

THE ART OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



A Study on Principles of Reconciliation

B r o o k y R S t o c k t o n

THE ART OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

2.0



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PREFACE

As a young pastor I was woefully prepared for all the sheep biting, head butting, and hoof kicking among sheep.

Overtime I threw myself into Scripture scrambling to grasp the rules of reconciliation. Fortunately, I had a good team of humble elders who supported and assisted me in my education.

I was often stunned by the problems in the flock; so much so, I complained to my wife about the volume and intensity of problems coming to my office. She replied, "God prepared you to be a physician of the soul. He sent these troubles to you because He knew you will handle these with integrity and grace." She was right. From then on I was at rest and saw my desk as "the garbage pit of the West."

Enclosed are some of my Bible studies and research on conflict management – ideas I hope you will incorporate into your ministry.



DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Bethel Bible Fellowship and the elder team who endured my weaknesses and who bore the heat of the day with me in sheep work. Blessed by their patience and love for the church,

Brooky Stockton

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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THE ART OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



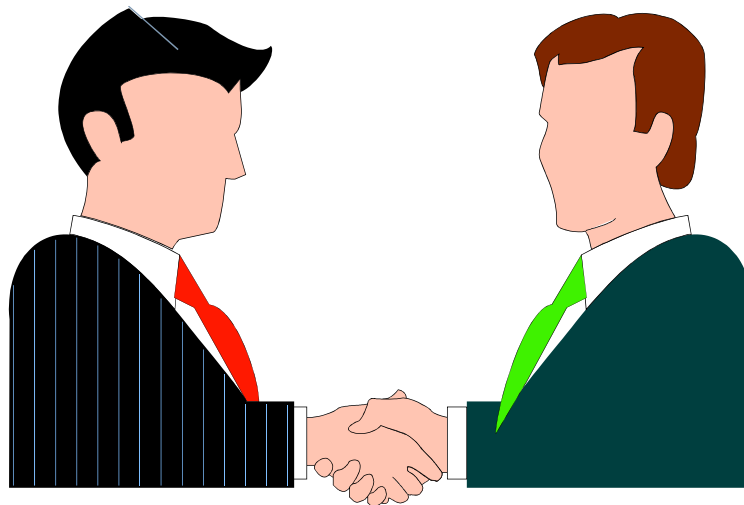
Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers, because they will be called sons of God” (Matt.



1. WANTED: CONFLICT MANAGERS

A study on the need for conflict managers

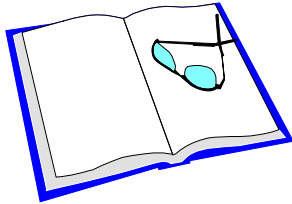


2 Corinthians 5:18

“And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation;”

Bible Discovery

Question One



Sometimes we develop an ideal view of the Christian life and we created a conflict between the way things ought to be and the way things really are. Look at the following verses and answer the following question, "What were some of the conflicts during the NT era?"

Matthew 5:23-26

Matthew 5:38-42

Matthew 12:46-49

Luke 10:40

Luke 12:13-14

Acts 6:1-2

Acts 9:11-16

Acts 11:2

Acts 15:1-2

Acts 18:12-13

Acts 20:29-31

Acts 24:5-9

Romans 12:14

Romans 14:1, 3

Romans 16:17

1 Corinthians 11:10

1 Corinthians 6:1

1 Corinthians 9:3

1 Corinthians 11:18-19

2 Corinthians 6:12-13

Galatians 5:10

Philippians 4:2

Colossians 2:4

2 Thessalonians 3:6

1 Timothy 1:3-4

2 Timothy 2:23

Titus 1:12-13

Hebrews 12:14

James 3:14-16

1 Peter 3:8-9

3 John 1:9

Jude 4

Matthew 5:1-12 is called the *Beatitudes*. Jesus completed an intense period of fasting and testing. Like Moses who fasted 40 days before he received the Torah to give to the newly constituted nation of Israel, which came from the 12 sons of Jacob, Jesus fasted 40 days and delivered the Sermon on the Mount, the new law, to the 12 apostles, the new reconstituted Israel of God.

Look at Matthew 5:1-12 and list the nine beatitudes

Question 2

Do you see a progression of spiritual development in this section? Why or why not? If so, what is it?

Question 3

In your opinion, why is the state of “persecution” the last blessed state in the series?

Question 4

When you mature, what kind of ministry will God give you (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).

Question 5

Why would anyone want to be involved in the messy Ministry of Reconciliation (John 21:15-18)?

Three Types of Conflict

Intrapersonal Conflict:

Intrapersonal conflict is the struggle going on inside or within a particular individual. This conflict may be between principle and feelings; mind and emotions; will and wants.

For example: In Galatians 5:16-20, the apostle reveals flesh vs. spirit conflicts, that is, there is tension between the regenerated part of the believer and the un-regenerated part of the man.

Interpersonal Conflict:

Interpersonal conflict is related to differences between people but that are not related to particular, substantive issues. People are different in the way they dress, talk, think, act, purchase, and relate to life. These differences often surface when two different people must interact toward a specific goal.

For example: In Galatians chapter 4, there was a conflict between Ishmael (Hagar's son) and Isaac (Sarah's son).

Issues Conflict:

Issues orientated conflict are substantive conflicts regarding facts, goals, values, and the means to attaining goals.

Facts: There is not an agreement about the who, what, why, where, and how of an issue. What is truth has not been defined.

Goals: There is not an agreement on the objectives to be accomplished.

Values: There is not an agreement on what is best or most virtuous.

Methods: There is not an agreement on the "how" or the means to attaining a desired result.

For example: In Galatians 2, an issue over fraternization with Gentiles surfaced between Paul and Peter.

The Call to the Ministry of Reconciliation



We should learn at least one lesson from perusing some of the conflicts in the NT.

We have a tendency as people to idealize the NT world. Idealism cripples. Life is conflict! All of us must learn to manage conflict or fail at life.

We should learn at least two lessons about conflict management from the Beatitudes:

When we mature, God will place us in the midst of conflict to represent Him and to reconcile men to God and to one another (Matthew 5:1-11).

It takes virtue and skill to be a conflict manager.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians was written to a church in conflict. He calls this church to the following (2 Corinthians 5:17-21):

To recognize that at one time they were at war with God, but due to the work of Christ, they have been reconciled to God.

To look at their differences and to work toward continued reconciliation with God and with each other.

To accept the Ministry of Reconciliation and seek to bring others into harmony with the will of God and with each other.

The **Ministry of Reconciliation** is the **call of God** to the new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17):

The Ministry of Reconciliation is a ministry that recognizes the inevitability of conflict in a fallen world. It seeks to respond to a world in conflict.

The Ministry of Reconciliation is fueled by thankfulness. No one understood the transition from hostility to God to a life of happy fellowship with Christ as did the Apostle Paul. Indebted and deeply grateful, he spent his entire life seeking to reconcile men to God and to one another. Personal experience and deep, deep gratitude fuels this ministry.

The Ministry of Reconciliation reflects Christian Maturity. Babes in Christ who are just getting acquainted with the facts of redemption and carnal minds who are blind to the will of God are incapable of the Ministry of Reconciliation. Reconciliation is for the mature in Christ.

The Ministry of Reconciliation is motivated by a deep, deep love for Christ. When Christ restored Peter to service (John 21), he asked his fallen disciple,

“Peter do you love me?” He did not ask if Peter loved sheep? He did not ask if Peter loved sheep work? He did not ask if Peter loved the Ministry of Reconciliation? He asked, “Peter, do you me?” Love for Jesus is the major qualification to be a Conflict Manager.

The Ministry of Reconciliation necessitates rubbing shoulders with dirty sheep. One cannot be a Conflict Manager if he does not get down and dirty, i.e., get personally involved in the lives of people. The Ministry of Reconciliation is not a sterile, clean, unsullied service to mankind. It is not aloof. It is not distant. Rather, ministers of reconciliation roll up their sleeves and shove themselves between mudslingers and hog callers in order to restore peace.

The Ministry of Reconciliation happens because of faith. There are no magic words that can resolve conflict. The minister gets involved because he believes that through Christ men can find peace and hope. The intent is not to present a magic solution but to eliminate “heat” so cool tempers can encounter each other and their God in an environment that “faith¹ can become active through love²” (Galatians 5:6).

¹ The word “faith” (pi,stij) in this context probably refer to faith that responds to the love of God, or it may refer to “faithfulness” that is motivated by love for God.

² The word “love” (avga,phj) is an ablative of source indicating that faith is a product of comprehending the love of God at work through Christ at Calvary. It could refer to “faithfulness to relational responsibilities as a product of agape love at work in the heart of the individual,” however, it does not suggest that the virtue of active love produces faith that saves the sinner.

Goals in Conflict Management

Lesson One: *Wanted: Conflict Managers*: A study on the need for Conflict Managers in the New Testament.

Lesson Two: *Levels of Conflict*: A study on the levels of conflict and how easily differences can escalate into war, even relational death.

Lesson Three: *Intrapersonal Conflict*: a study on the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit in the life of a believer.

Lessons Four: *The Principles of Conflict Management*: A study on the Principles and steps that can lead to conflict resolution.

Lesson Five: *Responses to Conflict*: A study on the strength and weaknesses of various approaches to conflict and the need for personal growth.

Lesson Six: *Principles of Relationships*: A study on the turning the four corners of marriage and the dynamics of human relationships.

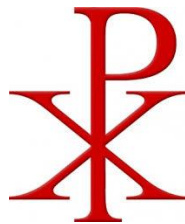
Lesson Seven: *Principles of Restoration*: A study on how to repair broken relationships.

Lesson Eight: *Descent into Hell*: An analysis of faction, and a study on strategies to overcome division.

Lesson Nine: *Managing Weaknesses*: A study on how to handle weaknesses in authority figures.

Lesson Ten: *Appealing to Authority*: A study on how the godly appeal.

Appendix:





2. LEVELS OF CONFLICT

Lesson 2

A study on the nature of conflict



Ephesians 4:27

“Neither give place to the devil.”

Bible Discovery



2 Samuel 10

Look at the following wars and determine the parties involved, the issues at hand, the underlying cause of the war, and any insights about conflict management.

2 Samuel 10 The Ammonite War

Parties	Issues	Cause	Results	Insights

Judges 7:24-8:3 The Contentious Ephraimites

Parties	Issues	Cause	Results	Insights

Judges 12:1-7 The Ephraimite War

Parties	Issues	Cause	Results	Insights

Levels of Conflict

Level I Differences in the Relationship³

Problem: Differences in ideas, goals, means of achieving those goals.

Emotions: Frustration and faith are co-existent.

Resolution: Appreciation and discussion

Level II Danger in the Relationship

Problem: There is a lack of trust and hope is weak.

Emotions: People are hurt, angry, and defensive.

Resolution: Deep communication. Serious listening and analysis.

Level III Divided Relationship

Problem: There is a power struggle, and the goal is to win.

Emotions: Bitterness, overstatements, verbal battles, accusation.

Resolution: Intervention, counseling, personal judgment.

Level IV Detestation of the Relationship

Problem: Defeating the enemy is the major objective.

Emotions: Hate, alienation, isolation, antagonism, cruelty.

Resolution: Deep, deep repentance.

Level V Divorce in the Relationship

Problem: Loss of hope and very, very threatened.

Emotion: Hardness of heart, unwilling to reconcile, rebellion.

Resolution: A miracle of grace.

³ Adapted from *Family Dynamics News*, Vol. 1, No. 2 Winter, 1988.

Questions

1. What virtue did Abraham spend on his conflict with Lot (Genesis 13)?
2. What virtue did Hagar spend on her conflict with Sarah (Genesis 16)?
3. What virtue did Isaac spend on his conflict with the men of Gerar (Genesis 26)?
4. What virtue did Jacob spend on his conflict with Laban (Genesis 31:27-31)?
5. What virtue did Joseph spend on his conflict with his brothers (Genesis 50)?
6. What virtue did Moses spend on his conflict with Israel (Exodus 17:1-8)?



7. What virtue did Gideon spend on his conflict with Ephraim (Judges 9)?
8. What virtue did David spend on his conflict with Saul (2 Samuel 24)?
9. What virtue did Nehemiah spend on his conflict with bankers (Nehemiah 5)?
10. What virtue does God want us to spend on those who hurt us (Luke 6:27-28)?

Evaluation of Conflict

Look at the following conflicts in the Book of Genesis and evaluate the level of conflict and the level of communication that occurred during the conflict.

Cain and Abel (Genesis 4)

Noah and Ham (Genesis 9)

Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13)

Sarah and Hagar (Genesis 16)

Isaac and Abimelech (Genesis 26)

Jacob and Esau (Genesis 28)

Jacob and Laban (Genesis 31)

Dinah and the Shechemites (Genesis 34)

Joseph and His brothers (Genesis 37)

Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38)

Joseph and Potiphar (Genesis 39)

Pharaoh and the Butler (Genesis 41)

Joseph and his brothers (Genesis 50).

The Cost of Peace

is spending virtues at the bargaining table.



Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance:

James 3:17-18 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that

make peace.

Responding to Difficult People

TYPE	BEHAVIOR	CHARACTER	RESPONSE
Bulldozers	Hostile- Aggressive, attack, abusive, abrupt,	Need to be right. Vision for others	Stand up for yourself. Give time to calm down.
Snipers	Undercover pot- shots. Indirect attacks that hurt.	Perfectionist. Unrealistic. Critical.	Flush them out and force them to articulate their disagreement surrounded by their
Whiners	Complain, self- righteous, accusatory,	Feels powerless, hopeless, blameless, morally perfect	Listen carefully and acknowledge. Disagree. Get it in writing. Separate fact from feeling. Switch to problem solving
Clams	Clams up. Unresponsive. Silent Treatment.	Non- committal. Escape and evasion.	Ask open-ended questions. Listen. Don't fill in the blanks. Pry, search,
Super sweet	Quick agreement. Non- committal	Fear of rejection. Wants to be liked	Be personable. Challenge their "Yes." Don't allow unrealistic commitments.

Ten Strategies for Avoiding War

You cannot always avoid sailing in rough seas, but you can avoid shipwreck by refusing to launch your ship in the middle of a storm. There is no one single strategy that can avoid conflict. One has to choose the best strategy depending on the nature of the issue and the type of person you are engaging. How you handle a super-sweet person and

Strategy One: Delay discussions on sensitive subjects. Give people time to calm down, get perspective, and to reflect on problem solving.

Strategy Two: Set a time when the issue can be addressed adequately. Unscheduled meeting to discuss pertinent issues only frustrates team members. You can go backwards in meetings, but you can never go forward without them.

Strategy Three: Do your homework and be prepared to discuss the issue. Make every meeting your meeting. Come prepared to listen, to discuss, to debate, and to articulate your position.

Strategy Four: Do a spirit check. There is no room for pride and arrogance on a team. Be ye being filled with the Spirit is the key to conflict resolution. Storing up virtue is money in the bank.

Strategy Five: Be a skunk. It is O.K. to admit wrong and accept partial blame. Spend humility.

Strategy Six: Give credit where credit is due. Some people need to know that you know they have done their best to contribute to a cause. Spend thankfulness.

Strategy Seven: Disagree with an aggressive person. Note the disagreement. Set up a time to discuss the issue when you can be more prepared and calmer. Spend honesty.

Strategy Eight: Ask questions to get at the true facts. Often distortion and overstatements abound in an emotional issue. Spend the search for truth.

Strategy Nine: Be silent on non-substantive issues or when people are simply picking a fight for personal entertainment. It is hard to argue with a person who will not fight back.

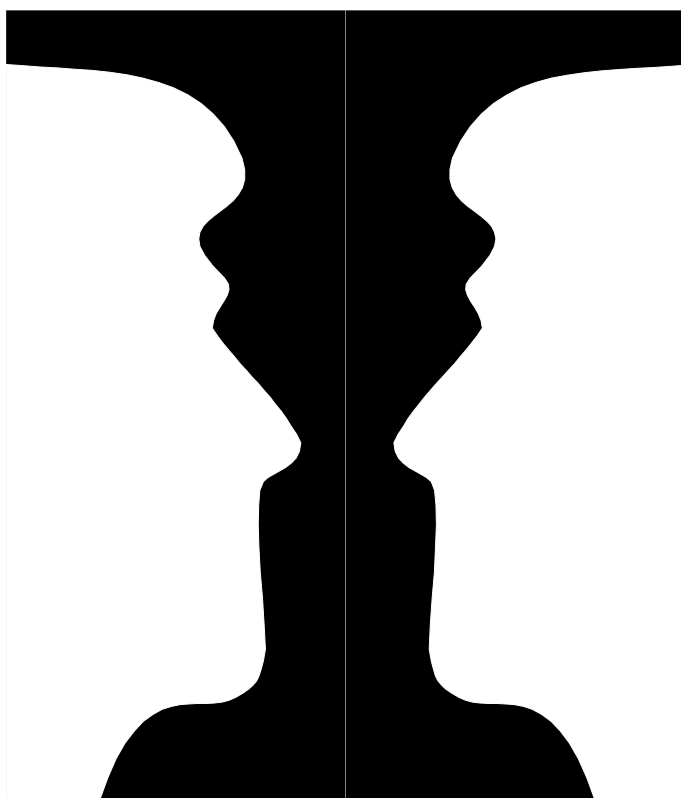
Strategy Ten: Throw in the sweetness of Jesus. When things get tense, share some of your sweet insights about the goodness of God and the blessedness of the Savior.



3. INTRAPERSONAL CONFLICT

Lesson Three

A study on the struggle between the flesh and the Spirit



Romans 6:14

“ Sin shall not have dominion over you . . . ”

Fragile Identities

One of the unique facets of being human is the ability to contemplate self-existence. I doubt seriously if my dog Biscuit ever seriously lays around and contemplates the meaning of his own life. God has given us the unique ability of self-consciousness. When we think about who we are, we usually say that we are mothers, students, teachers, athletes, business men, and ranchers. But, these are all rather fragile.



“I am a mother,” you say. This is wonderful, but who would you be if your children suddenly died.

“I am a student,” you say. This is great, but what will you be when you finish school and are no longer required to go to class?

“I am athlete,” you say. Playing in sports is a lot of fun, but one day you will put on weight and not move as fast as you use to. Who will you be then?

“I am a business man,” you say. Running a business takes lots of time, energy, and money. What happens if your business goes bankrupt and you are forced to find other employment? Who will you be then?

As the humanist contemplates his own existence, he concludes that he is “a mass of protoplasm” or “a stomach on legs” or “an accumulation of cells with negative and positive charges.”

Christians do not fare much better. One day while contemplating the meaning of your own existence, you hear the gospel and realize that your attempt to find meaning in sex or money or drugs or the accumulation of things has failed. You acknowledge to God that you are a sinner and accept Christ as your Savior. Who are you now?

“I am just a sinner saved by grace,” you say. Really? After all that God has done for you through Christ in your heart by the Holy Spirit, all you can say is that, “I am just a sinner.” Isn’t that what you were before you received Christ as your Savior?

“I am just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread,” you say. Is this all you are is just a “beggar?” After all that Christ has done for you, you summarize it by saying, “I am a beggar.” What kind of salvation is that?

“Well, one thing I have learned is that ‘in me dwelleth no good thing,’” you say. Really? Even after God has sent His Spirit into your heart, all you can say is, “In me dwelleth no good thing?” How can this be?

The bumper sticker says, “Christians aren’t perfect. They are just forgiven.” “This is what I believe,” you say. Is this all you are is “just forgiven?” Your sins have been cancelled and now you are just a blank slate?” Soon that slate will be filled up with more sins. What will you be then?

“I am a born-again Christian with a sinful nature,” you say. So, you are cleaned up, but at the core of your being you remain unchanged—a sinful being. If this is the way you think, no wonder you are miserable. You are a saved sinner that is desperately trying to be good but are absolutely frustrated because you are being asked to do what is contrary to your sinful old self.

Let’s try it one more time: “I am a Christian who has a righteous nature and a sinful nature,” you say. Really? Now you are saying that you are a spiritual schizophrenic, a Dr. Jekyll and a Dr. Hyde at the same time—a sort of split personality. Sometimes you are righteous and sometimes you are bad to the bones. James raises a question about this, “Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet *water* and bitter?” (James 3:11).

Let’s try another approach, a Scriptural approach: “I am born-again, regenerated being. I am a child of God who has been transformed by the power of God’s Spirit into a righteous person. I want to do what is right because God changed me. There is no conflict in my life when I do what is right because doing right is consistent with who I am—a righteous being.”

“This is heresy! This is perfectionism, and I can’t buy it,” you say. I like what Dr. A. J. Gordon said, “If we regard the doctrine of sinless perfection as a heresy, we regard the contentment with sinful imperfection as a greater heresy” (Quoted by L.E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, p. 20).

This study is about intrapersonal conflict that arises out of the problem of duplicity in the life of the believer. It is an attempt to answer the question, “Who am I?” It is a study on personal identification and the need to think Biblically about ourselves.

Bible Discovery



1. What do you learn about the importance and power of the Spirit's work in the life of a believer?

Ezekiel 36:27 And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do *them*.

Ezekiel 37:14 And shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live.

Jeremiah 31:33 But this *shall be* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Romans 8:9 But ye are not in the flesh⁴, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Titus 3:3-7 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, *and* hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

2. What do you learn about the product of the Spirit's work in the life of the believer after he has received Christ?

Romans 5:5; 6:3, 11 . . . because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy **Ghost** which is given unto us . . . so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ . . . Likewise reckon⁵ ye

⁴ The word "flesh" (sarx) has several uses in the NT. It can refer to the body (Galatians 2:2; Colossians 1:22); to un-regenerated man (Romans 8:8); to nature (Galatians 4:29); and it can be used as a metonym for sin at work through the body (Galatians 5:16). It does not, however, refer to a "sin nature" within the spirit of a man.

⁵ The word "reckon" (logizomai) means "to think, to consider, to count true, to calculate, or to credit." It is the first command in the Book of Romans.

also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁶

Romans 6:14 For sin shall not have dominion⁷ over you . . .

Romans 8:2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.

Romans 8:4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship⁸, created in Christ Jesus unto good work

Ephesians 4:22 That ye put off⁹ concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts (infinitive of result).

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children

Ephesians 5:8 For ye were sometimes darkness, but now *are ye* light in the Lord: walk as children of light:

Colossians 3:9-12 Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off¹⁰ the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him . . . Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;

1 John 3:1 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.

⁶ This is not “positional truth” or “experiential truth.” It is actual truth.

⁷ The word “dominion” is the same word as “lord.” It means to “lord over” or to “reign over.”

⁸ God does not create something dirty or evil or bad.

⁹ This is an infinitive of result that modifies two aorist verbs in verse 21, heard and taught. Paul is not exhorting believers to put off the old man. The old man was put off when they believed.

¹⁰ “Put off” (apekduomai) is an aorist participle referring to punctiliar action in the past. This is the tense of history.

1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

3. If the Scripture has such a positive view of Christians, why do Christians still struggle with sin?

Romans 6:6 Knowing this, that our old man¹¹ is crucified with *him*, that the body of sin¹² might be destroyed¹³, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

Romans 8:13 For if ye live after the **flesh**¹⁴, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Ephesians 5:6 Let no man **deceive** you with vain words:

Philippians 1:23 For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart¹⁵, and to be with Christ; which is far better:

Romans 8:7 Because the **carnal mind**¹⁶ *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

1 Peter 1:13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your **mind**, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

James 3:15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, devilish.

1 Peter 2:9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the

¹¹ The "old man" is not the "capacity to sin" or the "sin nature." It is all that a man is in Adam apart from a regenerated life. The "old man" was put off at the moment of regeneration. You can not have an old man and a new man at the same time.

¹² The "body of sin" is not the principle of sin or the capacity to sin. It is the Christians physical, un-regenerated body.

¹³ The word "destroyed" (katargeo) does not mean annihilated but "to render ineffective" or "to render powerless" as a force for doing evil.

¹⁴ The word "flesh" here refers to the unregenerate body. Man's deepest personhood is housed in a demanding, creative, easily-influence mortality-the flesh.

¹⁵ By depart Paul is referring to the death of the body. There is a time when everyman will have to vacate his mortal body.

¹⁶ A man can not be "carnal" in his personhood, but apparently he can be influenced by sin and think carnally rather than righteously. To do this, however, he creates a contradiction, a conflict, between his righteous nature and his mind.

praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

1 Peter 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul¹⁷;

1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

1 John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin¹⁸; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Summary: We should not water down the power of the new birth. When a person receives Christ, he is given the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit changes and transforms a person into a righteous being who want to do what is right and to please God. Conflicts arise for one of two reasons: (a) the believer lives in a mortal body, (b) the believer has underestimated the power of a regenerated life.

Application:

1. If you are an unregenerate being, how do you explain conflicts in your life (Galatians 5:16-10)?
2. If you are born-again, what conflicts are eliminated, knowing that you are a righteous person at the core of your being?
3. If you are born-again, what conflicts remain due to the fact that you still live in unredeemed flesh?

¹⁷ If the believer's soul has a sin nature, there would be no war or conflict. A war exists because the believer's righteous soul refuses to surrender to worldly lusts.

¹⁸ The verb "to do" (poeio) is a present, active, indicative.

Thoughts on the New Creation



Emperor William refused request for an audience by a German-American. He said, "I know Americans; I know Germans; but a German-American I do not know" (Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, p. 24).

"It is a mistake to think of the believer as both an old man and a new man or as having in him both the old man and the new man, the latter in view of regeneration and the former because of remaining corruption . . . the old man can no more be regarded as in the process of being crucified than Christ in his sphere could thus be regarded" (John Murray, *Principles of Conduct; Aspects of Biblical Ethics*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, p. 218)

"The old man is the unregenerate man; the new man is the regenerate man created in Christ Jesus unto good works . . . the old man ceased to exist at our regeneration, when it was 'put off.' We are never exhorted to 'put off' the "old man"" (John Murray, *Principles of Conduct; Aspects of Biblical Ethics*, Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, p. 218).

"I embraced the new understanding with a joy that seemed too good to be true. According to God I was a new person – no matter what my experience shouted out. I actually – right down here where I live – was God's born one; His actual child; His masterpiece. In the deepest sense of being, I was a saint. I was somebody!" (David Needham. 1978. *Birthright*. Multnomah Press.)

Though not always consistent in his interpretation, Lewis Sperry Chafer said, "I am a person who in terms of my most essential nature (deepest self, inner man, new man) is a creation of God who does not sin." I am righteous by nature delighting in the law of God. (L.S. Chafer. 1918. *He that is Spiritual*. Wheaton:Van Kampen Press, p. 148).

"Is not that a marvelous thing to be able to say? I am not doing this or that, it is this sin that remains in my members that does so. Sin is no longer in me, it is in my members only. That is the most liberating thing you have ever heard. That is the Apostle's assertion" (Lloyd Jones. 1973. *Romans the Law; It's Function and Limits, Exposition of Chapters 7:1-8:4*, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, pp. 204-207.).

