

Dealing With



A Bible Class Series

By

Ray Reynolds

Dealing With Conflict

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Dealing With Conflict

Lesson One – How To Understand Conflict **Reasons & Reflection**

Conflict Defined & Explained

"A conflict-free milieu does not exist in the church or elsewhere – nor should it. . . . A world with no conflict would preclude much of our struggle for integrity and authenticity in relationships and limit the depth of spiritual growth." (Kenneth Halstead)

"Conflict is a natural human state and can be a constructive force when approached with skill." (Davis & Porter)

"The price of avoiding conflict is to either stop being alive as a unique human being or else to stop having relationships with human beings who are unique and alive." (Paul Diehl)

"At its broadest, conflict has been defined as differences between and among individuals." (Borisoff & Victor)

"Social conflict exists when two or more parties express differences in beliefs, values, or interests, whether the divergence is real or perceived." (Allen Barsky)

"Conflict is a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goals or desires." (Ken Sande)

The Facts About Conflict

- 1) Conflict is an inevitable fact of life.
- 2) Conflict is a neutral term, neither positive or negative in and of itself.
- 3) Conflict is defined in different ways.
- 4) Conflict can be caused by many different things.
- 5) Conflict has many broad arenas.
- 6) Conflict usually comes because of neglect in a relationship.

Conflict Has Energy Which Can:

*Motivate Communication
Clarify Needs & Priorities
Move Us To Action
Help Us Define Our Identities*

*Identify Strengths & Weaknesses
Clarify Feelings
Mark Boundaries
Pull Us To Growth*

What Causes Conflict?

- ✓ *Human Uniqueness (Individuality)*
- ✓ *Differences (Preferences, Priorities, Perspectives)*
- ✓ *Criticism (Verbal & Non-verbal)*
- ✓ *Control Issues (Making Demands)*
- ✓ *Cumulative Annoyance*
- ✓ *Rejection*
- ✓ *Unmet or Differing Expectations*
- ✓ *Sin (Selfishness & Pride)*
- ✓ *Change*
- ✓ *Miscommunication*
- ✓ *Misbelief*
- ✓ *Misunderstanding*

What Are The Types/Arenas of Conflict?

1. *Intrapersonal Conflict (conflict within the individual)*
2. *Interpersonal Conflict (conflict between individuals)*
3. *Intragroup Conflict (conflict within a group of people)*
4. *Intergroup Conflict (conflict between groups)*

Conflict Comes When We Refuse To:

- C – Communicate
- O – Open Up
- N – Negotiate
- F – Feel
- L – Listen
- I – Involve
- C – Care
- T – Try

Christians Will Face Conflict:

- 1) Conflict With Non-Believers
- 2) Conflict With Co-Workers/Employer
- 3) Conflict In Yourself
- 4) Conflict In Your Marriage
- 5) Conflict In Your Family
- 6) Conflict Between Church Members
- 7) Conflict Between Church Leaders
- 8) Conflict Between Members & Leaders
- 9) Conflict Between Congregations

Conflict in the Book of Acts:

- **Acts 2** – The apostles were accused, Peter spoke, many men were convicted.
- **Acts 4** – The apostles were beaten and forbidden to preach Jesus.
- **Acts 5** – Peter has to approach a couple that had lied to the Holy Spirit.
- **Acts 6-7** – Stephen was persecuted and martyred for preaching the truth.
- **Acts 8-9** – Paul was against the church, the Lord appeared, Paul repented.
- **Acts 11** – Peter had to defend the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church.
- **Acts 15** – John Mark wanted to go with Paul, but he was homesick before. Barnabas said "Yes," Paul and Silas said "NO!" The men parted ways.

Major Areas of Conflict:

1. Lack of Biblical Authority
2. Worship Styles
3. Divorce/Remarriage
4. Elders (Authority)
5. Role of Women
6. A Lack of Love
7. Forcing Opinions

Driving Force Behind Growth = Conflict:

Selfishness – 17%

Pride – 14%

Others – 6%

Bias – 5%

Ambition – 3%

Bitterness – 1%

Fear – 1%

Lust – 1%

12 Causes of Church Conflict (John D. Cox):

1. Ignorance
2. Binding Opinions
3. Human Traditions
4. Selfishness
5. Hobbyism
6. Desire For Preeminence
7. Desire For Popularity
8. Envy/Jealousy
9. Obstinacy
10. Hypocrisy
11. Pride
12. Meddlers In Others Affairs

Questions:

Why are we afraid of conflict?

Why are we afraid of resolving conflict?

What happens when we refuse to resolve our conflicts?

Who benefits when we have conflict?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Two – How To Understand People Relationships & Respect

The Facts About Relationships

- ♥ Relationships matter to God.
 - ☉ **Ephesians 1:5, James 1:18**
- ♥ Relationships are what life is all about.
 - ☉ **Matthew 22:37-40, Galatians 5:6**
- ♥ Relationships are the basis of Christ's ministry and teaching.
 - ☉ **Luke 19:10, II Corinthians 5:17-19**
- ♥ Relationships have to be maintained.
 - ☉ **Matthew 18:15-17, Colossians 3:13**

The Purpose of Relationships

- ♥ We should have a burning desire to restore relationships.
- ♥ We should not try to reconcile if our heart is not in it.
- ♥ We should only pursue biblical reconciliation (I John 4:19-21).

The Meaning of Relationships

- ♥ We should know that reconciliation is necessary.
- ♥ We should know that it began at the cross with Jesus Christ.
- ♥ We should know that our relationships with each other are just as important to God as our relationship to Him.

The Scope of Relationships

- ♥ Reconciliation with others must begin with God.
- ♥ Reconciliation begins by having a right relationship with God Himself.
- ♥ Reconciliation cannot be accomplished without commitment and prayer.

Personality Styles in Conflict

- ***The Accommodator***
 - Motto:** "You win. Let's not fight"
 - Assumption:** Conflict is always wrong, sinful.
 - Profile:** Afraid of anger. Unpleasant. May be willing to silently suffer or parade as a martyr.
 - Problems:** Unrealistic. Will be abused. They can't take a stand.
 - Negative Examples:** Pilate with Jesus. Jews in **John 12:42-43**.
 - Positive Examples:** Abram with Lot in **Genesis 13**. Paul in **I Corinthians 9:19-23**.
- ***The Eliminator***
 - Motto:** "This is war!"
 - Assumption:** Compromise is wrong, sinful. In every situation someone is right and wrong.
 - Profile:** Competitive. Abrasive. Aggressive.
 - Problems:** Sees all disagreements as matters of life and death.
 - Negative Examples:** Jonah in **Jonah 4**. James and John in **Luke 9:52-56**.
 - Positive Examples:** Elijah on Mt. Carmel in **I Kings 18**. Ezra in **Ezra 10**.

- *The Blamer*

Motto: "This is all your fault!"

Assumption: Conflict is bad and someone has to take the blame.

Profile: Afraid of guilt. No responsibility. Often recruits allies to agree with them.

Problems: Mutual problems. Not black & white.

Negative Examples: Adam in **Genesis 3**. Aaron blaming the people for the calf.

Positive Examples: Nathan to David in **II Samuel 12**. Paul to Peter in **Galatians 2**.

- *The Denier*

Motto: "Problem? What problem? No problem!"

Assumption: If I deny it, conflict will go away.

Profile: Likes the accommodator, hates the blamer. Willing to add a silver lining, spin, justify wrongs, or misrepresent the facts.

Problems: Ignores reality. Conflict worsens.

Negative Examples: David with Amnon & Tamar. Thyatira in **Revelation 2:20**.

Positive Examples: Jesus offering no defense before Pilate.

- *The Believer*

Motto: "What's right? What does God want?"

Assumption: Conflict is a fact of life.

Profile: Growing in love (**I Corinthians 13**). Growing the fruit of the Spirit (**Galatians 5**).

Problems: A minority in the world. Often appears to be harsh and judgmental.

Negative Examples: Paul & Barnabas in **Acts 15**.

