



Peace Maker

If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
– Romans 12:18 NIV

Conflict.

Just feeling that word roll off my tongue brings me such discomfort. Hearing it out loud causes me to cringe. It's not a pretty word. You can dress it up however you want but the ugliness of it only grows bigger through its meager disguises. And even though its sour demeanor reels everyone accustomed to it, it is such a major factor in our culture.

Conflict seems to be something nobody wants and yet looks for opportunities to purchase. And it seems that we all try to advertise our conflict as the right kind, as if our version is the correct one and anyone that disagrees with us has the wrong one. Many today use conflict to act as a field general looking for the proper weakness to attack regardless of honor, hypocrisy and especially love.

So what do we do about conflict? You can't dodge it unless you crawl under a rock in the middle of some desert somewhere. But even that will bring other problems. The truth is it's everywhere in all kinds of shapes and forms. And with all the variations we see there is only two basic ways to deal with it.

Win.

Conflict brings an understood defensiveness toward someone. "They attacked me!" This mindset will set a stage for a battle. Shots will be fired. Injuries will incur. Both will limp away, even the "victor". But the underlying factor that no one will see is the need to have power. Winning a conflict is about exposing power. Who has more. Who has less. Who wins and who loses. The truth is trampled under the boots of pride. Many times, the purpose for the conflict is forgotten because of the explosions of "winning the war".

Resolve.

All conflict comes from a place of pain; either direct or indirect. Something was said and/or done that exposed a hurt or an injury. Sometimes, the present conflict peels back the scar of previous wounds. And conflict will always be filtered through the lens of our past. That is how it will be defined. But what if instead of dealing with the person we dealt with the hurt. What if we stopped seeing it as "Steve" or "Angie", and we saw it as depression or rejection? What if we looked for the need behind the action? Truly looked to see what was missing between two (or more) people that are close enough to share emotions?

Then we could attempt to resolve the missing part of the connection between us. Maybe we won't agree but can still love each other. Perhaps this stemmed from previous situations that caused a slow-moving erosion between us that can finally be dealt with. Know that someone does love me even if strong words and actions tried to deflect it (and, please, we don't have to agree on EVERYTHING to love each other)?

Then we could have at least in some small manner, "Peace on Earth"!

From My Heart,

Billy