The Problem of Sarx in Galatians Five



1. The word “flesh” (*sarx*) is used 16 times and the word “Spirit” is used 15 times in the Book of Galatians. The question is this: “Is *sarx* the sinful nature, unspiritual nature, or human nature, the body or something else? In an effort to explain the believer’s conflict with sin, theologians and psychologists have developed terminology that runs counter to Biblical ideas. Terms like “carnal nature,” “sinful nature,” “id,” and “subconscious,” and “alter ego” obfuscate Biblical teaching and unwittingly produce Christians who become spiritual schizophrenics. When a Christian loses sight of who he is in Christ, he can produce all kinds of bizarre behavior.

Thesis:

2. The terms *sarx* (flesh) and *pneuma* (spirit) are not describing an internal duality commonly known as “the two natures.” The Christian does not have *sarx* as a capacity within the human soul or spirit. The *sarx-pneuma* problem in Galatians needs to be understood in light of the historical conflict between the Jewish community and the Christian community.
3. The term “flesh” refers to (a) the un-regenerated body (1:16; 2:20; 4:13, 14); (b) the laws of nature as opposed to the supernatural power of God (4:23; 4:29); (c) the physical, sensual un-regenerated body or all that man is apart from the Spirit’s work of regeneration (5:13; 5:24); (d) a metonym for the old gestalt (5:16), or Judaizers in conflict with the Christian community (3:3; 4:7; 5:8; 6:12).
4. In Galatians, Judaizers (unregenerate men) sought to compel Christian males to submit to circumcision to cut off a hunk of flesh from their male anatomy. They were fleshly men seeking to cut off flesh for a fleshly cause that could never produce spiritual life. Therefore, the work of circumcision by the authority of the law performed by the legalistic Judaizers was associated with the show of “the flesh” (6:12, 13). *Sarx* and *pneuma* are metonyms for the Jewish/Gentile relational problem that existed in Galatia or synonyms for Judaizers and Christians. *Sarx* works in tandem with the law (*nomos*). The law told the *sarx* what was right, but it could not make the *sarx* do what was right. A return to *sarx* was not a return to “evil impulse” but a return to law (3:1-4; 5:1ff).
5. In Galatians there are two types of men: men of the flesh and men of the Spirit, or unregenerate men and regenerate men (5:8). Flesh is what all men

are before they experience the power of the new birth. All believers are “in the Spirit” and all non-believers are “in the flesh.” (Romans 8:8-9)¹⁹. The believer rejected the sarx when he became a believer (5:24)²⁰. He therefore cannot be “in the sarx” and “in the Spirit” any more than man can be in Boston and Denver at the same time. His sarx status disappeared when He received the Holy Spirit.

6. There were two communities in Galatia: (a) the Judaizers who attempted to proselytize men into becoming Jews by the right of circumcision as a symbol of commitment to keep the law; and (b) Christians who experienced freedom by virtue of the eschatological Spirit belonging to the kingdom of God (5:21) who changes men by making them into a new creation (6:15) causing them to inherit the kingdom of God, and become members of God’s eschatological people or the new Israel (6:16). The believer is transformed, not by law keeping, but by the power of a regenerated life. The flesh was part of the old aeon (1:4) and stands for unregenerate Israel under the law. The Spirit stands for the new community, the regenerate church belonging to the eschatological age we call the kingdom of God. By virtue of Christ death and resurrection the powers of the age to come arrived in history to create a new humanity. Judaizers who were attempting to pull believers back under the principles of the old aeon were undermining this marvel. Freedom from the old order was essential for producing fruit (5:1, 22-23).
7. The tension between these two communities was very real. The “flesh” community sowed flesh (circumcision) and reaped corruption (the works of the flesh). The “spirit” community sowed spirit and reaped eternal life (6:8).
8. What was true historically, the tension between the Jewish community and the Christians, is reflected in the believer’s personal gestalt. He had to make a choice between being governed by the old order or the new order, by the flesh (his unregenerate members) or the new creation (his regenerated being). The flesh in Galatians 5:16 refers to the desire of the believer’s

¹⁹ The word “carnal” or “flesh” or “sinful nature” in Romans 8 is synonymous with the unsaved, unregenerate man. The word “spirit” is synonymous with regenerated believers. The issues in Romans 8 is one of *being* (oi` ga.r kata. sa,rka o;ntej), that is, one’s primary state of existence (8:5; 8:8). A person is either “in the flesh” or “in the Spirit.” By using the conjunction *alla*, Paul makes a sharp contrast between those in the flesh and those in the Spirit. A man cannot be both in the flesh and in the Spirit. All believers, even carnal ones, are “in the Spirit.” While it is possible to think carnally, it is not possible for a Christian to be carnal!

²⁰ The verb “crucified” is an aorist indicating an historical action in the past, a once for all rejection of sarx as a means of attaining a right relationship to God.

unregenerate body, and the Spirit refers to the new creation of regenerate man.

9. In Summary, the flesh Spirit problem in Galatians must be understood historically as the tension between two communities: the Jewish community and the Gentile community. The flesh characterized those who choose to live before God by their own resources using the law as a guide to produce righteousness, and the Spirit community who tasted the powers of the age to come to experience the miracle of a new creation. The old community walked by the power of the flesh and reaped only corruption. The new community walked by the power of the Spirit and reaped the life of the Spirit. Because the legalists were assaulting the new community, they had to make a decision whether to walk according to the new order or to walk according to the old order. One choice produced the works of the flesh; the other choice produced the fruit of the Spirit.
10. Just as there was conflict between the Jewish community and the Christian community, the Spirit community will continue to experience some tension between his inner, regenerated spirit and his outer man, his un-regenerated body which Paul calls "the flesh."



Allegory of Two Covenants

Galatians 4:21-3

Hagar and Sarah

Mother	HAGAR	SARAH
Father	Abraham	Abraham
Position	Slave	Free
Sons	Ishmael	Isaac
Birth	Nature	Supernatural
Source	Unbelief	Faith
Symbol	Flesh	Spirit
Figure	Covenant of Works	Covenant of Grace
Location	Mt. Sinai	Jerusalem
Relationship	Persecutor	Persecuted

Romans 6: Your Identification with Christ



Romans 6 is perhaps the most important chapter you need to study in order to live a holy life.

This passage must be thoughtfully considered, examined, studied, and investigated, and not hastily read!

You can be a victorious Christian by grasping what it means to be identified with the Christ in Romans 6 . . . and if you fail to comprehend the wonder of your union with Christ you will be trapped into an Armenian performance-based way of living.

Who are You: Sinner or Saint?



The Question, “Who am I?” has been touted as one of the most fundamental questions of man. Even more difficult is the question, “What is a Christian, saint or sinner?”

Some preachers want Christians to know that they are sinners through and through.

Every week these poor Christians endure loud, pulpit pounding diatribes against

sin. “I am just a sinner saved by grace,” says another. A well-meaning saint touts, “I am just one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.” Others want us to know that God saves sinners, but not completely. “We have two natures, an evil nature and a good nature,” they say. “You have a white dog and a black dog living in side you. Whichever one you feed the most wins.”

The doctrine of the “two-natures” the believer has created more problems than it solves. Further, it has a tendency to produce introspective spiritual schizophrenics— Christians that see themselves as a Dr. Jekyll and Dr. Hyde. No wonder Christians are so defeated. They do not know who they are!

Furthermore, we hear phrases like “self is on the throne,” “crucify the flesh,” or “you must die to self” as if “self” is an ugly beast living inside the Christian’s black, sin-stained heart.

Another challenge is the phrase “positional truth.” What is meant by *positional truth*? Positional truth was strongly advanced by the dispensationalist, Keswick mystic, Miles Standford, who sought to counter the legalizing of the gospel and

the pseudo spiritual Charismatic Movement. His focus on “Christ crucified” was honorable. But, there is an upside and a downside to this view.

The upside is that positional truth takes a high view of Christ and the believer’s identification with His history by faith.

The downside is the language used is a transcendental mixture of sense and nonsense. This view advances the idea that you are “righteous positionally” but “sinful conditionally.” It sounds like double-talk: “It’s really not true, but you need to believe it is true anyway.” Hummm? This kind of rhetoric has confused many sincere seekers of truth – at least on the subject of sanctification.

Consider this supposition: *a regenerated man has only one nature, a righteous nature with a powerful desire to please God.*

Every statement in the New Testament about the nature of Christian is extremely positive. God’s Word calls Christians “saints” (1Corinthians 1:2), “new creations” (2 Corinthians 5:17), “children of God” (Ephesians 5:1-3), “sons of God” (1John 3:1), “children of light” (Ephesians 5:8), “in the Spirit” (Romans 8:9), and a “sweet fragrance of Christ” (2 Corinthians 2:15).

While a believer may have “carnal thinking” (2 Corinthians 3), he cannot have a carnal constitution. All believers are declared to be “in the Spirit [\[1\]](#)” constitutionally and all non-believers are declared to be “in the flesh [\[2\]](#)” constitutionally (Romans 8:9).

You can soar with the eagles in the clouds of righteous by “counting as true” your identification with Christ as taught in Romans 6.

Two Dynasties

Paul discussed the history of two dynasties[\[3\]](#) (5:12-21). The *Dynasty of Adam* which is characterized by the reign of sin, law, condemnation, and death; and, the *Dynasty of Christ* which is characterized by obedience, grace, justification, and life. There are two races of men, those *in Adam* and those *in Christ*.

Christians are said to be “in Christ.” In Christ, the Christian is justified[\[4\]](#) (5:1), regenerated[\[5\]](#) (5:5), reconciled[\[6\]](#) (5:10) identified with his glorious history (6:3-5), adopted (8:13-16), and glorified (8:30).

Dead to Sin

In the book "Born Crucified" by L. E. Maxwell, he tells this story:

"During the Civil War a man by the name of George Wyatt was drawn by lot to go to the front. He had a wife and six children. A young man named Richard Pratt offered to go in his stead. He was accepted and joined the ranks, bearing the name and number of George Wyatt. Before long Pratt was killed in action. The authorities later sought again to draft George Wyatt into service. He protested, entering the plea that he had died in the person of Pratt. He insisted

that the authorities consult their own records as to the fact of his having died in identification with Pratt, his substitute. Wyatt was thereby exempted as beyond the claims of law and further service. He had died in the person of his representative. There we have the truth of identification in a nutshell. God's way of deliverance is through death--through identification with our Substitute in His death and resurrection."

Believers are born crucified legally and no longer obligated to respond to sin's beckon and call. They are no longer in sin's jurisdiction and do not have to respond when drafted!

But, it is more than this. You have been "born again" and your spirit, the essence of who you are, no longer wants to sin. You are in Christ, and Christ is in you. You identified with Christ, and in a spiritual sense, you are still born to sin.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith (faithfulness) of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

F. J. Huegel, in *Bone of His Bone*, rightly summarizes our failure thus:

"We have been proceeding upon a false basis. We have conceived of the Christian life as an imitation of Christ. It is not an imitation of Christ. It is a participation of Christ."

Paul declares that Christians are dead to sin: "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" (6:2). The answer to Paul's question is, "It is impossible!" This is like asking, "How shall they who died in New York City still be walking around alive in New York City?" This too is impossible.

The word "dead" in an aorist indicating that the Christian died to sin at some time in his past. It is a completed action. By "dead," Paul means "unresponsive," "cut off," "unable to respond."

"Shall live" is a future tense implying that a future relationship with sin is impossible. The *work of redemption* has set the Christian free from the power of sin.

This is not just "positional truth!" He really is free!

A transformation occurs in the believer's internal constitution when he is united to Christ. When God regenerates a man, he changes the man in such a way that His "new creation" is unresponsive to sin; that is, the seed [Z] of Almighty God is in him so that he does not want to sin. Paul is not saying believers cannot sin. What he saying is that the believer's identification with

Christ grants him benefits that make it possible for him to live a genuine righteous life.

If we regard the doctrine of perfection a heresy, then we must regard contentment with sinful imperfection a greater heresy.

Consider the wise words of Dr. A. J. Gordon:

"Divine truth as revealed in Scripture seems often to lie between two extremes. If we regard the doctrine of sinless perfection as a heresy, we regard contentment with sinful imperfection as a greater heresy. And we gravely fear that many Christians make the apostle's words, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," the unconscious justification for a low standard of Christian living. It were almost better for one to overstate the possibilities of sanctification in his eager grasp after holiness, than to understate them in his complacent satisfaction with a traditional unholiness. Certainly it is not an edifying spectacle to see a Christian worldling throwing stones at a Christian perfectionist."

But what saith the Scripture? "Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid" (Rom. 6:1, 2).

The believer is born again . . . but not all of him is born again. Sin still dwells within the body . . . but, the regenerated spirit is under no obligations to obey it.

Baptism

Paul declares that the Christian is "baptized into" the history of Christ; i.e., the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (6:3-4). The word "baptize" is a transliteration of the Greek word *baptize* (bapti,zw). It is an aorist indicating completed action. It simply means, "to be placed into."

The believer is "placed into" Christ and identified with his victorious history so completely that he is said to be "dead unto sin."

This baptism is not water baptism, but an operation of the Spirit whereby He takes the believer out of the Dynasty of Adam to place him into the Dynasty of Christ. This happens at the moment of conversion.

An illustration may be helpful. When an immigrant leaves his country of origin and becomes a United States citizen, he no longer has a duty to his mother country. Further, all the benefits of being an American are now his. He is dead to his motherland, but alive to his new country. Being physically present in America and having legal status as an American Citizen, he can now enjoy a new life.

This act of “placing” a believer into Christ’s victorious history is effective and efficient in two ways: (a) positively, the believer is radically identified with the virtues of Christ’s accomplishments; i.e., he is permanently alive to God (Romans 6:11); and negatively, (b) the believer is permanently dead to sin, i.e., completely severed from sin (harmatia) (Romans 6:1-2).

The Literary “We”

Who or what does Paul mean by “we?”

By “we,” Paul means “we Christians.” It is a literary “we,” a narrative of inclusion because of Christian brotherhood. But this is not just a broad generalization. Paul intended the individual to personalize this truth. “I” am baptized into Christ and “I” am dead to sin! That is, because “YOU” (singular) have been baptized into Christ, “YOU” are dead to sin!

By “YOU” (or “we”) Paul does not mean “the physical body” or “the body of sin” referred to in verse six. By “YOU,” Paul means the *essence of your being*, the *inner-most “YOU,”* the *core of your being, your living born-again soul, your inner matrix* or that part of your personality that is truly “YOU!” “YOU” have been taken out of Adam and placed into Christ.

This baptism is radical identification with Christ.

“YOU,” the essence of who you are as a regenerated being, has been so completely identified with Christ so that “YOU” are “dead to sin and alive to God.” What was true of you in Adam is no longer true of “YOU” in Christ. What is true of Christ, is now true of “you.” Since Christ rose again, He is not impacted by sin and death. Since “YOU” share in the virtues of his history by radical identification with Him, “YOU” are “dead to sin and alive to God.”

Another illustration may be helpful. When a man gets married, he is no longer single, he is a married man (lawfully); but, he may struggle for weeks or months because he still thinks like a single man. But, in time, his mind will adjust to his new legal status and accept the role of husband in the marriage . . . and if he doesn’t I’m sure the little wife will have a tactic or two to remind him of his change in status.

Likewise, with Christ! At one time the unsaved man lived like a man in Adam doing what the sons of Adam do (sin), but upon his conversion to Christ, his legal status changed. He is no longer in Adam, but “married” to Christ. The sooner he stops thinking like a man in Adam and starts thinking like a man in Christ, the more positive his Christian experience will be, and the more he will take on family characteristics.

Destruction of the Body of Sin

There is a reason for this radical identification with the history of Christ as indicated by the purpose clause in verse 6, "in order that" (*hina* clause) "the body of sin might be destroyed." It is important to correctly identify the terms here. "The body of sin" is not the "sin nature" as the Kewicks taught. It is not "the sin principle" at work with in us. The "body of sin" refers to the physical body (soma). Your soma is your body, your members[8], that physical, flesh and blood, mental and emotional part of you which is un-regenerated and unaffected by conversion. While "YOU" are a "new creation," your body (soma) is still part of the old creation. Your body is still subject to being an instrument of sin[9].

The subjunctive verb, "destroyed" (*katargeo*), does not mean "annihilated." *Katargeo* means "to render inoperative" or "to make unemployed" or "to put out of business."

In using the subjunctive, Paul is pointing out the real possibility of reducing the power of the body (soma) over the soul.

Now who is the "old man" (*o` palaios*) of verse six?

The "old man" is not the sinful nature. It is not the sin principle at work in the believer. It is not "self." *The "old man" is all that you were in the Dynasty of Adam apart from the Dynasty of Christ.* It is your old identity, your old standing in fallen humanity, the sinful, un-regenerated you under the power of *harmatia* before "YOU" were "placed into" Christ.

Let us put it together. When you placed your faith in Christ, the Spirit took "YOU," the essence of your being, and identified "YOU" with the virtues of Christ's accomplishments so that "YOU" are constitutionally regenerated, connected with God, and disconnected from the power of sin. Though the born-again "YOU" is still living in an un-regenerated body that is capable of being used as an instrument of sin, YOU are righteous by nature and capable of taking charge of your body in such a way as to discharge it for the Savior's use.

Note that in Romans 12:1, Paul does not ask the believer to surrender himself (the "YOU"), but to place his "body" on the altar of service. "YOU" are already surrendered. "YOU" want to please God and to serve him. "YOU" want to do what is right, but "the body," the un-regenerated part of your constitution needs to be commandeered and inducted into service by an act of your will.

It is true that justification is inefficient and positional.

The Keswicks were correct. Justification is legal and forensic in nature. One's status before God changes from condemned to justified!! But, justification is not the same action as being "born again" nor does justification transform the character of a man. But, regeneration combined with the "baptism" of the Spirit is efficient resulting in a change in one's spiritual constitution.

Paul asserts his proposition once more, "For he that is dead is freed from sin" (6:7). The "he" is the "YOU" we have been talking about. Because of YOUR radical identification with Christ, the regenerated "YOU" is "dead," and therefore, "freed from" the reign of sin.

Let's look at another illustration. Have you seen the movie, "Shawshank Redemption?" Do you remember the scene when Red was out of prison and started working in the grocery store? In this scene, Red politely asks permission to use the boy's room, but his boss reminds him that he is free and that he no longer has to ask permission to service his human needs. Red, though free, still thought like a prisoner. In time, however, he adjusted and used his freedom to find Andy and to start a new life. The same is true of a Christian. He has been freed from sin, but he may still think like a prisoner. A little reflection of the Christian's change in status will empower him to think like a free man.

PART II



Paul continues, "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (6:8). Paul restates his proposition that if "YOU" are radically identified with His death, then "YOU" are radically identified with His life. His life now reigns in "YOU" and through "YOU."

A bottle can be in the ocean, and the ocean can be in the bottle. "YOU" are in Christ^[10] and Christ is in "YOU."

In verses 9 and 10, Paul rehearses the history of Christ. Having died, he died unto sin once. Having been raised from the dead, He has a perpetual, living relationship with the Father. Likewise, if "YOU" are connected to Christ, "YOU" are dead to sin, and "YOU" are permanently connected to God!

THE FIRST COMMAND FOR THE NEW CHRISTIAN

Reckoning

In verse 11, we come to the First Command in the Book of Romans . . . and, perhaps the MOST IMPORTANT COMMAND IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The reason Christians have so little victory in their Christian life is because they do not understand or grasp the importance of the first command in the

book. If they don't know it, they can't obey it. If they don't obey it, they will live in chaos and confusion thinking like a son of Adam.

"Reckon yourself to be dead unto sin and alive unto God" is the first command in Romans.



"*Reckon*" (logizomai) is a frequently used word in Romans four and it means "to think," "to compute," "to credit," "to act on," "to calculate," and "to weigh carefully."

Reckoning is a mental operation! The believer is not asked to do anything . . . but to think correctly! The command appeals to the new "YOU" who is created in righteousness.

Paul is saying that since "YOU" are regenerated and identified with Christ, "YOU" are dead, cut off, severed from sin, and "YOU" are "alive to God." "YOU" are connected to a vital, dynamic living relationship with your Heavenly Father. Therefore, START THINKING THIS WAY!

Stop thinking that you are "just a sinner saved by grace!" Stop thinking that you are a "sinner" struggling to do the impossible! Stop thinking like a beggar! Stop thinking like a *spiritual schizo* that has a black dog and a white dog living inside of you! Stop thinking that you have two spiritual natures . . . that you are some kind of spiritual schizo with multiple personalities!

"A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8)

Start thinking that "YOU" are a regenerated being, a "new creation," a "child of God," a "sweet fragrance" with only one nature, a righteous nature! Start thinking that "YOU," the inner most part of your personality is a righteous person who wants to do what is right—"You are dead to sin . . . and alive to God! *Think like* this says Paul!

When you do what is right, you are living consistent with who "YOU" are; and, when you do what is wrong, you are living inconsistent with who "YOU" are! —not the other way around!

You will never fly in the clouds of righteousness until you are able to say, "Sinning, is no longer who 'I' am and what 'I' do!"

For this reason, Paul urges the believer to renew his thinking!

The "mind" (tou nous), not the nature needs to be renewed (Romans 12:2). That is, the mind needs to catch up with the believer's existential transformation . . . like Red in the Shawshank Redemption. Every married person can probably remember the days following his or her public wedding. How easy it is to be married and still think like a single person. Though married, it takes time to

“think married.” Likewise, though one is “alive to God,” it takes time to think, “I am alive to God.”

Paul is not teaching sinless perfection here. Remember, “YOU” (a regenerated being) still lives in a “body of sin” (an un-regenerated instrument). “YOU” will struggle with sin throughout this life, not because something is wrong with “YOU,” but because “YOU” still live in a “body” easily supplanted by sin. “YOU” are born-again, but your body has not yet been born-again. “YOU” are dead to sin and alive to God, but your body is not dead to sin or alive to God.

Therefore, take charge of your body and all its un-regenerated parts and start resisting sin (6:12-13; 12:1-3).

Sin remains in your body and your members, but sin cannot reign over “YOU!”

Look at Romans 6:14 -- *“For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.”*

Paul reminds the Hebrews of the difference between law and grace. While the law educates a man about what is right and wrong, it does not supply the power to keep the standards it espouses, but grace not only acknowledges the righteousness of the law but transforms the soul to keep the law of the LORD God (Romans 8:4).

Paul is not pitting law against grace.

The opposite of law is not grace, but lawlessness; likewise, the opposite of grace is not law, but licentiousness (Jude 1:4; 1 Timothy 1:9; 2 Peter 2:8).

One mature in grace will keep the law (John 15:14, Romans 8:4, 13:8; 1 John 5:1-3).

An illustration of grace thinking may help.



Pneumatikos

I once heard a story about an eagle found by Farmer Brown.

The baby eagle fell out of its nest. Farmer Brown took the eagle home, put it in his chicken coop, and called him *Pneumatikos*.

However, the chickens called him *Sarkikos*.

The eagle grew up and noticed he was bigger than the other birds in the coop. Furthermore, he had an urge to fly. *Pneumatikos* went to mother hen and asked, “I have a desire to fly. What am I?” Mother Hen said, “Stop all this nonsense about flying. *Sarkikos*, you are a chicken, and chickens don’t fly.”

Weeks went by and Pneumatikos was very unhappy. Inside of him was a big heart with a desire to soar above the clouds. So, he went to the head rooster and said, "Mr. Rooster, I am unhappy. I have this desire to fly, but mother hen told me I was a chicken and that chickens don't fly. What am I?" The rooster said, "Son, you got to understand you are different than the rest of us chickens. Sarkikos, you are a chicken-eagle! You want to fly because part of you is an eagle. But, you can't fly because part of you is a chicken. You'll just have to learn to live with it?" Confused and discouraged, Pneumatikos just flapped around the barnyard pecking for corn.



One day, Pneumatikos saw Farmer Brown, "Farmer Brown, I am unhappy. I want to fly, but Mother Hen said I was just a chicken, and then Mr. Rooster said that I was a chicken-eagle. Who am I?" Farmer Brown said, "Pneumatikos, 'YOU' are not a chicken, and 'YOU' are not a chicken-eagle. 'YOU' are a pure bred eagle. 'You' were born to fly, and if you'll just keep on flapping your wings, you'll soar like an eagle." Delighted, Pneumatikos started

flapping his wings and within a few hours, Pneumatikos soared above the farm and never lived with chickens again.

Pneumatikos was flight-challenged, not because of his nature, but because he was mentally handicapped by chicken theology!!

Pneumatikos was born to fly. Inside him was a powerful heart designed to pump huge amounts of blood to his muscles so he could soar above the clouds. Likewise, believers are "justified" (Romans 5:1), "regenerated" (5:5), "reconciled" (5:10), and "identified" with Christ (6:3-4), and proclaimed "in the Spirit" (Romans 8:9). Believers have a powerful heart to do what is right. How many pneumatics Christians (and all are) have failed to soar above because they have been bound to the chicken coop below by chicken theology?

Who are you?

If you are a Christian, "YOU" are not a sinner at the core of your being. "YOU" are not a saint-sinner at the core of your being. "YOU" are a saint with a powerful desire to live in the heavenliest (Romans 1:7; Ephesians 2:1-10).

It is not improper to say you have a spiritual nature (the regenerated part of you) and you have a physical nature (the body and the un-regenerated part of you). But, it is improper to say that you two natures, a black dog and a white dog, inside of you. "YOU" are not a spiritual schizoid.

"You" are a child of God who wants to please your Heavenly Father.

You may stumble and you may sin, but if you sin, you sin because you are living inconsistent with your righteous nature. But, when a sinner sins, he sins because he is living consistent with his sinful nature!

Sanctification, the process of becoming holy, is dependent on three factors in Romans six:

- (a) the fact of the believer's radical identification with Christ and His accomplishments,
- (b) the "knowing" and "understanding" the fact of what it means "to be placed into" Christ, and



(c) obedience to Paul's command to "reckon" or "count" these facts to be true.

"YOU" are not a chicken, and "YOU" are not a chicken-eagle. "YOU" are an eagle. "YOU" are a saint. "YOU" are dead to sin and alive to God.

Reckon this to be true! THINK THIS WAY! "Now flap those wings and begin to fly," argued Paul.

Grace empowers us to live righteously (Romans 6:14).

[1] The term "spirit" in Romans 8 refers to justified, born-again, reconciled believers in Christ; i.e., saved men.

[2] The term "flesh" (sharks) refers to the un-regenerated, unsaved man or all that man is apart from Christ.

[3] Adam and Christ are often referred to as two Federal Heads, one of fallen man, the other of saved men.

[4] Justified is a legal term meaning "to be declared righteous and treated as such."

[5] Regenerated is a theological term referring to spiritual transformation of man when he believes in Christ. This is called being "born again"; that is, the day God saves a man and places the Holy Spirit within man wherein he becomes a "new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

[6] Reconcile is the operation of God whereby he restores His relationship to fallen sinners—sinners who were at one time hostile to God's law order; that is, reconciliation means the believing sinner has been restored to a right relationship with his God and Creator due to the propitiatory work of our Lord Jesus at Calvary.

[7] Seed means the "Holy Spirit" and his work of creating a new being in Christ.