Positive Examples: The Jerusalem counsel. Peter in **Acts 4-5**. Peter and Paul defending the Gentile Christians. The epistles.

Scriptural Guidelines For The Believer

- Resolve things quickly (**Matthew 5:23-24**)
- Monitor and correct yourself (**Matthew 7:1-5**)
- Reconcile personally (**Matthew 18:15-17**)
- Love (**Romans 12:9-21, I Corinthians 13**)
- Keep unity and peace (**Ephesians 4:1-3**)
- Let go of your anger (**Ephesians 4:26-27**)
- Forgive freely (**Colossians 4:1-3**)
- Prayer constantly (**I Thessalonians 5:17**)
- Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (**James 5:19**)

Respect One Another

It is the will of God that we show respect to one another, especially those who are in authority!

- ✓ Even if we think they are wrong!
- ✓ Even if we think we know more!
- ✓ Even if we assume they are ignorant and are making mistakes!
- ✓ Our world leaders - **Romans 13, I Peter 2:17**
- ✓ Our church leaders - **Acts 20:28, I Timothy 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9, I Peter 5:1-4, I Timothy 4:13-16, I Timothy 5:17-20, II Timothy 4:1-5, Hebrews 13:7,17,24**
- ✓ Our parents - **Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:1-3, Hebrews 12:8**
- ✓ Each other, especially those older than us - **Leviticus 19:32, Ephesians 5:21-33, Colossians 3:12-21, I Timothy 5:3, I Peter 3:7**

Respect Means That We:

- R – Revere
- E – Esteem
- S – Submit
- P – Pursue
- E – Exemplify
- C – Conform
- T – Trust

Respect One Another

Remember the Golden Rule! - **Matthew 7:12**

Remember what John says in **I John 4:7-16** about love (respect one another).

Remember greatest commands! - **Matthew 22:36-40**

Remember Jesus expects of us in **John 13:34-35** (love one another).

MAKING YOUR RELATIONSHIP RIGHT (Faulkner) - Why should you love people?

- Its good medicine.
- You feel better about yourself.
- People are a better investment.
- People are made in the image of God.

THE STAGES PEOPLE GO THROUGH

- o *The Prior-Conditions Stage*
- o *The Frustration-Awareness Stage*
- o *The Conflict Stage*
- o *The Solution or Non-Solution Stage*
- o *The Follow-up Stage*
- o *The Resolve Stage*

THE TYPES PEOPLE IN CONFLICT

Avoidance (Withdrawers) - Low concern for self, others, & relationships

Accommodation (Yielders) - Low concern for self, High for others & relationships

Competition (Winners) - Low concern others & relationships, High for self

Collaboration (Resolvers) - Low concern for self & others, High for relationships

Compromise (Compromisers) - High concern for self, others, & relationships

Questions:

Why are relationships difficult?

Why are some people afraid commitment?

What are some solutions for getting people to respect one another more?

Who benefits from conflict in our relationships?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Three – How To Identify Conflict

Realize & Recognize

REALIZING A CONFLICT HAS BEGUN

- When a person demand to be listened to, heard, and understood.
- When a person can no longer be honest and forthright.
- When a person ignores fairness.
- When a person is unwilling and will not participate in discussions.
- When a person steps outside of their role or ignores the rules.
- When a person is not consistent.
- When two or more people are un- willing to mutually discuss things.
- When two or more people are not willing to treat each other with respect.
- When two or more people are confused about their roles.
- When two or more people cannot meet any agreement and are unwilling to try or participate in resolution.

SENSING A CONFLICT

Early Detection Is Key.

- Watch for signs of strife.
- Try not to be the last to know.
- Look for subtle signs of a struggle.
- If you sense a conflict is imminent try to find the source of the problem.
- Work on a solution quickly.

People React In Different Ways:

- Defend Position
- Clam Up
- Ignore It
- Fight Dirty
- Work It Out

THE LIFE CYCLE OF A FIRESTORM (Ron Susek)

Phase 1: Sparks. Unresolved conflict. Dishonesty. Pride. Insults.

Phase 2: Ignition. Humor becomes cutting. Coalitions form. Prepare to fight.

Phase 3: Full fury. Emotions rule over reason. Paranoia sets in. Fleshly behavior is accepted as the only way to handle this. "Winning" is it. "Once the conflict spreads to 10% of the leadership and 20% of the congregation, it is full blown."

Phase 4: Consuming winds. The "updraft" won't let it die. Things go from bad to worse in a short amount of time. The fire spreads to fully consume everything and everyone around it.

Phase 5: The final burn. Litigation. Division.

Phase 6: Rebuilding.

CAUSES OF A FIRESTORM

- (1) Preacher – T.R.I.M. (trust, relationship, integrity, mission)
- (2) Church – Every congregation has a "pyromaniac" or two.
- (3) Common – Resistance to authority, grow to quickly, immaturity, no church discipline, etc.
- (4) Culture – The world and the community impacts the work and worship.

FACTIONS IN CONFLICT (Ron Susek)

- (1) Emotions – People will let their emotions run away in a conflict.
- (2) Fleshly Behavior – People will act like non-believers (rebellious children).
- (3) Grace Goes Out The Window – Legalism obliterates it. They will force things.
- (4) Man-made Rules Enforced – Opinions and traditions will dominate.
- (5) Look For The Next Fight – Harsh & Negative. Rigidly reign. See its demise.

IDENTIFYING CHURCH CONFLICT

1. Refusing To Put God First
2. Ignoring Biblical Authority
3. Trying To Change Worship Styles
4. Pushing Divorce/Remarriage Issues
5. Rebelling Against Authority of Elders
6. Redefining The Role of Women
7. Lack of Love & Sacrifice For Brethren
8. Forcing Opinions & Binding Traditions
9. Legalism & Liberalism

IDENTIFYING CHURCH CONFLICT – What To Do

- (1) Consider the weaker brother (**I Corinthians 8:1-13**).
- (2) Consider the ultimate source to all church conflict, Satan.
- (3) Consider others before yourself and be a servant (**Luke 19:10**).
- (4) Consider prayer before you make any judgment or approach anyone.

IDENTIFYING FAMILY CONFLICT

1. Refusing To Put God First
2. Trying To Change The Other Person
3. Pushing Your Own Views & Opinions
4. Redefining The Marital Roles
5. Lack of Love & Sacrifice
6. Selfishness & Pride Exists
7. No Communication & Isolation
8. No Honesty or Humility

IDENTIFYING FAMILY CONFLICT – What To Do

- (1) Consider the weaker vessel and marital roles (**I Peter 3:1-7, Ephesians 5:21-33**).
- (2) Consider the ultimate source to all family conflict, Satan.
- (3) Consider others before yourself and be a servant (**Luke 19:10**).
- (4) Consider prayer before you make any judgment or approach anyone.

RECOGNIZING CONFLICT

- (1) Realize that there is a conflict.
- (2) Determine what will glorify God.
- (3) Get the log out of your own eye.
- (4) Resolve to go and show your brother his fault.
- (5) Be reconciled to your brother.

CONFLICT IN MARRIAGE

"The strongest message married people need to hear is that they should expect a significant number of hassles, demands for change, power struggles and hard-to-deal-with conflicts."
(Dr. Neil Clark Warren)

"Its not always about who is right and wrong. Its about maintaining communication."

Remember that conflict is inevitable, but it can be helpful to the relationship.

Four levels of conflict in marriage:

(1) Problem To Solve

The goal is to collaborate mutually to a beneficial solution.

(2) Disagreement

The goal is to attempt problem solving and/or abandon all hope when necessary.

(3) Contest

The goal is to win, no matter the cost. It can hinder and eventually destroy the relationship.

(4) Fight

The goal is to completely annihilate the argument, feelings, and character of the opposition.

GOOD COUNSEL IN MARRIAGE

Ephesians 5:21-33:

- (1) We need to be submissive.
- (2) We need to loving
- (3) We need to consider one other.
- (4) We need to uplift and praise.
- (5) We need to nourish & cherish.
- (6) We need to leave, cleave, & weave.
- (7) We need to respect one another.

