

From Cope To Hope: How to Effectively Handle Life's Problems & Challenges

Part 2, "Peace in the Middle of Your Storm: Resolving Conflicts"

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Jesus promises peace. Life brings storms such as conflicts in relationships and in our circumstances. The peace that Christ brings to your life is stronger than the difficulties. Learn how to stay in peace even when you have to deal with people and resolve conflicts.

Proverbs 4:23, Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.

Having peace in the middle of any of conflict begins with "keeping (guarding) your heart." Conflict is not only the challenge of resolving interpersonal issues, it is also something that intends to degrade your inner peace.

The heart's central role in conflict is described in James 4:1-3. If you understand this passage, you will have found a key to preventing and resolving conflict.

"What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures."

Most conflicts that are manifest in your circumstances began with conflicts in your own heart.

Peace in your heart and peace in your circumstances are not the same. The first key to resolving conflict is to establish peace in your own heart and mind.

Romans 12:18, *If it is possible, **as much as depends on you**, live peaceably with all men.*

When you feel that someone has done something wrong that has led to conflict, be clear about what you think is "wrong" or defining someone's "fault." Don't consider an action wrong, sinful, or faulty that is nothing more than something you don't like or prefer. Don't allow desires to become demands because of a sense of entitlement. This can become a source of conflict soon follows. Choose not to be offended.

Matthew 18:15-17, *"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that **BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE***

CONFIRMED. "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

James 1:19-20, This you know, my beloved brethren But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Forgiveness is the greatest power of release from a feeling of hurt and pain.

Matthew 6:14-15, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

Luke 17:4 ESV And if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

Hebrews 12:15 See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

Forgiveness can be described as a decision to make four promises:

1. "I will not dwell on this incident."
2. "I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you."
3. "I will not talk to others about this incident."
4. "I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship."

(From: http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.958157/k.B361/Four_Promises_of_Forgiveness.htm#sthash.bnaAukYG.dpuf)

Choose not to be offended. Offense is one of the maladies of these last days.

Matt. 24:10 And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. 11 Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many.

Keep love at the front of your heart and mind.

Matt. 22:37-39, "Love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself"

Many conflicts are caused by faulty judgement

Matthew 7:1 "Judge not, that you be not judged. 2] For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you. 3] And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? 4] Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck out of your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? 5] Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother's eye.

Common mistakes people that result in conflict

1. Taking others for granted; assuming that one should continue to do for us what he/she has been doing
2. Taking offense on matters that do not qualify as biblical sins
3. Lack of common courtesy and deference
4. Gossip, backbiting
5. Presumption: Flagrant disregard of courtesy or propriety and an arrogant assumption of privilege; Something that is taken for granted or advanced as fact.
6. Psalms 19:12-13 Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Keep back Your servant also from presumptuous sins; Let them not have dominion over me. Then I shall be blameless, And I shall be innocent of great transgression.
7. Self-righteousness (Mat 7:1-5)

Remember what Jesus said, John 14:27, *Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.*

Practical Conflict Resolution methods

The P.A.U.S.E Principle

(From http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBHpH/b.958155/k.A1D0/PAUSE_Principle.htm#sthash.Wi3sVzim.dpuf)

As the Apostle Paul put it, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4; see Matt. 22:39; 1 Cor. 13:5; Matt. 7:12).

A biblical approach to negotiation may be summarized in five basic steps, which we refer to as the PAUSE Principle:

1. **Prepare** (pray, get the facts, seek godly counsel, develop options)
2. **Affirm** relationships (show genuine concern and respect for others)
3. **Understand** interests (identify others' concerns, desires, needs, limitations, or fears)
4. **Search** for creative solutions (prayerful brainstorming)
5. **Evaluate** options objectively and reasonably (evaluate, don't argue)

Recommended Resources:

Peacemaker Ministries

<http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBHpH/b.958123/k.CB70/Home.htm>

The "Four G's of Conflict Resolution"

http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBHpH/b.958149/k.303A/The_Four_Gs.htm