[8] The term “body” refers to all of man’s capacities as an earthly being: mind, emotions, feelings, conscience, hearing, seeing, touching; that is, the body has “members” (melos) connected with the physical body. For example, when a man becomes a Christian he is a new creature (in his spirit / soul), but his “memory” does not change. Memory is a capacity of our earthly body: See Romans 6:13, 19; 7:5, 23.

[9] With a regenerated soul and an un-regenerated body, there is conflict. It was from this conflict between the righteous soul and his unrighteous members that the early “brethren” conceived the concept of the “two natures” of the Christian. Yes, there is dissension and struggle in the Christian, but this is not the same thing as saying the believer has two spiritual natures, a white dog and a black dog, a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, inside him. The former helps us understand the tension we all feel, the latter turns us into spiritual schizophrenics.

[10] “In Christ” refers to our change in status; our change in position; i.e., from being condemned in Adam to being accepted before God due to the redemptive work of the Savior. “Christ in you” does not refer to his Divine Being as the right hand of the Father, but to the work of the Spirit transforming the believer into the image of the Savior; i.e., his changed, regenerated condition.

Freedom from the Six Power Cripplers

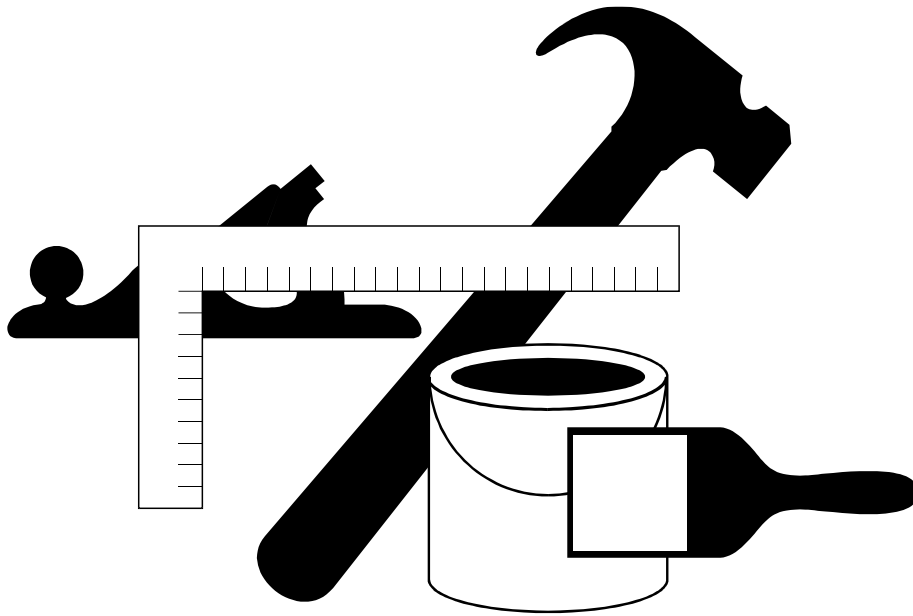
SPIRITUAL CONFLICT	<i>CONSEQUENCES</i>	GOD'S SOLUTION	RESULTS
<p>Punishment Plague: Because I deserve to be punished for the bad things I have done, I cannot be happy or allow others to help me.</p>	<p>Fear of God. Fear of punishment. Lack of joy. Avoidance of sensitive subjects. Guilt-motivated good deeds.</p>	<p>Forgiveness: Christ paid for my sins and my debt is cancelled because of His work on the cross.</p>	<p>Freedom from guilt and condemnation. Willingness to be loved though unworthy.</p>
<p>Performance Trap: I must meet certain qualification before I can be accepted by God.</p>	<p>Fear of failure Limited risk taking Fear of involvement Perfectionism Demanding of others Manipulation of others for success</p>	<p>Justification: I have been declared right with God and am treated as such by God.</p>	<p>Freedom from having to perform to gain acceptance by God. Rest. Vulnerability. Being a real person. Able to accept criticism.</p>
<p>Approval Trap: I must have the approval of others for what I do or I will not take on</p>	<p>Over sensitive to criticism. Isolation from critics. Attempts to please others at any cost.</p>	<p>Reconciliation: I am accepted by the Holy One because Christ has removed all obstacles to my fellowship with</p>	<p>Freedom from the fear of rejection. Willingness to accept criticism. A desire to please God</p>

responsibility.		Him.	regardless of how others may react. Peace.
Blame Game: Those who fail are unworthy of love.	Hard on self for personal failure. Driven to avoid criticism. Critical of others for their failures in life.	Propitiation: In love, God sent his Son to satisfy the claims of His justice on my behalf.	Freedom from the fear of punishment. Appreciation for the legal transactions that took place at Calvary.
Shame Game: I am what I am. I cannot change. I am hopeless.	Feelings of shame, inferiority, embarrassment, disgrace. Fear of exposure.	Regeneration: God sent his Spirit to make me into a righteous person.	Freedom from feelings of shame and disgrace. Confidence that I am new creation.
Fragile Identity: I am at the core of my being a sinful person.	Frustration with trying to do what is right.	Identification: I am a new creation with a genuine desire to do what is right and to please God.	Freedom from frustration, struggle, personal identity, and spiritual schizophrenia.
Godlessness: I am truly pained by the ungodliness around me.	Confrontation of godlessness whenever and wherever it confronts my nature.	Spiritual Warfare: I am a godly person, but I have conflicts with my own demanding flesh and the godlessness of others.	Freedom from the fear of confronting evil wherever it may surface.



4. PRINCIPLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Lesson Five



1 Timothy 5:22 Keep yourself pure

Bible Discovery



1 Timothy 1:5 & 1 Timothy 5:1-25

1. What was Timothy's assignment and what was Timothy's response to the struggles in Ephesus (1:5)?
2. What does fear have to do with resolving conflict (2 Timothy 1:7)?
3. In resolving the crisis about supporting widows, what attitudes did Timothy have to possess in order to be an instrument of resolution? Read through 2 Timothy 1 and 1 Timothy 5 and look for attitudes that Paul was seeking to cultivate in Timothy.
4. What principles did Paul establish for helping Timothy decide who should be on the church welfare rolls (1 Timothy 5)?
5. What warnings did Paul give Timothy that might help us become better conflict managers?

Principles Identified

1 Timothy 5

Timothy was left in Ephesus by the Apostle Paul to resolve regional conflict among growing churches. It was his job to root out false teachers, establish rules of conduct, ordain qualified elders, and solve financial burdens of the church. *Would you like to have his job?* The letter was written to this young man to clarify the ethical basis for managing conflict in the church.

What principles contribute to effective conflict management?

Principle One: Overcoming Fear

"God has not given us a Spirit of fear," said Paul (2 Timothy 2:7). The question the conflict manager must ask is, "How can we not be afraid in this situation?" We must learn to live with stress. Life is stress, and the only way to avoid stress is to avoid life. Christ asked, "Why are you afraid?" *Our fears distort reality.* The one who deals with conflict must deal with fear: fear of failure, fear of rejection, and fear of negative emotions.

Principle Two: Building Trust

How can we create a feeling of trust? People are afraid that if they disagree, they will be rejected. We must communicate that, "Nothing scares us to death and that an honest discussion on this subject is possible." "Can I trust you?" and "Will you hurt me?" are the critical questions that need to be answered in the minds of people. Trust in the negotiator's integrity is a prerequisite for problem solving: ". . . set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity" (Timothy 4:11).

Principle Three: Communicating Worth

The way to build trust, is to treat each person with dignity and respect even if we believe they are in error: "treat younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, and younger women as sisters, with absolute purity" (I Timothy 5:1). Courtesy pays.

Principle Four: Gathering Data

Timothy had to resolve conflict regarding the support of widows. Before deciding who was eligible, Timothy had to collect data about the age, family, and circumstances of the applicants. The only way to solve a problem and to make a decision is to gather necessary and pertinent information. What information do I need to make a decision?

1. What are the objectives?
2. What do people mean by the language used?
3. Are they generalizing feelings or are they being specific?
4. Is it hearsay or fact?

Data helps analyze the situation and to provide options. The Bible warns man about judgment without facts: "He who answers before listening- that is his folly and his shame" (Proverbs 18:13).

Principle Five: Being Ethical

Know the Biblical principle upon which to base a decision. For example: In I Timothy 5 it was unethical to hear an acrimony against an elder that was not substantiated by at least two or three witnesses. This is an ethical standard. One has to know the ethical principle, so conflicts are worked through with integrity.

Principle Six: Showing Fairness

Did all who are concerned about the issue have an ample opportunity to be heard? Impartiality is important. People will forgive an adverse decision, but they have difficulty in forgiving a dispassionate decision: "keep these instructions without partiality, and to do nothing out of favoritism" (Timothy 5:21).

Principle Seven: Keeping Yourself Pure

Paul told Timothy, "do not share in the sins of others, keep yourself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22). If people get emotional, it is easy to become emotional. If people are apathetic, it is easy to become apathetic. The one involved in conflict management must first guard his own attitudes and emotions. It is too easy to develop an emotional focus that makes one a problem producer instead of a problem solver. If a relational conflict develops in an altercation the issue is no longer the "disagreement" but the relationship. Repair the relationship, then work on the disagreement.

Principle Eight: Making a Decision

Timothy had to make a decision about false teachers, care of certain widows, and finances for pastors. Making a decision for some people is as scary as skydiving. Even choosing the flavor of an ice cream cone is a monumental event to some. It is good to be cautious, but after a while a decision needs to be made. Resolution means making the best decision. Without decision, crises fester.

Principle Nine: Guarding the Means

Paul admonished Timothy, "Rebuke not an older man harshly" (1 Timothy 5:1). Paul did not say, "Do not correct older men or women if they sin or are in grave error." He said, "Don't do it harshly!" *The way* a person makes a decision and executes it is just as important as what decision was made. A wrong response to a wrong response is a double wrong. *The means of conducting a disagreement is just as important as the disagreement itself.*

Principle Ten: Avoiding Idealism

Paul stated a fact: "The sins of some men are obvious reaching the place of judgment ahead of them; the sins of others trail behind them . . . in the same way good deeds are obvious, and even those that are not cannot be hidden" (1 Timothy 5:24). No resolution is perfect. We are dealing with imperfect people that sometimes must choose between two undesirable options. A mediator can only judge what he sees and hears. He will never know all of the facts, all the attitudes, all the issues. But, he can render the best decision possible. And regardless of the criticism, one's conscience remains clear.

Principle Eleven: Staying power

"Stay in Ephesus," ordered Paul (1 Timothy 1:5). Timothy's assignment was a tough row to hoe. Removing unqualified elders, confronting false teachers, and reducing the widows on church welfare list created heat and conflict. Who would want this job? Sometimes, staying power may be one's greatest asset in settling disputes.

Principle Twelve: Remembering the Objective

Three times in the book of I Timothy, right in the middle of the pigpen of conflict, Paul bursts into accolades of praise, ". . . to the praise of his glory" (1:17, 3:16, 5:13-16). Our goal is to free men to praise God. Praise is the key to freeing men. It is the oil that greases the skids and reduces the friction. It is the sweetness that turns lemons into lemonade. When things get tense, throw in the sweetness of Jesus. Praise Him before, during, and after the conflict and God will be glorified. When we seek to praise God and glorify Him, we create an environment where God can work. Praise is to God what complaining is to the Devil. God has a promise for conflict managers: Those who glorify God will be shown "the way of salvation," that is, they will see the right solution for the issue at hand (Psalm 50:23).

Perspectives on Conflict

What is conflict management? *Conflict Management is the art of decision-making.* Conflict comes when people are undecided. They have not figured out their goals, program, structure, or ministry philosophy. So the issue is, "What decisions need to be made?" Timothy had to make decisions about policies, ethical standards and personnel.

Why are there conflicts among people? Conflicts are bound to come because people are so different and because we are all human.

1. People have different values.
2. People adopt different goals.
3. People pursue different lifestyles.
4. People hold to different theologies.
5. People have different perceptions about issues.
6. People have different expectations of church leaders and one another.
7. People have different standards of performance and finished products.

Are conflicts bad? Conflicts are not bad as long as people recognize that life is filled with ambivalence, and that people are committed to communicate and work through issues to a resolution. Conflicts are bad if communication breaks down and people develop goals other than solving current issues, "fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience" (1 Timothy 1:18).

Do all churches have conflicts? All Christian churches have resistance to achieving their goals. But it is how people view that resistance that determines the level of heart-felt conflict. Many churches recognize resistance and are determined to pull together and overcome it. Possessing hope, they simply view resistance as a challenge. However, when conflicts are underground and unidentified, or there are no apparent solutions to heart-felt resistance, they become problems. Problems have a way of degenerating into interpersonal conflicts.

What hinders decision-making and solution finding? Attitudes! Here are a few that can squelch good decision-making:

1. If something "feels bad" it is bad. "Feeling good" to some is the ultimate value. Following this line, someone who generates negative feelings must be evil. Therefore, they must be dealt with as evil. This attitude, of course, would cripple any resolution.
2. A view that we're not supposed to have conflicts. While it is true we should not be contentious, it is not true that we should not have conflicts. The only

way to avoid conflict is a coffin. The book of Acts is filled with 1st century conflicts. Let's not idealize the New Testament. Most of the epistles were written to resolve conflict.

3. A belief that we are always supposed to agree with leadership. There should be freedom to disagree in love without being disagreeable. To "always agree" is to tell half-truths and to suppress real feelings. One can disagree with an authority's decision and still be supportive without being divisive.
4. A discussion that contains over-generalizations of problems such as, "That is stupidest plan I have ever heard," instead of saying, "I disagree with this decision to change the order of worship," or statements like, "We're not communicating," rather than saying, "I don't understand your last point."
5. A focus on self-protection rather than listening or seeking to articulate reasons for an action. In conflict our insecurities cause us to retreat from truth. Clamming up hinders progress. When protecting ourselves becomes more important than objective communication, then truth is filtered and discussion is foggy. People run, people criticize, and people hide behind masks.
6. A goal of winning. The goal of the Christian life is to bring glory to God. When the goal to praise God is replaced by a desire to win, or be right, or to be safe, or to get rid of people, then resolution is frustrated. The question should be, "How can we bring praise to God out of our trouble?"

What facilitates decision-making and solution finding? Here are Principles that can help make a meeting successful.

1. A positive view that God is with us, and that Christ is in control of our lives.
2. A positive view that God will not give us anything we cannot handle.
3. A positive but narrow goal for a meeting. Too many goals for a meeting doom the session to defeat.

Example of too many goals: Bible study, prayer, brainstorming, identify issues, set goals, discussion about goals, strategize, decision, elect officers.

4. A positive effort to be a person of integrity (filled with the Spirit of God).
5. A positive effort to brainstorm without offering criticism. And the ability after brainstorming, the positive ability to criticize ideas and choose the best solution.

- Rule One: Never criticize ideas during a brainstorm for solutions.

- Rule Two: After dozens of solutions are presented criticize them and narrow the field to three or four possible solutions.
 - Rule Three: Never criticize the character of the individual who presents an idea that seems strange or off base.
 - Rule Four: Don't get offended when your idea is scrutinize.
6. A positive and patient effort to persuade or be persuaded.
 - Rule Five: IT IS THE DUTY OF THE MINORITY TO CONVINC THE MAJORITY.
 7. A positive effort to articulate your own opinion and to analyze ideas.
 - Rule Six: IT IS THE DUTY OF THE MINORITY TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO WIN OTHERS THROUGH THE ART OF PERSUASION.
 8. A positive ability by the minority to make the majority successful.
 - Rule Seven: DECISION RELIEVES A CRISIS!
 9. A positive decision to do something!!
 - Rule Eight: IT IS THE DUTY OF THE MINORITY TO SUPPORT THE MAJORITY!
 10. There is power in unity.
 - Rule Nine: **ONCE A DECISION IS MADE, IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL TO OWN IT.** To leave a meeting gripping, criticizing, grumbling, and accusing comes from pride—a spirit that must be confronted and judged so unity can prevail. Expression of disunity is ground for dismissal! Think about it!

Most decisions made effect preferences. Very few decisions made affect the conscience. But if the conscience is affected, apply **Rule Ten**:

- UNITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY PREFERENCES.
- MY CONSCIENCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR UNITY.
- TRUTH IS GREATER THAN MY CONSCIENCE. Therefore, I must EDUCATE MY CONSCIENCE beginning with the Ten Commandments.

Twelve Steps for Resolving Conflict

1. Set a time and a place for discussion and the issue to be discussed.
2. Define the issue of disagreement.
3. Earnestly pray for God's personal guidance.
4. Determine to guard your own tongue and your own spirit for integrity's sake.
5. Each needs to answer this question, "How did I contribute to the problem?"
6. List solutions you have used in the past that were not successful.
7. Brainstorm: List all possible solutions. No criticism allowed during a brainstorm.
8. Discuss and evaluate all the proposals and narrow them to the best alternatives.
9. Agree on a solution to attempt.
10. Agree what each person must do to make the plan work.
11. Set another date to discuss the progress of the plan.
12. Encourage each member's contribution in making the plan successful.

Evaluating Success

How can one know if he is successful in dealing with interpersonal conflict?

Here are seven questions that need to be asked to evaluate effectiveness:

1. Did we agree on what decision had to be made?
2. Did we agree on who needs to make the decision?
3. Did we make a decision?
4. Did we reduce interpersonal tension by the decision?
5. Did we help people develop skills for resolving future conflicts?
6. Did we spawn a harvest of praise to God regardless if all were satisfied with the decision?
7. Do I have a clear conscience about my role in the decision making process?

Is it worth it? Some problems are more draining than the middle-east negotiations. Is it worth all the trouble, and hassle, and energy to fight for the life and soul of a marriage or organization?

Paul ordered Timothy, "Keep this commandment without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in his own time" (1 Timothy 6:14) and when He comes, He will not come with His rewards for His ministers of reconciliation.

Power Rules for Organizations

Rule One: NEVER CRITICIZE IDEAS DURING A BRAINSTORM FOR SOLUTIONS.

Rule Two: AFTER DOZENS OF SOLUTIONS ARE PRESENTED, CRITICIZE THEM AND NARROW THE FIELD TO THREE OR FOUR POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS.

Rule Three: NEVER CRITICIZE THE CHARACTER OF THE INDIVIDUAL WHO PRESENTS AN IDEA THAT SEEMS STRANGE OR OFF BASE. Criticizing the character of individual rather than the idea is called “ad hominem reasoning.” This hurts, and it only creates conflict.

Rule Four: DON’T GET OFFENDED WHEN YOUR IDEA IS SCRUTINIZED.

Rule Five: IT IS THE DUTY OF THE MINORITY TO CONVINCING THE MAJORITY.

Rule Six: IT IS THE DUTY OF THE MINORITY TO ACCEPT THE RESPONSIBILITY TO WIN OTHERS THROUGH THE ART OF PERSUASION.

Rule Seven: DECISION RELIEVES A CRISIS!

Rule Eight: IT IS THE DUTY OF THE MINORITY TO SUPPORT THE MAJORITY!

Rule Nine: ONCE A DECISION IS MADE, IT IS THE DUTY OF ALL TO OWN IT. There is tremendous power in UNITY. To leave a meeting gripping, criticizing, grumbling, and accusing comes from pride – a proud spirit that must be confronted and judged so unity can prevail. Expression of disunity is ground for dismissal! Think about it!

Rule Ten:

UNITY IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN MY PREFERENCES.

MY CONSCIENCE IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN OUR UNITY.

TRUTH IS GREATER THAN MY CONSCIENCE. \

Therefore, I must EDUCATE MY CONSCIENCE beginning with the Ten Commandments.



5. RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

Lesson six

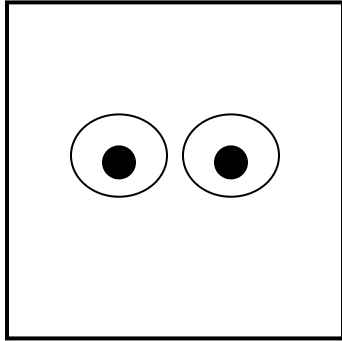
A study on reactions to conflict



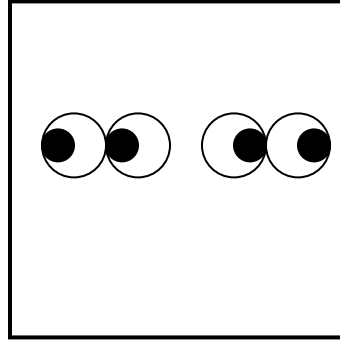
Philippians 2:1-2

“If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.”

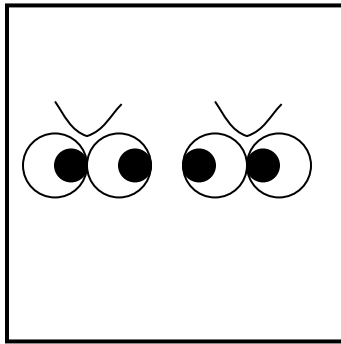
Responses to Conflict



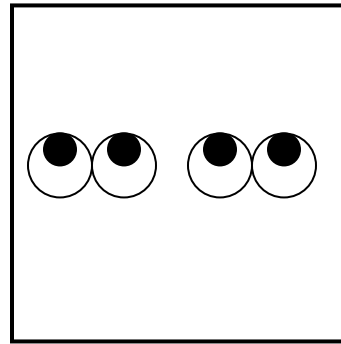
Fear



Flight



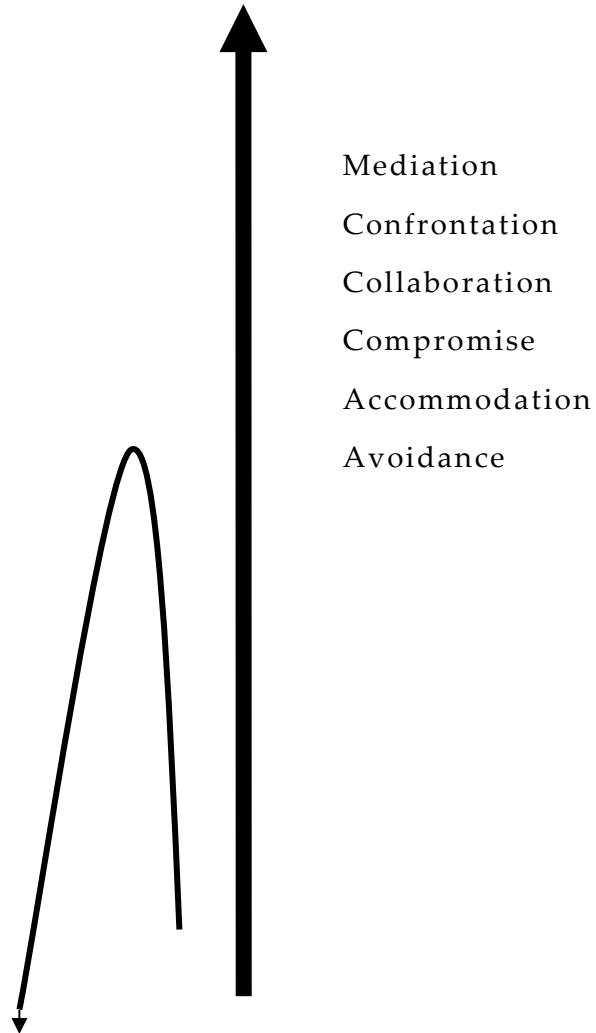
Fight



Faith

Conflict Resolution Styles

More skills and virtues needed to achieve a happy, peaceful resolution



The best of intentions can be defeated at times.

Your Conflict Resolution Style

1. **Avoidance:** Avoiding conflict attempts to achieve short-term gains at the expense of long-term profits. Avoiding conflict about preferences and non-substantive issues may be the right thing to do. On substantive issues, avoiding conflict fails the honest pursuit of truth and may cause a major conflict at another time.
2. **Accommodation:** Accommodation means one or both parties are willing to serve the will or preferences of the other for the sake of peace. Peace is the highly esteemed virtue. Accommodation eliminates conflict because one or both parties are saying that the relationship is more important than the issue. The only difficulty with accommodation is that substantive issues may not be properly identified and that principle stands to be compromised for the sake of peace.
3. **Compromise:** Compromise is an attempt to arrive at a settlement by making undesirable concessions. While compromise appears to be a political virtue, it is not necessarily a spiritual value. Compromise can make issues disappear and stand to be a win-lose situation leaving one person very unsettled about a decision.
4. **Confrontation (positive) or Competition (negative):** For some, winning is the highest value. A competitive person seldom loses on principle, but relationships are usually left in shambles. Just as some people are ready to compromise long term profits for short term gains, some people are willing to destroy short term gains for long term profits. When a person believes it must be “my way or the highway” relationships are destroyed and valuable gifts and insights are lost. However, confrontation over a substantive issue may be a good thing and achieve long term results.
5. **Collaboration:** Collaboration is the attempt by two different parties with different interests and different skills to cooperate with each other for a common good. Collaboration is not necessarily peaceful. It requires spiritual resources to listen to others, speak honestly, and criticize effectively. Collaboration takes time, energy, and effort to achieve a desired result. But, it can produce the greatest good. This is God’s way of building a church for the glory of God.
6. **Mediation:** One or both parties call for outside help to either mediate a consensual problem solving meeting or request an outside party (friend, pastor, judge, lawyer) to make a decision to relieve the stress.

Review of the Types of Conflicts

1. Intrapersonal Conflict:

Intrapersonal conflict is the struggle going on inside or within a particular individual. This conflict may be between principle and feelings; mind and emotions; will and wants.

2. Interpersonal Conflict:

Interpersonal conflict is related to differences between people but that are not related to particular, substantive issues. People are different in the way they dress, talk, think, act, purchase, and relate to life. These differences often surface when two different people must interact toward a specific goal.

3. Issues (non-substantive):

The issues revolve around personal preference like what to have for dinner or what T.V. program should we watch.

4. Issues Orientated Conflict over Substance:

Issues orientated conflicts are substantive conflicts regarding facts, goals, values, and the means to attaining goals.

Facts: There is not an agreement about the who, what, why, where, and how of an issue. What is truth has not been defined.

Goals: There is not an agreement on the objectives to be accomplished.

Values: There is not an agreement on what is best or most virtuous.

Methods: There is not an agreement on the "how" or the means to attaining a desired result.

Options in Dealing with Conflict

Conflict arises when people identify an issue that surfaces in the relationship and people take a position on it.



When issues surface and people takes sides on and issue, there are a limited number of conflict management options people can execute. When dealing with issues, it is all about facts and proof of claim . . . and a controlled demeanor.

1. Avoidance: The sides simply walk away and possibly avoid the conflict.
2. Accommodation: One party or both is willing to serve the will of the other for the sake of peace.
3. Compromise: The sides can begin to compromise their positions in order to temper the conflict.
4. Collaboration: Both parties have a desire goal in mind and are willing to sit down to debate and discuss the issue so mutual goals can be achieved.
5. Confrontation: The sides can begin to compete which will result in an escalation of conflict. Competition is not bad if the issue involves a substantive matter.
6. Mediation: The sides can seek mediation or give the dispute to an authority figure which may or may not resolve the conflict by making a personal decision.

Bible Discovery



Look at the following conflicts in Scripture, define them, and determine their outcome. Decide if the primary issue is one intrapersonal, interpersonal, or an issue of preference or an issue of substance. Determine the management style used: Avoidance, Accommodation, Confrontation/competition, Compromise, Collaboration, or Mediation.

