

# VII. The CONFLICTS in Marriage

(How to Handle Disagreements and Problems)



## A. WHY do Conflicts Exist?

"Conflicts" are basically caused by friction; when two opposing forces, ideas, etc., meet together. Friction causes heat and heat starts fires and fires destroy things!

Sin brought conflict (Gen. 3ff).

--Conflict with God

--Conflict with fellow man (Ex. Cain killing Abel)

### **General Factors that cause conflict:**

#### 1. The conflict of the \_\_\_\_\_ (two natures)

--Romans 7:18-19 --Galatians 5:16-17

Specific problems with the flesh:

- 1) Selfish \_\_\_\_\_ - James 4:1-3
- 2) Divisive \_\_\_\_\_ - I Cor. 3:1-3
- 3) Conceited \_\_\_\_\_ - Phil. 2:3-4
- 4) Tiredness, fatigue, & other physical problems - II Cor.12:7

#### 2. The conflict of the \_\_\_\_\_

--I John 2:15-17 - The world's philosophies, methods, etc., often influence the thinking and behavior of unsuspecting Christians.

--John 16:33 - "In the world you will have tribulation (conflicts & pressures)"

#### 3. The conflict of the \_\_\_\_\_

Our "adversary" - I Peter 5:8

Satan instigates strife and conflict.

### **Specific Factors that cause conflicts:**

#### 1. Conflicts are basically caused by \_\_\_\_\_.

Differences are not necessarily wrong; rather, they can be beneficial (I Cor. 12:4-20).

a. Differences of \_\_\_\_\_ (differences of tastes, likes/dislikes, habits, etc.)

b. Differences of \_\_\_\_\_ (differences of understanding)

c. Differences of \_\_\_\_\_ (differences of belief, values, philosophies)  
(Note: Romans 14:1-15:6)

**Warning:** Yoking up with unbelievers is asking for trouble (conflict)! (II Cor. 6:14-18)

2. Some conflicts are caused by \_\_\_\_\_

3. Some conflicts are caused by \_\_\_\_\_

**Why does God allow conflicts in our lives?**

- \_\_\_\_\_ - "You reap what you sow" (Gal. 6:7)
- \_\_\_\_\_ - Discipline, to correct (Heb. 12:5-11)
- \_\_\_\_\_ - Maturity (James 1:2ff)

**B. HOW do I Mend a Conflict?**

**1. Determine the actual cause**

(the right ailment)

First determine \_\_\_\_\_ in the conflict, then your spouses (Matt.7:3-5)

**2. Apply God's Medicine**

(the right answer)

- a. Seek God's wisdom (from the Bible) (James 1:5)
- b. Follow God's advice (loving confrontation) (Mt. 5:23-24; 18:15-18); Unresolved conflicts will become long-term "problems."

**3. Respond with the proper therapy**

**\*\* Have the right attitude**

- a. Respond with a \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_ spirit (Gal.6:1)
- b. Respond with \_\_\_\_\_ words (Prov. 15:1, 25:15)
- c. Respond with gracious \_\_\_\_\_ (Mt. 6:14-15; Lk. 17:3-4; I Pet. 3:9; Eph. 4:31, 32; Col. 3:13)

**\*\*Do the right action (Follow these steps)**

1. Sit down and face each other (Matthew 18:15).
2. Pray for God's grace & wisdom
3. Work at clearly defining the issue so both of you understand what the conflict is about.
  - a. Deal with the present problem at hand, not the past (Phil.3:12-14)
  - b. Deal with one problem at a time (Mt.6:34)
4. If the discussion becomes more heated lower your voices. Avoid shouting. (Prov.15:1)
5. Come to an agreeable solution (a solution you both believe God would be pleased with)
  - a. Compromise when it is a non-Biblical, or non-moral issue (Rom.12:10,16).
  - b. When agreement is not reached, the father/husband, as the head of the home, must make a careful, correct, considerate decision and the family/wife should abide by it with a sweet spirit (Eph.4:22,23; 6:1; I Pet. 3:5-7)
6. If unresolvable, seek counsel from someone you respect and trust (such as your pastor or a close friend). Another person often can be more objective.
7. Make resolving the conflict a priority. Don't let anything interfere with resolving it, even if it means canceling a planned appointment or activity.

**Six "don'ts regarding conflicts:**

- 1) Don't expect the problem to "\_\_\_\_\_."
- 2) Don't have the attitude of "\_\_\_\_\_?"
- 3) Don't play the "\_\_\_\_\_ game."
- 4) Don't "fight fire with \_\_\_\_\_" (I Pet. 3:9; I Th. 5:15; Rom. 12:17-21)
- 5) Don't practice "character assassination" (Don't attack the \_\_\_\_\_ rather than the \_\_\_\_\_)
- 6) Don't dig up "old bones" (Don't bring up the past)

**C. HOW do I Avoid Conflicts?**

You can't avoid conflicts stemming from the sin of someone else, but you can keep them from starting with you.

1. Walk in the \_\_\_\_\_ (Gal. 5:13-23)
2. Mind your \_\_\_\_\_ business (I Pet. 4:15)
3. Accept the \_\_\_\_\_ of others (not all differences are sinful - Rom. 14)
4. \_\_\_\_\_ on non-moral issues (Rom. 15:1-7)
5. Respond Biblically (like \_\_\_\_\_ would) toward people who cause conflicts with you (Matthew 5:23,24)
6. Make it your goal to live \_\_\_\_\_ with all men (Rom.12:18)

\*Remember, you are \_\_\_\_\_ with your spouse (Eph. 5:29-32).  
 When you fight against him/her, you are fighting against yourself!

