

Communication & Conflict

Conflict is part of life for sinners living in sin cursed world.

Underline sources of conflicts in this passage

James 4:1–10 *1 What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? 2 You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. 3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. 4 You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. 5 Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: "He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us"? 6 But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." 7 Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.*

All sources conflict between people can be reduced down to seeking or doing (even if unintentional) what is contrary to God's commands (godliness) instead of seeking to love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37-40; Mark 12:30-31)

Communication problems add to conflict arising from sinfulness, and they can also be the source of conflict even between those striving to be godly. Note the evil & non-evil causes in this list:

12 Major Causes of Communication Breakdown (not in any particular order)

- 1) _____ of skills (physical, mental, competency, vocabulary, etc.)
- 2) _____ barriers (foreign, dialect, accents, male / female differences)
- 3) Inability to _____ noise / interference
- 4) Fear
- 5) Lack of Desire
- 6) Selfishness
- 7) Ignorance
- 8) _____, slander, gossip
- 9) Wrong _____
- 10) Foolishness
- 11) _____ messages - actions / body language does not match words
- 12) _____ of Speech

We will focus on conflicts caused by communication problems with the assumption that you want to do what is godly.

The following list reveals how failed or ungodly communication contributes to conflict and how godly communication contributes to resolution and peaceful harmony.

Some Dangers of Failed or Ungodly Communication

- 1) Lack of needed information
- 2) Wrong assumptions
- 3) Confusion
- 4) Discontentment, Frustration
- 5) Lack of harmony
- 6) Suspicion, jealousy
- 7) Unwise decision making
- 8) Attitude problems
- 9) Strife
- 10) Lack of intimacy

Some Blessings of Godly Communication

- 1) Needed information provided
- 2) Correction of assumptions
- 3) Clarity of understanding
- 4) Contentment
- 5) Harmony
- 6) Trust
- 7) Wise decision making
- 8) Good Attitudes
- 9) Unity
- 10) Intimacy

Conflict as Opportunity

James 1:2-4 _____

Romans 5:3-11 _____

Conflict is the opportunity _____

The hard part is _____

Directing your Emotions & Response

1) Manage your

Proverbs 29:11, *A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.*

Proverbs 25:28, *Like a city that is broken into and without walls Is a man who has no control over his spirit.*

Proverbs 14:29, *He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.*

2) Leave it in the

Proverbs 24:28-29, ²⁸ *Do not be a witness against your neighbor without cause, And do not deceive with your lips.* ²⁹ *Do not say, "Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."*

Psalms 37 - People may do evil against you, but put your trust in the Lord instead of seeking revenge. Summarized in vs. 7-8, ⁷ *Rest in the LORD and wait patiently for Him; Do not fret because of him who prospers in his way, Because of the man who carries out wicked schemes.* ⁸ *Cease from anger and forsake wrath; Do not fret; it leads only to evildoing.*

Romans 12:19, *Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.*

Romans 8:28-29, ²⁸ *And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.* ²⁹ *For those whom He*

foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

3) _____ in a Godly Manner

Proverbs 15:28, *The heart of the righteous ponders how to answer, But the mouth of the wicked pours out evil things.*

Proverbs 15:1 *A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs up anger*

Proverbs 19:11, *A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.*

Ephesians 4:26–27, ²⁶ *BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷ and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

Romans 12:21, *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Ephesians 4:29, *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*

4) Be Humble & _____

1 Peter 5:5-6, “. . . *for GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.* ⁶ *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,*

Matthew 6:12, *‘And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.*

Luke 17:4 *“And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”*

Ephesians 4:32, *Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.*

5) Seek _____ for Even Your Enemies

Leviticus 19:18, *‘You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.*

1 Peter 3:8-9, ⁸ *To sum up, all of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit; ⁹ not returning evil for evil or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.*

Matthew 5:44, *“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,*

Responses to Conflict - Possible responses to a conflict -

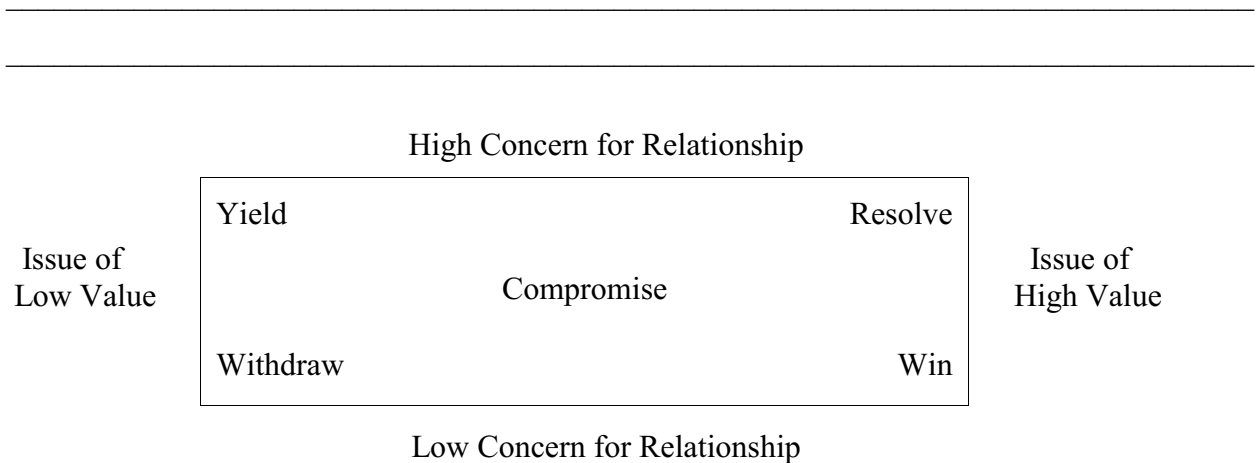
Withdraw - physically leave or psychologically check out. _____

