

# A Biblical View of Conflict and Its Resolution

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Week 12

Far from abandoning the conflict

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<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

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- 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 ...

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- 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
- Weeks 6-8: Bad responses to conflict
- Week 9: Towards Resolution: Log Removal
- Week 10: Dealing with sin in others
- Week 11: Examples

# Your Assignment was ...

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- Homework —

(1) Think about our examples some more

(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

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## ■ Previous

- ▶ Shoplifting at Walmart
- ▶ Bringing up family problems in Sunday School without permission
- ▶ Bad-mouthing a friend
- ▶ Relationship between conflict and friendship
- ▶ A dispute over injury compensation
- ▶ A controversy over a son's friend
- ▶ Family conflict about betraying a confidence

## ■ New this week

- ▶ Worker getting paid, but not doing the work
- ▶ Cake stealer

# Cake Stealer

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Pip smiled as he thought of the last delectable piece of chocolate cake that was waiting for him in the kitchen. However, his great expectations of a scrumptious snack were crushed when he saw that the cake had vanished. Looking frantically around, he noticed that Estella, who was sitting close by, had chocolate frosting smudged on her collar, and cake crumbs in her lap.

## What should Pip do?

- \* Yell: “You stole my cake! I’m gonna beat the dickens out of you!”
- \* ...

# Resolving Responses

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- Involving just those in the conflict
  - ▶ Overlooking an offense
  - ▶ Reconciliation
  - ▶ Negotiation
  
- Getting help from others
  - ▶ Mediation
  - ▶ Arbitration

# Golden Rule Application

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- We're all familiar with the "golden rule"
  - ▶ **Matthew 7:12** In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets.
  - ▶ **Luke 6:31** Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.
- We need to guard against superficial application
  - ▶ "If it were my birthday, the present I'd want most would be a book about the infralapsarianism/supralapsarianism debate. So that's what I'll get others for their birthdays."
  - ▶ "I don't mind phone calls late at night, so it's okay for me to call other people late at night."
  - ▶ "It does not bother me someone if yells at me, so it is fine for me to yell at others."
- Particularly be on guard against such applications when you are trying to resolve conflicts

# Disclaimer

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The scenarios that follow are presented for instructional purposes only.

Any similarity to real people or events is strictly coincidental.

Any similarity to fictitious people is probably not coincidental

# Scenario 1

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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, Bonita, did not mind, but his daughter, Bonnie, was embarrassed and offended.

## What should Barry do?

- \* Ask Bonita to have a talk with Bonnie
- \* Tell Bonnie to get used to it, because it will probably happen again
- \* Nothing, because he did nothing wrong
- \* Ask Bonnie's forgiveness
  - + and say nothing about it in next week's class
  - + and tell the class next week what he did wrong
- \* ...

# Scenario 2

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During the course of a volleyball match at a church picnic, Vance smashed a vicious kill off of Vincent's face. The force of the hit broke Vincent's nose, blurred his vision, and knocked out a couple of teeth. Vincent has no medical insurance.

## What should Vance do?

- \* Suggest to Vincent that if he doesn't know how to protect himself, perhaps he ought not be playing
- \* Seek out a deacon to see if the church's insurance might pay for Vincent's injuries
- \* Tell Valerie (the setter) and Valiant (the passer) that the three of them should split the cost of the medical bills
- \* Offer to pay the cost of the medical bills himself
- \* Hope someone videotaped the hit, so he can show it to his teammates on his YMCA team
- \* ...

# Scenario 3

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Richard is 16 years old. His parents, Howard and Marion, have forbidden him from riding in any vehicle driven by his 18 year-old friend, Arthur. This prohibition stems from a conversation the parents overheard between two of Richard's other friends, Ralph and Warren, in which the boys talked about Arthur's tendency to violate traffic laws regularly. Richard claims that the boys were making things up, and that Arthur is really a careful, law-abiding driver. He is upset that his parents do not believe him.

## What should Howard and Marion do?

- \* Take Richard's word for it and lift the prohibition
- \* Stick to their decision no matter what
- \* Talk to Ralph, Warren, and Richard together to try to discern the truth
- \* Install a tracking device in Arthur's car, and monitor his speed for several weeks.
- \* Long for the happy days gone by, when none of Richard's friends could drive
- \* ...

# Scenario 4

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Ronald and Ronda tell Ronald's brother, Roscoe, and his wife, Rosemarie, something in confidence. They later discover that Rosemarie shared this information with her mother, Rosalyn. Ronald and Ronda confront Rosemarie. She admits that she told Rosalyn, but she does not admit that this was wrong, or that she needs to repent. She justifies her actions by saying that she didn't mean to tell her mother.