## D. HOW can I really FORGIVE?

The greatest problem in most troubled marriages is unforgiveness.

What is the cause for most divorces? Unforgiveness

### See: Matthew 18:21-35

**\*You should forgive your spouse the same way \_\_\_\_\_ has forgiven \_\_\_\_\_!**

How can I forgive what he/she did to me?

1. **Compare the \_\_\_\_\_ of sins you are asked to forgive with the great legion of sins God forgave you (v. 21-22)**  
*"Seventy times seven"*  
 You have been forgiven far more than you will ever forgive!
  
2. **Compare the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin God forgave you with the trivial sins you are asked to forgive others (v. 23-28)**  
*"Ten thousand talents (v. 24) . . . a hundred pence" (v. 28)*
  
3. **Compare the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's forgiveness with the cost of your own forgiveness (v. 27)**  
*"God gave up His Son for your forgiveness (John 3:16); all you give up is your sin of anger and resentment" (Dr. Jim Binney)*  
 It costs to forgive (when you forgive, you have taken upon yourself the effects of that person's sin and freed him/her from their obligation of personally paying you for it)  
 What do Stephen (Acts 7:60) and Jesus (Lk. 23:34) have in common? The ability to forgive at great cost.
  
4. **Compare the \_\_\_\_\_ of unforgiveness with the blessings of forgiveness (v. 34-35)**

The Bible teaches that God shall have judgment without mercy on those who showed no mercy (James 2:13).

<b>Compare the consequences of unforgiveness          with the blessings of forgiveness:</b>	
By: Dr. Jim Binney	
<b>UNFORGIVENESS</b>	<b>FORGIVENESS</b>

Unanswered prayer (Mt. 6:4)	Answered prayer (I Pet. 3:7)
Give place to the devil (Eph. 4:26; cp. II Cor. 2:10-11)	Freedom from Satan (Ja. 4:7)
Grieve the Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:30)	Receive the comfort of the Spirit
Hurt others (Heb. 12:15)	Be a blessing (Eph. 4:29)
Broken fellowship with God (I Jn. 1:5)	Intimate fellowship (I Jn. 1:6-9)
Physical ailments (Exod.15:26)	Health and good days (I Pet. 3:10)

It has been said that 90% of physical ailments are psychosomatic - the mind effected by guilt and anger effects you physically. Unforgiveness is like a cancer in the bones; it cripples and destroys relationships and you.

### Follow Christ's Pattern of Forgiveness

Eph. 4:32 - "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Col. 3:13 - "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any; even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye."

#### How did Jesus forgive?

##### Jesus forgave...

1. By \_\_\_\_\_ for the sins of others (Colossians 2:13-14)  
(In order for forgiveness to be real, someone has to pay the debt)
2. By \_\_\_\_\_ for His enemies (cp. Mt.5:43-44)

("Father forgive them for they know not what they do")

##### Learn to distinguish between weakness and wickedness

Ignorance is not innocence, but it is a reason for mercy (Acts 3:17; I Tim.1:13)

Wickedness = To be sold out to sin; Pre-meditated vengeance or rebellion; Deliberate transgression; Not caring about the cost to the offended; A desire to hurt another.

Weakness =To be overtaken in a fault; Deceived by the Devil; Ensnared by the flesh; Concern for the fulfillment of an appetite  
(see: Gal.6:1-2)

3. By focusing on the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin, rather than the \_\_\_\_\_ of sin

("For this purpose was He manifested, that He might destroy the works of the Devil [Not the workers of iniquity Jn.3:17-18])

4. By envisioning God's

(Heb. 12:2 - "[Jesus envisioning] the joy that was set before him endured the cross...")

You can comfort others with the comfort you received (II Cor.1:3-6)

You can see that God can even work through the evil sins of others for a good purpose (Gen.50:20)

Outline by Dr. Jim Binney

### Practical Pointers on Forgiveness

1. Focus on \_\_\_\_\_, not retaliation (Rom. 12:17-21)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ the restoration process (Mt. 18:15)
3. Don't put a \_\_\_\_\_ (ceiling) on your forgiveness (Mt.18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4)
4. Don't put \_\_\_\_\_ on your forgiveness, other than the condition that he/she repents and asks for forgiveness (Luke 17:3,4)  
(If he/she does not repent, you still must forgive him/her in your heart and not let bitterness grow)
5. Be \_\_\_\_\_ in your forgiveness (Mt. 18:35 - "from the heart")

Not a "surface" forgiveness (EX: the plastic smile, the cold handshake, the distant hug, the shallow words "It's okay," the quick "I

forgive you", etc.) Rather, when we forgive, it must come from within, from our innermost being.

6. Forgiveness is not forgetting, but it \_\_\_\_\_ to forget

(God forgets in that He no longer holds the sin against us, nor does He allow it to come in between He and us)

7. Be \_\_\_\_\_ to be made \_\_\_\_\_ to forgive (Eph.4:31)

(Pray for God to change your heart and let Him do so [cp.Phil.2:13])

8. If you need forgiveness, be

(Its easier to forgive a humbled person)

### **Test of Forgiveness**

By Dr. Jim Binney

- 1) Can I thank God for the lesson(s) I learned through the painful experience?
- 2) Can I talk about it (the conflict or person) without angry resentment or feelings of revenge?
- 3) Have I accepted my part of the blame? (Prov. 13:10)
- 4) Can I reward them who hurt me and pray for them?
- 5) Can I revisit the scene without resentment?
- 6) Can I grant forgiveness from the heart and verbalize it?