

## Christian Response to Conflict – Sept. 8, 2021

Conflict is inevitable... how do we handle it as Christians? 11 verses tonight.

Some learned behavior: silence & stifle; argue & anger; put down, turn around.

No matter the conflict, communication is key to resolving it.

“If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” – **Rom 12:18**

### Steps in Responding to Conflict [PEACE Plan]:

1. **Pray** – pray for God’s wisdom; pray to prepare the other heart.
  - a. This benefits with time... cool down; not big deal;
  - b. Go to throne before the phone.
2. **Evaluate yourself - Inner Work**
  - a. **Matt. 7:5** – “You hypocrite! First take the beam out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”
  - b. Acknowledge your part & put yourself in their shoes
  - c. Put your heart in the right place to communicate  
(not to assign blame or attack; unload) Want to make peace or war?
3. **Arrange to meet in person** – just the 2 of you– not phone, text. **Matt. 18:15:**  
“If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.”
  - a. Meet sooner, not later. Jesus said: “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First, be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (**Matt. 5:23-24**).
  - b. Plan an appropriate time. Don’t rush.
4. **Communicate** your heart . . . Attitude matters!!
  - a. Start with positive words – importance of person/relationship to you.
  - b. Explain your feelings – don’t assess blame.
  - c. Give the benefit of the doubt
  - d. Allow another to save face, don’t back them in a corner.  
(retain respect; not be embarrassed or humiliated)
5. **End conversation on positive note**
  - a. Reaffirm your feelings & express thanks
  - b. Vow to move forward, not go back . . . clean slate.
  - c. Forgive. And say “I’m Sorry.”

Some conversations won't go well. Now what?

**1 - Matt. 18:15-17 - God's plan for conflict resolution:**

1 – Privately, just the 2 of you. 2 - if refuses to listen, take along 1-2 others. Have a 3d person mediator help... they find common ground.

2 – After making multiple efforts at peace . . . walk away.

**Matt. 18:17** – if he refuses to listen, treat as a tax collector or pagan.

**Luke 9:5** - If anyone does not welcome you, shake the dust off your feet

- When you've done all you can do, be done.
- Don't chase. Don't open doors that God may be closing.

**Closing Thoughts:**

1. Some people are – “not busy, but busy-bodies.” (**2 Th. 3:11-14**). There are some “who cause divisions & make obstacles” for others. (**Rom. 16:17**). Rule: Stay away. Drama is for tv/movies . . . not our lives.
2. Don't make your personal issue a social issue. **Grace flows down.** “Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all wrongs.” – **Prov. 10:12**
3. Don't use prayer requests as a tool for **gossip**
4. God only holds us **accountable** for doing what He has called us to do. You're responsible for your actions, not another's reactions.
5. Even if there is no resolution, there must be **forgiveness**. We're called to: "Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you" (**Ephesians 4:32**).
6. **Forgive over & over – 70 X 7 – Matt. 18:22**
7. **How we handle conflict is our witness.** Let it be a good one.  
Will we be seen as angry people? Mean? Bitter people? Immature?  
Or will our Christian witness come through – peaceful & forgiving.  
Christians should be **imitating Jesus**...

Song of the week – “Let There Be Peace on Earth” – by Young Persons Choir of NYC