Colossians 3:12-21:

- (1) We need to love and forgive.
- (2) We need to compromise.
- (3) We need to encourage.
- (4) We need to be meek & humble.
- (5) We need to be peaceable.
- (6) We need to be submissive.
- (7) We need to be understanding.

Questions:

Why is it hard to realize there is conflict?

Why is it hard to recognize conflict?

How can we be on guard for conflict without looking for a fight?

What are some ways we can improve our response time to a conflict?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Four – How The World Deals With Conflict **Resentment & Revenge**

THE WORLD IGNORES CONFLICT

- The world would rather compromise.
- The world would rather be tolerant.
- The world is blinded to the prejudice, bias, discontent, materialism, and ignorance that Christians see in it.
- The world hates to admit mistakes.
- The world refuses to be convinced of defeat in conflict, so they ignore it.
- The world sees Christianity as a threat.

APPROACHING CONFLICT

- When the world is forced into a corner, when non-believers are challenged, they will fight.
- When a fight ensues there are two main consequences: resentment and revenge.
- Unfortunately, Christians live in a "dog eat dog" world and that attitude often creeps into the church.

WORLDLY APPROACH TO CONFLICT

RESENTMENT

- **Job 1:5-7, 36:13** – Eliphaz and Elihu, two of Job's friends, claimed that Job was resentful because he claimed innocence.
- **Jeremiah 11:18-23** – Jeremiah learns of a plot to kill him because the people resented him for his preaching.
- **Proverbs 27:2** – *"A stone is heavy and sand is weighty, but the resentment caused by a fool is heavier than both."* - NLT
- **Proverbs 3:11-12** – Some people resent God when He chooses to discipline them.
- Judah, Solomon's own tribe, was left out of the taxation system. This, coupled with the injustice of having to support the king's extravagance, led to the resentment of the northern tribes that broke up the kingdom after Solomon's death.
- Herodias resented John the Baptist for his preaching against her marriage (**Mark 6:18, Luke 3**).
- Christians are warned to guard against the sin of envy and resentment (**Romans 13:13, I Peter 2:1**).
- James linked envy and resentment with self-seeking selfish ambition (**James 3:14-16**).

INFLUENCE OF THE WORLDLY APPROACH TO CONFLICT

We are often influenced by the world.

We should never allow the world to influence us into resenting, envying, or being jealous of another.

Resentment will lead us into a greater sin that could cost us our soul.

WORLDLY APPROACH TO CONFLICT

REVENGE

- In **Genesis 4** Lamech was afraid that his enemies would seek revenge.
- In **Genesis 37** the brothers of Joseph resented him and took revenge on him.

- **Leviticus 19:18** warns, *"Never seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."* (NLT)
- In **Joshua 20** cities of refuge were established to keep people from seeking revenge.
- In **I Samuel 14** Saul made a foolish oath concerning revenge toward his enemies.
- Joab killed Abner in **II Samuel 3** because he resented him and sought revenge.
- After Elijah defeated Jezebel's prophets on Mt. Carmel, she swore revenge (**I Kings 18**).
- In his defense Job claimed that he had never taken revenge on someone (**Job 31:30**).
- Hatred keeps revenge alive (**Proverbs 10:19**), but love forgives and forgets offenses (**I Corinthians 13:4, James 5:20, I Peter 4:8**).
- Jeremiah knew that the people sought revenge on him (**Jeremiah 20:10**).
- In **Ezekiel 25:25-17** the Lord promised to visit the Philistines with vengeance because of what they had done to Israel.
- Joel knew that the cities of Tyre and Sidon wanted revenge against him (**Joel 3:4**).
- **Nahum 1:2** – *"The Lord is a jealous God, filled with vengeance and wrath. He takes revenge on all who oppose him and furiously destroys his enemies!"*
- Jesus taught: *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away."* (**Matthew 5:38-42**)
- Jesus also taught *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."* (**Matthew 5:43-45**)
- God used his people in the OT to execute his vengeance, but remember that was in the OT.
- We could consider the stories of Gideon (**Judges 6-8**), Abimelech (**Judges 9**), Samson (**Judges 16**), etc.
- Obviously, stories like the one of Tamar being raped by her half-brother Amnon, fleeing to Absalom, and plotting revenge, show the negative effects (**II Samuel 13, I Chronicles 3**)

What Does The Bible Say About Revenge?

- It is forbidden (**Leviticus 19:18, Proverbs 24:29, Romans 12:17-19, I Thessalonians 5:15, I Peter 3:9**).
- Jesus is an example of forbearing one another (**I Peter 2:23**).
- Those who seek revenge are rebuked by Jesus (**Luke 9:54-55**).
- Revenge will come back to you (**Esther 3**).
- James and John wanted revenge in (**Luke 9:54**) but Jesus reminded them that it is inconsistent with a Christian spirit (**Luke 9:55**).
- Revenge proceeds from a spiteful heart (**Ezekiel 25:15**).
- There is punishment for those who consider or seek revenge (**Ezekiel 25:15-17, Amos 1:11-12**).

WORLDLY APPROACH TO CONFLICT

We are often influenced by the world.

We should never allow the world to influence us to seek revenge when someone has done wrong against us.

Revenge can lead to frustration, murder, and greater sins that could cost us our soul.

HOW TO FIGHT FAIR

- *Identify the issue.*
- *Choose the right time.*
- *Choose the right place.*
- *Begin with a positive stroke.*
- *Stick to the issue.*
- *Do not bring up the past.*
- *Do not hit below the belt.*
- *Take the other person seriously.*
- *Express anger non-abusively.*
- *Do not play games.*
- *Do not be passive aggressive.*
- *Avoid asking for explanations of behavior.*
- *Avoid labeling and name calling.*
- *Avoid triangles.*

Questions:

Why is it hard to deal with conflict?

How does the world view conflict?

What are the negative aspects of resentment and revenge?

How can Christians convince the world to deal with conflict instead of ignoring it?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Five – How Christians Deal With Conflict Responsibility & Remedy

CHRISTIANS & CONFLICT

- Remember that even in the most loving and happy home, or church, conflict is inevitable.
- Conflict is not necessarily sinful, but it often leads to sin.
- Christians should be eager to preserve all relationships, especially those with family and brethren.
- Remember that there are many conflicts between Christians listed in the NT.

WHAT WILL A CHRISTIAN DO?

- (1) A Christian will recognize the real problem before its too late (**Matthew 18:15-17**).
- (2) A Christian will choose the right time to approach another in the spirit of gentleness (**Galatians 6:1**)
- (3) A Christian will take the initiative before its too late (**Matthew 5:23-24**).
- (4) A Christian will clarify the area of conflict and get to the point (**Acts 9, 11**).
- (5) A Christian will think before he/she speaks (**Proverbs 12:18, 18:21**). – T.F.A.
- (6) A Christian will reaffirm their relationships (**Matthew 22:35-40**).
- (7) A Christian will express their feelings with caution (**Colossians 3:12-21**).
- (8) A Christian will be open and honest.
- (9) A Christian will be assertive.
- (10) A Christian will not handle tolerance or evasiveness, but will practice compromise when needed (**I Corinthians 8:1-13**).
- (11) A Christian will know when to move on and shake the dust from his/her feet.
- (12) A Christian will pursue resolution and reconciliation.
- (13) A Christian will enjoy restoration, rewards, renewal and revival.

Matthew 18 Gives Seven Qualities To Apply:

1. Humility – we need a major league dose of humility
2. Responsibility - no one wants to take it
3. Sacrifice - giving up yourself, denying yourself
4. Love - individual care
5. Discipline - 4 steps (person alone, witnesses, etc.)
6. Fellowship - share life, taking care of difficulties and problems
7. Forgiveness – How can you hold a grudge?

