

How Do I Deal With Conflict?

3-27-19

I. Slide1 Intro:

- A. Today we have *conflicts everywhere*. Think of the ongoing armed conflicts *between* nations. Think of the strife *within* nations. Conflicts between the sexes, generations, races, religions, cultures, & political parties, churches, marriages, friends, employees.
- B. Conflict is inevitable. *No relationship is immune.*
1. When managed biblically, conflict can serve as a catalyst for change and an opportunity for spiritual and relational growth.
 2. Why then are we afraid to tell our friend his/her words hurt us, to ask our boss for a raise, or to confront our family member about his drinking problem and its effect on his family?
 - a) Peacemakers are people who *breathe grace*. Do you naturally *breathe grace*? *I don't*. Yet, it is what God calls us to do.
 - (1) Not all of us are called to teach a Bible study, sing on the worship team, or work with youth, *but all of us* are called to **go and be reconciled** (Mt. 5:24niv). *To our brothers and sisters, our friends and family, and to our people in our churches and community.*
 - b) Everything in Scripture is about **how to remain connected**. Dan Effinger
 - (1) To God & man. Look inward (fail). Look upward (success).
- C. Misunderstanding: Let's get back to the *early church...really?*
1. As we read through **1 Corinthians** we can compile as list of these divisive issues. They include: Over-identification with one or another Christian leader. Too much pride in one's own spirituality. Sexual immorality. Suing fellow Christians in court. Prostitution. Marriage and divorce. Participating in the worship of idols. Dressing immodestly in the church gatherings. Selfishness in church gatherings. Interrupting the gatherings w/Tongues.
- D. Slide2 Outline: How Do I Deal With Conflict?
1. Deal With Conflict by...*Dealing With Conflict*.
 2. Deal With Conflict by...*Keeping it Gospel Centered & Grace Based*. [Practical]

II. Slide3a DEAL WITH CONFLICT BY...DEALING WITH CONFLICT

- A. Rick Warren asks, When it comes to conflicts you are a skunk or a turtle?
1. When the skunk in the relationship gets upset they spray & everybody knows it
 2. When the turtle in the relationship gets upset, they pull into their shell & hide.
- B. Slide3b There are actually 3 main ways we deal with conflict.
1. Escape Responses (turtle/ostrich). Let's pretend it didn't happen.
 - a) Avoiding – some say, *I don't want to rock the boat*, but that's just cowardice. Don't run from the problem.
 - b) Appeasing – some believe in *peace at any price*. Or say, *I just always give in*. That's codependency. That's *peace-fakers, not peace-makers (blessed are the...)*
 2. Attacking Responses (skunk. react, not act). Let's fight (but not fair). Bully or manipulator.
 3. Peacemaking responses (the right way). Let's fix it.
 - a) Jesus *never ran* from a conflict. God blesses peacemakers. *A peacemaker is a bridge builder*.

III. Slide4a DEAL WITH CONFLICT BY...KEEPING IT GOSPEL CENTERED & GRACE BASED

- A. In Mt.18, Matthew moves from the story of Estranged Sheep (vs.12-14 *left the 99*) to Erring Sheep (vs.15).
1. He's speaking of *interpersonal problems between Christians*, that remain unresolved. These are *family matters*...and *we can work them out*.
 2. *We Can Work it Out*. [Beatles 1965]
 - a) Life is very short, and there's no time For fussing and fighting, my friend
I have always thought that it's a crime, So I will ask you once again
Try to see it **my way**, Only time will tell if I am right or I am wrong
While you see it **your way** Theres a chance that we may fall apart before too long
We can work it out, We can work it out.

B. Check out how important what he is about to teach us. Go past it to vs.21,22. Parable (32b). Then 33-35. Sounds kinda serious.

IV. ERRING SHEEP (Mt.5:23-25)

A. Slide4b Reconciliation, who's job is it Anyways?

1. Isn't it **God's** job to show people they are wrong? **No**. Usually in scripture he used **humans** for this purpose. [Think: Nathan w/David. Paul w/Peter. Elijah w/Ahab]
2. Conflict doesn't resolve itself accidentally. *It must be intentional.*
 - a) I thought **time** heals all things? **No**, if it does *the next time you go to the doctors office, just remain in waiting room. :)*
 - b) The only way to **resolve conflict** is to **face it**.
3. **Every member** of the church of Christ has been granted *the privilege* of the reconciliation procedure by Jesus Christ.

B. Slide4c When Is It My Responsibility To Go?

1. **Go**, if **you're** in Sin - Mt.5:23,24. **Go**, if **they** are in sin - Mt.18:15.
2. **If they are in sin, shouldn't they come to me?**
 - a) They might not *know* that they did sin against you.
 - b) They might not be *ready* to come to you. But your attitude of **submission & love** will help them to repent.
3. The Ideal is **both** cooling down & they meet each other on the way to each others house to seek reconciliation.
 - a) It's best when you *start fighting over...it was my fault, no it was mine. :)*

C. Slide4d How Much Time Do I Have To Start Reconciliation?

1. Note the **urgency** in Mt.5:24,25. **Leave it there - 1st - quickly.**
 - a) Note the close tie between *worship & reconciliation*.

D. Slide4e What If I **Don't** Resolve Conflicts?

1. **It blocks my fellowship w/God** [You can't be rt w/God & wrong w/them].
2. **It blocks my prayers** [God wont hear, while we stay here. 1 Pet.3:7 *Treat her/wife as you should so your prayers will not be hindered*].

