

Ln 5 How To Curtail Conflict

[Philippians 1:27-2:4](#)

As Paul writes this letter he is aware of the relational stress in the church at Philippi due to conflict. Therefore, in this passage we find **four** essentials for curtailing conflict, and thus relieving some stress in our lives.

A Spirit of Cooperation [1:27](#)

Knowing conflict is brewing in the church at Philippi, Paul writes: *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ* ([1:27a](#)). The word translated **becometh** means "**to be worthy of.**" Our salvation and forgiveness were bought at a very high price—the precious blood of Jesus. How do we live a life worthy of the high price paid for our salvation and forgiveness? Paul tells us: *that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel* ([1:27b](#)). The phrase **one spirit** refers to unity or getting along with other people. The phrase **with one mind striving together** pictures a team effort or cooperation. Success in marriage, church, parenting, business, government, education, or whatever depends on cooperation with people and commitment to the principles of God's Word. Therefore, what does the Bible tell us in [Romans 12:18](#)?

Curtailing conflict requires **a spirit of cooperation** and...

A Spirit of Confidence [1:28-30](#)

Paul continues: *And in nothing terrified by your adversaries* ([1:28a](#)). There are always people who don't want to cooperate and try to intimidate those who do. When you try to bring peace and cooperation, don't be frightened by these people. How sad that many churches spend much time and effort fighting against one another instead of the real enemy! It takes a lot of **courage to cooperate** and be a peacemaker. That's why we need confidence in what promise of Jesus in [Matthew 5:9](#)?

Paul also writes: *which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God* ([1:28b](#)). This means trying to cooperate and bring peace is a **token** we are the children of God. On the other hand, those who always cause conflict and controversy are revealing they aren't Christians. Few things disclose what kind of people we really are as how we handle conflict. How we react is a *token* of whether or not we are truly Christians.

If we live for Christ, we will experience opposition—the Evil One will see to that. That's why Paul writes: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake* ([1:29](#)).

Jesus says we are *blessed* when people *revile* us, *persecute* us, and *falsely* say bad things about us because we are following Him ([Mt 5:11](#)).

Then, what does He say in [Matthew 5:12a](#)?

Paul and the Philippians have some things in common with us because Paul writes: *Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me* ([1:30](#)). When people misunderstand us and say all kinds of bad things about us, we are facing the *same conflict* as believers who have gone before us. However, we must always have what confidence found in [Deuteronomy 31:8](#)?

Curtailling conflict requires **a spirit of cooperation, a spirit of confidence**, and...

A Spirit of Consolation (Phil 2:1-2)

Reducing conflict in relationships requires genuine concern for other people, even those with whom we disagree. Therefore, Paul writes: *If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind* ([2:1-2](#)). The word translated **consolation** is the same Greek word Jesus used when He called the Holy Spirit the **Comforter** in [John 14:16](#).

Many times in my life I have been so discouraged I seriously considered getting out of the ministry. At those times the Lord has encouraged and comforted me. He has never sent an angel, called me on the phone, or sent a post card.

Instead, He encouraged and comforted me through other believers who obey what command in [1 Thessalonians 5:11a](#)?

There have also been times in my life when my relationship with some church members has become strained to the point of conflict. However, over the years I have learned as I pray for that relationship to improve, God will give me an opportunity to minister with encouragement by showing tenderness and compassion to them during a crisis. People will never forget the comfort we give them during their times of crisis.

Curtailling conflict in relationships requires **a spirit of cooperation, a spirit of confidence, a spirit of consolation**, and...

A Spirit of Consideration [2:3-4](#)

Paul now gives us two main reasons for conflict in relationships: **strife and vainglory** ([2:3a](#)). **The word translated *strife* (*eritheia*, air-ith-ay'-ah) denotes selfishness and rivalry.** Selfishness always breeds contention, resentment, and rivalry. Division and discord are the results of people focusing exclusively on their own agendas and preferences.

A second reason for conflict is **vainglory**, which refers to ego or pride. Wherever there is conflict, the culprit is usually ego or pride.

How does [Proverbs 13:10a](#) confirm this?

To live in peace with everyone, we must sometimes swallow our *pride* and say the two most difficult words in the English language: "**I'm sorry**;" or we must say the three most difficult words, "**I was wrong**."

Swallowing our *pride* sometimes means forgiving people we don't feel deserve to be forgiven.

However, we must because of what command in [Colossians 3:13](#)?

Only one thing keeps us from *forgiving* and seeking reconciliation, and that is our *pride*. When we are proud we have an exaggerated opinion of ourselves and feel others should bow down before us and ask for our forgiveness. Pride causes us to wait until someone else makes the first move toward reconciliation.

To curtail a spirit of contention and conflict, we must have a spirit opposite of *strife* and *vainglory*.

How does Paul describe this opposite spirit in [Philippians 2:3b](#)?

The word **better** doesn't mean you put yourself down and act like you are inferior. Rather, it means you treat people like they are worthy of respect and consideration. It means your focus isn't exclusively on yourself but on other people as well.

When we fail to consider others *better* than ourselves or when we fail to value other people by treating them with less respect than they deserve, we are creating an atmosphere for conflict and adding stress to our relationships.

How does Paul describe a **spirit of consideration** in [Philippians 2:4](#)?

This means we are willing to put our own comforts, preferences, and desires aside because we are more concerned about other people. When we don't look to the interests of others, we will have problems in our marriages, with our kids, with people at school, at church, at work, and everywhere.

To curtail conflict in your relationships, you must have:

A SPIRIT OF COOPERATION,

A SPIRIT OF CONFIDENCE,

A SPIRIT OF *CONSOLATION*,

A SPIRIT OF CONSIDERATION.

On your "move into stress-free living," which of these do you most need to work on, and when will you begin?