## What should Ronald and Ronda do?

- \* Pray that someone will share some of Rosemarie's secrets with others; or do it themselves if they know any
- \* Refuse to buy any Christmas presents for Rosemarie
- \* Continue to insist that Rosemarie repent
- \* Tell Roscoe that he needs to fix the situation
- \* Break off all contact with Roscoe & Rosemarie until she repents
- \* ...

# Scenario 5: Part 1

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Carl and Charles are members of the same church. Charles just bought a new house, which needs a lot of landscaping work done. Carl is a professional landscaper. He agreed to do the work for Charles for a substantially discounted price, so long as Charles paid him the money up front, so he could purchase plants and supplies. Charles agreed. Quite a bit of time has passed. Carl has cashed the check, but he has done no work.

## What should Charles do?

- \* Keep waiting, trusting that Carl will do the work soon
- \* Ask Carl when he'll get to the job, asking him for the money back if it isn't soon enough
- \* Hire another landscaper, and send the bill to Carl
- \* Report Carl to the elders
- \* Call the Better Business Bureau about Carl
- \* ...

# Scenario 5: Part 2

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Suppose Charles asks Carl when he'll get to the job, and Carl says that he can't give a date, and then refuses to give Charles his money back when asked for it.

## What should Charles do?

- \* Tell Carl that he will sue him unless he either does the job or returns the money within a month
- \* Secretly report the situation to the elders
- \* Tell Carl that he will report the situation to the elders
- \* Ask Carl if there is some mutually acceptable person who could mediate or arbitrate the dispute
- \* Write a negative review about Carl's business on a local business review web site
- \* Now, call the Better Business Bureau about Carl
- \* ...

# Scenario 5: Part 3

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How, if at all, do the following changes in the scenario change the way that Charles should respond?

- \* Carl asked for only 1/4 of the money up-front
- \* Carl is Charles' brother-in-law
- \* Charles and Carl are members of different churches
- \* Carl is not a member of any church

# Scenario 6

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Dick and Joanna own a small bed-and-breakfast inn. Their maid, Stephanie, is incompetent and uninterested in improving. They want to fire her; however, she is the daughter of an elder in their church, George, who also happens to own the bank that holds the mortgage to their inn. They hired her in the first place at George's request.

## What should Dick and Joanna do?

- \* Keep Stephanie, but also hire a competent maid
- \* Discuss with Stephanie the areas in which she needs to improve, and set a deadline for this to happen
- \* Tell George that his daughter is incompetent, and ask him what to do
- \* Fire Stephanie right away, and pledge never to hire a church member or relative again
- \* Suggest that Stephanie see a psychiatrist
- \* ...

# Scenario 7: Part 1

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Lenny leads a weekly covenant group at his house. He invited a co-worker and friend, Ed, to come to the meetings. Ed is a believer, but he attends a different church. Ed said that he would try to come to a meeting soon. Several weeks, then a month, then two months, then three went by, and Ed still had not come to one of the meetings. Two or three times during this period, Lenny talked to Ed about the meetings, and reminded him that he was invited to attend. Lenny is rather hurt that Ed hasn't come.

## What should Lenny do?

- \* Try to get over his feelings of hurt
- \* Explain to Ed that he feels hurt and why
- \* Quit the covenant group so this won't happen again
- \* Write about the situation on his blog site
- \* Find another job so he doesn't have to deal with Ed
- \* ...

# Scenario 7: Part 2

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Suppose Lenny goes to Ed, and explains that he is hurt by Ed's failure to come to one of the meetings, since Ed had initially said that he would try to attend at least once.

## What should Ed do?

- \* Suggest that Lenny should look up "try" in the dictionary
- \* Reply, "Wow, I didn't realize you were so sensitive"
- \* Tell Lenny that when he initially said that he'd try to come, he didn't realize that the meeting time conflicted with TNT repeats of Law & Order
- \* Promise Lenny that he will come to the next meeting, unless providentially hindered
- \* Explain to Lenny that in Ed-speak, "I'll try" is a synonym for "No"
- \* ...

# Items Discussed Today

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- Application of the golden rule
- Various scenarios

# For Next Week

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- Homework —
  - (1) Think about the examples some more
  - (2) Think about whether you have any questions you want us to discuss next week. If so, send e-mail with the question to **conflict@logicteacher.com**.
- Lesson — “In our last conflict”

Note: Lesson title comes Agatha Christie, *The Secret Adversary*, Chapter 8:  
Checkmated for the moment, he was far from abandoning the conflict