In Order To Deal With Conflict We Need:

- ✓ Abraham's Faith
- ✓ Peter's Keys
- ✓ John's Love
- ✓ Andrew's Zeal
- ✓ Stephen's Boldness
- ✓ Paul's Authority
- ✓ James' Good Works

MAJOR CONFLICTS IN THE NT

Problem #1 : *The Inclusion of the Gentiles*

Solution : *The Jerusalem Conference*

The Facts:

Evangelism of the Gentiles was included in the Great Commission (**Matthew 28:28-20, Mark 16:15-16**).

The conversion of Saul was providential so that he would reach out to the Gentiles (**Acts 9:15-16**).

Cornelius was a Gentile man that was ready to obey the gospel. So the Lord sent Peter to him (**Acts 10:1-48**).

The brethren in Judea were not ready to include the Gentiles. Therefore, Peter taught them (**Acts 11:1-18**).

The church in Antioch wanted to be a part of the evangelism, so they sent Barnabas out to find Saul (**Acts 11:19-30**).

Barnabas and Saul, now called Paul, went out on their first missionary journey converting Gentiles and Jews wherever they could go (**Acts 13:1ff**).

After much success, Barnabas and Paul, people question the inclusion of the Gentiles because of their practices and failure to obey the Law (**Acts 13-15**).

The brethren decide to call the apostles together for some answers concerning these questions (**Acts 15:1-21**).

The church leaders decided to send out a letter to all of the brethren on this subject (**Acts 15:22-29**).

The brethren rejoiced when they heard the decision of the leaders and accepted the Gentiles (**Acts 15:30-33**).

Problem #2 : *The "John Mark" Conflict*

Solution : *1 Mission Effort Becomes 2 Mission Efforts*

The Facts:

The church leaders had just had a unity meeting and the Jerusalem Conference was a huge success (**Acts 15:1-34**).

Paul said a harmless and beautiful thing. He wanted to go and visit the brethren again. He wanted to simply visit the churches he had planted (**Acts 15:36**).

Barnabas was determined to take John Mark with him. They were not going to start in new fields, just visit (**Acts 15:37**).

Barnabas loved John Mark, but remember that they had to leave him in Pamphylia because he was homesick just weeks after the first journey started (**Acts 13:13**).

John Mark had left the team and departed when they needed him. There was nothing doctrinal, with him, he did not embarrass them, he just lacked maturity.

Therefore, Paul insisted that he not tag along on this journey because he was not trustworthy in the work (**Acts 15:38**).

The contention could not be resolved at that time so they decided to separate and go on two journeys (**Acts 15:39-41**).

Barnabas & John Mark went to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and went back to Syria and Cilicia encouraging the churches he had help to establish (**Acts 15:39-41**).

BARNABAS' VIEWPOINT:

- ☐ John Mark was a good Christian man.
- ☐ John Mark had returned for the Conference.
- ☐ John Mark felt he was ready to take the trip.
- ☐ John Mark was family and he loved him.

- ☐ John Mark's first trip was hard because it was probably his first away from home (**Acts 12:12**).
- ☐ He was ready to forgive and forget the fact that John Mark had left on the first journey.
- ☐ Remember that he was an encourager and he always wanted to give people a second chance.
- ☐ He stuck up for Paul earlier too.

PAUL'S VIEWPOINT:

- ☐ John Mark was a major disappointment.
- ☐ He knew that there was a possibility that he would leave them again, and was not ready for the risk.
- ☐ What if they were to encounter persecution?
- ☐ He respected Barnabas but felt that his family ties were getting in the way of progress.
- ☐ He wanted to encourage the brethren in churches with a young man that many had never met.
- ☐ He knew that there were other good men that could go with them (i.e. Luke, Silas, etc.).
- ☐ He had not penned **I Corinthians 13** yet.

JOHN MARK'S VIEWPOINT:

- ☐ Barnabas was family and he wanted to assist.
- ☐ Paul was an inspiration to be around and he was looking for a mentor.
- ☐ He may have lost his father early on in his childhood, probably due to persecution (**Acts 12**).
- ☐ He probably repented of his lack of courage and had many months to think about what he had done.
- ☐ He did not want to separate the mission team, but felt he could be a valuable asset.
- ☐ He was young and energetic while Paul and Barnabas were older and wiser.

CONCLUSION

Who was right?

- ❖ Neither of them.

What happened?

- ❖ The conflict was not resolved immediately.

How did they work it out?

- ❖ Not at first. They just separated into two separate successful mission teams.

Who did Luke side with?

- ❖ Neither of them. But he assisted Paul.

Who did the God side with?

- ❖ Neither of them.

Why does Luke follow Paul?

- ❖ He probably followed Paul because of his ailing health. He does record the success of others too.

What can we learn from it?

- ❖ The Lord was able to use it to His glory.
- ❖ Instead of one mission team, there were two.
- ❖ Both mission teams had different missions.
- ❖ Instead of Paul mentoring young John Mark, Peter took him under his wing (**I Peter 5:13**) despite the issues he had with Paul (**I Corinthians 1, Galatians 2**).
- ❖ Many scholars believe that Peter helped John Mark write his gospel account.
- ❖ Later Paul would say that John Mark was "profitable" to him (**I Timothy 4:11**).

Problem #3 : *Church Problems (i.e. Corinth)*

Solution : *The Epistles*

The Facts:

The most prominent of all the churches, that had the most conflicts, was Corinth.

What did Paul recommend?

We will talk about it next week.

Questions:

Why did the early church face conflict?

How did they handle conflict?

What would happen if no one took responsibility in a conflict?

How can Christians find a quick remedy for conflict resolution?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Six – How People Respond To Conflict Resolution Reception & Rejection

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

How do people respond when you suggest resolving a conflict?

They either receive it or reject it.

Over the course of the next few weeks we will learn how to deal with both responses.

CONFLICTS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Church problems were everywhere (i.e. Corinth, Ephesus, etc.)

The solution was the Epistles.

We all benefit from these writings.

PROBLEMS IN CORINTH – I Corinthians

Problems With Pride :

- o Personalities (1)
- o Pedigrees (1-4)
- o Permissiveness (5-6)
- o Pushiness (8-14)

Problems With Purity :

- o Tolerance (5)
- o Promiscuity (6)
- o Marriage (7)
- o Conscience/Eating (8-10)
- o Worship (11-14)

Problems With Doctrine :

- o Unity (1-3)
- o Church Discipline (5)
- o Brotherhood Issues (8-14)
- o Baptism For Dead (15)
- o Resurrection (15)
- o Giving (16)

Paul's Solution:

I Corinthians 13 - LOVE

"Faith, hope, and love!"

RESOLVING CONFLICT IN CORINTH

What did Paul do to come to this solution?

- I. ASSESSMENT - *He assessed the situation.*
 - He took time to calm down.
 - He determined the source of the conflict.
 - He gathered appropriate information.
 - He considered what everyone wanted and needed.
 - He approached the situation with caution.

II. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT - *He acknowledged the problem.*

He did not run from the issue.
He must have prayed about the situation.
He listened to all of the concerned people.
He tried to understand their viewpoints.
He got his thoughts together.

III. ATTITUDE - *He had the right attitude.*

He was cautious not to stereotype them.
He tried to remain objective.
He took a look at the issue with an open heart.
He knew that they had to be flexible.
He knew they had to be as open as possible.

IV. ACTION - *He took action.*

He was careful to watch his language and words.
He stuck to the issues and didn't side step.
He did not make any rash vows or promises.
He reminded them he was sincere and trustworthy.
He was eager for them to change their behavior.

V. ANALYSIS - *He spoke and then he listened.*

His first letter was very pointed.
He summarized all their difficulties.
Then he clarified the solutions to these problems.
After that he waited for a response.
He was pleased with the results so he wrote again.

CAUTIOUS CONFRONTATION

Keep in mind your personal needs:

You want to be listened to, heard, understood.
You want to be honest and forthright.
You want a sense of fairness and justice.
You want willingness and participation.
You want to be respected.
You want to have a role in the decision.
You want consistency and structure.
You want resolution.

