build others up. (Ephesians 4:29)
- Listen carefully (James 1:19)
 - 1) Waiting (Proverbs 18:13)
 - 2) Concentrating (Matthew 7:12)
 - 3) Clarifying
 - 4) Reflecting (Proverbs 15:23)
 - 5) Agreeing (Proverbs 5:31, 28:13)
- Confront carefully (Proverbs 12:18)
 - * Pray
 - * Choose the right time and place

- * Believe the best about others until you have facts to prove otherwise.
(1 Corinthians 13:7)
- * Talk in person whenever possible.
(Matthew 18:15)
- * Plan your words.
- * Use a gracious tone of voice and friendly body language (Ephesians 4:15)
- * Be objective (facts vs. personal opinions or conclusions).
- * Use the Bible carefully (don't be preachy).
- * Ask for feedback.

E. Recognize Your Limits

(Romans 12:18; 2 Timothy 2:24-26)

- Your job: to speak the truth in love as clearly and persuasively as possible.
- God's job: to change people

3. When and How Should You Involve Other People

"But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." Matthew 18:16

A. Only after you have attempted Step One, which is:

Overlook minor offenses (1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

B. Only after you have exhausted Step Two, which is:

Talk in private (Matthew 18:15)

C. Step Three: Take one or two others along
(Matthew 18:16)

The operative verb: "refuses to listen"

D. Step Four: Tell it to the church
(Matt. 18:17)

E. Step Five: Treat the other person as a nonbeliever

(Matthew 18:17; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15)

- "As" is a functional decision, not a heart decision
- Treat people caught in sin like Jesus treated them—love them enough to tell them the truth

4. God's Purpose for Confrontation:

Restored Fellowship

1 John 1:5-7

A. Stay out of the dark.

B. Walk in the light.

C. Enjoy great connections with others.

"A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." John 13:34-35