



How to Love People & Resolve Conflict

Forgive, Stop Sinning, and Start Serving Others

We all desire to have good relationships, but what happens when someone hurts you? Conflict is a normal (and healthy!) part of relationships, but that doesn't mean handling it in a loving way is our natural response. The easy thing to do is to shut the person out or hold a grudge, but that actually isn't the biblical way of dealing with conflict at all. This study can be done as a Life Group or one on one lesson, and focuses on how Scripture tells us to resolve the conflict that inevitably comes our way.

Basic assumption→ We all want to have good friendship in which others love us & we love them.

Basic command→ *A new command I give you: Love one another as I have loved you; so you must love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another (Jn. 13:34-35).*

1. How did Jesus love us? On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate yourself on loving in each of your relationships?

Biblical assumption→ Relationships will experience quarrels and conflicts. This is to be expected. How you handle them is what is important. **Take a look at James 4:1-12.**

1. What causes the conflicts you experience?
2. What does James mean by "friendship with the world"?
3. What solutions does James give for resolving conflicts?

Conflict Resolution Principles

1. Conflicts come from our own desires that battle within us. Accept this fact—that we are part of the problem.
2. They are part of the problem too—but they are *not* all of the problem. We cannot control other people, so the Godly thing to do is connect with God and allow Him to change us.
3. Go to God in honest prayer to have your needs met.
4. Check your motives (even in prayer!). Is your request to please yourself or to serve God and His purposes?
5. Repent of any worldly desires you may have.
6. Humble yourself before God and submit to His will.
7. Stop being double-minded. Realize you either serve God or the devil.
8. Start mourning over your sinfulness instead of focusing on what frustrates you about the other person.
9. Stop slandering the other person(s) in your speech and in your thoughts.
10. Realize that you may not perfectly understand the other person's perspective—only God does. This qualifies Him (not you) to accurately evaluate the situation.
11. The key is to get God's perspective on the relationship and to employ His principles in relating to one another.
12. It is most helpful to humbly ask the other person questions in order to gain their perspective. Give them feedback until they confirm to you that you do indeed understand their perspective.



13. Ask them for the kindness of allowing you to explain your perspective. Get feedback from them until you are convinced that they understand your perspective.
14. Now real communication is taking place, and it is possible for one or each person to say they're sorry.
15. The powerful tool that God gives us may now be employed (it is one of the most significant things we can learn to do in life!). What is this tool? Forgiveness.

Learning to imitate God → *Look at Ephesians 4:32-5:2.*

1. How did God treat us when we sinned against him?
2. What are some ways we could show kindness and compassion to the person we are in conflict with?
3. What would your forgiveness of the other person look like if you imitated God/Christ?

Resolving a conflict is one important way to show love to another person. It is doing exactly what Jesus did for us when He came to earth to die and be raised again.

He took the initiative to resolve the conflict between God and humans. He sacrificially went out of His way, at great cost to Him personally to see that the conflict was resolved. This is love. This is how we are commanded to love one another (Jn. 13:34-35). This is how the world will know that we are His disciples (because we live/relate the way He lived/related).

What does Ephesians 4:15-16 have to say about the way we communicate with one another? This is the manner in which we are to do numbers 12 and 13 of the "Conflict Resolution Principles."

A list of problems and what Jesus wants to do about them in our lives (Eph. 4:22-32)

Jesus calls us into His kingdom. When we enter we are carrying lots of baggage from our old way of doing things. He tells us that it is time to get rid of it!

- Falsehood is replaced with speaking the truth in love.
- We are still allowed to get angry, but God gives us a timeline for resolving our anger issues: before sunset. If we don't, we are choosing to give the devil a foothold in our lives. If we don't start communicating with the person we are angry with that same day, then we give the devil increasing control over our lives each day we allow the conflict to go unresolved.
- Instead of stealing we are to work so that we have extra to give away to those in need. (We can steal each other's good reputation).
- Unwholesome speech is replaced with words that build others up, not tear them down. The goal of all our words is to benefit the other person rather than ourselves. Some of us just like to talk to hear ourselves talk. Jesus calls us to purposely direct our speech to help others or learn to be quiet.
- Strong negative emotions and their expression to others (bitterness, rage, anger, slander, fighting) is to be replaced with kindness, compassion and forgiveness—we start treating each other the same way God treats us.

Proper lines of communication when conflict occurs

What do you usually do when you have a conflict with someone else?

- a. Clam up and withdraw?



- b. Say angry things? Try to win the argument?
- c. Try to work out a compromise?
- d. Purposely let the other person have their way for the sake of the relationship being preserved?

You might be surprised to learn that none of these ways is God's way of dealing with the conflict! God is not into winning or losing, running or fighting.

He is interested in loving communication (**John 3:16-17**) and actual resolution of the conflict (**Matthew 18:15**) in which all parties concerned have humbled themselves (**James 4:6-12**), admitted their part of the problem (**Phil. 2:3-5**), asked forgiveness (**Matthew 5:23-24**), and communicated the truth in a sacrificially loving way (**Eph 4:15**).