People are more willing to receive your message if you are treating others like you want to be treated (**Matthew 7:12**).

There are biblical commands concerning our approach.

Most Bible passages describe:

1. *Giving God The Glory*
2. *Getting The Log Out of Our Own Eye*
3. *Talking To Our Brother*
4. *Showing Him His Fault*
5. *Be Reconciled*

Later we will discuss this more in depth.

RECEPTION or REJECTION

It often depends on the environment:

1. *Descriptive Speech*
2. *Problem Solving Techniques*
3. *Maintain Spontaneity*
4. *Establish Empathy*
5. *Maintain Equality*

This will also be discussed at length.

FAIR CONFRONTATION

- Go with the right purpose.*
- Select the right time and place.*
- Own the problem (personal and honest).*
- Be specific about the problem.*
- Use, and hear, constructive criticism.*
- Abandon the pedestal.*
- Admit your mistakes.*
- Agree on future behavior.*
- Forgive and move on.*
- Know your feelings and your fears.*
- Know your interests and your needs.*
- Keep in mind their feelings and interests.*
- See conflict as a problem to solve, not a war.*
- Respect and love the people.*
- Avoid polarizing or positioning.*
- Claim a peacemaking role.*
- Get all the disputing parties to the table.*
- Accept conflict as normal.*

CONFRONTATION

You can make or break a relationship on how you approach conflict.

You can determine whether a conflict will be resolved by how you approach them.

They will receive you or reject you based on your attitude and your approach.

REMEMBER THE CHRISTIAN APPROACH

Consider what Jesus instructed concerning our approach (**Matthew 5:23-24, 6:14-15, 18:15-17, Luke 17:3**).

- QUICK
- PERSONAL
- COMPLETE
- FORGIVING

Consider what Paul taught and how he approached people (**Romans 12:18, I Corinthians 1:10, Galatians 2:11-21, 6:1-2, Ephesians 4:26-27**).

- QUICK
- PERSONAL
- COMPLETE
- LOVING

Consider what Peter taught and believed (**1 Peter 3:8-12**).

SYMPATHETIC
COMPASSIONATE
HUMBLE
PEACEFUL

Questions:

How do you respond to reception?

How do you respond to rejection?

If what ways will you benefit from future conflicts if you consider others first?

Why do people respond negatively to conflict resolution?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Seven – How People Avoid Resolving Conflict **Reservations & Resignations**

PEOPLE WILL TRY TO AVOID RESOLUTION

KEEP IN MIND: When do you wash a lion?

When he is sleeping or when he is full.

NEVER feed a lion when he is hungry!!!

There are times when you need to avoid resolving conflict.

AVOIDING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When is a bad time to deal with a conflict?

- Three minutes before company comes.
- When your tired and stressed.
- After a hard day at work or as soon as you get inside the house.
- As soon as you get to work.
- Just before worship services begin.
- Between class and worship.

When is a good time to deal with a conflict?

- When you are in a neutral setting.
- Where there are few distractions.
- After dinner is over and you are sitting around the dinner table.
- In the bedroom a few hours before bedtime (**Ephesians 4:26-27**).
- In a quiet break room.
- In the conference room or library.

We Have To Convince Others To Deal With Conflict

It allows us to obtain personal growth.

It allows us to discover our own strengths.

It allows us to discover new resources.

It allows us to respect others.

It allows us to deal with our better ourselves.

We Have To Convince Others That Conflict Is Good For Us

It is not sinful, unless it leads to sin.

It can teach us about others.

It can teach us about ourselves.

It can break down barriers.

It can build up our relationships.

We Have To Convince Others That Resolution Is Good For Us

Relationships cannot mend without resolution.

Unity cannot be achieved without resolution.

Love cannot be seen without resolution.

Harmony cannot be found without resolution.

We will struggle without resolution.

Why Do People Avoid Conflict Resolution?

Pride
Bad Attitude
Emotionally Unbalanced
Want No Involvement
Not Willing To Solve The Problem
Not Willing To Change
Personality Difficulties
Fear
Frustration
Past Failures
Learned Experience
Low Maturity Level
No Common Sense
No Education

THE SLIPPERY SLOPE (Sande)

Escape Responses (Peace Faking):

Suicide - Emotional & Social Problems
Biblical Example: Judas (**Matthew 27**)
Flight - Run to "Mommy", go to a hotel
Biblical Example: Woman at the well (**John 4**)
Denial - Lying to self
Biblical Example: Eli & his sons (**I Samuel 2**)

Conciliation Responses (Peace Making):

Overlook - Not worth getting mad about it
Biblical Example: **Proverbs 19:11**
Discussion - Need to talk about it
Biblical Example: **Matthew 18:15**
Negotiation - Talk about the problem
Biblical Example: **Matthew 18:15**
Mediation - Bring in a third party
Biblical Example: **Matthew 18:16**
Arbitration - Bring in a third party to make judgment
Biblical Example: **Matthew 18:16**
Discipline - Follow God's plan to make it right
Biblical Example: **Matthew 18:17**

Attack Responses (Peace Breaking):

Litigation - Go to court to settle the problem
Biblical Example: **Matthew 5:25-26, I Corinthians 6:1-8**
Assault - Threaten, gossip, blame others, etc.
Biblical Example: **Acts 4-5**
Murder - Destroy your enemy at all costs.
Biblical Example: **Acts 6-7**

IGNORING CONFLICT RESOLUTION

People will ignore you when you try to pursue conflict resolution.

People will allow personal things to help them close their minds to conflict resolution.

Be On Guard For:

Personal Problems
Misunderstandings
Lack of Communication
Unmet Expectations
Pride, Jealousy, & Envy
Grudges & Unforgiving Hearts
Low Self-Esteem (or High)
Mixed Up Priorities

Remember What Your Ego

E – Edging
G – God
O – Out

ATTITUDE

When it comes to reservations and resignations, your attitude is the key to making it work!

A – 1
T – 20
T – 20
I – 9
T – 20
U – 21
D – 4
E – 5
= 100

Your attitude determines 100% of your actions.

Attitude = Altitude

Questions:

What are some reservations and resignations you have about resolution?

How can you deal with difficult people?

Why do people have to be difficult?

What would happen if we all gave up on conflict resolution?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Eight – How To Manage Difficult People – Part 1 **Reluctance & Resistance**

EMOTIONS

Emotion is energy.

Emotion animates life.

There is an intimate connection between relationships and emotional development.

There is an intimate connection between emotional development and yourself.

Emotional competence is built on self-understanding.

Do you understand yourself?

Do you love yourself?

Before we go any farther you need to evaluate your emotional competence and development.

EMOTIONS (Saarni)

Key Skills of Emotional Competence:

- Awareness of one's own emotions.
- Ability to discern and understand your own emotions.
- Ability to discern and understand the emotions of others.
- The ability to use the vocabulary of emotion and vocalize your feelings.
- The ability to differentiate between internal subjective emotional experience (feeling) and external emotional expression (action).
- The capacity to adapt and cope with various emotions and distressing circumstances.
- The awareness of emotional communication within relationships.
- The capacity for emotional self-efficacy (ability to choose, direct, and control emotions in a morally acceptable way).

MYTHS ABOUT EMOTIONS

Emotions cannot help a person deal with a problem more effectively.

People must express their emotions or bad things will happen.

Not expressing emotions is a sign of strength, maturity, and or virtue.

Emotional venting is always healthy.

THE TRUTH ABOUT EMOTION

What you need to know about emotion:

No emotion, in and of itself, is wrong or sinful (**Ephesians 4:26-27**).

Emotion is energy.

It can be channeled into healthy or unhealthy thought and behavior.

Some view anger as a secondary emotion.

It follows and flows from a primary emotion, such as disappointment or hurt.

Anger needs to be studied further.

Anger is neither an automatic nor an inevitable response to any given stimuli.

The presence, intensity, or absence of anger depends on our values and on our interpretation of the stimulus.

THE TRUTH ABOUT ANGER

Anger is viewed in negative terms by many Christians. Why?

