

Life Hacks Series – Part 2
Conflict Resolution
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5.5.19

Good morning, welcome back to part two of our sermon series called Life Hacks. In this series we are talking about God's hacks into relationships to help us succeed in ways that many people fail. The Spirit teaches us insider information showing us how to act in ways that are sometimes exactly the opposite of what everyone around us think we should do.

Today I wanted to talk about something that impacts every single one of us. I want to talk about how we respond to conflict. What actions, if any, do we take when conflict happens in our lives? What does God have to say about resolving conflict? What is his advice, his hack, in one particular area?

John 13:35

35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

When Jesus said this, it went to a group of disciples who always got along. The disciples were extremely different people.

It's easy to love people when everything is going well. It's when conflict happens that real love is required.

Luke 6:32-36

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full. 35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. 36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Your identity and my identity as a follower of Jesus Christ is dependent on how we love each other. And how we handle conflict not doubt highlights who we are as believers in extraordinary ways.

Before we actually talk about conflict resolution, I'd like to lay down some foundational truths that are accessible to every Christian. When you ask Jesus to come into your life, you are filled with his spirit, there is specific and measurable evidence of the Holy Spirit's presence in your life. Another way to say it is the inevitable and supernatural outcome of your decision to follow

Jesus is that you would begin to reflect his character in the way you live. What does that look like?

Galatians 5:22-23

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
23 gentleness and self-control.

These are supernatural consequences of surrendering your life to Jesus. The bible says

2 Corinthians 5:17

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

That you are a different person, that change is possible, these aren't just inevitable and supernatural outcome of your decision to follow Jesus, these are promises they are your right to have as a child of God.

1) Be intentional about growing in humility.

Philippians 2:5-8 (NIV)

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Humility is a daily habit; pride cannot see itself in the mirror. It is best to assume you are prideful and go from there.

2) Be intentional about growing in honesty.

Believe it or not some of us still struggle with telling the truth. We lie, we exaggerate, we round up or down depending on what best suits us. We inflate the wrongness of someone behavior, we use inaccurate and inflammatory language.

Matthew 5:37

37 All you need to say is simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

It's said twice in scripture, James 5:12

Is your language factually accurate? In conflict is my language providing honest and clear communication?

3) Be intentional about growing in listening.

Active Listening skills are essential for every area of your life.

LADDER: look at the speaker, ask questions, don't interrupt, don't change the subject, emotions in control, responsive listening. (body language)

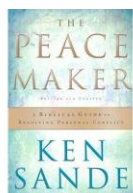
James 1:19-20

19 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

4) Be intentional about controlling your emotions.

- Proverbs 29:11 Fools give full vent to their rage,
- Proverbs 15:1,4 1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. 4 The soothing tongue is a tree of life, but a perverse tongue crushes the spirit.
- James 1:20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

I want to give you two resources to look at, I think these are great books to look to as you seek to grow in handling conflict biblically.



Peace Maker by Ken Sande

How to have that difficult conversation Dr. Henry Cloud and John Townsend

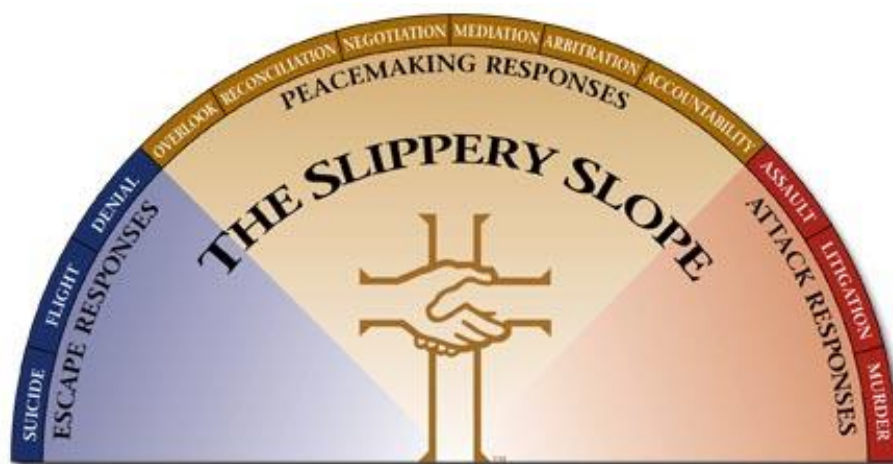
Ken Sande says that there are three options to choose from whenever you are facing conflict.

Peace Faking

Peace Breaking

Peace Making

I'm going to have on the screen a graphic that is shown in his book that gives these three responses. I'd like you to take a second and find the section you belong in. What is your natural go to when it comes to conflict? Now tell the person next to you the section you think they belong to. Hopefully we can stir up some conflict.



I'd like to focus on the middle section this morning. Just a quick note about the extremes.

Know when to conform and know when to let it go.

Overlooking or forbearing is a very real option when it comes to conflict. I would say that a lot of our offenses and conflict with other people can be overlooked.

