

A Biblical View of Conflict and Its Resolution

Week 9

Notwithstanding their conflicting
interests and thoughts

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.

Some material is based on *The Peace Maker*, by Ken Sande.

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

The Class So Far ...

- Week 1: Introduction & Overview
- Week 2: Internal conflict
- Week 3: Reasons for conflict
- Week 4: Conflicts in history (led by Sam)
- Week 5: Conflict as opportunity
- Week 6: Response to conflict: Escape
- Weeks 7-8: Response to conflict: Escalation
 - ▶ Verbal Escalation
 - ▶ Non-verbal Escalation

Your Assignment was ...

- Homework —

(1) Think about whether you have any current conflicts that you are escalating by soliciting allies

(2) Send to **conflict@logicteacher.com** short descriptions of specific, fictitious conflicts that you'd like for us to discuss how to resolve

Results Thus Far

- What if one CRPC member were to see another CRPC member shoplifting steaks at Walmart? Should that person: A) Tell the manager immediately, B) Confront the person, C) Tell the elders, D) Pray that the person be cursed by God, or E) Fuggetta Boudit?
- While teaching a Sunday School class, Barry talked about an incident in which his wife and daughter behaved improperly. He did not ask their permission or warn them in advance. His wife, Jill, did not mind, but his daughter, Angie, was offended. What should Barry do?

Responses to Conflict

- Three main categories of responses:
 - ▶ Attempting to **escape** the conflict 1 / 8
 - ▶ Attempting to **escalate** the conflict 1 / 15 , 1 / 22
 - ▶ Attempting to **resolve** the conflict today , Feb
- Categories of resolving responses
 - ▶ Involving just those in the conflict
 - Overlooking an offense (not same as denying)
 - Reconciliation
 - Negotiation
 - ▶ Getting help from others
 - Mediation
 - Arbitration

Prerequisite: Log Removal

Matthew 7:3-5 “Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? (4) Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ and behold, the log is in your own eye? (5) You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.”



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- Consider your role in the conflict
 - ▶ Are you overly sensitive, taking offense when you ought not take offense?
 - ▶ Have you sinned, either in attitude or actions?

Sensitivity

- Manifestations of sensitivity
 - ▶ Attributing negative motives to others' actions
 - ▶ Assuming general statements are intended for you specifically
 - ▶ Dwelling on minor matters taken out of context
 - ▶ Disagreeing before understanding

An Aside: Theological Sensitivity

- Although in the broad, evangelical church community, theological correctness tends to be undervalued, in the conservative (particularly, reformed) community, it can be overvalued
- Manifestations of this include
 - ▶ Insisting on conformity on every issue, without regard to importance
 - ▶ Claiming every issue is equally important
 - ▶ Inability to work with anyone other than those who agree with us on everything
 - ▶ Giving highest respect to those who **say** the right things, rather than to those who **do** the right things

Doing > Saying

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter.”

Matthew 21:28-31 “But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, ‘Son, go work today in the vineyard.’ And he answered, ‘I will not’; but afterward he regretted it and went. The man came to the second and said the same thing; and he answered, ‘I will, sir’; but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?” They said, “The first.” Jesus said to them, “Truly I say to you that the tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the kingdom of God before you.”

Matthew 12:46-50 While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him. Someone said to Him, “Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.” But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, “Who is My mother and who are My brothers?” And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, “Behold My mother and My brothers! For whoever does the will of My Father who is in heaven, he is My brother and sister and mother.”

Sensitivity

- Manifestations of sensitivity
 - ▶ Attributing negative motives to others' actions
 - ▶ Assuming general statements are intended for you specifically
 - ▶ Dwelling on minor matters taken out of context
 - ▶ Disagreeing before understanding
- Solutions to sensitivity
 - ▶ Focus on the joy of the Lord
 - ▶ Cultivate gentleness of spirit
 - ▶ Pray rather than worry
 - ▶ Think about good things
 - ▶ Put into practice what you already know

Philippians 4:1-9

(1) Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long *to see*, my joy and crown, in this way stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. (2) I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord. (3) Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in *the cause of* the gospel, together with Clement also and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

(4) Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!

(5) Let your gentle *spirit* be known to all men. The Lord is near.

(6) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. (7) And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

(8) Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things.

(9) The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

Sin

- Some common conflict-inducing sins
 - ▶ Sins of the lips: hurtful words, gossip, lying, complaining
 - ▶ Failing to keep a commitment
 - ▶ Not submitting to proper authority
 - ▶ Lack of self-control
 - ▶ Not treating others as I want to be treated
- Solution
 - ▶ Recognition and confession
 - To God
 - To the people affected (if any)
 - ▶ Repentance

7 A's of Confession

1. Address everyone involved (all those whom you affected)
2. Avoid if, but, and maybe (do not try to excuse your wrongs)
3. Admit specifically (both attitudes and actions)
4. Acknowledge the hurt (express sorrow for hurting someone)

Some Bad Examples

- “I’m sorry I didn’t realize how sensitive you are and didn’t choose my words better.”
- “If I hurt you, please forgive me.”
- “I shouldn’t have hit you, but you were being really obnoxious.”
- “I was at least as wrong as you were.”
- “I’m sorry you overreacted to what I did.”
- “I should not have been so mean, but I had a really rough day.”
- “Maybe I should have handled the situation in a different way.”

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1. Address everyone involved (all those whom you affected)
2. Avoid if, but, and maybe (do not try to excuse your wrongs)
3. Admit specifically (both attitudes and actions)
4. Acknowledge the hurt (express sorrow for hurting someone)
5. Accept the consequences (such as making restitution)
6. Alter your behavior (change your attitudes and actions)
7. Ask for forgiveness

After Log Removal

- If you are the offended party
 - ▶ You may overlook the offense
 - ▶ You may seek resolution
 - Reconciliation
 - Negotiation
 - Arbitration
 - Mediation
- If you are the offending party
 - ▶ Overlooking is not your call
 - ▶ You should seek resolution, even if the other person/people do not

Overlooking an Offense

thinking,

behaving,

and feeling

the same as if

the offense never occurred.

Candidates for Overlooking

- Private offenses of the lips
- Non-characteristic failures to keep a (minor) commitment
- Lack of desired friendliness
- Intellectual sloppiness
- Responses to our own sinful behavior

Items Discussed Today

- Categories of resolving responses
- Removing logs from our own eyes as the first step to resolving conflict
 - Sensitivity
 - Sin
- Confession
- Overlooking offenses

For Next Week

- Homework — (1) Examine yourself to see if you have any logs in your eyes relative to current conflicts
(2) Send to conflict@logicteacher.com short descriptions of specific, fictitious conflicts that you'd like for us to discuss how to resolve
- Lesson — “The conflict being thus necessarily terminated”

Note: Lesson title comes from Charles Dickens, *Barnaby Rudge*, Chapter 27:
Mr Chester, with the volume gently extended in one hand, and with the other planted lightly on his breast, talked to them in the most delicious manner possible; and quite enchanted all his hearers, notwithstanding their conflicting interests and thoughts.