

A Biblical View of Conflict and Its Resolution

Week 5

Seemed the brighter for the conflict

Led by Michael Holloway

<http://www.calvaryrpc.org/SundaySchool/>
<http://www.logicteacher.com/conflict/>

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the updated New American Standard Bible

Class Goals

- To understand what the Bible says (both explicitly and by implication) about conflict
- To learn how to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary conflict
- To learn practical, biblically-acceptable methods for resolving conflict

Your Assignment was ...

- Homework — Have an enjoyable, God-honoring Christmas week

The Class So Far ...

- Week 1: Introduction & Overview
- Week 2: Internal conflict
- Week 3: Reasons for conflict
 - ▶ General framework:
 - Desire → Demand → Judge → Punish**
 - ▶ Thoughts about theological conflicts
 - Subtle transformation of infallibility from God to ourselves
 - Failure to consider varying levels of confidence
- Week 4: Conflicts in history (led by Sam)

Response to Week 3 Comments

- Concerning the “logical consequence” of someone’s beliefs
 - ▶ In the absence of strong evidence to the contrary, Scripture directs us **to accept as true** what other believers say to us
 - ▶ Theoretical, mutually acceptable discussions about supposed consequences is fine
 - ▶ Accusations of lying or heresy are not
- Concerning “the group” with which someone is identified
 - ▶ Grouping is sometimes necessary in general discussions (for example, calvinists, post-millennialists, paedobaptists)
 - ▶ Attributing beliefs to an individual based only on the group(s) to which you think they belong is **never helpful**
 - ▶ Charges of heresy or non-conformity should be based on **an individual’s professed beliefs**, not his (supposed) identification with a particular group

Conflict as Opportunity

- “... the Bible teaches that we should see conflict neither as an inconvenience nor as an occasion to force our will on others, but rather as an opportunity to demonstrate the love and power of God in our lives.”

1Corinthians 10:31-11:1

Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit but the profit of the many, so that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

Opportunity³

- To glorify God
- To serve others
- To grow to be more like Christ

To Glorify God

- Trust God Proverbs 3:5-7; Acts 16:22-31
- Obey God
- Imitate God
- Acknowledge God

Acts 16:22-31

(22) The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order *them* to be beaten with rods.

(23) When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;

(24) and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

(25) But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

(26) and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

(27) When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

(28) But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!"

(29) And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,

(30) and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

(31) They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."

To Glorify God

- **Trust God** Proverbs 3:5-7; Acts 16:22-31
- **Obey God** John 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”
- **Imitate God** Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:1
- **Acknowledge God**

Imitating God

Ephesians 5:1-2

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

1Peter 2:12

Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may because of your good deeds, as they observe *them*, glorify God in the day of visitation.

1Corinthians 11:1

Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ.

To Glorify God

- **Trust God** Proverbs 3:5-7; Acts 16:22-31
- **Obey God** John 14:15 “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”
- **Imitate God** Ephesians 5:1-2; 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Corinthians 11:1
- **Acknowledge God** Philippians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 3:14-16

Acknowledging God

Philippians 2:12-13

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for *His* good pleasure.

1Peter 3:14-16

But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are blessed. AND DO NOT FEAR THEIR INTIMIDATION, AND DO NOT BE TROUBLED, but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence; and keep a good conscience so that in the thing in which you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ will be put to shame.

Opportunity³

- To glorify God
- **To serve others**
- To grow to be more like Christ

Serving Others

- Help “an opponent” “find better solutions” “than he would have developed alone”
- Carry another’s “burdens by providing for his or her spiritual, emotional, or material needs.”
- “Help others learn where they have been wrong and need to change”
- “Encourage others to trust in Jesus”
- “Teach and encourage others by your example”

Opportunity³

- To glorify God
- To serve others
- **To grow to be more like Christ**

Growing More Like Jesus

- Reminder of our weaknesses
- Encouragement to depend more fully on God's grace and strength
- Expose sinful attitudes and habits
- Practice new attitudes and habits

Romans 8:28-29

(28) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.

(29) For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become* conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

Questions to Ask *(4 G's)*

- “How can I please and honor God in this situation?” *(Glorify God)*
- “How can I show Jesus’ work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?” *(Get the log out of your own eyes)*
- “How can I lovingly serve others by helping them to take responsibility for their contributions to this conflict?” *(Gently restore)*
- “How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?” *(Go and be reconciled)*

Items Discussed Today

- A bit more about week three topics
- Three opportunities in conflict
 - ▶ To glorify God
 - ▶ To serve others
 - ▶ To grow to be more like Christ
- Questions to ask to help us realize these opportunities

For Next Week

- Homework — (1) Look back at how you've handled some previous conflicts. Did you glorify God, serve others, and grow to be more like Christ through these conflicts? (2) Think about whether you have a tendency to try to escape conflict.
- Lesson — “Thus avoiding any conflict”

Note: Lesson title comes from Charles Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge*, Chapter 33:

How did the vexed wind chafe and roar about its stalwart roof; how did it pant and strive with its wide chimneys, which still poured forth from their hospitable throats, great clouds of smoke, and puffed defiance in its face; how, above all, did it drive and rattle at the casement, emulous to extinguish that cheerful glow, which would not be put down and seemed the brighter for the conflict!