Yield - Abandon the conflict by conceding to the other person's desire. _____

Win - No matter what the cost, the conflict must yield to your position / desire. _____

Resolve - Both parties in the conflict come to a mutual agreement on what is true and right. _____

Compromise - those in conflict agree to a workable solution, but it is not totally satisfying to any.



Working Toward Resolutions

- 1) Be quick to _____ & slow to _____. Until you understand the other person's position / point of view, you do not understand the problem and cannot resolve it.
Proverbs 18:13, *He who gives an answer before he hears, It is folly and shame to him.*
James 1:19–20, ¹⁹ *This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger;* ²⁰ *for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.*
- 2) Find the Right _____ & _____ for Resolution - both parties in a conflict need to have a proper context for working out the problem. There needs to be ample time - not rushed. It needs to be when both can put their best effort into it - neither over tired or not yet awake. It needs to be an a place where there is appropriate privacy, without unnecessary interruptions, and equal footing.
Proverbs 15:23, *A man has joy in an apt answer, And how delightful is a timely word!*
- 3) Define the _____. - both parties need to work to define the actual conflict. It often turns out to be a misunderstanding instead of an actual conflict.
- 4) _____ areas of both agreement and disagreement in the conflict. This narrows the issues.
- 5) Listen and reflect to identify _____ contribution to the conflict. This requires humility, but accepting responsibility honors truth, demonstrates godliness, and opens the door for cooperation from the other person - especially when forgiveness is requested.
- 6) State _____ what you can do to help resolve the issue, even asking their opinion (i.e. what can I do to help resolve this?)

BE AWARE & AVOID BEING EITHER DEFENSIVE OR AGGRESSIVE - remain patient & humble

Practical Help in Communication

Listening Skills:

Try to be in an environment conducive to listening - quiet enough to hear, private enough to avoid unnecessary distractions / interruptions.

- 1) Listen _____ & carefully - Do not multitask, allow your mind to wander, prepare a rebuttal
- 2) Actively strive to _____ the message, not just the words

- 3) Take _____ as needed
- 4) Quickly and politely ask for _____ of what you do not understand
- 5) Don't jump to _____.
- 6) Be _____ while listening (don't finish their sentences for them)
- 7) Refrain from _____ even if attacked / falsely accused (understand their point of view first)
Includes: returning accusations; retaliation; obscuring the issue; changing the subject, etc.
- 8) _____ consider rebuke / criticism
- 9) _____ to them your understanding of what they have communicated
- 10) If you need to apologize, don't cut them off to do so. _____ until they are done talking

Speech Skills:

Try to be in an environment conducive to being heard - quiet enough to hear, private enough to avoid unnecessary distractions / interruptions.

- 1) Speak _____ with appropriate volume (articulation, loud enough to be heard, but not yelling)
- 2) Prepare _____ and use notes as needed. This not only keeps you on track, but shows respect for the other person in that you have thought through things beforehand.
- 3) Avoid _____ / distractions while you speak (silence / turn off your phone)
- 4) Seek _____ to make sure your message is being understood
- 5) Ask questions to _____ mutual understanding
- 6) _____ willingness to come back at another time if the other person is not able to pay attention for whatever reason (legitimate or not)
- 7) Avoid direct _____ of motive - express your observations and ask questions
- 8) Do not use blanket statements / _____ - "all," "always," "never," "a million times," etc.
- 9) Do not _____ the other person or their concerns
- 10) Do not bring up _____ that were already resolved (if forgiveness was granted, bringing it up demonstrates unforgiveness and perhaps bitterness)
- 11) Do not seek _____
- 12) Do not _____ your emotions (appropriate only when seeking comfort - and warn them first)
- 13) Do not _____, or withhold information to make your argument stronger
- 14) Do not _____ others for your own response / actions (you are always responsible for yourself)
- 15) _____ use vulgarities, profanities, curse

KEY VERSE TO MEMORIZE: Covers manner and motivations for speech:

Ephesians 4:29 - *Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.*