OT Passage	Type of Conflict	Resolution Style	Result
Genesis 4 Cain			
Genesis 9 Ham			
Genesis 12:10			
Genesis 13			
Genesis 16			
Genesis 16			
Genesis 21 Sarah			
Genesis 25			
Genesis 26			
Genesis 27:5ff			
Genesis 28:6-10			
Genesis 29:25ff			
Genesis 31:1-17			

Judges 2			
Judges 11:12, 28			
Judges 11:28-32			
1 Samuel 15			
1 Kings 2			
1 Kings 10-11			
Nehemiah 4:1-4			
Nehemiah 5			
Nehemiah 13:8			
Nehemiah 13:15ff			

A Study on Jesus' Style of Conflict Resolution

Passage	Type of Conflict	Resolution Style	Results
Mark 1:35-39			
Mark 2:6-12			
Mark 3:1-6			
Mark 3:22			
Mark 3:31-34			
Mark 5:17			

Mark 4:11			
Mark 7:1-6			
Mark 8:11-13			
Mark 8:16ff			
Mark 8:32			
Mark 9:33			
Mark 10:			
Mark 10:35			
Mark 11:15-18			

Conclusion: There is not a right and a wrong way to deal with conflict. However, some ways may more wise than others depending on the type of conflict.

How Churches Deal with Conflict

1. **Avoidance:** Many church members just avoid conflict. This is often the wise choice unless, of course, the issue is one of substance.
2. **Collaboration:** Most people just workout the problem through consensual problem solving by both parties involved.
3. **Accommodation:** Individual within the church are willing to serve the will of the majority. The minority helps the majority to succeed.
4. **Mediation:** Parties seek the help of a leader or pastor in the church.

5. **Compromise:** Parties are forced to compromise their personal interests for the greater good of the congregation.

6. **Decision-Making by leaders.** Churches ask for a decision by a leader in the church to relieve the differences.

7. **Confrontation:** Members are willing to fight for what they believe at the expense of the whole congregation.

8. **Departure:** Unable to persuade or to compromise or to accommodate, the individual senses his need to separate from the fellowship.



6. PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONSHIPS

Lesson Seven

A study on Trust and Integrity



Matthew 5:44

“But I say unto you, **Love** your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;”

Bible Discovery



Look at the following verses and discuss the relational principles each contribute to understanding conflict management and the dynamics of human relationships.

7. What are the building blocks of a successful marriage?

Ephesians 5:21-22

Ephesians 5:31

Ephesians 5:25-28

Peter 3:7

8. Looking at the above verses, decide what are the most fundamental principles of a successful relationship.

9. What happens when these principles are violated?

Proverbs 18:19

Proverbs 15:13

10. What do you learn about reconciliation from the following verses.

Romans 12:17

Luke 17:3

Matthew 5:23-24

Matthew 7:1-3

Matthew 18:15-17

Turning the Four Corners of Marriage

Marriage is much like driving a car. You have to negotiate the turns if you want to avoid a crash. Couples need to turn four corners in marriage if the relationship is to experience peace and tranquility.

For Wives (Ephesians 5:22, 33)

Submission (u.pota,ssw,, hupotasso): *Hupotasso* is the Greek word for *submission*. It is a military term meaning “to arrange yourself” under a superior. Though *hupotasso* is a military term, it has a relational context. God, not the husband, has commanded women to arrange themselves under their husbands, to recognize their superior position, and to serve his leadership. Submission does not imply inferiority, but it does intimate activating a spirit of servanthood, obedience, and meekness.

Respect (fobe,w, phobeo): *Phobeo* is the Greek word for “fear,” “reverence,” or “respect.” The proper response to God appointed authority is respect, even fear. Though a man is not always worthy of respect, the wife should always respect the position of her husband. A wife who debates, challenges, and criticizes her man needs to grow in respect. The spirit of respect should be reflected in a woman’s words, tone, and demeanor. It is much easier for a man to lead a respectful wife.

For Husbands (Ephesians 5:25; 1 Peter 3:7)

As God has a will for the wife, He has a will for the husband.

Love (avgapa/w, agapao): The Greek word *agape* is the word used to describe God’s love. *Agape* is God’s unconditional, gracious, beneficent love that sacrificed His Son for sinners. The nature of *agape* is self-sacrifice for the good of others. God is calling the man to a life of *agape*—to lead the home through self-sacrifice. God does not command the man to love his wife because she is always lovely, but because love is the law of God’s kingdom. It is not difficult for a wife to submit and to respect a man who does everything out of love.

Honor (timh., tima): The Greek word *tima* (tee-may) means “to honor,” or “to make room,” or “to give weight.” Simply put, *tima* means, “to listen” to one’s wife and “to make room” for her wishes, and “to give weight” to her opinions. It is God’s will that the man know his wife (“dwell according to knowledge”) and carefully consider what she says. It is easier to respect a man who listens.

The Deeper Side of Love

Commitment

Acceptance

Love is a commitment to give, and it must be received and accepted to produce happiness. But there is a risk in love, the risk of rejection. Therefore, to love is to be vulnerable. The opposite of love is self-protection—a lack of vulnerability.

Trust

Responsibility

Lovers build a relationship on trust. It is impossible to love without trusting. Love is vulnerable because it trusts another with needs and weaknesses. The one who is trusted is being leaned upon and has the responsibility of protecting that trust. However, the one who trusts is vulnerable and if the person being trusted is weak, they may fail that trust. There is a responsibility in being trusted and there is the danger of violating trusts and wounding others.

Pain

Violation of a trust

Lovers must negotiate with pain or they will never be complete in their love. The greatest lovers receive the greatest amount of hurt. Committed people care, and because they care, they are vulnerable to the failures of others. When other people fail, it hurts. The pain you feel is not an indication of your weakness, but a mark of your mates' immaturity. Pain tells you that you have loved and trusted; that you have followed Christ.

Grace

Forgiveness

When one is wounded, it hurts. When hurt, you must share with your mate how they hurt you. The healing process begins when hurt is shared and the offender admits his failure, seeks forgiveness, and comes alongside to share in the pain they caused. Confession says, "I agree. I have failed your trust and wounded you. I was wrong. Will you forgive me? How can I help relieve the pain you feel?" Healing can take place when there is confession and effort on the part of the offender to restore the relationship, and where forgiveness and grace are extended by the wounded. Forgiveness says, "I not only forgive your act, but the pain you caused."

Christ

Pain

Healing

The greatest lover was Christ: He who loved best was wounded the most. But, through His wounds healing has come to mankind.

"By His wounds are we healed . . ." (Isaiah 53:5, 6).

Flesh & Spirit Factors in Marriage

Before we can manage a human relationship, we need to major on personal management, particularly managing our own Spirit. A general once said, "We have met the enemy and it is us." The greatest battle may not be on the playing field of life but in the human heart.

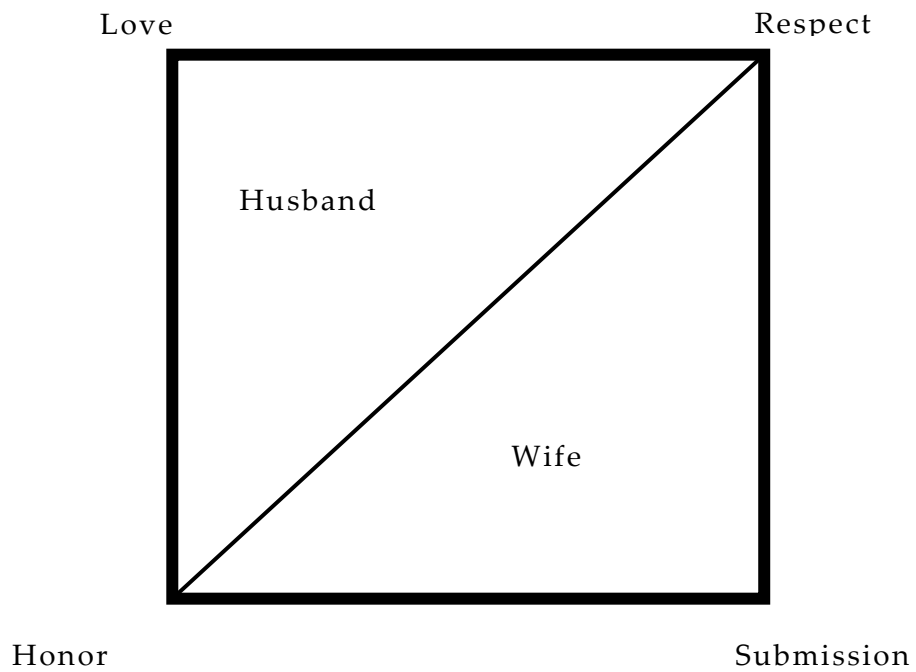
In the OT, we have the story of Isaac and Ishmael (Genesis 21). When Isaac was born, Ishmael who was the son of Hagar, began to mock Isaac, the son of Sarah. The solution was to expel Ishmael from the camp (21:10). In N.T. times, the Judaizers derided the Christians and created conflict in the church. The Judaizers were labeled "in the flesh" and Christians were identified to be "in the Spirit" by the apostle (Galatians 4:29; 5:1-10). Paul set up a Greek dualism and contrasted the Ishmael/Isaac conflict with the historic agitation occurring between Judaizers and Christians (Galatians 5:1ff). The *sarx* (flesh) opposed the *pneuma* (spirit). *Sarx* and *pneuma* are metonyms for the Jewish/Gentile problem in the Galatian community. That is, the Judaizers were not "born again" nor did they know Christ as their Lord and Savior. Jealous, they assaulted the Christian community and mocked them like Ishmael mocked Isaac. But, what was true on the stage history was also true of the believer's new gestalt (spiritual properties).

When we receive Christ as His Savior, we receive the Spirit (Galatians 3:2; Ephesians 1:13). Regenerated, we have a tremendous drive to know God and to please Him. However, there is a part of us that is not born again, namely the body and its principalities. The unregenerate part of us (flesh/body) is in conflict with the regenerated part of us (the spirit). What are we to do?

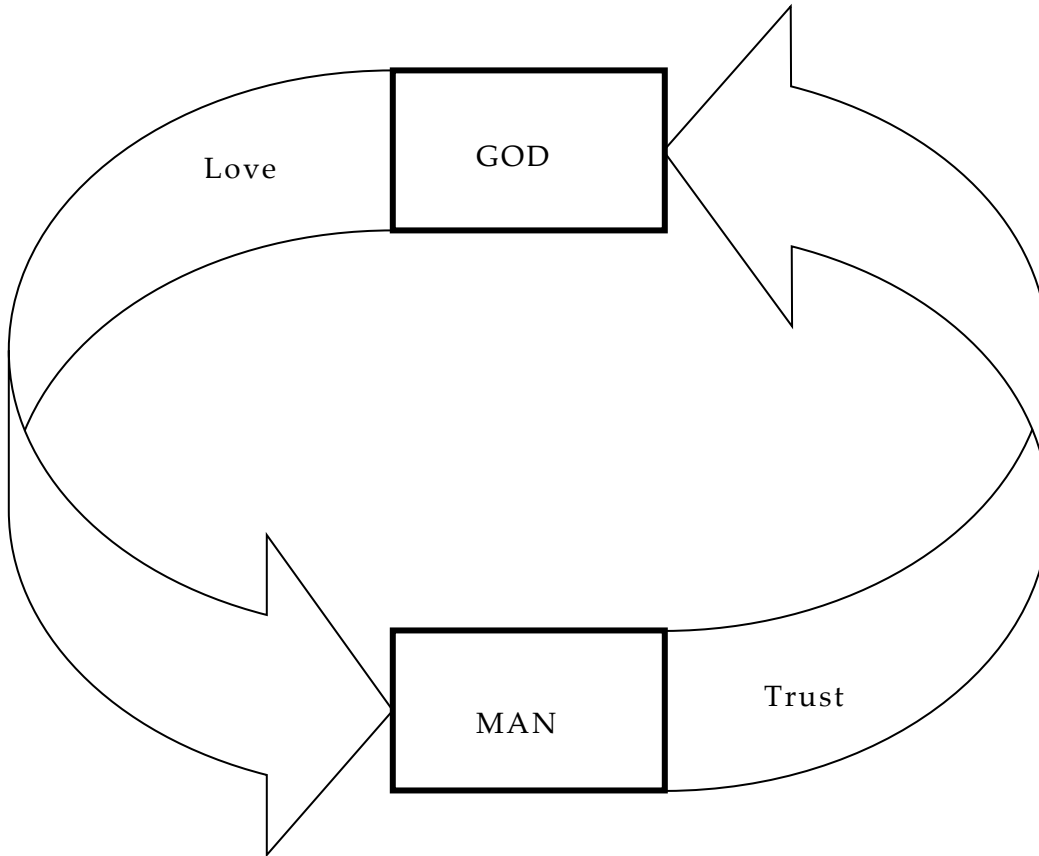
We are to do what Sarah did with Ishmael: to expel Ishmael and to nurture her son (Galatians 4:30; 5:1-21). That is, we have a need to oppose the demands of the "flesh" in our lives with all its lusts, anger, and factions, and we (regenerated beings) are to nourish the demands of the Spirit in our lives. In Galatians, Paul call for us "to walk in the Spirit" which yields the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22). In Ephesians 5:18, Paul identifies the need "to be filled" with the Spirit which is synonymous to being "controlled by the Spirit." In Colossians, the need is for believers to let the Word of God rule the home (Colossians 3:16-18).

In conclusion, if we let the flesh, the unregenerate part of us, control our marriage; our marriage will be filled with "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, and strife" (Galatians 5:20). But, if we as regenerated beings yield to the Spirit, our marriage will reap a harvest of "love, joy, and peace" (Galatians 5:22).