- Some see it as sin.
- Some see it as weakness.
- Some fear it because it seems unpredictable.
- Some see it difficult to control.
- Some have been taught that it is negative.

Anger is a powerful emotion.

- It can damage us or shut us down.
- It can ruin relationships.
- It can hinder respect.
- It can dehumanize.
- It can demonize.
- It can vilify.
- It can hinder fairness.
- It can label and frustrate.
- It can over-generalize.
- It can eliminate courtesy.
- It can discourage communication.

Anger can be positive.

- It can make us think.
- It helps us to feel.
- It can lead us to speak.
- It can move us to action.
- It can help us to open up.

How Can We Avoid Letting Our Anger Take Control?

Avoid Negatives - Do not use insults, lies, weak points, logical flaws, and inconsistencies. Try not to say "always" or "never" in a conflict.

Think & Listen Critically - Every statement should be used with caution. Some people will take everything you say in the worst possible way.

Listen Patiently - Some people will be impatient, negative, and brief in their statements. Do not respond immediately to them.

Use Positive Behavior - Some people will fidget, sigh, give strange looks, glare, and avoid eye contact. Try to be open and positive in all you do and say in a conflict.

Have An Open Mind - Some people think "I already know what they're going to say." Be careful not to make that judgment. Hear them out.

Think While You Listen - Some people speak without thinking about it first. "Foot in Mouth Syndrome." It will happen unless you formulate a response while listening.

Avoid Outbursts - Don't allow anger to force you into a tantrum or a fit. While releasing anger is healthy be careful of your angry outbursts. Broken hearts and hands!

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

In conflicts we are going to encounter all kinds of difficult people:

- Some are reluctant to resolve conflict.*
- Others resist but may come around.*
- Others are resilient and often rebellious.*

How can we deal with these people?

TYPES OF DIFFICULT PEOPLE

The Hostile Aggressive Trio
The Volcano
The Complainer
The Clam
The Super-Agreeable
The Negativist
The Know-It-All
The Bulldozer
The Staller
The Martyr
The Control Freak
The Green-Eyed Monster
The Sponge
The Flirt

HOPE FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

We will talk more about these types of difficult people in our next lesson.
Remember that difficult people can be persuaded to resolve conflict.

FINDING HEALING

Biblical passages that help bind and heal:

- | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Proverbs 15:1 | 6. I Corinthians 13 |
| 2. Matthew 6:15 | 7. Galatians 6:1-2 |
| 3. Matthew 7:12 | 8. Ephesians 4:31-32 |
| 4. Matthew 13:15-18 | 9. Hebrews 12:14 |
| 5. John 13:34-35 | |

Questions:

Why is it so important for us to learn how to manage difficult people?

Why are Christians often the most difficult people to deal with?

What are some emotions we have to deal with when we face conflict?

Who determines when to resolve things?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Nine – How To Manage Difficult People – Part 2 **Rebellion & Resilience**

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

In conflicts we are going to encounter all kinds of difficult people:

Some are reluctant to resolve conflict.

Others resist but may come around.

Others are resilient and often rebellious.

What kind of difficult people are we dealing with in conflict?

How can we deal with these people?

What should we learn about them?

TYPES OF DIFFICULT PEOPLE

The Hostile Aggressive Trio

Sherman Tank – A.K.A. Steam Roller

Motto: "Fight! Stand up for yourself!"

Sniper – A.K.A. The Gossip

Motto: "Outlast them and outsmart them."

Exploder – A.K.A. The Landmine

Motto: "Surface attack!"

How can you deal with them?

Don't try to meet them head on because that is what they want. Sneak up on them subtly, and meet with them slowly, on neutral ground. They are all interested on whose side you are on.

The Volcano

A.K.A. = The Firecracker

Motto: "I'm going to blow up!"

How can you deal with them?

Interrupt the tantrum. Give them time to run down. Then approach them.

The Complainer

A.K.A. = The Critic

Motto: "Listen to me!"

How can you deal with them? – Two types

Triangular Complainers – Don't listen.

Classic Complainers – Watch your words.

The Clam

A.K.A. = The Cold Shoulder

Motto: "Just leave me alone."

How can you deal with them?

Invite communication. Do not let them sit silent and unresponsive. Don't talk for them.

The Super-Agreeable

A.K.A. = The Chameleon

Motto: "Whatever you think."

How can you deal with them?

Don't let them tell you what you want to hear. Get them to commit quickly but realistically. Get them to act.

The Negativist

A.K.A. = The Wet Blanket

Motto: "I'm defeated. No one loves me."

How can you deal with them?

Don't be sucked into their pessimism. State your own optimism. Don't argue.

The Know-It-All

A.K.A. = The Balloon

Motto: "I know everything there is to know."

How can you deal with them?

They are all talk, so diffuse their arguments by talking too and offering new advice. You have to do your homework. Give them a way out.

The Bulldozer

A.K.A. = The Work Horse

Motto: "I am certain."

How can you deal with them?

They like the "Hostile Aggressive Trio" should not be hit head on. Listen to them and acknowledge them, but question them firmly.

The Staller

A.K.A. = Indecisive Man

Motto: "I need more time, information, etc."

How can you deal with them?

Get to the point. Get past the surface issues. Invite them to be direct. Make sure that your arguments are concrete.

The Martyr

A.K.A. = The Victim

Motto: "Poor me. Woe is me."

How can you deal with them?

They are absorbed with self-pity. Refuse to attend their "pity party" at all costs. Challenge them to look at someone or something else.

The Control Freak

A.K.A. = The Organizer

Motto: "I cannot let this go."

How can you deal with them?

They cannot let things go. There is no simple thing to them. Don't let them make issues over the small things. Take it easy.

The Green-Eyed Monster

A.K.A. = Thing

Motto: "I want it and I'll get it."

How can you deal with them?

They will pursue what they want because of envy. Convince them that envy is sinful and that they should love others.

The Sponge

A.K.A. = The Vacuum

Motto: "I need more. Give me more."

How can you deal with them?

They constantly want more. They will nag you. They will never give you anything back. Give them nothing. Do not feel sorry for them.

The Flirt

A.K.A. = The Lover

Motto: "Let me sweep you off your feet."

How can you deal with them?

They want to seduce you to control you. Their innuendoes often border on harassment.
Call their bluff. Stand your ground. Don't give in.

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

There may be other kinds of difficult people we will encounter in life.

However, these types summarize many that we have already encountered.

Hopefully, we can better understand what they want and how to deal with them.

HEALING THE HURTS

The unseen hurts that we carry within us can be dangerous and destructive.

Victims tend to become victimizers.

Our adult lives, with their hurting and hurtful ways, are the composites of earlier and repeated choices.

Remember that history repeats itself.

Dangerous Myths & Misbeliefs (Wilson):

1. Unseen means unreal.
2. We shouldn't be woundable.
3. God doesn't care about our unseen inner lives.
4. If I look honestly at my wounds, I'll blame and dishonor my parents.
5. If I deny my wounds and deaden my pain, then I'll be less self-focused.
6. If I don't acknowledge or realize my pain, then it won't hurt you.

HEALING THE HURTS

Our adult lives, with their hurting and hurtful ways, are the composites of earlier and repeated choices:

- *What we lived with.*
- *What we learned.*
- *What we've practiced.*
- *What we've become.*
- *The past & present consequences.*

If we learned a bad (abusive or hurtful) pattern, we tend to live and repeat that pattern.

Only an honest evaluation and conscious decision to change can break that pattern.

Many practice an unhealthy "emotional recycling" that will hinder their life.

Feelings are a fact and have a history.

We tend to filter unacceptable emotions and recycle them into gender acceptable alternatives, often before they even cross our minds.

We have an "Emotional Recycling System" that we use regularly and its time to break the cycle.

The Male Emotional Recycling System

Experience sadness, fear, other "soft emotions."

AWARENESS THRESHOLD

"ANGER BIN"

Result – Frustration & Confusion

The Female Emotional Recycling System

Experience anger, assertiveness, other "hard/firm emotions."

