



How to Pull Together When You're Pulling Apart

Conflict: *A fight or struggle for mastery; a clash of opinions or interests.*

"What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Isn't it the whole army of evil desires at war within you?" James 4:1 NLT

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:18

Two kinds of conflict

- _____ conflict
- _____ conflict

Four rules for fighting

1. WHEN? The Right _____

"In your anger do not sin: do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." Eph. 4:26

2. HOW? The Right _____

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger." Prov. 15:1

3. WHERE? The Right _____

"Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins." 1 Pet. 4:8

4. WHAT? The Right _____

"Live in harmony with one another: be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing." 1 Peter 3:8,9 NIV

Two options for handling conflict

1. _____
"See to it that no one misses the grace of God, and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many." Hebrews 12:15 NIV

2. _____
"Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you." Ephesians 4:32 NIV

"Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Colossians 3:12,13 NIV

Daily Meditations

Here's a chance to spend some time each day this week meditating on today's topic!

Write your answers on another piece of paper this week.

This week's memory verse:

"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone." Romans 12:18

Monday

Read Proverbs 15:1; 29:11; 30:33; and Ecclesiastes 7:9.

When God inspired the Bible writers, he knew one of our most basic needs as human beings would be to learn how to handle conflict. Many of these verses contain a simple truth: The best way to manage conflict is not to *start* conflict. What principles speak to you from these verses?

If you had to choose one of these verses to challenge you this week, which would it be?

Ask the Lord today to help you think before you speak -- to help you reduce conflict by not starting unnecessary conflict. Thank Him for His strength which enables you to do this.

Tuesday

Read James 4:1-3 and Ephesians 4:26. The churches and communities to whom James is writing apparently struggled with fights and quarrels. According to these verses, what is at the root of conflict?

According to these verses, how are we to handle our desires?

How is this different from the way we usually deal with them?

Have you ever had a conflict with another believer? Were “battling desires” at the root? What happened?

Has this conflict ever been resolved? If so, how did it get resolved? If not, why not follow Scripture and get it resolved today?

Today ask the Lord to help you resolve any conflict you have with others and thank Him that He is the great Peacemaker who made peace with us through the cross!

Wednesday

Read Philippians 4:1-3. We’re going to stay in these verses for the next few days and really study them as a picture of conflict and resolution. How is it possible for people who have once served together for the Lord to now live in extended conflict?

Are you holding a grudge or feeling angry with another believer?

If God had the Apostle Paul appear before you and ask you by name to put your differences aside for the sake of the cause of the gospel, would you?

Try an experiment: Put your name and the other person’s name in place of “Euodia and Syntyche” and read Paul’s admonition out loud to yourself. Will you be willing to follow Scripture?

Ask the Lord to show you if there is conflict between you and another. Ask for His strength to make it right today. You may think you can’t straighten it out, but He will empower you to do it!

Thursday

Reread Phil. 4:1-3 and Gal. 6:1. Notice Paul’s response to these women: What is his manner -- does he command, threaten, or push? What words does he use to describe them? Is he gentle or is he harshly authoritarian?

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Sometimes we go to extremes when we see conflict around us: Either we ignore it or we are too harsh in dealing with it.” How does Paul avoid either extreme?

What do you tend to do when dealing with conflict?

Also, note that Paul, although a famed leader of the early church, does not “pull rank” on these women. In more legalistic churches, leaders can often display dictatorial tendencies. Why is this ultimately self-defeating? Why doesn’t Paul exhibit a more authoritarian style? (See Gal. 6:1 for more on gentleness)

Ask the Lord to reveal to you conflict between others that you may help to mediate. Pray that God will help you deal with conflict around you gently and effectively.

Friday

Reread Phil. 4:1-3. According to your notes from this past weekend, what are four practical rules you can use to “fight fair”? Which of these is hardest for you? Why?

Ask God today to help you resolve conflict His way: With gentleness and a focus on Christ!

Saturday

Take the time today to go over any devotions you may have missed and to complete your memorization of this week’s verse. What points or verses have been particularly meaningful for you this week? Thank you so much for your continued prayers -- Keep praising God for the work He is doing! Pray for the ministry this weekend! Thank you!