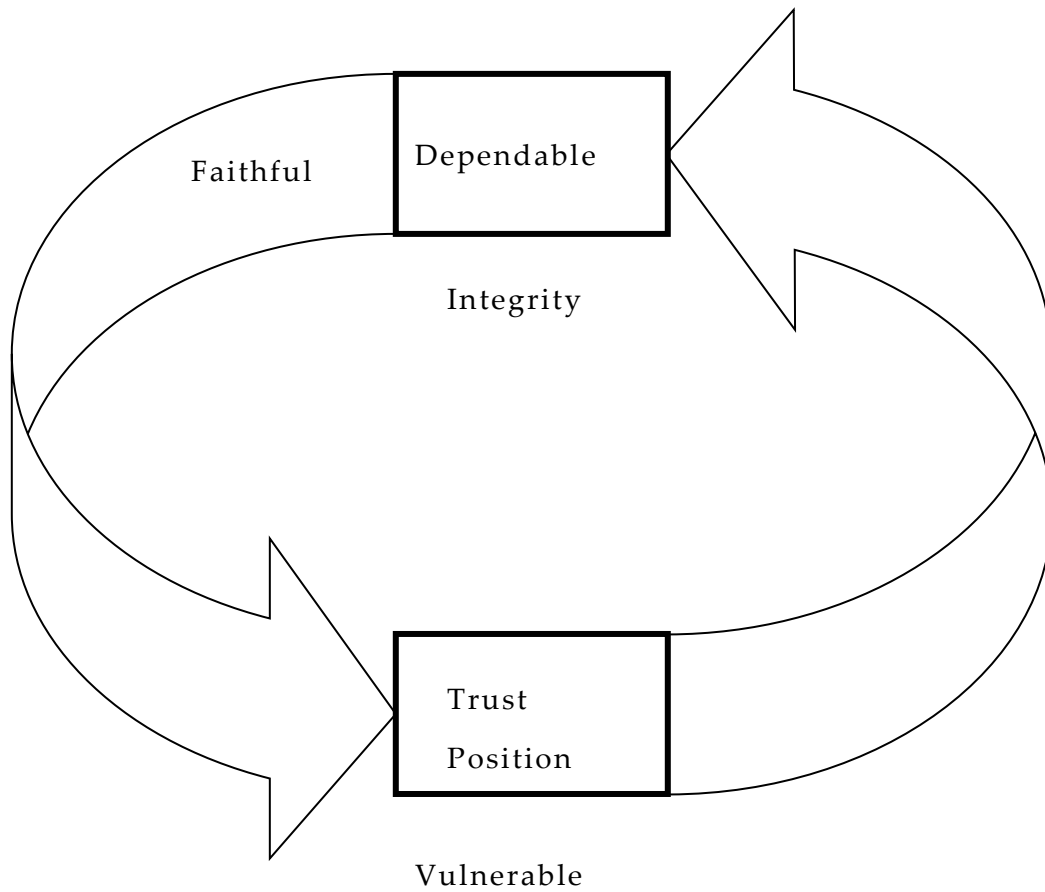
Turning the Four Corners of Marriage



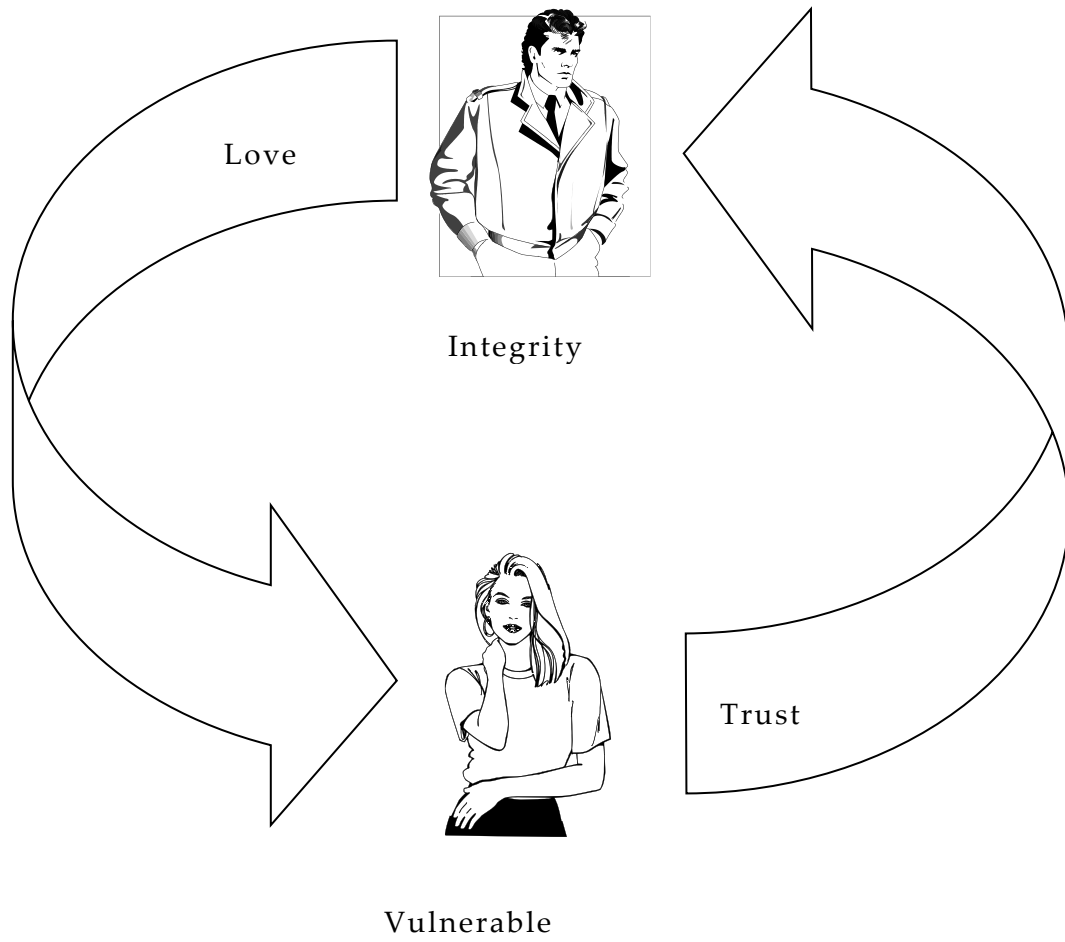
Love and Trust



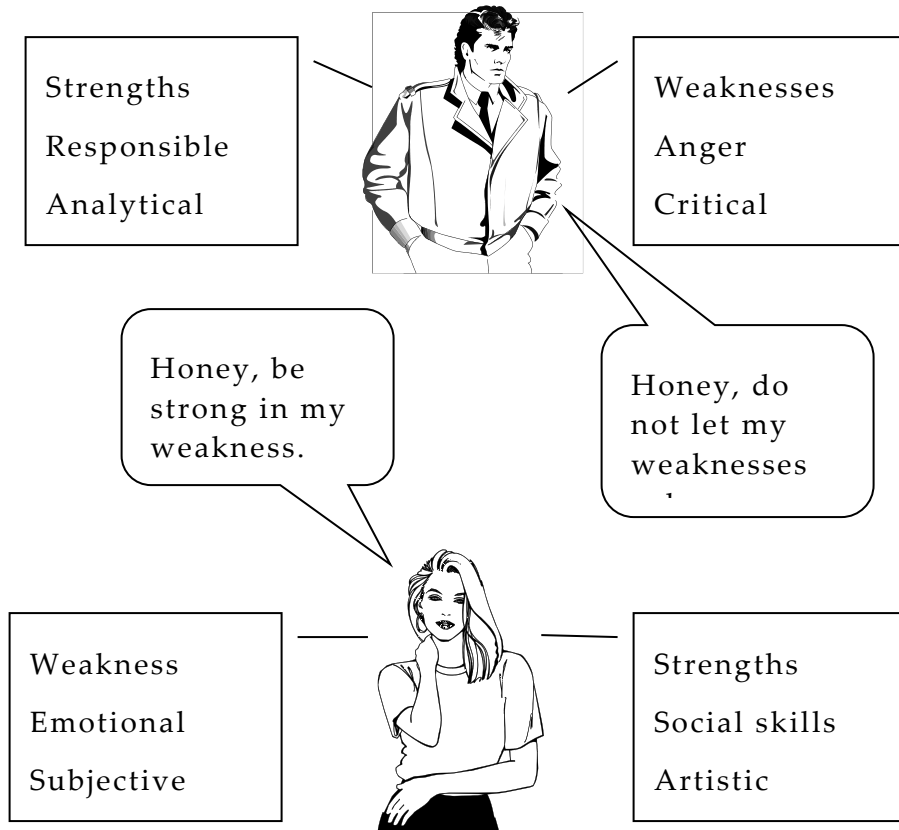
Relationship Principles



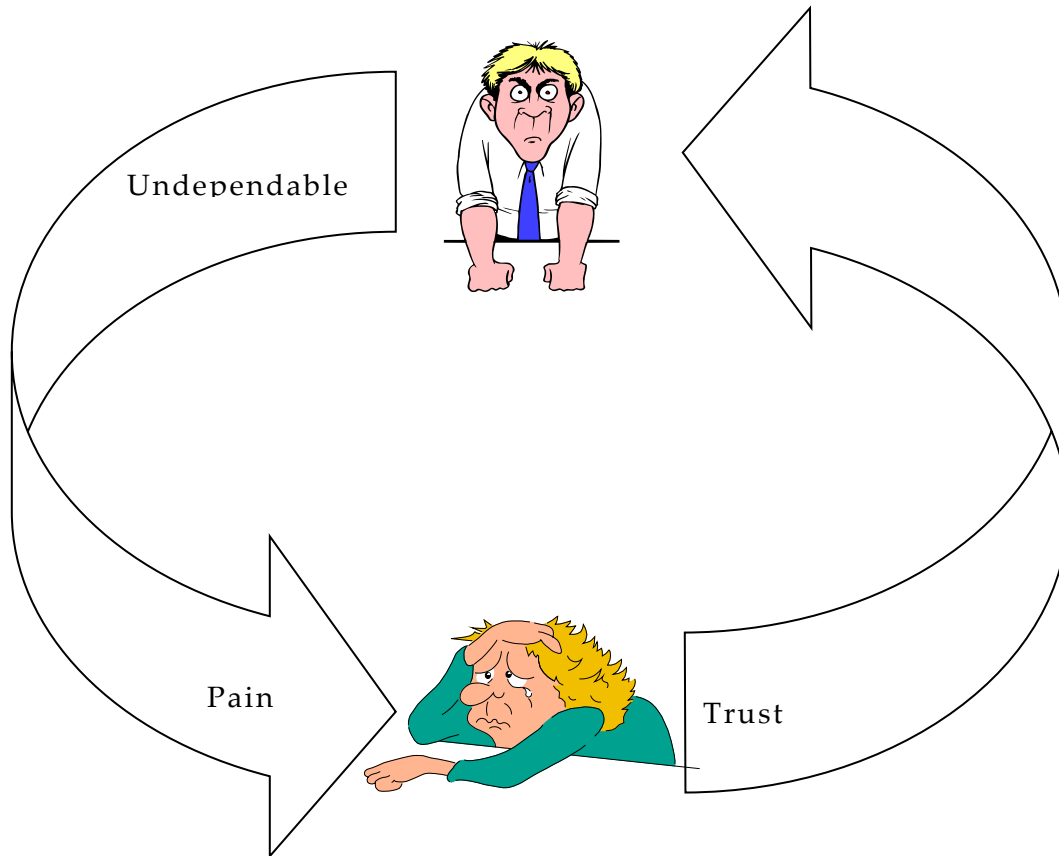
Husband & Wife Relationship



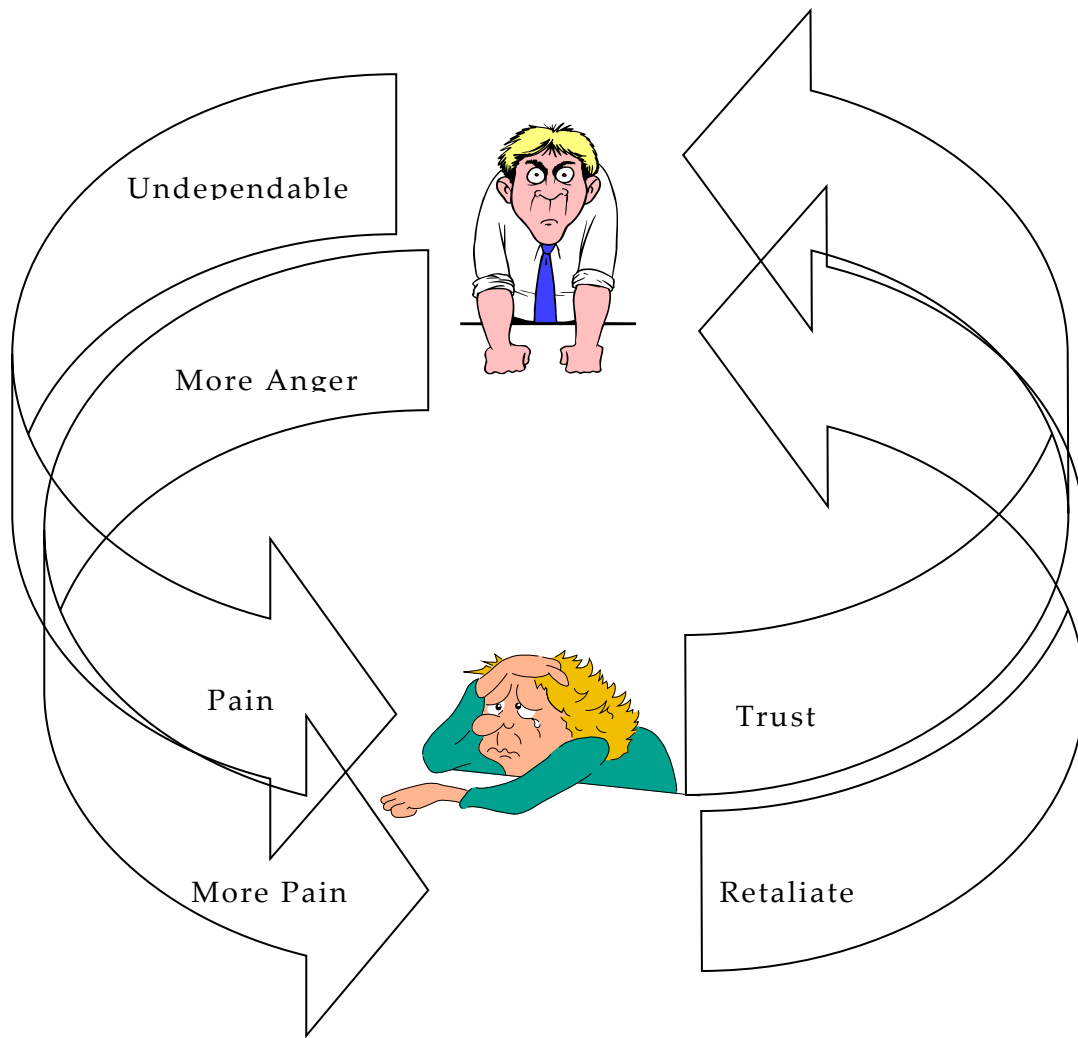
Strengths and Weaknesses



Relational Pain

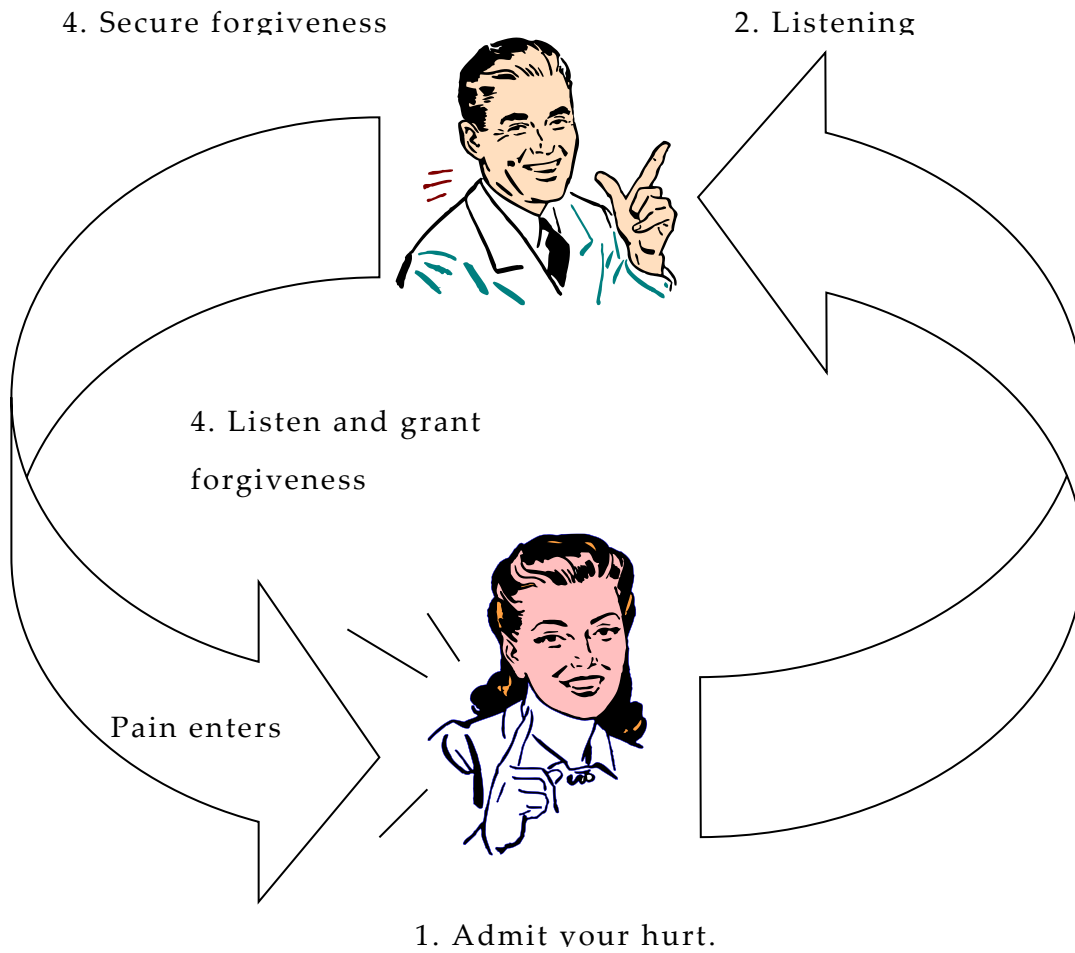


Cycle of Hurts



Managing Hurts

3. Analysis and Confession



5. Set up a time to discuss the issue.

Steps to Repair a Broken Relationship

Insights



You have heard about the little Dutch boy that saved the dam from breaking by sticking his index finger into the hole of the dyke. Marriage is like that. Little cracks can become major threats. We need to know how to repair them. You can repair a broken relationship by following these steps:

Step One: Admission

"Ouch! You hurt me!" This is easy to say as a child, but as we grow older, we are trained to cover up our hurts. However, covering our wounds only increases the risk of a relational degeneration. Pain in the soul can turn into a kind of gangrene of the human spirit. The Bible calls it *bitterness* (Hebrews 12:15). Bitterness is translated "hemlock" and "venom" in the O.T. If left untreated, people get hurt again and again until finally the wound festers and poisons the tissue that holds the marriage together. The Bible calls it, "defiling many."

The first principle of relational first-aid is to admit woundedness. To some, admitting hurt is more difficult than treading across burning coals in bare feet. It is associated with weakness and ineptness. This is especially true for men. Men are trained to be tough. Men will risk life and limb on the gridiron to score a TD, but they will not expose their soul to pain for fear of getting emotionally hurt. Most men will not cry because they refuse to let anything touch the nerves of their soul. Even when hurt, they "macho" their way through the suffering. Emotional calluses form making it impossible to be fully human.

Admission that one has been hurt is not a sign of weakness, but of strength; not of enfeeblement, but of character; not of impotence, but of dependence on the relationship. One cannot be treated for disease unless he admits he is sick. Likewise, one cannot be healed emotionally unless one admits that he has been hurt.

Step Two: Examination

When hurt you must ask, "Why am I feeling this pain?" Relational pain happens for two reasons: (a) one has developed personal rights that God has not ordained, i.e., one did not get his way on a matter, or (b) a violation of a trust. If the pain is due to the former, then you go deeper into Christ and place

your personal rights at the foot of the cross. But if a violation of trust occurs, you must go deeper into love and confront your brother (Matthew 18:15ff).

Step Three: Confrontation

When you are hurt by another because of a violation of principle on their part, you need to go and share with him or her what he or she did and how it hurt you (Luke 17:3, 4). This is a difficult step to take. If you do not go, a root of bitterness will develop in your heart, which will defile your relationships. God holds us responsible to communicate our hurts in love ("speaking the truth in love . . ."). It has the other's best in mind because you are trying to restore a relationship with someone you care about. To ignore hurt is only hiding the problem. It is like starting a stamp collection of hurts. Each time a wound is incurred, it is pasted into the scrapbook of your memory. When the book is filled, you cash in your anger. Instead of dealing with one hurt, you now force your mate to deal with hundreds. Do what the Scripture says and do not let the Sun go down on your wrath (Ephesians 4: 26). Manage your struggles day to day.

Step Three: Inspection:

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

If your spouse wounds you, then you need to go to them and share how they hurt you. This will help them to know the damaging effects of their words and actions in your life, and it will help them to be more sensitive in the future. However, your spouse may not listen if they were hurt in the altercation with you.

Therefore, you need to inspect your own your walk and talk before you go and confront your spouse about his or her failure. Jesus said that a person must take the beam out of his own eye before he can take the splinter out of another's. With the help of the Spirit, examine your life to see if you have failed to follow a principle in God's Word. Jesus stated the principle: When hurt, we must not only admit our hurt, but we must first confess our fault before we attempt to correct our partner who hurt us.

Step Four: Confession

"Therefore, confess your sins to each other . . ." (James 5:16).

If there are three words more difficult to say in the English language than, "I am hurt", then it must be the words, "I am wrong." Saying, "I am sorry," is not the same as admitting, "I was wrong," and following up with the question, "Will you forgive me for what I said?"

God calls us not only to admit wrong, but to accept responsibility for the pain we cause. Until we deal with the hurts we cause, we are not in a position to confront another about their faults. It is not weakness to admit wrong done, but an act of character. People will forgive anything but impeccability. Once we have admitted our fault in a matter, we move into a position to help "take the splinter" out of your brother's eye.

Once we have dealt with our responsibility in a matter, we can ask, "May I share with you how you hurt me?" When you share your hurt and their fault in a matter, you are helping them to be a better person. If they accept responsibility to for their actions, you are in a position to forgive and restore the breach.

Step Five: Remission

11. "Forgive as the Lord forgave you" (Colossians 3:13).

The key to patching the hole in the dike is the peg of forgiveness. It can plug the holes and plugs the cracks in a relationship.

When your spouse admits their wrong and asks for forgiveness, it needs to be granted. Forgiveness is not saying that "I'll try to forget," but it is admitting: "Yes, I am hurt, but I'm willing to forgive your act and the pain that it caused. I promise not to hold this against you or bring it up in the future."

Forgiveness focuses on the future, a future where there will be more pain, more wounds, and more forgiveness. Forgiveness says: "I love you and I accept you and I am willing to carry the pain that you caused because of the joy we have as a couple." Marriages built on this foundation will never fail (1 Corinthians 13:8a).





7. PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATION

Lesson Eight

A study on managing offenses



Matthew 5:23

“Therefore if thou bring thy **gift** to the altar, and there remember that thy brother hath ought against thee;”

Bible Discovery



Look at the following verses and identify the principles of restoration, that is, the principles that help repair a broken relationship.

12.

Matthew 5:23-24

Matthew 7:1-3

Matthew 18:15-17

Luke 17:3

Romans 12:14

Romans 12:17

1 Corinthians 13:5-8

1 John 1:5, 9

James 5:16

1 Peter 2:24

Responding to Hurts and Wounds

As we have indicated earlier in this study, there are several possible reactions to conflict: fear, flight, fight, or faith. This is especially true for those when there are hurts and wounds in a conflict.

“Hurts,” “Wounds,” and Psychology

Personally, I do not like the terms “hurts and wounds” because these terms are used by the psychologized, which tend to create an environment of victimization within the church. I was once in a church where everyone was hurt. Interestingly, there were no predators in this church, only victims. Hummm?

Even though I do not like the terms “hurts and wounds,” I find these words help in describing some of the emotional bruising that takes place in human relationships. If we must use the terms like “hurts and wounds,” then we must also use terms like “sin,” “revenge,” and “evil.” Where there is an injured party, there must be an offending party. Often, hurt people sin themselves, offend, and multiply pain in others. The key to responding correctly is this: **NEVER ALLOW HURT TO BECOME AN EXCUSE TO WITHDRAW LOVE.**

Grace is the Key to Healing

By adding grace, broken relationships can be healed. In grace, God forgives us on behalf of Christ. By tapping into God’s grace, the wounded can become an instrument of healing.

By grace the offender can humble himself and seek to repair the broken relationship (Ephesians 2:8, 9). When grace is at work, the offended and the offender will accept the responsibility to repair damage done.

A Review of Grace

13. The one under grace knows that God loves him, not because of who he is, but because of Who God is—a God of love (1 John 4:8-10).
14. He does not seek to be more worthy in order to be loved, but consents to being loved though he is unworthy.
15. He has stopped trying to be good in order to be accepted because he knows that he is accepted because Christ was good.
16. He has stopped trying to gain acceptance by his performance because he knows he is accepted by God because of Christ’s performance.

17. He no longer blames himself because Christ took all the blame upon Himself. When in fault in a human relationship, he knows he can accept responsibility for his actions because Christ has accepted responsibility for his faults.
18. He no longer determines his value based on his past because he knows his value is based on his perfect position in Christ in the present.
19. He has no shame about his past, because he is too occupied with the glory of being in Christ in the present.
20. He overcomes failure because he realizes God will not withdraw His favor because of his failure.
21. He accepts pain as an excuse to go deeper into the love of Christ in order to be a healing agent towards those who offend him.

Grace For the Offended Party

It is impossible to have human relationships and not experience disappointment, fear, anger, and frustration at times. This will happen, and when it happens the “hurt” individual must never allow their pain to become an excuse to withdraw love! God calls us to love (responsibility) at all times. When grace is at work, the offended accept the following responsibilities:

Wounded people have the responsibility to make sure they are not being over sensitive. Over sensitive people have their feelers out and are easily offended by the imperfect behavior of others. Grace is not “easily provoked²¹” (1 Corinthians 13:5).

Wounded people have the responsibility to make sure they are not being perfectionists. Perfectionists have difficulty relating to imperfect people who live in an imperfect world. They possess unreal expectations and make life difficult for everyone around them. Because perfectionists are legalist, they are easily disappointed and hurt by normal people. Perfectionists must learn what the word “grace” means and apply it generously in their relationships. Grace releases people from impossible standards.

Wounded people have the responsibility to recognize their hurt and analyze why they feel the way they do. They must ask, “Do I feel hurt because I have rights God has not given me or do I feel hurt because of a violation of a trust?”

²¹ “provoked” (ouv paroxu,netai) is a present passive. It is properly translated, “easily provoked” meaning that when a person walks in love they are not easily offended or aroused by the imperfect behavior of others.

Wounded people must recognize that hurt, emotional pain, is God calling them to go deeper into love. If one feels hurt because one's rights were stepped on, then God is calling that one to yield their rights. If one feels hurt because a trust has been violated, then God is calling them to love their brother and to confront him.

Wounded people have the responsibility to pursue the one that hurt them and to restore the relationship. This principle assumes the relationship is valuable and worth preserving. In grace, the Lord Jesus came to "seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Wounded people must never use pain as an excuse to withdraw love from others. Emotional pity parties, silence, distance, stand-off-ish-ness, withdrawal, and giving another the "cold shoulder" are signs that one is not walking in love.

Wounded people must not allow, "hurt" to become an excuse to sin. Revenge, yelling, shouting back, and giving "tit for tat" is sin. God challenges the wounded to, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). When a hurt person gives into their feelings and sins, they become a "predator." For this reason, hurt people are the most dangerous people in the community.

Wounded people should interpret pain as GOD'S CALL to go deeper into love (Isaiah 53:6). A hurt person is NOT A VICTIM, but an instrument God wants to use to love another. When one experiences hurt because of a violation of a trust, then one must confront his brother in love so that he can become the person God wants him to be. The one doing the wounding has the greater need!! If the wounded individual does not respond to God's CALL to love his brother by confronting him, he is in effect failing to become an instrument of grace to help his brother to grow in love. Confronting another is not comfortable for the flesh. It is much easier to ignore sin and flee to safety. But, love "doth not seek its own things" (1 Corinthians 13:5).

The wounded person must learn how to confront his brother in love. After one has (a) admitted hurt, and (b) analyzed the violation of trust to understand why the feelings of pain exist, the offended needs to make the commitment to confront the one who violated the trust. A way to confront is simply asking permission to share the experience:

Sally: "Sam, I've got a problem that has come up in our relationship. May I share with you what happened?"

Sam: "Sure, uh . . . "

Sally: "Thank you. Sam the other day you said, " . . . " and it hurt me!

Sam: "I'm sorry I said what I said and I knew at the time I was wrong. Can you forgive me?"

Wounded people must learn to forgive those who hurt them after the painful experience has been shared and repented of properly (Luke 17:3). Forgiveness means that the wounded person must not only forgive the deed done, but the pain it caused. Forgiveness is a commitment to cancel the debt, to bury "the hatchet," and to go into the future with hope and love where there will be lots of joy and possibly more pain in the relationship.

22. *Injured parties have the responsibility to seek healing from the Lord.* Moping around the house, digging up the past, and mulling over offenses is not forgiveness nor is it part of the healing process. Healing is the ability to be Christ-like. This means the wounded party needs to obey Christ and be filled with the Spirit of God even though he may be recovering from deep, emotional hurts (Ephesians 5:18).

23. Wounded people who sin or retaliate against wrong done, have the responsibility to confess their wrong and to correct their errors in an altercation first (Matthew 7:1-3). It is one thing to be hurt by an offending party, but it is quite another to retaliate. Grace does not seek revenge! When the wounded person retaliates, they sin. Sin must be admitted and confessed.

Grace on Offending Parties

24. One who violates at trust (offending party or offender) has the responsibility to humble himself, listen to the offended party, admit wrong, and repair the damage caused by his lack of integrity. When grace is at work, the offended party will accept the following responsibilities:

25. *The offending party has the responsibility to recognize his error and to correct it immediately.* Immediate action to correct wrong done is the mature, responsible thing to do. People will forgive imperfect people, but they have difficulty in dealing with perfect people. This means the offending party has the responsibility to judge pride in his life – the spirit that keeps him from humbling himself and admitting wrong done.

26. *The offending party needs to learn to be quick to recognize sin in his own life and to deal with it responsibly.* Failure to fulfill a responsibility, to complete a task, to keep a promise is a sin. Anger, criticalness, yelling, contentiousness, gossip, and verbal assaults are actions that hurt and divide relationships.

27. *The offending party needs to recognize the signs of woundedness in others.* Hurt people can respond to wrongs done in various ways. Withdrawal of affections, anger, sorrow, fear, absence from meetings, and bitterness are some of the signs of a wounded spirit. Do not assume wounded people are

affected by grace. Immature people use “hurt” as an excuse to withdraw love. When grace is at work in the offender, the offender will pursue a right relationship despite the immature responses of those he may hurt.

28. *The offender has the responsibility to take the initiative to repair the relationship.* Getting right with the offended one is more important than any religious duty one may be called to perform (Matthew 5:23). Grace puts people first; religious duty second.
29. *The offending party has the responsibility to listen to the complaint, hurt, or frustration of the ones he wounds.* Listening to the injured party and trying to understand their feelings is the first step toward healing the one wounded. Listening is not easy. It is hard to hear the pain of those who we injure by our lack of integrity. Nature wants a “quick fix,” an “easy out,” an immediate “gloss” over the offense. It is critical, therefore, that the offender lay hold of grace and look the one he offended in the eye, be quiet, and listen intently to what the offended party has to say. Talking, debating, justifying, arguing, explaining, and contending are not listening. Grace listens to the injured party and says the following,
 30. “Thank you for sharing your feelings with me! I promise to weigh carefully what you have said.”
 31. A soul impacted by grace understands that he can accept responsibility for his actions because Christ has accepted responsibility for his sins.
 32. *It is the responsibility of the offender to evaluate what he has done and to admit wrong done.* Often in an altercation, there is plenty of blame to go around. The offender need not accept all the blame in a damaged relationship, but when grace is at work, he will accept the burden to repair the relationship. Accepting the bulk of the blame is honorable if indeed the bulk belongs to the offending party. But, accepting all blame for the sake of peace is not honest and may hinder the long term relationship.
 33. *The offending party has the responsibility to confess his fault and to secure forgiveness.* It is not enough to say, “I am sorry!” Grace at work says, “I was wrong for . . . Will you forgive me?”
 34. *It is the responsibility of the offender to help heal the hurt caused and the damaged done.* It is not enough just to ask for forgiveness and walk away from a bleeding, hurting person. If one steals money, he needs to give it back. If one kicks a door in, he needs to repair the door. If one damages another emotionally, he needs to do all he can to repair the damage done by being patient, loving, and committed to the relationship. Deep hurt may take time to repair. Listening and admitting wrong go a long way in the healing process.

35. The offender needs to grow in Christ so he will not commit the same act again and again and again. One test of sincerity is a concerted effort to resist sinning again (Romans 6:11-14).
36. In conclusion, both the offended and the offender have the responsibility to do everything possible to repair a damaged relationship. When grace is at work, the wounded will not use pain as an excuse to withdraw love. When grace is at work, the offender will not let pride keep him from listening, admitting wrong, and helping to repair the broken relationship. Grace makes a person proactive. Grace pursues, seeks, and fights to restore a broken relationship.



8. DESCENT INTO HELL

Lesson Nine

A study on the anatomy of faction



2 Samuel 15:14

“ . . . make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.”

Bible Discovery



Look at the following verses and identify the descent into organizational hell.

37.

Read Numbers 16 and answer the following questions:

1. What complaint did the Sons of Korah bring to Moses?
2. What was the real motive behind their actions?
3. Who were they really rebelling against?
4. What other accusations did the Sons of Korah bring to Moses?
5. What was God's assessment of the situation?
6. What do you learn about faction from this story?

Read 2 Samuel 15 and answer the following questions:

7. Describe the relationship between David and Absalom up to this point.
8. How did Absalom posture himself to win the hearts of Israel?
9. Identify the muscle and bones of a faction.
10. What were the results of Absalom's *coup d'etat*?
11. What do you learn about the anatomy of faction from this story?
12. What N.T. insights do you learn about faction from these passages?

Romans 16:17-18

1 Corinthians 10:10; 3:1-3

1 Thessalonians 5:12-14

1 Thessalonians 5:15²²

Titus 3:9, 10

²² The word "idle" (avta,ktouj) means to be "unruly," that is, one who will not submit to the fundamental disciplines of life.

Descent Into Organizational Hell

Descent into organizational hell is one place we never want to be. Fights, factions, and division are from the evil one. In order to avoid organizational hell, members need to identify the anatomy of a faction:

Anatomy of Faction

1. **Weak Leadership:** Organizational hell begins with weak leadership, stress in the organization, and a multiplicity of organizational roadblocks that hinder the achievement of goals. But, in one sense, all leaders are weak. The key is NEVER USE A LEADERS WEAKNESS as a campaign for personal promotion.
2. **Organizational Stress:** When leadership becomes bogged down in administrative detail or personal problems, organizations become constipated.
3. **The Rise of Organizational Experts:** When problems arise within the organization, all kinds of experts rise to the surface that appears to have the answer for every problem in the organization.
4. **Rise of a Competitor:** Eventually, one man (or woman) will arise to challenge weak leadership, assert himself, and politic for his cause. Absalom is a good example of a competitor who arose in Israel to challenge King David.
5. **Affectionate Campaigning:** Competitors seek to win hearts by affirming the complaints of others. All of this politicking is done behind the scenes for the purpose of undermining struggling leadership.
6. **Open Conflict:** Open conflict begins when the competitor challenges existing leadership in the organization publicly. Accusations, assaults of character, exaggerations of discontent, and bitter invectives designed to create doubt about the integrity or ability of the leadership abound.
7. **Division in the Organization:** People tend to listen to criticism and to take sides. When people take sides in a dispute, the organization is divided.
8. **Organizational War:** When people take sides and decide to fight, the organization descends into organizational hell. War is hell.

Getting Out of Hell

It is not easy to lead an organization out of organizational chaos. In fact, most attempts fail. Only by grace and deep repentance can a Christian organization escape the blood bath.

A Strategy for Organizational Survival

1. **Leaders, do not give up the helm!** The first strategy is to take control of the ship, and to not resign leadership. People will be calling for your resignation. Do not resign your leadership post²³. It is no shame to be fired or to be called to a new position, but it is shameful to resign when the organization needs you the most. Take charge and use your position to provide leadership during the crisis. Often, critics in the organization will accuse leaders of being dictatorial, taking too much leadership, being too busy, and ask that leaders share responsibility with the body. This is usually not the case and should be considered a ploy by the complainers to undermine current leadership.
2. **Repentance among the Leadership:** Leadership must repent and then lead the members of the organization to repent. Organizations descend into organizational hell because leaders are blind, ignorant, too busy, naïve, or just plain neglectful of duty. Whatever the problem, the leaders in the organization need to get before God, gain perspective, and enter into a period of prayer and self-judgment. Weaknesses will surface. Failures will be identified. It is important to understand the difference between weakness and sin. The latter disqualifies a man for service; the former needs to be identified and overcome.
3. **Be filled with the Spirit:** This is more than a trite saying. Only Spirit-filled men can lead people out of organizational hell (Ephesians 5:18). This means that the SPIRIT OF PRAISE MUST REPLACE THE SPIRIT OF COMPLAINING (Psalm 50:23). Praise will release grace and enable people to see what God is doing.
4. **Open Communication:** Leaders need to consider the following as a course of action: (a) Admission of failure, (b) asking forgiveness of the body, (c) commitment to relieve the stresses in the organization and to give up-to-date reports on progress made, (d) request that the members make a commitment to be patient, avoid gossip, and continue their present duties while the leaders seek to find solutions to the present crisis.

²³ Do not resign your leadership position unless you have sinned against God (theft, adultery, fraud, etc.). If you have sinned against God, and are morally disqualified from service, you must resign from the Christian organization you have served. Do not resign because of weakness in your leadership. Weakness can be repented of and corrected. But, sin, though it can be forgiven, disqualifies a man from service.

5. **Confrontation:** Leaders need to go one-on-one behind the scenes with the competitors, proud experts, and affectionate campaigners that sought to undermine the authority of leadership. They need to be confronted and rebuked for not handling the difficulties in the organization with integrity or by seeking to work with the leaders for godly, mutual solutions. Leaders need to ask competitors in the organization to either (a) stay be quiet, and support the leadership, or (b) leave the organization. Staying and causing more division is not an option. At this point, leaders need to follow Paul's admonition to warn a divisive person once, or twice, and after that to shun him (Titus 3:9, 10). Refusal to submit to qualified leaders, even though weak, is grounds for dismissal (Hebrews 13:17; Titus 3:9, 10; 1 John 3). A study of Solomon's rise to power reveals that he had to clean house before the nation could go forward (1 Kings 1-3). Timothy had to chase divisive men out of the church (1 Timothy 1). Titus, likewise, had to drive unqualified men out of the church in Crete (Titus 1-3).
6. **Decision:** Good leadership will analyze the problems, brainstorm for solutions, and make decisions to relieve stress in the organization. **Decision relieves a crisis.**
7. **Revisit the Vision:** Descent into organizational hell means that the survivors must revisit the original vision of the organization and begin to dream about what they can accomplish together for the Lord. Through prayer, set new goals and objectives.
8. **Train People:** People do not know how to treat weak leaders. They only know how to criticize and attack weakness. Leaders must teach people how to treat their weaknesses and how to approach them when they want to correct them. There is a godly way to correct leaders and then there is the fleshly way to attack them. Teach them God's way.

A Warning: No matter how hard you try, sometimes the worst will happen. deacon / elder teams are often dominated by pride, jealousy, and a desire to win even if it means splitting a church. Humble, sincere, genuine pastors are not welcome in government churches.