AWARENESS THRESHOLD

"DEPRESSION BIN"

Result – Frustration & Concern

HEALING THE HURTS

We have to learn to recognize our hurts and heal them.

We cannot be afraid of our emotions.

We would be ignorant to pretend that we don't have these emotions.

Questions:

How should you handle difficult people?

What advise would you give to someone who is the victim of a difficult person?

Why is our Christian faith challenged when we face difficult people?

How did Jesus deal with difficult people?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Ten – How To Change & Foster Change Return & Repent

THE NEED FOR CHANGE

When we recognize that there is a conflict we know that a change must be made.

Remember that conflict is inevitable, and conflict is not sinful.

The most difficult process in dealing with conflict is convincing yourself and others to change.

THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE

We are commanded to repent (**Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38, 3:19, 17:30**).

Repent means to change (also atone, bewail, deplore, lament, regret, relent, and sorrow).

It is often hard to convince ourselves, and others, that we are created anew at baptism (**John 3:1-7, Romans 6:3-5, II Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 3:1**).

This means that we have to change.

Change is also necessary in conflict.

We have to stop thinking about ourselves and begin thinking about our relationships (**Matthew 22:35-40**).

There is a specific, biblical way on how to approach someone who needs to change (**Matthew 18:15-17**).

BRINGING CHANGE IN CONFLICT

1. Choose the right time.

Go in the spirit of gentleness (**Galatians 6:1**).

Make sure that you do not approach them at an inconvenient time.

It would be best to find a place where you could speak in private.

Make sure that you have detected the early warning signs correctly.

2. Take the initiative.

Go to them and talk to them about it (**Matthew 18:15-17**).

People say you cannot forgive them until they repent, but forgiveness has nothing to do with the repentance of the person.

If we hold on to our anger and grudges we will kill the church!

Matthew 5 says to leave our gift at the altar and fix the problem.

3. Clarify the area of conflict.

- Jesus got to the heart of the matter with Paul in **Acts 9**.

- Don't mull over things that do not matter.

- Stick to the facts and make your point known quickly and efficiently.

4. Think before you speak.

- Remember **Proverbs 12:18, 18:21** and when what James says about the tongue.

- Watch what you say

- Remember T.F.A., Think-Feel-Act!!!

- Don't say everything your thinking.

5. Reaffirm your relationships.

- Remember they are still your friend, brother, sister, spouse, etc.

- Whether they are threatening or not, we should still act like adults.

- We cannot get very far if we treat them unfairly, even though we may disagree with them.

6. Express your feelings.
 - Remember to use caution, but you should tell the other person how you feel about the conflict.
 - If they have sinned against you, tell them how it hurt you and how you think they need to change.
 - Try to keep a hold of your emotions.
7. Be open and honest.
 - Remember that openness and honesty will diffuse many conflicts before they even start.
 - Don't be the person who is asked "What's wrong?" and says, "Nothing!"
 - "They don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."
8. Be assertive.
 - Most people don't like people that are fair-weathered and ride the fence.
 - You need to get to the point and make it clear what has to be done.
 - It would be helpful to have scriptural references and use them in a non-threatening way.
9. Practice compromise.
 - Your way is not always the best way.
 - You need to be open to compromise, but don't be the type of person that is always giving in to the pressure.
 - Try being the servant once in a while.
 - However, you should not boast about being the servant and compromising.
10. Move on!!!
 - When the conflict is over you need to forgive and forget.
 - Don't bring up the past.
 - What if God always brought up your sinful past.
 - The only reason people bring up the past is to take emphasis off of the present. This accomplishes nothing.

BEING THE PEACEMAKER

What does a peace-maker do?

- o Detects the problem early.
- o Defines the real problem.
- o Chooses the best solution.
- o Establishes a goal and pursues it.
- o Rehearses and practices.
- o Prayerfully considers others.
- o Knows the subject thoroughly.
- o Stays on the subject.
- o Focuses on the solutions.
- o Uses anger constructively.
- o Realizes that they can change.
- o Realizes that others can change.

THE FIVE NEVERS OF CONFLICT

Never allowing anyone to isolate one person, member, elder, etc.

Never discuss confidential matters (includes spouse).

Never meet with a large group.

Never meet with outsiders first.

Never record the meeting on tape or take detailed notes.

SOMETIMES NOTHING CHANGES

Why some conflicts may never be resolved:

1. One or all do not want it resolved.
2. They do not know how to change.
3. Failure to give proper attention to the conflict and necessary changes.
4. Failure of clear, realistic, defined terms and necessary goals.
5. No differentiation between interpersonal and objective dimensions.
6. Failure to focus on the main issue.
7. Failure to understand conflict, resolution, or the need for change.
8. Failure to realize the emotional nature of conflict.
9. Failure to recognize strengths of others and to build thereon.

LOOKING FOR CHANGE

Some people are looking for change in all the wrong places. We need to change:

- ❖ *How We Love (Compassion)*
- ❖ *How We Listen (Consideration)*
- ❖ *How We Pray (Faith)*
- ❖ *How We Wait (Patience)*
- ❖ *How We Study (Word of God)*
- ❖ *How We Lead (Direction)*

GOD DESIRES CHANGE

God's ultimate desire is for us to return and repent.

Remember the story of the prodigal son in **Luke 15**, the woman at the well, Zacchaeus, the woman caught in adultery, and the story of Jonah.

Remember the cycles of Old Testament history and how God was so loving and merciful.

WHAT WILL DETERMINE CHANGE

Your Attitude	Your Personality
Your Emotions	Your Involvement
Your History	Your Experiences
Your Common Sense	Your Maturity
Your Education	Your Information
Your Faith	Your Knowledge
Your Commitment	Your Relationship To Christ

Questions:

How can you change?

How can you foster change and create an environment for change?

Why are we commanded as Christians to change and repent?

Why is change so difficult?

Dealing With Conflict
Lesson Eleven – How To Make Things Right
Resolution & Reconciliation

MAKING THINGS GO RIGHT (Faulkner)

- ☐ **Choose a positive disposition.**
Choose how you want to react.
Don't let the situation or person control you.
Look for the good in the situation.
Allow the experience to help you grow.
- ☐ **Will to, whether you want to or not.**
Get a handle on things in your life.
Reframe your mind like Paul.
When you are weak you are strong.
Know that you can think positively.
- ☐ **Act Better Than You Feel.**
Changed actions create a good environment.
Act better and you will feel better.
If you believe, with God's help you will do it.
You have the power to make it right again.
- ☐ **Use your compass when you're off course.**
Don't forget to consult with God.
It is important to look into the Holy Book.
Set goals and get focused.
Avoid distractions from your environment.
- ☐ **Don't kill today with yesterday.**
Forget about your past! Put it behind you!!!
Yesterdays guilts will cripple your tomorrow.
Remember the apostle Paul and his joy!
Come to grips with your past and enjoy today.
- ☐ **Cut your line when its tangled.**
You can't spend all day with a tangled line.
Don't try to untangle resentment and hate.
Cut the line, move on, and go fishing again.
Forget about what's behind, look ahead.
- ☐ **Keep cool, even when your hot.**
Anger will make things go wrong in a hurry.
Don't stuff anger in your subconscious.
Learn how to release anger in a positive way.
Identify the source of your anger.
- ☐ **Make your relationships right.**
All relationships will have ups and downs.
Marriages fail, friends fade, co-workers leave.
Cement new relationships or fix old ones.
"Love people and use things."

- ❑ **Go first anyway.**
*Don't sit back with your hands in your lap.
 Don't wait for the other person to make a move.
 The other person may think its your fault.
 Remember that God sent Jesus first.*
- ❑ **Live young, even when your old.**
*You are the master of your life.
 You can choose what you want to be.
 Age is not a barrier, but your attitude is.
 Love life, love people, live with excitement!*

THE FACTS ABOUT RECONCILIATION

- ♥ God reconciled us to Himself.
Romans 5:8, II Corinthians 5:19-20
- ♥ God requires that we reconcile with others.
John 13:34-35, II Corinthians 5:18
- ♥ Reconciliation was the very heart of Jesus' ministry.
Matthew 18:15-17, John 17:20-23
- ♥ Reconciliation should be recognized as an essential work of every Christian believer.

