

#28

PRINCIPLES FOR RESOLVING CONFLICT

Conflict! It's all around us. Conflict between parent and child. Conflict between husband and wife. Conflict between friend and friend. It's a part of life. But how is the Christian supposed to deal with conflict? Is there a time when conflict is necessary and are there times when we are to steer clear of it? In this lesson we will explore what the Bible teaches about conflict and the principles surrounding it.

1. What does the Bible teach regarding our relationships with others?

Hebrews 12:14

2. Does that mean that we can never be angry with anyone?

Ephesians 4:26

Note: Anger is an emotion that we are created with. What the Bible is saying is that anger in and of itself is not a sin, but it is what you do with it that determines what is sin or not.

3. How important is it to God that you settle your differences with others?

Matthew 5:23, 24

4. How does God want me to settle my differences with others? Luke 17; 3, 4

5 How do I handle a situation where another believer wrongs me?

Matthew 18:15-17

6. How does God say we should handle faultfinding and having a critical attitude? Matthew 7:1-5

28-2

7. What does the Bible teach about granting forgiveness to others when they seek it from us? Matthew 6:14, 15; 18:21, 22

Note: When we forgive others that does not mean that we cannot talk to them about the way that they dealt with us. But it does mean that we are ready to resolve the problem with them.

8. Are we to “love our enemies?” Luke 6:27-36; Romans 12:14-21 _____

Note: It is impossible for the “natural” man to love his enemies. But not for the children of God! We are to be “partakers of His nature” in every way.

“It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces humanity. Even sinners whose hearts are not utterly closed to God’s spirit will respond to kindness; while they may give hate for hate, they will also give love for love. But it is only the Spirit of God that gives love for hatred. To be kind to the unthankful and to the evil, to do good hoping for nothing again, is the insignia of the royalty of heaven, the sure token by which the children of the Highest reveal their high estate.”

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing, p. 75

9. How are we able to have this kind of love for others? John 15:4, 5;
1 John 4:12,13

Note: While we cannot on our own freely love and forgive others, the Holy Spirit will give us the ability to do those things that we cannot do on our own. We have just to ask Jesus for this and consider it a done deal. (Luke 11:9-13)

10. Should you try to be a peacemaker in someone else’s quarrel? Proverbs 26:17

11. Are there ever any times when it is justified to speak out against someone directly? John 2:13-16

28-3

Note: "It is true there is an indignation that is justifiable, even in the followers of Christ. When they see that God is dishonored, and His service brought into disrepute, when they see the innocent oppressed, a righteous indignation stirs the soul. Such anger, born of sensitive morals, is not a sin. But those who at any supposed provocation feel at liberty to indulge anger or resentment are opening the heart to Satan." *Desire of Ages, p. 310*

Conclusion: God wants us to live in peace and love with one another. This love can only come from God. And it is yours for the asking. God wants us to be direct and honest with each other. When we are faced with a conflict, pray and ask God for wisdom in the matter. If we have caused injury to someone, we need to go to the individual and ask for forgiveness. If someone has harmed us then we need to go to that person and, praying beforehand, spell the problem out for him or her.

Remember, diplomacy and tact are extremely helpful. Try to think of something positive to tell them so that they are not automatically put on the defensive. If they ask for forgiveness, you need to forgive them. If you have to, ask God to help you forgive them. Do not, under any circumstances get involved in someone else's quarrel. If someone asks for advice with their quarrel, refer them to the appropriate Bible verses.

There may be times when you will need to verbally confront someone under certain circumstances. Those times would be when: 1) God is dishonored, 2). God's service is dishonored, and 3) innocents are suffering. Lastly, remember God's promise to us. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians 4:13

ANSWER KEY TO LESSON #28

Q. 1- Make every effort to live in peace with every man

Q. 2- No

Q. 3- Extremely important

Q. 4- If your brother wrongs you, rebuke him. If he asks forgiveness then forgive him

Q. 5- First go and talk to him one on one. If he won't listen bring one or two others along. If he still won't listen, tell it to the church. If he still won't listen he is not really a part of the body

Q. 6- We will be judged with the same measure we use for others

Q. 7- Forgive generously. If we don't forgive others, God won't forgive us

Q. 8- Yes

Q. 9- By being connected to Jesus and His love

Q. 10- No

Q. 11- Yes