Over 1,100 Baptist pastors lose their pulpit every month. A pastor will not survive if his income comes from the church and the deacon team is led by a proud rich man. A pastor will not survive if the church acts like a democracy where carnal men and women are allowed to vote. Moreover, it is difficult to survive if the issue is a third rail issue where the pastor is fighting prejudice, misinformation, disinformation, and a brain washed community.

Many churches do not want a man of God as a pastor. They want a man they can control and manipulate. If such happens, walk away with your head up.



9. MANAGING WEAKNESSES

Lesson Eight

A study on managing weaknesses in leaders



1 Samuel 24:6

“And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he *is* the anointed of the LORD.”

Bible Discovery



Look at the following verses and identify the principles of restoration, that is, the principles that help repair a broken relationship. Read 1 Samuel 24 and answer the following questions:

1. Why was David in the cave?
2. Why was Saul in the cave?
3. What did David's men want David to do?
4. What had Saul done to David and his men that justified their suggestion?
5. What did David do instead of killing Saul?
6. What happened to David's conscience as a result of cutting off the hem of Saul's garment?
7. Why did David not destroy Saul?
8. What was the result of David's restraint before his men, before Saul and his men, and before the nation? (think).

Reflection

1. In your opinion, what lesson did David teach his men about handling weaknesses leaders?
2. In your opinion, how did this lesson help David survive the civil war caused by Absalom during the Absalom revolt (2 Samuel 15-18)?
3. In your opinion, what should we learn from David about treating the weaknesses of those in authority over us?

4.

Managing Weaknesses

1. A weakness is not the same as sin. It is not a sin to have a weakness, but neither is it a virtue. Sin is an act of rebellion against a moral commandment of God such as lying, fraud, adultery, or stealing. A weakness is a fault or defect in one's character or administration.
2. A weakness does not disqualify a man from service. The trouble with weakness is that we all have one or two or three. In fact, there is no such thing as leader without a weakness. All are weak. Weaknesses may hinder effective service, but they do not necessarily disqualify a man from spiritual service. Sin, however, disqualifies a man from spiritual leadership. A man need not fear weakness, but he had better fear sin. Sin of a moral nature is a reason for dismissal in a Christian organization. Weakness is a need for prayer and growth.
3. The weaknesses of a leader must be guarded. Organizations must learn to build on the strength and gifts of their leaders, not their weaknesses. Weaknesses can destroy effectiveness. A wise management team will build on strengths of its officers and come along side to prevent individual weaknesses from dominating the team.
4. The weakness of a leader must be protected. That is, never turn the dogs (or sheep) loose on the weakness of a leader. David protected Saul from the animus of his men. He did not turn them loose on Saul.
5. Strengths and weaknesses must be known and understood by other men of integrity. Every leader should be able to say, "Do not let my weaknesses dominate this team." For example, if a man is not a diplomat, do not compromise the organization by sending him to mediate disputes.
6. Strengths must be known and set free to operate within the organization. We guard weakness, but build on the gifts and training of individuals. We must do everything possible to make sure people are serving in the area of their giftedness. Furthermore, we must put the majority of our effort into figuring out how to set men free to serve rather than how to restrain them in their service.

A Moment of Truth at En Gedi

(1 Samuel 24)

Have you ever had someone who maliciously hurt you, and then in a sudden change of circumstances, their future was in your hands? David had that kind of opportunity at En Gedi.

At Nob and Gath David faced the enemy within--his flesh, his fears, and his unbelief. There he learned to trust God. At En Gedi, he faced his enemy without--Saul, his pursuer. At Engedi, the nation learned to trust David.

While in the cave at En Gedi (I Sam 24), David faced the greatest test of his life--a challenge greater than that of Goliath, a conflict greater than the hurricane of fear that gripped him at Gath. This test that proved his moral superiority over his companion, his qualification to be the leader of God's people.

In I Samuel 22 and 23 we see a vivid contrast between David and Saul—a moral difference that screamed for a change in the leadership.

The Difference Between Saul and David

At En Gedi, David we see David at his best and Saul at his worse. David sought the safety of those between him and Saul. Saul sought to destroy those between him and David. David saved the people of Keilah, even though they betrayed him; Saul destroyed the priests at Nob, though none of them betrayed him. David risked his life to save his countrymen. Saul risked everyone's life to save his own. David sought the Lord and the wellbeing of his people. Saul sought the wellbeing of himself and the destruction of David. Though David had failed sadly at Nob and Gath, he recovered and grew; Saul, however, plummeted into the depths of depravity. David was governed by truth and selflessness. Saul was governed by lies and selfishness.

Background to the Confrontation at En Gedi

- David fled from Saul to Nob, to Gath, to the Cave of Adullam (21:1ff).
- David escorted his parents to Moab to secure their safety (22:3).
- Saul listened to Doeg the Edomite and executed the priests (22:6ff).
- Abiathar, the priest, escaped and joined David (22:30).
- David left the cave and saved the men of Keilah (23:1).
- Saul pursued David at Keilah (23:7).
- David retreated from Keilah and hid in the Dessert of Ziph (23:8ff).

- David and Jonathan met to reaffirm their covenant.
- Saul pursued David into the desert and almost captured David when a report of a Philistine invasion reached Saul.
- Saul temporarily halted his pursuit of David, then resumed it.
- David hid in the sheepfolds of En Gedi from Saul (23:29).

David in the Sheepfolds at En Gedi

En Gedi is a rugged, mountainous region southeast of Jerusalem. Wild goats still live in the area called "Ibex Springs." While fleeing from Saul, David and some of his men hid in one of the ancient caves in the area. Caves sheltered the sheep from the scorching heat of the mid-day, desert sun. Saul, suffering from constipation, "the curse of kings", went to relieve himself in the very cave that David and his men were hiding.

David's Test

Maliciously and relentlessly, Saul pursued David. Because he could not catch him, Saul never possessed the opportunity to kill him. In this chapter (I Samuel 24), the shoe was on the other foot. David was presented with a perfect opportunity to destroy the man that was seeking to kill him. It seemed so right, so perfect, and so God-ordained. What a critical moment in David's history! David faced a decision that would make or break him, and he only had a few minutes to sort through the issues. It is here that we see grace working in him.

The Principle Tested

Do the ends justify the means? With one stroke of the sword, Saul's tyranny would tumble. David could be lifted to the throne. With one stroke, the nation could be brought back to the Lord. Would David wield his deadly sword to his own advantage against his superior who intended to hurt him?

Ten Logical Reasons Why David Could Have Destroyed Saul

1. Saul gave the orders to execute the innocent priests of Nob (22:16). It would be considered just for David to execute the murderous king by most men?
2. Saul was bent on revenge. Saul sided with the false witness of Doeg, the wicked Edomite. He disbelieved the noble witness of Ahimelech the priest. He murdered 85 priests in cold blood and all the innocent women, and children, and babies at Nob. Did not David have a right to execute justice?

It was at this time that David wrote Psalm 52. David reveals the true character of the Edomite:

- He was a powerful, but evil man.
- He was proud man.

- His tongue practiced deceit.
- He would proceed to fail and fall, but the righteous will flourish.

3. Saul lied to David and refused to give him his daughter in marriage (18:19). He tried to arrest David unjustly (19:18). He hurled javelins at him (18:10), broke promises to him (19:6), and issued a warrant out for David's arrest and execution. Saul was a vicious enemy.

4. After David courageously delivered the citizens of Keilah from the sword of the Philistines, David graciously removed himself from them that their lives might not be in jeopardy from Saul's perverted acts of justice. Saul rewarded David with a life threatening chase (23:1-5). Didn't he have a right to protect himself and his men?

5. The ingrates at Keilah could make a man bitter. They rewarded good with evil. Because their treacherous hearts sided with Saul, the men of Keilah released information as to David's positions. Shouldn't David let bitterness determine his sense of justice?

8. Even the residents of Ziph, who aligned themselves with Saul, made life hard for David and his men. By sending daily reconnaissance messages to Saul, the fugitives barely escaped the peril of a battle among their own countrymen (23:19-28). Like a pesty fly, Saul pursued David. If Saul were dead, fewer people would be endangered, correct?

9. God promised David the throne. When Saul came into the cave, the timing seemed right. Saul's vulnerability in the cave appeared to be a gift from God, an act of providence. One stroke and David could say "Good-bye" to the life of a fugitive, "Good-bye" to trouble; "Good-bye" to hunger. Pressures would cease and the pleasures of court life would be David's to enjoy.

10. All of David's men agreed that it was God's timing to kill Saul: "This is the very day the Lord spoke of when he had said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hand for you to deal with as you wish.'" With the circumstances right, and his advisors all in agreement, why shouldn't David strike his adversary to the ground?

All these reasons in a moment of time tested the principles on which David rested. It tested his faith, his character, and his patience. Yes, God was testing David, not to make him fall, but to make him stand.

Why didn't David execute Saul when he had the chance?

David's Principle

David was not governed by circumstances. The pressure of his peers did not direct him. He was not mastered by his emotions. David was a man that made choices based on principles. One law kept David from striking Saul,

"The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him, for he is the ANOINTED OF THE LORD."

Application: All of God's people need to learn this lesson. *Never, never, never use an opportunity to pummel God's leader in his moment of weakness.* Always put that razor sharp tongue back in its sheath. If God wants a man out of the way, he can do it himself. Do not become the instrument of dethroning a leader. It will never be a blessing and the curse will return on your own head--because, when you are in a position of authority and you are weak, your previous actions will become a model for others to target your weaknesses. *When you take the low road, others will use your example as an excuse to take the low road.* When you choose unjust means to achieve just ends, others will use unjust means to justify unjust ends. *What you allow in moderation will become an excuse for others to do in excess.* Selah.

Little Did David Know

What David did not know was that one day (in the Absalom revolt) *he would be weak and vulnerable, and a strong one would seek to take his life.* Fortunately for him, his model treatment of Saul taught his men the greatest lesson they would ever learn about following: ***Always protect your leaders when they are weak and vulnerable.*** Never become an instrument to destroy God's anointed, because if you do, you will be teaching others how to treat you when you are weak.

Reflection: What will happen to a church that learns to support weak pastors, deacons, and Sunday School teachers? Could it be that God gives us flawed leaders (not sinful and rebellious ones) so that we may learn how to be good followers? Yes, we need better leaders; but we also need better followers.

Do not hear what is not being said. There is a time and a way to confront *sinful* leaders trapped in a moral quagmire. *We are not called to protect the sins of our leaders, but we are called to protect their weaknesses.*

A Moment of Truth

Ridding the country of Saul was a real temptation, but it would have been mutiny and murder. Instead, David cut off the robe of the king. In fact, the moment it was done, David was pricked to the core with conviction and remorse: "Afterward, David was conscience stricken for having cut off the king's robe . . ." (24:4).

What David realized was a truth about himself and it was this: his deed was an act of disdain, and act of hatred, an act of hostility. Though he believed he should not lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed, his little garment-cutting was evidence that his heart was full of anger and bitterness. Cutting the

king's garment seems like a small thing to us who enjoy "freedom of speech." But to David, it revealed a major flaw in his heart, and it grieved him. As soon as he did it, he knew he was wrong, and as soon as he did it, he repented.

Reflection: Oh, the little knives of slander, the little scissors of gossip, the little pin pricks of rumor that we use to destroy the reputation of our brethren. How ugly they are to the one who practices religion of heart. This is the difference between true Christianity and mere religion. The latter practices outward conformity to law, the former involves purification of the soul.

Reflection: If David was convicted of this act towards a treacherous Saul, how much more should we be convicted of criticizing our brethren who make human mistakes, but are seeking to please Christ? Who appointed us to judge our brethren? Should we not seek to make them successful for our Lord?

Results of Passing the Test

David passed the test in action, but he failed in his heart. Never the less, in his grace, God used the affair to demonstrate David's integrity to his men and to the nation. Can you imagine what the headlines in the Jerusalem Gazette were the next morning?

1. David's restraint proved to Saul that David was not his enemy. "I cut off the corner of your robe, but I did not kill you." If he was close enough to cut off his robe, he was close enough to slit his throat, and Saul knew it.
2. David's act demonstrated to Saul's army that he was not the disloyal renegade that others made him out to be. To those rugged and heartless warriors, the garment between David's fingers substantiated David's honor. Not only this, they heard Saul's own testimony, "You are more righteous than I" (24:17). Accordingly, they heard David's oath of loyalty to Saul and his descendants (24:21, 22).
3. The army gossiped this event to everyone they met. Israel heard about the grace and loyalty of David. When he became king, the nation followed him.

Remember the major lesson: Never, never, never "touch the Lord's anointed".

Nobody raises his own reputation by lowering others.

How to Conduct a Disagreement

God promised David the kingship. But Saul was the anointed, unrighteous king that held the throne of Israel. Saul was trying to kill David. In the cave at Engedi, David had the opportunity to seize the throne by *coup d'etat*. He did not take the low road by killing Saul (I Samuel 24). Again in the desert of Ziph, David had another opportunity to end Saul's nasty pursuit by running him through with a spear (I Samuel 26). Again, David refused to touch the Lord's anointed. Likewise, there will be times when a believer will find himself at odds with God-ordained authority. *The way one conducts a disagreement is just as important as the issues of the disagreement itself.* How does one handle a disagreement with God-ordained authority? What is the high road?

Don't Take the Low Road

1. Do not take your disagreement to others. David did not go around the country bad-mouthing Saul. He took his disagreement directly to Saul. Take your issues directly to the one with whom you disagree, not to your friends (Matthew 18:15-20 and James 5:9).
2. Do not seek fellowship with the malcontent (1 Timothy 5:22; Titus 3:9,10). David did not go around the country stirring up a civil war. When we criticize authority by casting aspersions against them or by condoning open criticism, we are granting permission for others to attack leadership. David did not turn his men loose on Saul.
2. Do not write a nasty letter. Angry letters never solve the problem, they only wound and hurt the people who receive them. Writing critical letters is the coward's way out! If you have a grievance, have the courage to talk face to face. Every letter you is a permanent record of your criticism and it can be used as evidence against you. When you are thankful, put it in writing so it can be enjoyed for a long time. There is no record of David ever sending a grievance letter to Saul, but we do have the record of his thankfulness in the Psalms.
3. Do not quit or divorce (Proverbs 25:19). Quitting is nothing but an adult temper tantrum which destroys whatever integrity one has gained in the eyes of others. Quitting without talking is a tactic of "revenge" designed to hurt the one with whom one disagrees. Whether we realize it or not, it is emotional blackmail. Jesus did not quit when his Father refused to let the cup pass from Him. When we disagree, God is not calling us to quit. He is calling us to faithfulness, love, and endurance (Proverbs 20:6 II Timothy 4:5). You may feel like quitting and you may have a right to quit, but real love does not give up on people until it has exhausted the remedies of righteousness (I Corinthians 13:6-8).

4. Do not compile a list of grievances. A list only proves that we are bitter by choice and that we have failed to deal with our hurts over a period of time in a Scriptural manner (Matthew 18:15-20).

5. Do not come in anger or with a harsh rebuke towards an authority figure (I Timothy 5:1). Emotion only puts up a wall between us and the one with whom we disagree. People do not hear very well when people are red with anger. Emotional blackmail is a poor strategy for change. It will backfire in our face and produces relational death. We must never bad-mouth our leaders. Even after Saul's death, David spoke well of Saul (II Samuel 1). Always approach authority gently and respectfully.

6. Do not view leaders as an enemy. God establishes authority (Romans 13:1-7). Just because there is a problem in an organization does not mean the authority is the cause. Israel had problems even when David, God's anointed, administrated the kingdom. We must learn to deal with issues without attacking the integrity of people in authority.

Take the High Road

1. Go to your God-given authority. David took his complaint to Saul directly. It was not easy, but he managed to do it twice (I Samuel 24 & 26). Determine to take the long-term road to reconciliation. It takes time and patience to work through some issues, but reconciliation is worth it. David waited 10 years for a resolution. Christ endured Calvary in order to bring about reconciliation between God and man.

2. Go respectfully and politely. "A soft answer turns away wrath" (Proverbs 15:3). "Do not rebuke an older harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father," exhorted Paul (1 Timothy 5:1). People in leadership positions cannot hear what you are trying to say when you are yelling in their face. Why should a leader listen to someone who has lost his objectivity?

3. Go in hope (1Corinthians 13:5-8)? Too often, the discontented write authorities off by precluding that they are "unapproachable," that they will not listen, or that they will not be received. Go believing the best and you may be surprised.

4. Go and share the facts as you see them. Avoid speaking in generalities such as "things are always wrong around here," or "you're unscriptural." Be specific. Generalities only cast shadows of doom over issues. No one can resolve a generality, but specifics can be dealt with.

5. Come as a team member, humbly, and submissively, not as an adversary (I Timothy 5:1 ". . . entreat as a father"). Why should a leader change in order to suit an opponent? Contestants do not want authorities to win but to fail. A wise

leader will never do what adversaries want. When you come, come as a team member willing to be a part of the solution.

6. Rest in the Lord. Let God be God. After you have shared your concerns leave it with God and your leader. God is able to bring about change if that change will further His glory. Remember, God did not remove all of David's conflicts immediately. Rather, He used them to build his character, and He may do the same with you. If this be the case, let God work things out in His way and in His timing.

7. Support your Leader. (Hebrews 13:17) It is their job to lead; it is your job to follow, to protect their weaknesses, and to make them successful. David protected Saul from the murdering intent of Abishai, and we should protect our leaders and support their plans. Happy submission is God's way of developing our integrity even if we have to compromise our preferences. The only exception to submission is if we are asked to compromise our conscience. In this case, it would be better to obey God rather than men (Acts 5:29). We all have preferences, if ours is not accepted, we must support the preferences of our leaders. When we are asked to lead, others will need to submit to our preferences.

If we strongly object to a decision based on a clear, Biblical principle and feel that will sin by submitting to those in authority, it would be better to leave quietly, than to split or tear up an organization. But even here one has to be careful (Numbers 11:4-6) lest the pettiness and peevishness of the flesh direct one's interest. David's time was a time when "men did that which was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Leaving should only be done after we have exhausted every means of communication over much time, and after we are convinced that there are moral problems in leaders or obvious doctrinal errors on the essentials of the faith (Ephesians 4:1-5). However, we must not mistake differences of opinion as errant. In 99% of the cases we would be better off by tolerating a difference in an organization than to separate from the good of an organization.

Tough Lessons of Leadership

1. There is a difference between representative leadership, leadership that seeks to represent sheep in the fold, and directive leadership, leadership that seeks to represent God to the sheep. The difference between the two is the difference between being a servant of the sheep and a servant of God.
2. Leadership is different than serving. Serving requires submission to authority. Leading requires the courage to take authority and use it to expand the church.
3. The critical skill of serving requires spontaneous submission and obedience, while critical leading requires deliberate vision and long-term planning.
4. All leaders have weaknesses. These weaknesses need to be known and understood for effective teamwork. It is essential that those under authority learn two critical skills in weakness management:

Do not allow the weakness of another team member to dominate the agenda. For instance: Some men are motivated by fear. They are fearful about decisions, plans, and changes in directions. Their first initial response to everything is a veto. For other deacons to allow that brother's fear to determine a course of action will only result in stagnation of the organization.

Another example: A man may have very low standards materially. The car he drives is old, the clothes he wears are sloppy, and his front lawn is full of weeds. This brother may never see the urgency of painting the auditorium. To allow this brother's lack of excellence to discourage the spending of money on upgrading the church is allowing his weakness to dominate the agenda.

Secondly, it is important to avoid any action of dethroning a weak leader. That is, always protect the backside of a leader. If you fail to protect the weakness of a leader, then you will only grant permission for others to attack and expose your weaknesses. "Love covers a multitude of sins."

If a fellow leader's weakness is dominating the direction of a team, he must be gently reminded that he is in the way of progress. Do so firmly, respectfully, but courageously.



10. APPEALING TO AUTHORITY

Lesson Eleven

A study on managing weaknesses in leaders



1 Timothy 5:1

“Rebuke not an elder, but entreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren;”

Bible Discovery



Look at the following Exodus 18 and study the concept of the Godly appeal.

1. What was the relationship between Jethro and Moses?
2. What kind of emotions do you see during their greeting each other?
3. What kind of man was Jethro?
4. What problem did he observe about Moses administration?
5. In your opinion, what kind of problems resulted from Moses inefficient management?
6. How did Jethro approach Moses to correct the problem?
7. What do you learn about how the godly appeal from Jethro's example?
8. What principles can be extracted from this study on "How to Appeal to Authority?"

The Godly Appeal

Do you have trouble addressing needs to one in authority? Maybe he is a teacher, a father, a Sunday school teacher, or a coach. If so, God is seeking to teach you the art of the godly appeal.

The way you manage the deficiencies of a person in authority is critical to your future. Miriam rebuked Moses and was immediately stricken with leprosy (Numbers 12). Absalom challenged his father and lost his life (II Samuel 15-18). Make no mistake about it: addressing the needs of a person in authority is not a task for a simpleton. If you mismanage the short fallings of those in authority over you, you may not escape unscathed!

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, came to visit Moses at Mt. Sinai. During this visit, he observed the defective management Moses. He wisely challenged Moses' plan, and then offered one of his own. His approach to correct the situation was not only acceptable, it benefited Moses and the nation.

At times you will observe ways to improve a ministry, and you may need to approach a spiritual leader about the need for change. When you do, make sure you follow Jethro's model. **You can master the godly appeal by imitating the following model of Jethro in Exodus 18.**

Come as a friend, not as an enemy.

"And Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and did obeisance, and kissed him; and they asked each other of their welfare; and they came into the tent" (18:17).

Jethro was not an enemy, but a trusted friend, a father-in-law deeply committed to the success of Moses. Because he was a friend, it was not difficult for Moses to listen to Jethro's assessment and his advice. Why should a man in authority listen to the criticism of a person who has positioned himself as an adversary? If you have something to say, make sure you are coming alongside as a friend, not as a foe; as a "paraclete" not with a pair of cleats. Leaders need and want help, but they have a sixth sense about wolves in sheep's clothing.

Come as a spiritual partner, not as an opponent.

"And Jethro rejoiced for all the goodness which the LORD had done to Israel . . ." (18:9).

Jethro not only had Moses' best interest in mind, he wanted what was best for Israel. A competitor's only concern is scoring over his opponent. Why should a leader listen to people whose only ambition is their own success? If you need to

correct one in authority, make sure you have the best in mind for the people of God. This is especially true during times of growth and change.

Come in fellowship with God, not in fellowship with Satan

"And Jethro said, 'Blessed be the LORD . . . I know that the LORD is greater than all gods . . .' And Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." (Exodus 18:10).

Jethro was a priest of Midian. He worshiped the YHWH of Israel. Somehow, it is easy for a leader to listen to a man of integrity, but it is extremely difficult to accept the advice from one who does not know God's Word, is unfaithful in the simple duties of life, and whose character is dubious at best. If you have not spent time in the company of God, do not attempt to rebuke a "father figure." You will lose.

Come with an open mind, not a clinched fist.

"And when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he did to the people, he said,

What is this thing that thou doest to the people? why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto even?" (18:14).

The only way some people know how to handle problems is by turning every difference into a slug fest. Jethro did not prejudge Moses. He observed a problem, and then asked questions in order to ascertain the facts in the case. Having gathered the reasons for Moses' actions from Moses himself, Jethro was then able to form a judgment. It is important that when you approach a leader that you go with an open mind, some questions, and a listening ear. Sometimes a leader has good reasons for doing what he's doing. Gather the facts, or you may commit the error of presumption:

"He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Proverbs 18:13).

Come with sweet reasonableness, not negative emotion.

It is interesting to observe what Jethro did not do. He did not get angry or try to use emotion to persuade Moses. He did not give him a piece of his mind, nor did he bring a charge against his character. Why should Moses listen to a man who has lost his objectivity? Would you listen? Leaders are nonplussed by anger. Like a scorpion sting, anger only wounds and hurts. If you approach your "Moses" about a problem, make sure you are filled with the Spirit and objectivity. Guard the means: "*Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as if he were your father*" (I Timothy 5:1).

Come with a plan, not a list of complaints

"And Moses' father-in-law said unto him, 'The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee; thou art not able to perform it thyself alone.' " (18:17).

Jethro did not present Moses with a list of complaints, nor did he dismantle his character because there was a problem with his management style. Rather, Jethro reasoned with Moses and discussed with him the cause and effect of his choices. He suggested a plan to correct his over loaded schedule. It made sense to Moses, and he changed. Hopelessness is created by over-generalizing problems, denigrating another's character, and by casting the shadows of gloom over issues. A man of God can relate to reason, but emotions only inflame perceptions.

"The heart of the righteous studieth to answer: but the mouth of the wicked poureth out evil things" (Proverbs 15:28).

Go to make your leader successful.

"Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward...and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" (18:19).

Jethro did not condemn Moses and then walk away leaving him feeling guilty and flogged. He offered him a strategy to resolve help relieve Moses busy schedule and the frustration existing among the people. His goal was to make Moses successful, not to challenge his authority. If you really have the best interests of your "Moses" and your "Israel" in mind, then spend some time developing a plan. Write it down on paper, and make yourself available to head the task force. Handing your "Moses" a list of chores to do only adds to his frustration. Any idiot can tell a leader he needs to do more. Your "Moses" is not interested in a list of complaints, but he would be interested in a thought out plan, especially if you are willing to be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.

"So Moses hearkened to the voice of his father-in-law, and did all that he had said" (15:24).

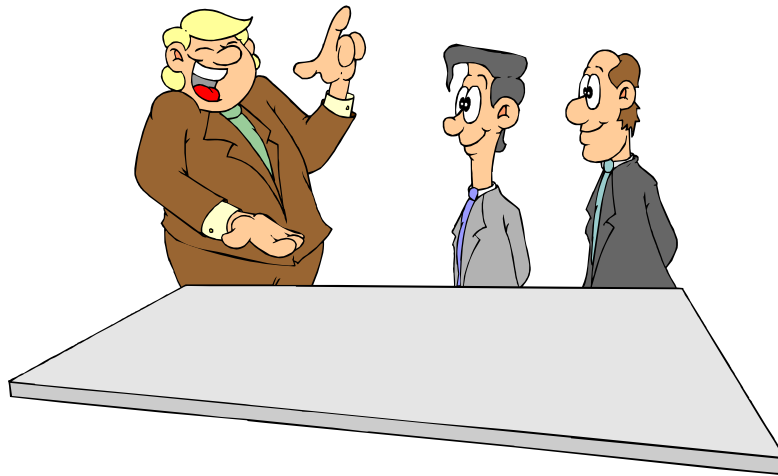
If you become aware of a problem and you feel the need to correct a man like Moses, remember, **the manner in which you approach an issue is just as important as the issue itself.** Do not write a letter or come to your leader as a foe in a spirit of anger with an attack on his plan. Rather, come as a friend and a partner, in the spirit of meekness, and with sweet reasonableness. How can he resist a godly appeal? It worked with Jethro, and it will work for you.



11. THE ART OF MEETINGS

Lesson Twelve

A study on the skills of managing meetings



1 Corinthians 11:17

“Now in this that I declare *unto you* I praise *you* not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.”