SEEKING RECONCILIATION

- #1 – *Be aware of your calling.*
 Christians are called to ministry as ambassadors.
II Corinthians 5:17-21
- #2 – *Be committed to the relationship.*
 Reconciliation is only found when there is commitment.
Ruth 1:16-17
- #3 – *Be purposeful in your examination.*
 Destroying the walls of hostility will strengthen relationships.
Ephesians 2:14-15
- #4 – *Be sincere in your speech.*
 Sincerity is the willingness to be vulnerable.
John 15:15
- #5 – *Be sensitive in your approach.*
 A sensitive approach will unlock many doors and remove barriers.
Ephesians 4:15-16
- #6 – *Be sacrificial in your decision.*
 People are willing to respond to someone who is humble.
Philippians 2:3-4
- #7 – *Be empowered by God's strength.*
 Christians have to be willing to yield to God and let Him have control.
II Corinthians 8:9
- #8 – *Be balanced in your actions.*
 God created diversity yet He desires unity in that diversity.
II Corinthians 8:12-14

The Ministry of Reconciliation

- Reconcilers are sensitive to the needs of others.
- Reconcilers know that comfort zones need to be broken.
- Reconcilers promote transparency and understanding in relationships.
- Reconcilers are willing to pay the price in relationships.
- Reconcilers have learned the art of conflict resolution.
- Reconcilers know that reconciliation is a painful process.
- Reconcilers are willing to make the necessary sacrifices.
- Reconcilers know that it takes patience, perseverance, prayer, and the power of God to get through conflict.

Questions:

How can you be reconciled to God?

How can you be reconciled to others?

Why is it so hard for Christians to seek reconciliation when it's a Bible teaching?

Why do we often overlook the need for resolution in our relationships?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Twelve – How To Reap The Benefits Restoration & Rewards

RESTORATION

People want to know how to restore their relationships.

People want to be given a how-to manual on making relationships work.

The Bible tells us everything we ever wanted to know about relationships.

It also tells us how to reconcile and reap.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT RESTORATION?

Matthew 5:23-24 - *"Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*

Matthew 18:15-17 - *"Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that 'by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.' And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector."*

Luke 17:3-4 - *"Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."*

I Corinthians 5:1-13 - *"It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person. For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? But those who are outside God judges. Therefore put away from yourselves the evil person."*

Galatians 6:1-2 - *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."*

James 5:19-20 - *"Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins."*

RESTORATION

How do you restore broken relationships?

Is there a process we can follow?

Is there a pattern in these scriptures?

RESTORING RELATIONSHIPS

#1 – *Talk to God before talking to the person.*

Use prayer to ventilate vertically.

James 4:1-2

#2 – *Always take the initiative.*

You should take the initiative and do so quickly.

Matthew 5:23-24

#3 – *Sympathize with their feelings.*

Use your ears more than your mouth.

Romans 15:2, Philippians 2:4

#4 – *Confess your part of the problem.*

Diffuse the tension and disarm the situation by confession.

Matthew 7:5, James 5:16

#5 – *Attack the problem and not the person.*

You will never fix the problem if you are always fixing the blame.

Proverbs 15:1, 16:21, Ephesians 4:29

#6 – *Cooperate as much as possible.*

Peace always has a price tag.

Romans 12:18, Ephesians 4:1-6

#7 – *Emphasize reconciliation, not resolution.*

Its unrealistic to think that everyone is going to agree on everything.

I Peter 3:11

REWARDS

Relationships are blessed when we pursue reconciliation.

Marriages are healed.

Families are made stronger.

Friendships are bonded.

Churches are unified.

People are so afraid of reconciling and being vulnerable.

The rewards are worth the wait.

They are worth the headache.

Galatians 6:9-10

If you do not reconcile before it is too late it will weigh heavy on your conscience.

I have never heard of a person dying of a swelled head.

I have heard of people dying of a broken heart.

When people reconcile we need to praise God!
We need to give God the glory!
Reconciliation is not something that takes place in our lives everyday.

Questions:

How can you be restored to God?

How can you be restored to others?

Why is it so hard for Christians to be convinced that they can still be lost?

Why are we not joyful when the lost are restored and when heaven rejoices?

Dealing With Conflict

Lesson Thirteen – How To Start Fresh & Anew

Renewal & Revival

STARTING FRESH & ANEW

The Bible echoes the joy of renewal and revival.
Nearly every book has a story on these themes.
The time of renewal, revival, and refreshing are now here!
Its time to let God work!

TIMES OF REFRESHING

Acts 3:19 - *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord."*

TIMES OF RENEWAL

Our renewal with God begins at our conversion, the new birth (John 3):

- ♥ Hear – Romans 10:17, Acts 15:7
- ♥ Believe – **John 8:24, Acts 4:12, 16:31, Hebrews 11:6**
- ♥ Repent – **Luke 13:3, Acts 2:38, 3:19, 17:30**
- ♥ Confess – **Matthew 10:23, Romans 10:9-10, Acts 8:37-38**
- ♥ Be Baptized – **Matthew 28:19-20, Mark 16:15-16, Acts 2:38, 10:48, 22:16, Colossians 2:11ff, Galatians 3:24ff, I Peter 3:21**
- ♥ Faithfulness – **Romans 6:3-7, II Timothy 4:6-8, Revelation 2:10**

Our relationship with God is maintained by renewal and revival consisting of confession and repentance of sin:

- ♥ **II Corinthians 5:17-21**
- ♥ **II Corinthians 7:9-10**
- ♥ **James 5:16**
- ♥ **I John 1:8-10**

Our relationship with God is maintained by a right relationship with ourselves, our spouse, and our children:

- ♥ **Matthew 22:36-40**
- ♥ **Colossians 3:1-21**
- ♥ **I Peter 3:7-12**

Our relationship with God is maintained by a right relationship with all people at all times which includes co-workers, neighbors, men of other races, and cultures:

- ♥ **Matthew 18:21-35**
- ♥ **Mark 12:28-34**
- ♥ **Ephesians 2:14-18**

The only way to have renewal and revival is to resolve conflict and reconcile our relationships.

TIMES OF REVIVAL

How can we be revived?

II Chronicles 7:14 - *"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."*

When will revival come?

Revival Will Come When Our Lives Are Transformed

Romans 12:1-2 says, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."*

Revival Will Come When Our Lives Are Joyful

Romans 15:1 says, *"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves."*

Revival Will Come When Our Lives Are Secure

1 John 5:13 says, *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God."*

Revival Will Come When Our Lives Are Focused

Remember the dialogue between Jesus and Peter in **John 21:15-17**. Jesus wanted to know "Do you love Me?"

Revival Will Come When Our Lives Are Genuine

Psalms 51:10 says, *"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me."*

TIMES OF REVIVAL

"Revival is the inrush of the Spirit into the body that threatens to become a corpse." (D.M. Paton)

"I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And that which I can do, by the grace of God, I will do." (Dwight Moody)

"Give me 100 preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; they alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the Kingdom of Heaven on earth." (John Wesley)

"There can be no revival when Mr. Amen and Mr. Wet-Eyes are not found in the audience." (Charles Finney)

DEALING WITH CONFLICT

This series of lessons was provided to you only because it is desperately needed.

We need to focus on past and present conflicts in order to prevent future ones.

Hopefully, we have all grown more mature after having spent this time in God's word studying about this great Bible subject and its need to be applied today.

Questions:

What can we do to start anew with our spouse and family?

What can we do to start anew with our employees/employers and co-workers?

What can we do to start anew with our friends and neighbors?

What can we do to start anew with our Christian brothers and sisters?

What can we do to start anew with God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and His Holy Spirit?

What can we do to start anew with in our own spiritual lives?

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