

**I. Introduction and review: God brings peace through the gospel. Rom. 5:1 12:18
Heb. 13:14 John 14:27 Isa. 9:6 Luke 1:79 2:14 19:38 Eph. 2:11ff**

II. You cannot completely avoid conflict. Rom. 12:18a

A. All conflict is the result of sin.

1. Conflict between man and God. Gen. 2:16-17 3:9-10 Ro. 5:10 Col. 1:21 Is. 57:21
2. Conflict among people. James 4:1-2 Gen. 3:12 Mt. 15:18

B. Peace is sometimes out of your reach. Heb. 12:14 Ecc. 3:8

1. You cannot make peace at the expense of truth and righteousness. Rom. 16:17-18 Mt. 10:34-38 18:15f Jer. 8:11 Acts 20:28 Gal. 2:11ff I Co. 5:6-7
2. There are some people with whom it is impossible to make peace. I Co. 7:15
3. God does not hold you responsible for the sinful failures of others.
4. You cannot always avoid conflict, but you can avoid sin. I Co. 10:13
5. Sometimes sincere believers reach an impasse. Acts 15:36ff 2 Tim. 4:11

C. Conflict is very dangerous (see The Slippery Slope, from *The Peacemaker*).

1. Some fight (*peacebreakers*) – revenge, verbal and physical attacks, lawsuits. Rom. 12:17-21 Mt. 5:21-22 Pr. 11:9 29:22 12:18 14:17 15:18 16:28 I Co. 6:1-8
2. Others flee (*peacefakers*) – denial, escape, divorce, suicide. Eph. 4:26-27,31 2 Sam. 17:23

D. Conflict brings opportunity.

1. To glorify God. I Co. 10:31
2. To be more like Christ. Rom. 8:28-29 Js. 1:2ff
3. To serve others. Rom. 12:14,20 Phil. 2:3-8
4. To bear witness to a watching world. Col. 4:5 1 Pe. 3:16
5. God may be working in many lives. Gen. 50:20
6. The goal in conflict is to please God – not yourself and not even others. Pr. 29:25 2 Co. 5:9 John 5:30 8:29

III. Do all that is within your power to prevent sinful conflict. Mt. 5:9 Heb. 12:14

A. The key to peacemaking is having an attitude of humility, grace and love. Js. 4:6

1. Our pride makes us want to judge and condemn others (and defend ourselves). Mt. 7:1ff Js. 4:11-12 Gal. 5:15,19-20
2. Humility enables us to show grace and to receive correction. Rom. 15:7 Eph. 4:31-32 1 Pet. 4:8 1 Co. 13:7 Pr. 9:8 Col. 3:12-14

B. Don't stir up strife. Rom. 16:17 Pr. 6:16-19 29:22 26:21 Titus 3:10

1. Don't be quarrelsome. Rom. 16:17-18 Pr. 20:3 2 Tim. 2:23-24
2. Be especially careful how you speak. Pr. 18:21 10:19 Eph. 4:29 Js. 1:19 3:1ff

C. Be a good listener. Js. 1:19 Pr. 20:5 Phil. 2:3-4

D. Use your words to build up and encourage. Eph. 4:29

E. Be willing to overlook minor offences. I Pe. 4:8 Pr. 10:12 17:14 19:11 Mt. 5:39-40

1. Don't stand on your rights. I Co. 6:6-7 Phil. 2:5f Pr. 1 29:11,20,22 25
2. Be willing to make personal sacrifices for the sake of peace. Rom. 14:19 Pr. 17:14 Mt. 5:39-40 I Co. 6:7 Phil. 2:3-8
3. Trust God to defend your interests. Rom. 12:19 I Pe. 2:23 Ps. 37

IV. Pursue peace by first getting the log out of your eye. Mt. 7:1-5

A. Deal with your own sins and faults. Mt. 7:1-5 5:23-24 Pr. 28:13 Ps. 139:23-24

1. While in the midst of a conflict, the flesh wants to focus upon the sins of the other person. Gal. 5:15-21
2. You must deal with your own sin before you can help others to overcome theirs. Mt. 7:1-5 1 Tim. 1:15 Ps. 39:23-24 Jer. 17:9
3. Face up to the root of sin in your own heart. James 4:1-2 Mt. 15:18
4. First seek forgiveness from God. Ps. 51:4 32:1ff Pr. 28:13 1 Jo. 1:8-2:2
5. Then seek forgiveness from your brother or sister for whatever fault you may have (even if it is only 10%).
6. If someone has something against you, you must go to them – soon! Mt. 5:23-24

B. Peacemaking often fails because people don't adequately (biblically) deal with conflict – "mowing the weeds".

C. Seek forgiveness from the other party biblically – pull the weeds (The 7 A's of Confession from *The Peacemaker*). Mt. 5:23-24

1. Address everyone involved.
2. Avoid *if, but* and *maybe*.
3. Admit specifically.
4. Apologize. Acknowledge the hurt.
5. Accept the consequences. Luke 19:8-9
6. Alter your behavior. II Co. 7:10-11
7. Ask for forgiveness. 1 Jo. 1:8-9 Luke 17:4

D. Other practical considerations when seeking forgiveness.

1. Often when you seek forgiveness the other person softens and admits their sin in the conflict.
2. When you and the other person don't fully agree, can you admit that you might have been wrong or that you could have been more sensitive?
3. In many relationships there is a huge unweeded garden which will take a lot of time to clean up initially.
4. After the initial weeding has been done, care must be taken to pull the new weeds which will continue to spring up from time to time.

E. What if the other person refuses to forgive you? Rom. 12:18 Pr. 18:19

1. Allow for some time.
2. Ask if there are any other issues for which you need to seek their forgiveness.
3. Seek mediation. Phil. 4:2-3 Pr. 27:5-6

V. Concluding applications

Discussion Questions

1. What is the cause of conflict?
2. Why is peacemaking sometimes impossible?
3. What are two kinds of sinful responses to conflict.
4. What can you do to avoid unnecessary conflict?
5. What should you do if the other person is primarily at fault?
6. Why do many apologies fail to produce lasting peace?
7. How could you confess your sins against others?

8. What should you do if the other person won't forgive you?