Bible Discovery



Look at the following passages and discuss what you learn about meetings.

1. What was going wrong when the Corinthians met together (1 Corinthians 11:17ff)?
2. What good things can come of a church meeting (Acts 4:32-5:12; Acts 12; Acts 13; Acts 15).
3. What kind of meetings should Christians conduct in the church (Acts 2:42)?
4. What are some of the rules that guided the early church (1 Corinthians 14:26ff).
5. In your opinion, what are the dos and don'ts for Christian meetings?

Love Meetings and Make Progress

It was said, "God so loved the world that he did not send a committee."

Great things, as well as stupid things, are decided by committees. A church can certainly slide backward as a result of meetings, but it can never go forward without them.

The Bright Side of a Meeting

How many times have we gone to a church meeting and come out so "fired up" that we felt like a blast furnace ready to ignite the world with the torch of the gospel? There was such a meeting in the Scriptures, "After they had prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the Word of God boldly" (Acts 4:31). What a meeting! Can't you feel the heat and the unity of those early saints? Great power and great grace was upon them all. And it happened because the believers met together.

The Darkside of a Meeting

More often than not, we have come away from a meeting at the church confused, bewildered, and frustrated. Instead of setting the world on fire for Christ, you felt like burning a brother at the stake. Have you ever come away from a meeting sizzling with anger like that? If you're human, you have. Even the apostles, Paul and Barnabus, had "such sharp disagreement that they parted company." This tragic division happened at a meeting of two noble brothers.

Because Christians are constantly fighting sin, Satan, and the world, meetings have a tendency to go downhill as soon as members arrive.

There is a tendency for every meeting to drift toward collective incompetence (George Keifer).

Anyone taken as an individual is tolerably sensible and reasonable, but as a member of a crowd he at once becomes a blockhead (Friedrich Schiller).

Every man hath a fool in one sleeve, and he is encouraged to appear in meetings (George Herbert).

All assemblages of men are different from the men themselves. Properly managed, a meeting can achieve extraordinary results, but just as often, decisions made and actions taken by a group of persons are likely to be less competent than those made or taken by the very same individuals acting alone (George Keifer).

Get together a hundred men or two men, however sensible they may be, and you are very likely to have a mob (Samuel Johnson).
(Quotes from: "Strategy of Meetings")

Therefore, everyone should seek to make every meeting a winner. By a winner, I mean the goals of the organization are advanced; bad ideas are eliminated; God's principles are applied; disunity is minimized, and Christ is glorified.

Therefore, the biggest mistake we can make is to abdicate our responsibility at a meeting.

We must begin to see every meeting as our meeting; as an opportunity to glorify Christ; as a chance to strengthen relationships; as a duty to fulfill our part in the Great Commission. We have an obligation to make a meeting successful, to shape it, and move it in the direction of its objective. Like in the game of football, touchdowns are scored when all 11 members carry out their assignment. A church meeting becomes successful when we prepare ourselves mentally by prayer, take responsibility for the success of a meeting, and take control of our own attitude. Ultimately this is the only attitude we can control.

How to Make Meetings Successful!

1. *Prepare more: meet less.* Hugh Brackenridge said, "In order to speak short, think long." Sometimes less is more. Meeting less and planning more is the first basic rule for meeting management. Holding a meeting without an agenda, or without written proposals is about as vain as trying to paddle a canoe on ice.

2. *Cultivate a good attitude prior to a meeting.* If it is difficult to make a meeting successful with a good attitude, it is next to impossible to make a meeting successful with a bad attitude. If we want a meeting to be successful, we must first entertain noble thoughts.

3. *Limit the number of objectives.* An agenda with discussion, decision, and delegation objectives will only be a circus. By limiting the number of objectives, the team members can better prepare and focus.

4. *Discipline corporately, or else we will self destruct.* In any given meeting we are wrestling with personal emotions, irrelevant issues, and inconsistent interests. A team needs to work at its corporate discipline. We can't achieve our objectives without controlling a meeting. *Control* is not a bad word. People need rigorous self-control of their own emotions, words and ideas so that the discussion will be focused. If a meeting is to keep from self-destructing, the team needs to set limitations on itself so the issues are controlled:

- Limit the number of tasks or issues to be discussed.
- Limit the number of participants.
- Grant sufficient time for adequate preparation.
- Create a proper environment for success through education and prayer.

5. *Know the objective of the meeting.* It is genius to visualize the objective. Strength and energy and clarity of purpose flow from it. A high performance meeting develops because the members clearly understand the objective, agree with it, and force themselves to canoe up river. Knowing what we want to accomplish is a cardinal rule for a successful meeting. We must avoid setting goals, brainstorming, delegating tasks, making decisions, developing relationships, and socializing all in one meeting. Too many objectives spell D-I-S-A-S-T-E-R.

6. *Define success.* A successful meeting advances the cause of Christ. We must ask, "Did our meeting succeed?" If a meeting is designated for brainstorming and quality ideas are generated, then the meeting succeeded. If a meeting is called for delegating, and the responsibility ends up in the corporate lap of the committee, then the meeting failed. If the objective of the meeting is to make a

decision, then we can't adjourn until the decision is made. How many times have we attended a meeting where no decision was made? Frustrating, isn't it? Success means achieving the *objective* of the meeting.

7. Battle to keep irrelevant issues, inconsistent interests, and personal needs from sidetracking the dialogue away from the objective of the meeting. Meetings tend to degenerate the moment people arrive. This is even more true for churches since we have a spiritual enemy. We need to work hard to keep team members from being distracted. Good planning overcomes distractions.

8. *Do our homework.* When we complete our assignment, we are make a statement to the other team members that their time is important, that the team purpose is important, and that we are important to the other team members. **Nothing will raise the morale of the group more than an assignment well done.**

9. Get organized:

- Notify participants in advance by phone or postcard. People forget easily.
- Make sure the essential people are there who will help achieve the objective.
- Prepare an agenda. Which can give control and direction to the meeting.
- Limit the participants the smaller the better. A committee of 8 people has 42 relationships that must be primed, prepared, or repaired. The larger the group, the more difficult it is to achieve the objective.
- Organize the details: chairs, tables, papers, refreshments, speakers, sound equipment, overheads, etc.

10. *Manage the environment.* One manager described this story: "We were having a meeting one time and a fly came into the room. After it went from nose to nose, everyone began trying to exterminate the little critter. By the end of the meeting there had been at least 45 slaps on the table, 22 crushing blows to the back of the hand, and everyone in the room had the agenda notes rolled up into deadly weapons. The colossal success of the meeting was to have finally downed the aerial pest."

Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savour: so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour (Eccl. 10:1).

Little distractions can spoil even a well-planned meeting. Be careful. Inappropriate dress, untended children, shuffling of papers and ringing telephones can cause a meeting to degenerate. Since the cause of Christ is so important, teams must plan their meetings with the least amount of

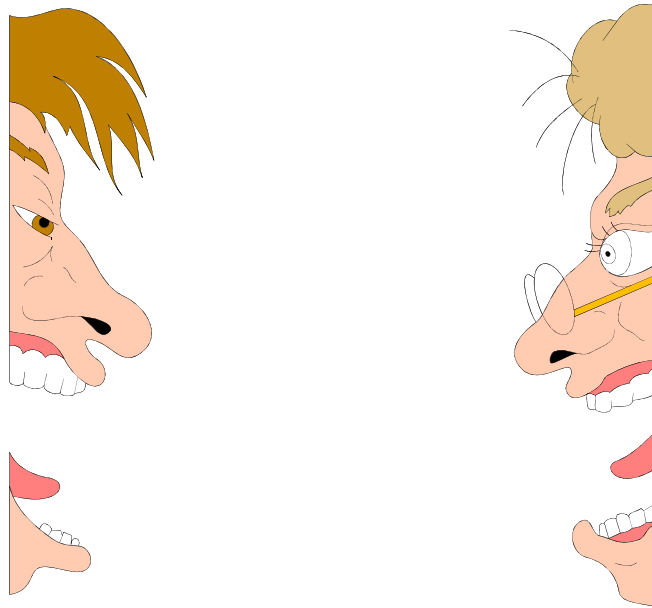
environmental distractions. Following these principles will not only help our organizations survive, but to thrive through meetings.



12. THE NEED FOR GRACE

Lesson Eleven

A study on Repentance and Forgiveness



2 Timothy 2:25

“In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them **repentance** to the acknowledging of the truth;”

Bible Discovery



Look at the following verses and discuss the true nature of repentance and forgiveness.

What do you learn about the true nature of repentance from the following verses:

Leviticus 6:1-6

Isaiah 55:7

Matthew 5:23-25

Luke 3:8-14

Luke 17:3

Luke 18:13

2 Corinthians 7:10

What do you learn about the true nature of forgiveness?

Genesis 50:17

Joshua 24:19-20

Luke 17:3-6

Matthew 18:22-35

Luke 23:34

Rare Repentance

Real repentance is rare. It is rare because it takes grace to respond correctly when one is wrong. The natural tendency of human heart is to defend itself and to resist contrition. It takes God's grace working in the heart to admit wrong and to do all that is possible to repair broken relationships. Rare repentance, God's repentance, has the following attributes:

1. Rare repentance begins with deep emotional conviction: "it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis 6:6). The word "grieved" (atsab) means to "be pained or grieved or hurt." It is translated "sorrow" in Genesis 3:16. Rare repentance occurs because emotions are triggered by an alarm coming from the conscience. If there are no tears, there is no repentance.
2. But, repentance is more than emotion. Esau cried, but he did not repent (Hebrews 12:17).
3. Rare repentance involves going to the one that is hurt. It is rare, because most people hide instead of going to the ones they hurt. When grace is a work, the offender musters the courage to go to offended one in order to restore the relationship (Matthew 5:24).
4. Rare repentance involves listening to one hurt. The hardest part of repentance is listening to the injured party. Nature wants to avoid the anger of hurt people, to whitewash the error, to escape listening to the pain caused in others. Though it is difficult to listen to the pain and hurt and anger of the wronged, it is the right thing to do. Part of repentance is listening to the pain of others; trying to understand their hurt, and learning what was said or done that damaged the relationship. Godly men and women learn from the pain of others.
5. Practically, this means the errant must set aside the time to go to the injured, look him in the eye, and listen to the hurt. I suggest the offending party say, "Thank you for sharing with me how I hurt you. I promise to carefully weigh what you say."
6. Debating, explaining, arguing, or defending self is the opposite of listening. Listening is not indicative of total agreement. But, it does place value on the relationship.
7. One time I was with a couple headed for divorce. I asked them to give me a shot at trying to mediate their dispute. It took five days! It took me two days to get them to listen to each other. As soon as one started sharing, the

other started defending. I had to get out a timer, let one talk for five minutes, and challenge the other to listen for five minutes. When the bell went off, the other talked while their spouse listened. Teeth would grind, eye brows twisted, and wrinkles would form on the face of the one forced to listen. Listening was torture. This went on for two days. By the end of the two days, grace was at work. They learned they could listen without dying. In fact, for the first time in their marriage, they actually admitted they understood the other person's point of view. On the fifth day, we sought solutions. Amazingly, both agreed they were the problem in the marriage and both agreed that they had to change personally. Each mapped out what they would do individually, and both agreed to work together to solve mutual problems. Their marriage held together, and they have a wonderful life together. The marriage was saved because each found grace to listen to the other's point of view.

8. Rare repentance involves a confession: When David was confronted, he said, "I have sinned against the Lord" (2 Samuel 12:13). He did not say, "I made a mistake." He did not say, "I am sorry." He uttered the hardest words in any human language, "I was wrong!" When wrong, it is good to be specific: "I lied," or "I stole," or "I committed adultery."
9. When wrong, the confessor must not only manage violations of a trust, but perceptions of wrong doing by others. Hurt people sometimes over exaggerate the offender's deficiencies. Jay Vernon McGee use to say, "I'm not half as bad as my enemies say I am, nor am I half as good as my friends think I am." Before one makes a confession, one should examine his own heart and actions using God's Word as the standard of right and wrong. He should acknowledge actual sins, but he need not accept all the blame hurled at him by an offended one.
10. Rare repentance involves action! There is no doctrine of repentance in the Old Testament. The word "repent" (nacham) is a verb, not a noun²⁴. When there is no noun, there can be no doctrine. It is not until the New Testament that we find the word repent in a noun form (metanoia).
11. When God repented of making man on the earth, he acted to destroy the work he created (Genesis 6:6). Likewise, a repentant person will take action to undue, repair, or destroy the negative thing he has created by his sinful action.

²⁴ The word *repent* is a verb, not a noun in the O.T. However, there is one exception. The exception is found in Hosea 13:14 where nacham is used as a noun and it is translated "repentance."

12. This is significant because rare repentance is an action! Repentance is not primarily confession, but WORK! That is, a repentant soul will labor to do all that is possible to repair the damage done to those he has offended. This means that those working in the arena of conflict management must call the offender to go to work, that is, they must come up with a plan of action to restore the relationship and to restore integrity.
13. For example: If a man steals a car, how does he repent? It is not enough to be sorry about stealing the car. He must GIVE IT BACK with interest! If a thief will not return a stolen item and pay the penalties, he has not repented (Leviticus 6:1-6; Ephesians 4:28).
14. In Las Cruces New Mexico, I was involved with a Christian School. A couple of teenage boys broke into the school and set fire to a wastepaper basket. The fire got out of control and burned the school to the ground. One of the boys came forward and confessed to the crime. It was a messy affair, but I admired the way the young man handled himself and how the board managed the affair. There was no way on God's earth the young man could pay for the damage done. The elder board challenged the boy to go to work and to make payments to the church for seven years. The boy agreed. He went to work and for seven years he sent a healthy portion of his pay to the church. At the end of the seven years, his debt was cancelled. Now, this is Biblical repentance.
15. Rare repentance involves a change in behavior. The first time the word "repent" (metanoie'te) is used in the N.T. it is used as an imperative (Matthew 3:2). The word "repent" means "to turn." That is, a repentant person will change course, turn around, do an about face, go a different direction. Interestingly, the person who repented the most in the O.T. is the God himself (Genesis 6:6; Exodus 32:14; Judges 2:18; 1 Samuel 15:35; 2 Samuel 24:16).
16. A person who will not change course, develop new habits, stop errant behavior, or initiate a new lifestyle has not repented.
17. One time, I was working with a Christian counselor who received a telephone call from a man who wanted help in becoming a Christian. I was listening to the conversation on one end and it went something like this: "I will not come over . . . I do not believe you . . . No, I will not help you become a Christian . . . Move out and do not leave a forwarding address, and I may reconsider!" Curious about the phone call, I begin to ask questions. The man on the other end of the phone was a practicing homosexual, and my friend refused to talk to him about the gospel until he demonstrated sincerity about forsaking his homosexual lifestyle.

18. A week later, I was in his office again in a co-counseling situation when the telephone rang again. "I will be right over," said my friend. He looked at me and said, "Let's go. That homosexual guy moved out of his apartment into a new apartment across town and did not leave a forwarding address." He went over to the homosexual's new apartment and led him to the Lord. Later, the ex-homosexual was baptized and joined the church. Now this is action! This is repentance!
19. One day, a young man came into my office and was troubled about something he had done. He admitted to me that he slandered a certain church member in our community to several individuals. The church member had suffered all kinds of grief over the ruination of his reputation. I called the church member and set up a time for the two of them to get together. We met, and the young man confessed he had slandered this other church member. Had we stopped here, repentance would have been incomplete. I challenged the young man get on the phone in front of the church member and call the three people to whom he spread lies. It was a tearful affair, but the young man repented and the slandered was greatly relieved.
20. Rare repentance works to repair the damage done. It is not enough just to listen, or to confess error, one must seek to share the hurt caused in the relationship. Listening is a part of the healing process. Admission of wrong helps heal wounds. Changing behavior convinces others of sincerity. A thief repairs damage done by returning stolen goods. A liar repairs damage done by renouncing his lies in public. An adulterer repairs the breach by breaking off relationships with former lovers and by holding himself accountable to others. Jesus healed sinners by going to the cross. The important issue here is that the rare repentance does not walk away from the bomb he drops in human relationships. He stays around to help clean up the mess. The question the offender must ask is, "What can I do to repair the hurt I caused?"
21. Rare repentance is a gift of God, a work of grace. I am convinced it is impossible for people to repent unless God is at work in the heart. Men will defend and justify themselves before they will admit wrong. Only God can help men produce rare repentance: "if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:25).
22. One time a woman came into my office with lots of questions about salvation and the Bible. She went to a college retreat, and was loaded with curiosity about the Scriptures. I was delighted by her questions as I noticed her marked up text. She wanted to become a Christian. I began to ask questions and discovered that she was a 25 year-old widow whose husband was killed in Vietnam. But, she was shacking up with another man. I could

have led her in the sinner's prayer, but felt led to challenge her to forsake her immoral state (Isaiah 55:6, 7). I suggested to her that she consider marrying the man, but she sadly confessed that he did not love her. So, I challenged her to move out. She was totally reluctant to leave this guy. I even offered to come over with a truck with several men to help her relocate. She hesitated. There was a war for her soul and I prayed silently. In the end, she closed her Bible and said she could not do it. Like the Rich Young Ruler, she left my office without eternal life. She could not repent.

23. On another occasion, a man sauntered into my office with his head hanging down. He confessed to me that he had committed adultery, not once, but over eight times in the course of two years. It was a mess. I asked him to bring in his wife. He did, and he confessed his sin to her. She cried and wanted a divorce immediately. I told her that her response was most appropriate and that she had a right to divorce the louse. I respectfully asked her to delay her decision for two days. If she were not satisfied with her husband's response, then I would help her to obtain the divorce.
24. For two days, the man called former lovers and confessed over the phone in the presence of his wife, his sinful acts of adultery to these women. He said that he was wrong, that he would not see them again, that he was receiving help from me, that he was seeking to get right with God and suggested they do the same. His wife sat in a chair and read a book. For those he could not reach by phone, he wrote a letter saying that he had sinned and that he would never see them again. I gave the letters to his wife to mail. It was a long, grueling two days. At the end of the time, after he had broken off all his relationships, he got on his knees and begged his wife to forgive him. I asked her to take another day to think about it. They came in the next day. Again, he got on his knees and asked his wife to forgive him. He waited in tears for her answer. Amazingly, she said she would forgive him and not seek a divorce.
25. This marriage was saved because the man repented properly and gave evidence of his sincerity.
26. A thief who does not return what is stolen, a fornicator who does not leave his lovers, or a gossip who does not call his friends and renounce his statements has not repented.
27. Rare repentance is the basis of forgiveness. In Luke 17:3, Jesus said, "If your brother repent, forgive him." By using the word "if", Jesus placed a condition on forgiveness. How can forgiveness be bestowed, if one does not repent?

In conclusion, a conflict manager must call people to walk the difficult road of repentance. This means that sins must be identified and that steps of repentance must be listed.

High Cost of Forgiveness

The Lord taught us to forgive those who hurt us and to pray: “**forgive** us our debts, as we **forgive** our debtors” (Mathew 6:12).

If you have ever been seriously hurt by someone you trusted, the difficulty of the business of forgiveness is real.

What does it mean to forgive?

The first time the word “forgive” is used in Scripture is in the story of Joseph when his jealous brothers pleaded with him to forgive them (Genesis 50:17). They hurt him deeply. When he was in a position of power over them, they begged for a cancellation of their debt.

The Hebrew word “forgive” (afn, nasa) means “to carry” or “to lift away.” The Scripture speaks of a nursing father carrying (nasa) his helpless infant (Numbers 11:12). Haggai mentions a working priest carrying (nasa) a carcass in his robe (Haggai 2:12). He also brings before us an image of an olive tree carrying (nasa) its heavy fruit on overburdened limbs (2:19). Zechariah has a vision of a lead lid weighing about 100 pounds being lifted off (nasa) a large eastern clay pot. All of these images suggest that the forgiver should take the weight of guilt off penitents and carry it on his own shoulders. And, this is what the Lord Jesus did at Calvary. He took our sins on his own shoulders so the weight of our guilt might be lifted from us. Joseph’s brothers were asking Joseph to take the weight of their sin against him off of them and to carry it himself. And, he did!

Because forgiveness is expensive, it is not easy to forgive.

High Cost of Forgiveness

§ Forgiveness is expensive because the forgiver has to give up his anger. It is so easy to feed the fires of anger with dead wood from the storage bin of past memories. To forgive means the forgiver must let go of his angry emotions and not direct them at the one who hurt him.

§ Forgiveness is expensive because the forgiver must let go of his pain. When one is sinned against, anger, fear, distrust, loneliness, bewilderment flood the soul. Forgiveness means the forgiver must not only forgive the act *but the pain it caused!*

§ Forgiveness is expensive because the forgiver must give up his sense of justice. When the scales of justice are tilted against a man, he has a built in gyroscope that seeks to balance the scales in his favor. Forgiveness means that forgiver has to leave the courtroom where justice is the main concern and go to the hospital of grace where mercy is the main concern. Letting go of justice is so hard for many people.

§ Forgiveness is expensive because the forgiver must give up control over his debtor. When a man is a creditor, he wants to control the debtor through a contract. Hurt people seek to control those who injure them by lectures, by anger, by constant reminders that the debtor now owes him. Forgiveness is expensive because the forgiver has to give up a “you owe me” attitude and the angry words that he uses to control the one who has hurt him. This is so difficult because the forgiver is setting the debtor free. And, this is risky because he might do the same thing again and again.

§ Forgiveness is expensive because the forgiver must give up his pride. Often we listen to the horror stories on the evening news with numb hearts. But, when injury comes to us personally, all our passions are aroused. When it is ME that has been hurt, self-importance is thrust to the forefront of our concerns. Forgiveness means GOD is at the center of the universe and not wounded ME! Forgiveness means the ME in me must take his proper place before the LORD and in simple obedience to “forgive my debtors.”

The Higher Cost of Unforgiveness

While forgiveness is expensive, no one can afford the HIGHER COST OF UNFORGIVENESS!

Matthew 6:15 But if ye **forgive** not men their trespasses, neither will your Father **forgive** your trespasses.

Jesus declared that if we do not forgive those men (repentant) men of their trespasses, that God will not forgive us. Without His forgiveness there is no fellowship with Him, no power, and no answered prayer. What believer can afford this fine?

Erroneous Ideas About Forgiveness

Universal forgiveness is not what God is calling Christians to do. Contrary, to what many preachers proclaim, the Christian is not called “to forgive” everybody. This is arrogance and a gross misunderstanding of the Scripture. He has not given Christians the responsibility to forgive all criminals and terrorists any more than he has given us the individual responsibility of punishing them. Rather, the Christian is called to stand ready to forgive those individuals (friends, family, and neighbors) who sin against him (Matthew 6:12).

Unconditional forgiveness is not a Scriptural concept. The Christian is not called to automatically forgive people when he is sinned against. God places a condition of repentance on the dispensation of forgiveness (Isaiah 55:6, 7). Likewise, the believer is called to forgive repentant men seeking forgiveness ((Luke 17:3).).

Conclusion

Jesus is teaching that if God is willing to forgive our mammoth debt against Him, surely we can forgive miniscule debts of our family and friends who hurt us. If God is willing to pay the High Cost of Forgiveness by sending His only begotten Son into this world as the Sin Lifter (nasa), surely we can pay the High Cost of Forgiveness and lift away (nasa) burdens from those who have hurt us and who seek our forgiveness.



13. MEDIATION

Lesson Twelve

A study on Arbitration



Matthew 5:9

“Blessed are the peacemakers”

Arbitration

Most disputes between good people can be worked through by appropriating God's grace—grace to be honest and grace to listen. But, when normal communications break down, people need help in working through the issues with civility. Where anger, defensiveness, and argument exist, there is a need for mediation. Blessed are the wise peacemakers who can bring about reconciliation.

In my own ministry, I have found the following instructions helpful in mediating disputes between husband and wife, sister and sister, and brother and brother.

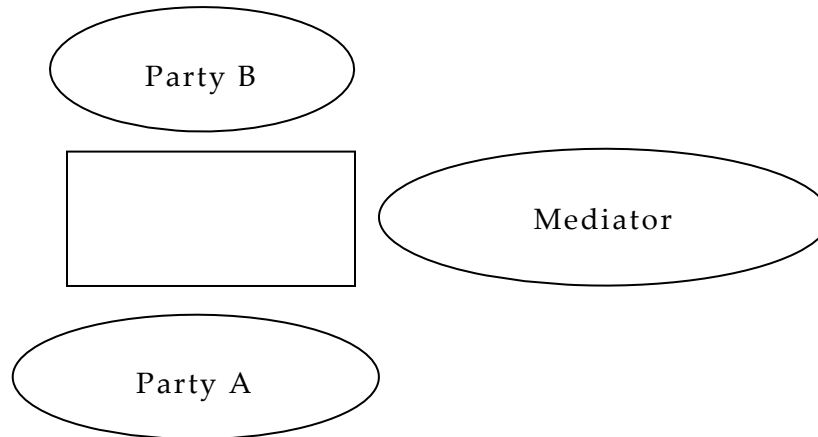
Instructions for Mediators

1. Lead those involved in a dispute to bind themselves to the Scriptural mandate: "first be reconciled to thy brother" (Matthew 5:24). If necessary, put it in contractual form.
2. Set aside sufficient time. If a mediator is needed, then communication has broken down. Communication takes time. In my experience, mediation takes anywhere from two or three hours to two or three days. The longest dispute I have been in took four hours a day for five days.
3. Mediation is not counseling nor is it discipleship. Set aside one block of time—an 8 hour day. In my experience setting up a series of Monday nights does not work. Mediation must be done all at once. Do not let disputes linger from week to week.
4. Understand the duty of the Mediator. The mediator needs to spend time in prayer, review conflict management principles listed in this work, and be absolutely neutral in the dispute. His job is to facilitate communication, to lead parties to follow Biblical principles, and to bring about a godly DECISION. That decision may be following steps of repentance or following steps of forgiveness or both.
5. Understand the duty of the parties. The parties must identify the issues, and discuss the issues, and come to a mutually satisfying decision. While discussing an issue, one party must talk and the other must listen. Then the other talks while the former listens.

Procedure for Mediation

Introduction

1. Arrange the room: The parties should sit exactly opposite each other. The closer the better. The mediator should sit at the end of the table or to the side of the parties.



2. Brief welcome: Express appreciation for the courage and willingness of the two parties to come together to work through the conflict.
3. Read a Scripture: Set the tone at the beginning that God's Word is the sufficient to guide, and that it is the final authority on all matters of concern.
4. Prayer: Ask God to be present and to supply grace to each party.
5. List the issues and prioritize them. Each person should be given ample opportunity to list the areas of concern that they want to discuss. Agree on the top three issues. The top three issues set the agenda.
6. Explain the procedure and the rules. Gain a commitment. See appendix: Rules of Mediation.