3. It blocks my **happiness** [if your **relationships stink**, your **life stinks**].
4. It **dishonors** Christ's name. It saps strength from the church. It hurts everyone.

E. **Slide4f** What If I **Do** Resolve Conflicts? *Purpose*

1. To preserve the **honor of God's name**. To assure the **purity** of the Church.
To **reclaim** & **reconcile** the offender. [Don't have a **good riddance attitude**. Esp after Jesus' example of leave 99 for 1]

F. **Slide4g** How Do I Decide **When** To Confront?

1. Whatever comes between Christians **Must** be removed. asap

G. I believe the bible reveals 2 types of Offenses: **Coverable** & **Uncoverable**.

1. **Coverable Offenses** - 1 Pet.4:8 **And above all things have fervent love for one another, for love will cover a multitude of sins.**
 - a) Ask yourself, **Is it covered?** Are you dwelling on it? Can you drop it? Is it eating you up? Are you finding others to talk about it w/you?
2. **Uncoverable Offenses** - If the matter continues to rattle around inside **or** carry over till the next day, it should be handled.
 - a) If it **drives a wedge** between 2 Christian bro's/sis's the wedge **must** be removed.

H. **Slide5a** How Do I Confront? *The Four Steps of Instruction...* **(Mt.18:17-17)**

I. **#1 KEEP IT PRIVATE** (15)

1. **Alone** - Keep the Circle small.
 - a) Anything else is Gossip. **But I need counsel.** **Be careful**...it seems that that is in the **next step**.
2. **Gaining a Brother** - This is our **Goal**. The very heart of the issue is to gain back a bro/sis.
 - a) Above all else, go to him w/the idea of **winning your brother**, **not** an **Argument**.
 - b) It is possible to **win** the **argument** & **lose** your brother.
3. **Some Principles:** **Don't condemn** the offender. **Don't** hold it **in**. **Don't** let it **out** (Gossip).

a) Watch out for the *Transmutable Disease* of **Gossip** *or leprosy of the tongue*.
If 2 couples have a problem, & each of the 4 told only 2 friends, which only tell their spouse, now 20 people are involved. [No wonder why Jesus & Paul compared *sin* to **leaven**]

4. **Our Attitude:** *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.* Gal.6:1

a) **Restore** - used especially as a surgical term, of *setting a bone or joint*. Which obviously requires **patience & tenderness**.

(1) Our **attitude** should not be that of a **policeman** out to arrest a criminal, **but** rather that of a **physician** seeking to *heal a wound* in the body of Christ, a wound that will spread *sickness and death* if left alone.

b) **Note:** this doesn't necessarily mean *only one visit*. **Make every possible attempt to do this before going on.**

J. **Slide5b #2 GET HELP FROM A FEW** (16)

K. **Do you know why to bring in 1 or 2 more?** *INTIMIDATION!!!* :)

1. **No! The opposite.** Bring in *worthy arbitrators* the offender could receive from.
2. Note again, this isn't necessarily only a *1 time shot* either [perhaps several visits]
 - a) They must work at this **until** they've reached *reconciliation*, **or** are convinced it must go to **step #3**.
3. **Note:** it *doesn't* call for *2 pastors, or Elders, or Deacons*, **but 2 Christians**. *It is ALL of our jobs!*

L. **Slide5c #3 GET HELP FROM THE CHURCH** (17a)

1. Telling it to the Church is still a part of trying to **Win** an erring brother.
2. Very rarely does it have to come to this if the **1st steps** were done properly.
3. I believe that *taking it to the church* **isn't** for *public humiliation*, **but** is *broadening the circle* once again. Bringing in **All** friends now for again... *restoration purposes*.

M. **Slide5d #4 TREAT HIM LIKE A HEATHEN/TAX COLLECTOR** (17b)

1. This means that you *treat him as* an **unbeliever**. *It doesn't say* that you are **judging** if the person is saved or not, you don't know.

2. So, how do we treat unbelievers? We seek their **salvation**. We are **kind** towards them. We show **love** towards them.
 - a) They obviously shouldn't *serve* in the church.
3. It also hinders *true Fellowship* w/them.

V. PRACTICALS

A. Slide6 Here is the *ideal* Biblical Response to sin:

The sinning party	The Offended party
1. Repentance – Share it.	Hear it
2. Confession – Name it.	Accept it
3. Restitution – Restore it.	Receive it
4. Change – Explain it.	Encourage it
5. Forgiveness – Ask for it.	Give it
6. Reconciliation – Bring it.	Work on it

B. Slide7 The 7 A's of confessing sin.

1. **Address** – everyone involved. Keep the circle small (sin against wife tell wife. against a group tell the group).
 - a) Heart Sins (personal).
 - b) Social sins (public). Lk.19:8 *Zacchaeus if I have taken anything from anyone...*
2. **Avoid** – words like **if, but, & maybe**.
3. **Admit** – specifically (greed, envy, jealousy, pride, selfishness)
4. **Apologize** – express *sincere sorrow* for the way you affected them.
5. **Accept** – the consequences.
 - a) Lk.15:19 *I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.*
 - b) Offer restitution when appropriate – Lk.15:18 (prodigal thinking thru what he'll tell dad).
6. **Alter** – your behavior. (present a plan. ask for input)
7. **Ask** – for forgiveness (at the appropriate time)

8. What if they won't forgive you?

- a) Was your confession adequate? Have you followed through on your commitments
Allow time (8 years once for me).

C. Slide 8 3 Steps of True Forgiveness.

1. I will not bring it up to you again.
2. I will not bring it up to others.
3. I will not stew/fixate on it myself.