Colossians 3:13(NIV)

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Matthew 5:44

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,

Matthew 6:12

'And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matthew 18:15-17

"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

Clarify your Motives

- You confront to help yourself; the person's behavior is causing a problem for you.
- You confront to help the relationship; the person's behavior is causing a breakdown in intimacy or the workability for the relationship .

- You confront to help the other person; stopping the behavior would be good for him or her.
- You confront to help third parties; the person's behavior is hurting others.

Understand the three possible reactions to confrontation.

You can be received well, the person gets it, and it all ends well.

Proverbs 9:8b

8b rebuke the wise and they will love you.

Psalms 141:5

5 Let a righteous man strike me—that is a kindness;

let him rebuke me—that is oil on my head.

My head will not refuse it,

You may face resistance, defensiveness or some other form of opposition

Proverbs 9:7-8a

7 Whoever corrects a mocker invites insults;

whoever rebukes the wicked incurs abuse.

8a Do not rebuke mockers or they will hate you;

Proverbs 15:12

12 Mockers resent correction, so they avoid the wise.

Third, you may not face not only resistance but also retaliation.

Some other great pieces of couples when planning to confront someone.

- Choose the right time and place
- Distinguish between what you prefer and what's wrong
- Affirm some good things
- Get specific and be clear
- Request specific changes

- If limits apply, communicate them

Ask, how can I do this? is there a way I can give you some feedback about your behavior that is not offensive to you?

I statements, not you statements

Use “I think, I feel, I need” statements.

1. When I think you’re not listening I get frustrated, because I feel disrespected.
2. I get mad when I think you’re not listening to me, I feel ignored, like I’m not important to you.
3. I need you to look at me when I’m talking to you, so I know you are listening, and I feel like I’m important to you.

If you need to approach someone and talk to them about a particular conflict, I encourage you to use “I think” “I feel” statements. This does a couple things to hack the resolution process. Let’s start with why it’s important to say what you think.

Saying “I think” is an honest form of transparency that gives the listener insight as to where you are at mentally in this moment. It simply states your perspective clearly

Saying “I think” is a statement not an accusation, it helps the other person listening be less defensive. When I think you’re not listening is way more palatable and productive than “you never listen”.

Saying “I think” is an exercise in humility, because the people may or may not be doing or not doing what you think he or she is or isn’t doing. He or she may or may not be doing or not doing what you think he or she is or isn’t doing in a way the you may or may not be able or unable to receive. How we think isn’t always factual, saying I think leave room for conversation. The other person might be listening to you, but they lack something different like eye contact or body language that you need to feel heard.

If someone comes to you and says when I think you are _____ I feel _____

Let me talk to the people on the receiving end of the confrontation. When someone comes to you and they make an “I think” statement you should care. In our family we have a saying, I will always care, and I can always be sorry.

How people think matters. How people think compounds over time. Like a snowball it gets larger and larger inside a person’s being until they can’t take it anymore and they explode. How people think shapes the quality of how they view you, how they view themselves, how they

view your relationship, their faith, your faith, the church and most importantly the gospel. How people think matters.

7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.

Proverbs 23:7 (NKJV)

In the context of this scripture the writer of proverbs is painting a picture of a host serving his guest and expensive meal. Outwardly he is saying eat, enjoy, we have plenty, but on the inside he is counting dollars every time you take a bite and in his spirit he is despising you. As a man thinks so is he. It's a fake relationship.

"Sow a thought, reap an action; sow an action, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny."

This is what happens in friendships that come to an end, in dating relationships that doesn't make it. And marriages that fail. Someone stopped caring at some point how the other person thinks.

The same thing is true to have concern for how other people feel. If you have hurt their feelings. At some point in our human experience we make choices to either care or not care about people's feelings. People can use their emotions to manipulate in confronting situations. That's not what I am talking about. All things being equal if someone is expressing that their feelings are hurt, we need to care.

Not everyone is in touch with their feelings, so they won't always get it right. What a great time to help them.

Philippians 2:3-4 (NIV)

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Paul is instructing the Philippians church to care about each other, look out for the interests of others. In a grandiose summary statement Peter in

1 Peter 4:8 says, "Above all, love each other deeply,"

Care about each other, look to each other's needs, care about how each other feel.

Philippians 2:19-22 (NIV)

19 I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, that I also may be cheered when I receive news about you. 20 I have no one else like him, who will show genuine concern for your welfare. 21 For everyone looks out for their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. 22 But you

know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel.

If all of this goes well there is an opportunity to you to make an “I Need” statement. This is where the person who is offended asks the offender to change. I need you to look at me when talk to you so that I know your listening.

I will always care, and I can always be sorry. One of the reasons Tracy and I are able to say this is because of our motives. One of the top 5 things that binds Tracy and I together in our marriage and in ministry is that we are committed to having Christ honoring motives. Motives toward, each other, other people. If we do or say something, we are tenacious about having pure motives. That doesn't mean we always get it right or always say it right. Well, she normally does. It means my motive is love, for your good, we don't' do things just to get people or just to win. When people know your motives are pure it goes a long way.

If all of this goes well there is an opportunity to you to make an “I Need” statement. This is where the person who is offended asks the offender to change. I need you to look at me when talk to you so that I know your listening.

Closing