Procedure for Discussion

1. Select the first issue to be discussed. Having a timer²⁵ handy may be helpful.

²⁵ A timer (a clock with a buzzer) may be helpful if the parties have a tendency to interrupt

2. Select which party will speak first.
3. Party A will speak first, and Party B will listen. Party B is not allowed to interrupt. (Optional: After Party A is finished, Party B will say²⁶, “Thank you for sharing this with me, I promise to carefully consider what you say.”)
4. Party B will speak second, and Party A will listen. Party A is not allowed to interrupt while Party B is speaking. (Optional: After Party B is finished, Party A will say, “Thank you for sharing this with me, I promise to carefully consider what you say.”).
5. Continue back and forth until there until the solution is obvious.
6. Find a solution and make a decision. Ask the question, “What is God’s solution for this issue?” Usually, the solution is apparent. Party A or Party B will need to do something: be on time, stop complaining, listen more, admit failure, forgive, purchase something, spend more time with the kids, fix the car, turn off the T.V., be home on the weekends, etc.
7. Lead the parties to make a commitment to follow through on the solution. Hallelujah, a decision has been made.

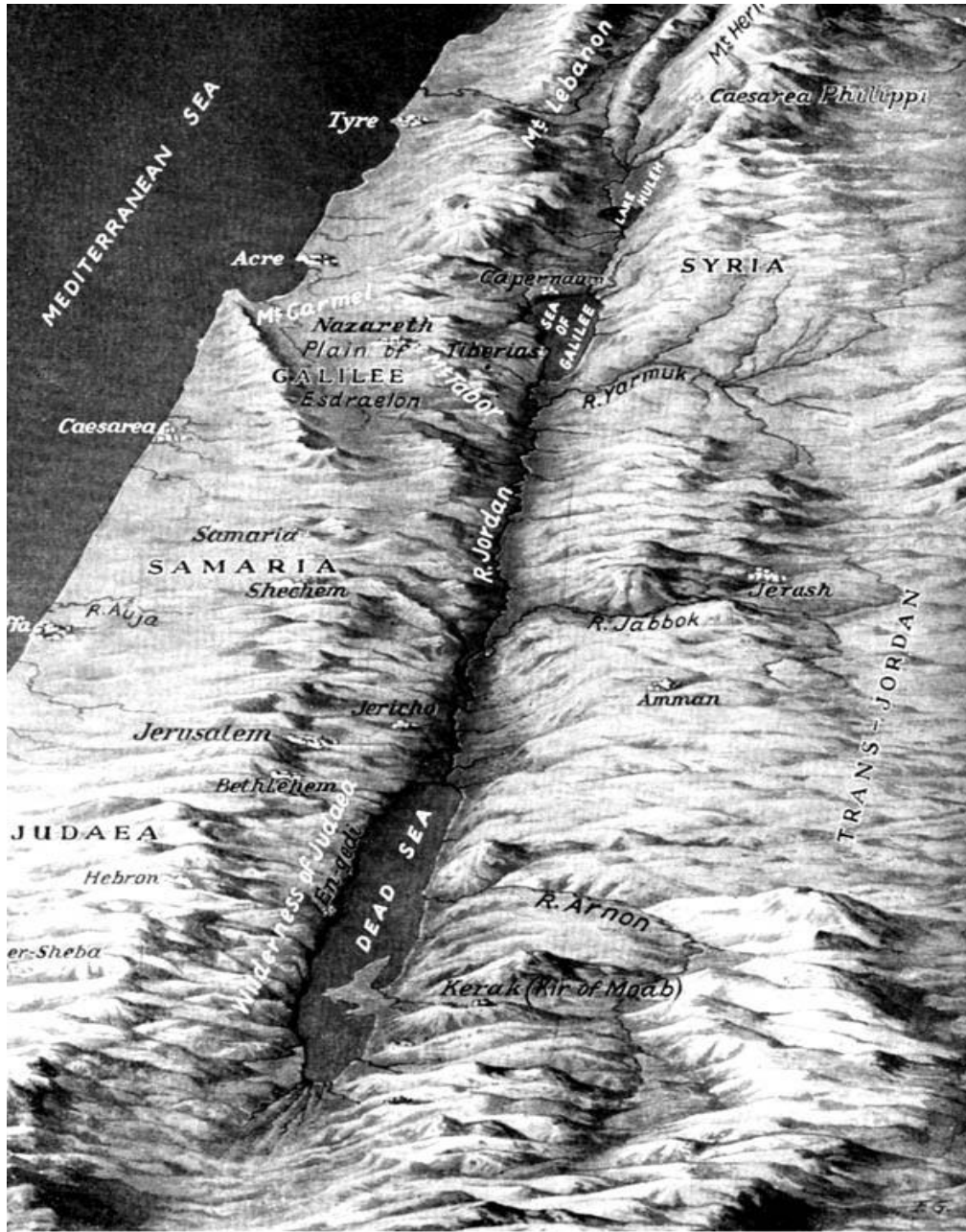
Rules for Discussion

1. One party will talk, while the other listens.
2. No interruptions are allowed.
3. Each party will be given a chance to talk and to ask questions.
4. We not stop our mediation until a decision is reached on the top three issues.
5. We will take breaks to give each party a chance to think or rest or eat.
6. At times, I (the mediator) will need to dismiss one party to address an issue in the mediation, to help gain clarity, or to shed light on the mediation process.

²⁶ I have found this little statement, “Thank you for sharing with me . . . ” helpful to create positive attitudes with couples in crisis. It is not always necessary to make parties say this, but if communication has broken down, use the formula and demand that couples use the phrase.

APPENDIX

Map of Israel



Hills and valleys of the Holy Land of Palestine

Levels of Conflict

LEVEL	DESIGNATION	FEATURE	NEED
Level I	Differences	Frustration	Appreciation
Level II	Disagreement	Tension	Communication
Level III	Divisions	Skirmishes	Personal Judgment
Level IV	Detestation	War	Deep Repentance
Level V	Divorce	Death	Miracle of Grace

Tools of Communication



Are you a good communicator? Like a two-way radio, communication requires a transmitter and a receiver, a talker and a listener. In marriage you need both. Communication takes skill and you can develop it by learning to use these tools.

THE HEARING TOOL: In I John 5: 14 the aged apostle says, "God hears us." But, are we seeking to become like Him in his hearing? Do we hear what our spouse is really saying? What do the tones and inflection of the voice mean? Do we hear the sounds of a troubled heart as well as the sounds of a happy one? Successful marriages depend on the ability to hear.

THE SEEING TOOL: A lonely and dejected women noted of the Lord, "You are the God who sees me" (Geneses 16:13). Do we want to be like Christ in His seeing? God saw Hagar in her weakest moment. The Word of God strengthened her. What do we see when we are with our spouse? Can we see hurt, disappointment, or yearning?

THE TOUCHING TOOL: "Jesus had compassion on them and touched . . ." (Matthew 20:24). Do we want to be like Christ in the compassion of touching? I believe that Jesus was a hugger. Don't you? A hug, fingers running through the hair, or a kiss on the cheek are the little ways that couples say, "I'm glad you're here." A touch can say, "I love you." It can express, "I need your love."

THE WORD TOOL: Jesus is called "the Word" (John 1:1). He is God's communication to us. We too must learn to communicate, and the most useful mechanism is the power of words. Words are not neutral. They have the power of "life and death" (Proverbs 18:21). James tells us they are like sparks that can start fires, and are like rudders that turn tons of steel and metal. Words are the most misused tool. By words our marriage will become a joy or a distress.

THE FRAGRANCE TOOL: "All your robes are fragrant . . ." (Psalm 45:8). When crushed at the cross, Christ emanated forgiveness: "Father forgive them . . ." What spills out when we are bumped: anger or kindness? What do we communicate when people mistreat us? In order to communicate the "fragrance of Christ," one must be filled with the Spirit of God--a personal resource no marriage can do without.

Grades of Communication



The goal of marriage is to build trust so that communication can progress to a more insightful and satisfying experience. True communication requires a risk and a deeper level of trust. Notice how the risk increases and how much more trust is needed as one plunges into the deeper levels of sharing.

GRADE F: SMALL TALK

Questions like "How are you?", "What's new?", and "How are things going?" are surface queries designed to interrupt silence and avoid social embarrassment. Conversations that remain on this level are boring and lead to frustration in marriage.

GRADE D: FACT REPORTING

At this level, information is shared, but personal opinions and feelings about the facts are kept secret. For example: A wife may ask her husband where he is going after dinner, and he may simply respond, "Out!" The word "out" does not communicate where he is going, or why he is going.

GRADE C: IDEAS AND OPINIONS

Intimacy begins here. On this level you are exposing your inner thoughts, feelings, and opinions. Your soul is exposed, and your partner has a chance to know the real you. There is a risk, however, that your partner may not like your ideas and opinions. You are vulnerable. This is why intimacy is based on trust and integrity. Can your partner trust you with their feelings?

GRADE B: FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS

This level requires real honesty about the feelings of anger, resentment, joy, and frustrations. Couples who are really able to share their true feelings about issues have built up a level of trust. They feel safe exposing their most intimate feelings with their spouse. Rich relationships are able to plunge into this level of communication and come up with pearls of insight about their partner.

GRADE A: DEEP INSIGHT

Rare insightful moments will occur when you are perfectly in tune with your mate's emotions and opinions. A glance across the room, a mischievous smile says it all. This ability to mutually share personal ideas, opinions, and

responses greatly enrich the relationship. This level takes the greatest amount of trust and involves the greatest risk.

A Study on the Styles of Conflict Resolution

OT Passage	Type of Conflict	Resolution Style	Result
Genesis 4 Cain	Interpersonal	Compete	Death
Genesis 9 Ham	Interpersonal	Compromise	Curse
Genesis 12:10	Issue	Avoidance	Trouble
Genesis 13	Interpersonal	Accommodate	Blessing
Genesis 16	Issue (substance)	Compromise	Trouble
Genesis 16	Interpersonal	Accommodate	Blessing
Genesis 21 Sarah	Interpersonal	Confrontation	Blessing
Genesis 25	Interpersonal	Competition	Despised Brother
Genesis 26	Interpersonal	Accommodate	Blessing v. 23
Genesis 27:5ff	Interpersonal	Compete	Split family
Genesis 28:6-10	Interpersonal	Compromise	Grief to family
Genesis 29:25ff	Interpersonal	Collaboration	Wealth for Jacob
Genesis 31:1-17	Interpersonal	Avoidance	Conflict
Judges 2	Interpersonal	Confrontation	Victory
Judges 11:12, 28	Interpersonal	Avoidance	Failed
Judges 11:28-32	Interpersonal	Confrontation	Victory

1 Samuel 15	Interpersonal	Accommodation	Loss of favor
1 Kings 2	Interpersonal	Mediation	Truth
1 Kings 10-11	Issue (substance)	Compromise	Divided kingdom
Nehemiah 4:1-4	Interpersonal	Avoidance	Success
Nehemiah 5	Interpersonal	Mediation	Resolution
Nehemiah 13:8	Issue (substance)	Confrontation	Resolution
Nehemiah 13:15ff	Issue (substance)	Confrontation	Resolution

Basis of Unity

Ephesians 4:3

Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

What do you do when you disagree in church matters?

When I was a young Christian, I observed a division between two warring factions in a regional church dispute. It was not pretty. It seemed like no one could escape the ugliness.

Confused and bewildered by it all, I was greatly helped by a letter I read in a preacher's library written by Anthony Norris Groves, a dentist missionary to Baghdad in the 1830'. He was a man who sought to bring unity where there was a spirit of division. Later, I discovered an edited version of this letter composed by Keith Price. The following is an amended portion of those thoughts:

The basis of our fellowship is **LIFE** in the Christ of the Scriptures, rather than **LIGHT** on the teaching of the Scriptures.

Those who have part with Christ have part with us. Because our communion is one of life and love more than one of doctrine and opinion, we seek to show that the oneness in the life of God through Jesus Christ is a stronger bond than that of being one of us – whether organizationally or denominationally.

Because our fellowship is based on our common life in Christ, we do not reject anyone because of his organization or denominational affiliation. Furthermore, we do not hold him responsible for the conduct within that system any more than we would a child responsible for the conduct in the home of which he is affiliated.

We do not feel it desirable to withdraw from fellowship with any Christians except at the point where they may require us to do what our conscience will not permit or restrain us from doing what our conscience requires.

Even then, we maintain our fellowship with them in any matter where we are not called upon to so compromise. This ensures, insofar as we understand the Scripture, we do not separate ourselves from them any further than they separate themselves from Christ.

We do not consider an act of fellowship to be indicative of total agreement. Sometimes, fellowship with those with whom we do not totally agree may be a true expression of Christian love. At times, we would rather accept a fault in order that together we may birth a greater good.

Our choice would be to bear with their wrong rather than separate ourselves from their good.

We believe it more scriptural to reflect a heart of love ready to find a covering for faults, than to constantly look for that with which we may disagree. We will then be known more by what we witness for than by what we witness against.

We feel it biblical never to pressure men to act in uniformity further than they feel in uniformity.

We use our fellowship in the Spirit as an opportunity to discuss our differences and find this to be the most effective way of leading others, or being led by them, into the light of the Word.

While enjoying such a wide range of Christian fellowship, we would not force this liberty upon those who feel otherwise-minded. In such circumstances, we enjoy fellowship as far as they will permit, then pray that the Lord would lead them further into the true liberty of common life in Christ.

Every Christian has a responsibility "to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace"(Ephesians 4:3).

You can be a unifying Christian by practicing the following admonitions:

Base your fellowship on LIFE, not LIGHT.

God wants you to be accurate in interpreting Scripture and in applying it to your life. Likewise, God uses men to lead the church into truth. However, if unity is based on LIGHT (illumination into all Biblical truth) instead of LIFE, then as you grow in knowledge, your arena of fellowship will shrink. As you expand knowledge there will be fewer and fewer people who see what you see and know what you know.

But, if you base your fellowship on the common LIFE that all Christians have in Christ, then you can fellowship with all who have salvation even though there may be different understandings of some secondary doctrines.

Win others by persuasion rather than by power.

If your fellowship is based on LIFE, then you can disagree without destroying the "spirit of unity." If your fellowship is based on LIGHT, then you will not be able to fellowship with anyone who disagrees with you. You will conclude that something must be wrong with others who do not hold your point of view. You will cut them off emotionally, or even worse, attack their character and wound them. As Christians, we need to learn to disagree without attacking the character of others.

We prefer to win others to our point of view by persuasion rather than by emotion.

In the *Parable of the Sower*, the Sower (Christ) went out to sow. The seed fell on different kinds of ground. Not all ground produced fruit. The point of Jesus' parable is that His kingdom message could be resisted. His kingdom was here by persuasion rather than by power (Matthew 13:1ff).

When one fails to win by persuasion and attacks the character of another, he commits *ad hominem* reasoning—an appeal to prejudice and emotion rather than reason.

Deacon-bashing, quitting, and criticism are power tactics that evidence the critic is deficient in LIGHT and LIFE.

Help the majority to succeed.

No community of Christians will agree on every doctrine, every issue, and every decision. *Total agreement is unnecessary for fellowship.* This is especially true when it comes to the area of personal preferences.

When you find yourself in disagreement, God may be testing your ability to "preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." He may be testing your motivation or character. Loneliness tests one's reason for doing things. It's OK to have a preference and a difference of opinion. Learn to manage differences correctly. If your preference is not supported, then support the preferences of your leaders and help make them successful.

It is the responsibility of the minority to help the majority to succeed!

Learning to manage disagreements is a mark of Christian maturity. If you can learn to manage your disagreements with integrity, you will honor the Savior and preserve His work.

Walk in the Spirit.

Some Christians, in the name of hurt, seek to persuade others. "This hurts!" can be a power tactic to influence power members.

As a Christian leader, I often heard the words, "You hurt me." As I analyzed these "wounds," I discovered most of the time that people were not hurt because of a violation of trust but because they were spiritually immature. One of the greatest lessons I ever learned in Christian ministry is that *the flesh is easily* offended (Colossians 3:9, 10). **Love is not easily offended.** Victimization, a current psychological phenomenon in Christianity, is a fleshly attempt to shift blame. When we walk in the Spirit, we express true love and are able to debate issues without being hurt. When others do not agree or adopt our persuasion, Spirit-filled Christians either submit, or seek to find a way to articulate their persuasion skillfully.

I was at a business meeting where one of the women members felt very passionate about her point of view. When others disagreed and did not jump on board, she broke into tears. Her emotion electrified the room and derailed the entire meeting. Fortunately, members used their heads instead of their hearts. After she realized the team was not going to accept her tears as an argument, she took offense. Soon afterward, she left the church a wounded soul. When asked “why?” she shifted the blame and accused the leadership of carnality.

Right after Paul commanded believers to “be ye being filled with the Spirit” (a present, passive imperative) in Ephesians 5:18, he discusses submission and loving leadership in the home. The lesson is clear: Spirit filled people either submit to the preferences of leaders, or use gentle persuasion to lead others. A spirit-filled Christians rejects criticism, anger, and woundedness as a tactic to control people.

Sometimes, however, a violation of a moral principle occurs and someone is hurt. A violation of a moral principle in Scripture is called a *scandalon* (skandalish in Luke 17:3). This is not petty, childish, hurt feelings, but pain due to a violation of a trust. Even then, however, God calls the believer to manage his wound with integrity and to love his brother by confronting him – not to control him, but to help him grow in love (Luke 17:1-3; Romans 12:17). Managing wounds with integrity is necessary to keep the spirit of unity in the bond of peace.

Conclusion: The Lord calls us to go deeper into Christian love. *Anger, quitting,* and *attacking* others are not fruits of the Spirit, but fruits of the flesh. God calls us to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” We do this by making LIFE the basis of your fellowship, by using the art of persuasion rather than power, by helping the majority to succeed, and by walking in the Spirit.

Prayer: My gracious heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son to die for my sins, for the gift of your Holy Spirit, and for the precious fellowship of the saints. Help me to be a unifier and not a destroyer. Because you have accepted me in my weakness, help me to accept others who differ with me. Teach me to support leaders when my preferences are ignored and to unify the saints through my love and submission. Fill me with your Spirit, and help me to lead through gentle persuasion rather than by fear and anger. To you be the glory! Amen!

Following Mathew 18:15-17

If your brother sins . . .

Do not run from the responsibility of confronting your sinning brother. God has shown you his sin so you, out of love, can help lead him back to Christ.

STEP ONE: Go to your brother alone and confront him (or her). Do not go to your pastor. Step one may take several conversations

If your brother acknowledges his sin and forsakes it, you have won your brother. Do not share the sin with anyone else. Keep it between the two of you.

If your brother does not respond to your exhortation, go to step two.

STEP TWO: Take another brother (consider a deacon) or two with you to verify what is true, and confront your brother again. Determine the facts!

If your brother responds, confesses and forsakes his sin, you have won your brother. Do not share the sin with anyone else. Keep it between this company.

If your brother does not respond to this effort, then go to step three.

STEP THREE: If you have taken step one and two and you have clear evidence your brother has committed a serious sin, then inform the pastor or a deacon in this church. The leadership will ask the church to confront the sinning brother in order to win him to righteousness.

STEP FOUR: If the brother does not respond to the church, the church will, by the authority of Christ, discipline that sinning brother, and turn him over to the authority of Satan for the destruction of the flesh (1 Corinthians 5).

Sins that merit church discipline are, but are not limited to, the following: gossip, slander, drunkenness, fornication, adultery, homosexuality, lying, perjury, child abuse, child molestation, fraud, theft, indolence, divisiveness, doctrinal perversion (1Corinthians 5:1-13; 2 Thessalonians 3:5ff; Romans 16:17).

The Biblical church seeks to follow the Scriptural mandate of being pure and holy.

Rules of Mediation

Introduction

1. Please sit across from each other.
2. Be polite and listen to the opening statement.
3. Listen while the Scripture is read.
4. Prayer: Ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit and to help you communicate in such a way that the other party will understand your point of view, and that you will be given grace to understand them.
5. List the issues in the relationship and prioritize them (1, 2, 3, etc.).

Procedure for Discussion (Explain)

1. The first issue to be discussed will be priority one.
2. While each is speaking, the other will listen. No interruptions are allowed.
3. Party A will speak first, and Party B will listen. Party B is not allowed to interrupt. (Optional: It may be helpful to say, "Thank you for sharing this with me, I promise to carefully consider what you say.")
4. Party B will speak second, and Party A will listen. Party A is not allowed to interrupt while Party B is speaking. (Optional: It may be helpful to say, "Thank you for sharing this with me, I promise to carefully consider what you say.").
5. We will continue discussing Issue One until we reach an understanding of what actions need to be taken to resolve the issue. After a decision is made, we will go on to Issue Two.
6. We will find a solution and make a decision.
7. If you are people of integrity, you will follow through on your commitment.

Basic Rules

1. One party will talk, while the other listens.
2. No interruptions are allowed while the other is talking.
3. Each party will be given a chance to talk and to ask questions.
4. We not stop our mediation until a decision is reached on the top three issues.
5. We will take breaks to give each party a chance to think or rest or eat.
6. At times, I (the mediator) will need to dismiss one party to address an issue in the mediation, to help gain clarity, or to shed light on the mediation process.
7. At times, I will read a portion of Scripture or stop to pray to help us focus on God's will.
8. I have explained to the parties the rules and procedures of mediation. I am committed to fairness, to upholding the principles of God's Word as I understand it, and to finding God's solution for the parties involved.

Signature of the Mediator

I have read the Rules of Mediation and am committed to do my part to make this time successful.

Signature of the Party A

I have read the Rules of Mediation and am committed to do my part to make this time successful.

Signature of the Party B

Arbitration Agreement

The following document comes in contractual form and must be signed by all parties involved to become binding.

1. **The Parties:** The parties, hereafter called Party A and Party B, agree to assign their signature to binding arbitration in order to resolve the current dispute.
2. **Jurisdiction:** The jurisdiction of this arbitration shall be ecclesiastical in accordance with the authority granted to the church by the Word of God (1 Cor. 6:1ff)), and as protected by the United States Constitution (Art. I, Sec. 10, Cl. 1; Amen. 1).
3. **Fees:** Each party is required to submit _____ dollars to the Principal Negotiator as a token of sincerity, which in turn, will be used by the arbitration team for administrative costs (rent, duplication, etc.). The remainders of the fees shall be distributed according to the discretion of the judges.
4. **Negotiation Team:**
 - A. The Principal Negotiator shall be a man of integrity. His duty is to know Party A and Party B and to assemble an arbitration team which will consist of (a) a Moderator, (b) a Secretary, (c) and a Judicial Team of at least three judges, and (d) a pastoral counselor or counselors. His duties cease once the Arbitration Team is in place.
 - B. The Moderator shall be a Christian appointed by the Principal Negotiator and he shall be a man of integrity as defined by Acts 6:1-6 and 1 Timothy 3, capable of moderating meetings according to the principles of fairness. The duty of the moderator is to administrate the proceedings and to align them with the arbitration objectives.
 - C. The Secretary of Arbitration shall be appointed by the Principal Negotiator (a) receive and record the party Summaries, (b) duplicate appropriate papers for the Arbitration Team, (c) write, record, file, and send appropriate letters, (d) record and execute expenditures, (e) record appropriate notes and decisions.
 - D. Judges shall be selected by the Principal Negotiator. The judges (a minimum of three) shall be Christians, people of integrity, capable of discerning error and rendering fair and just decisions (Acts 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 1). The duty of the judges is to perform all or part of the following: (a) to ask questions, (b) to determine the facts of the case

- and the merits of the arguments, (c) to identify error or sin, (c) to specify sins or errors, (d) to render a decision, (e) to identify a plan of reconciliation, or steps to repentance, or responsibilities to be accepted by each party, or (f) recommend discipline according to the principles found in Matthew 18 or 1 Corinthians 5 or Titus 3:9, 10.
- E. The Pastoral Counselor must be a man known for his understanding of Scripture and his experience in reconciliation. He may instruct or advise judges, parties, or the Moderator about Biblical principles of reconciliation, insights they should consider, or case facts, but he may not be a judge or render the final decision.
5. Times and Dates: The day and time of arbitration shall begin at _____ (A.M. or P.M.), _____.
6. The Procedure shall be as follows:
- A. The Moderator shall start the meeting with a welcome, a statement of purpose, a Scripture reading, a prayer, and a review of the procedures.
- B. Issues shall be listed and prioritized. Issues shall be discussed one by one as prioritized.
- C. Issue shall be discussed in an orderly fashion between the parties according the laws of order and civility.
- Party A shall speak first, and Party B shall listen.
 - Party B shall speak second, and Party A shall listen.
- D. Judges may ask questions at any time.
- E. The Moderator and Judges may recess at any time to discuss the case or to address individuals involved in the case.
- F. The Moderator shall call for a decision of the Judges when in his estimation the merits of the case have been sufficiently addressed by both parties.
- G. The Judges shall render a decision and call the parties to appropriate, responsible steps of action and reconciliation.
- H. The Moderator shall have the option of setting an additional time to continue arbitration, not to exceed 30 days, which shall be binding for all the principals.
7. Stay of Action: Parties agree to stay any pending legal action between them until the conclusion of the arbitration process has been completed by signature of the Moderator, Secretary, and Judges in the Negotiation Team.

8. Instruments: Each party will submit a one to two page summary of the dispute to the Principal Negotiator prior to the proceedings. The Principal Negotiator, Moderator, or Judge may request additional instruments that will have full force and effect the outcome of this negotiation process.
9. Decision of the Judges: The parties agree to abide by the decision of the judges. The decision by the judges shall be legally binding and obligatory for both parties.
10. Authority of the Contract: The signatures on this contract are binding. This contract shall remain in force and shall not be rendered invalid or unenforceable should one party or the other breach his oath or fail to adhere to the terms in the contract. The decision by the Judges shall remain in force and effect pertaining matters of the dispute between the two parties. Furthermore, if necessary, the proceedings of this contract and decisions of this arbitration shall be submitted in affidavit form to other jurisdictions upon the request of either party.
11. Waiver of Rights: The parties agree to enter into the terms of this contract jointly and severally, according to their free will, without compulsion, in ecclesiastical jurisdiction, knowing each has the right to choose other jurisdictions, to consult with independent counsel with regard to the legal ramifications and effects of the provision of this agreement.
12. Default or Breach of Contract: The parties have knowledge of the terms of this contract and agree that they shall have no right to withdraw from the proceedings or the obligation of this contract or the decision of the judges once having submitted to the terms of this agreement.
13. Confidentiality: All principals involved in this contract agree to protect the privacy of all participants involved in this mediation, and to refrain from discussing, talking, sharing, divulging, or reporting information gained from these proceedings. The mediation process is not attempt at legal discovery, but an attempt to reconcile differences between the parties. Nothing shall be written or disclosed without written consent from both parties with the one exception as iterated in under the "Authority of Contract" clause.
14. **Basic Rule of Judgment:** The judges shall follow the common law rules of evidence requiring proof of claim: personal testimony under oath and the best evidence rules.
15. **Judges shall make a decision based on a preponderance of evidence; they shall not ask for evidence beyond reasonable doubt unless agreed upon by all parties.**

16. The following principals have read the terms of this contract and affirm by signature that they possess competent knowledge of their duties and obligations involved in this contract:

17. Other rules must be defined and agreed upon by all parties.

Principal Negotiator

Signed _____ Date _____

Parties

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Moderator

Signed _____ Date _____

Judges

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Pastor Counselors

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____

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