

Managing Conflict God's Way

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Psalm 13

Open: "Confessions of a Repeat Offender." **Can you identify?** To some extent or another we all are "repeat offenders" or have been offended repeatedly.

There are some conflicts you can simply **overlook**. The Bible says:

"Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense." (Proverbs 19:11, ESV)

Others you must address—as I did with "CANCEROUS PRIDE"! Romans 8:28-29

It's important because conflict can keep us from loving God, loving people: Matthew 22:34-40!

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. . . . You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Matthew 22:37-39)

How shall we "Manage Conflict God's Way"? Today we will look at four conflict management principles emerge as we meditate on Psalm 13—in light of David's conflict, and for us as we encounter conflict on this side of the cross.

Read: Psalm 13

Psalm 13:1-2 – In conflict, David **pleads** four times: "How long?" He's asking, "Where are You, God? Not paying attention? Watching from a distance?"

Psalm 13:3-4 – In conflict, David **wrestles** with God: He prays that God would consider his words, hear him, enlighten his eyes, lest his accuser "prevail."

- Notice how David addressed God: "O Lord my God."
- David seeks to **demolish** all barriers to living a life that glorifies God.
- Psalm 115:17, "The dead do not praise the Lord."

What happens between verses 4 to 5?

Psalm 13:5-6 – In conflict, David **resolves** to trust God; hope becomes confidence!

As we reflect on the transition from verses 4 to 5 — how David moved from "conflict" to "resolution" and how we can as well—here's the first or four principles that emerge:

(To manage conflict God's way) 1. Ensure you have a right relationship with God. In our desperation we cry out to God, yet are we up to date with Him?

a. **David's perspective / Historical context:**

- Moses – Joshua – Judges – Saul – David
- **Very early:** David wrestles with a decision to trust God and God alone
- **Early:** King Saul sought to kill David (1 Samuel 18-24)
- **Later:** After David's adultery and murder (see 2 Samuel 11-12)
- **Afterward:** Absalom's rebellion (2 Samuel 13-18)

b. Today's perspective:

- **Nonbeliever:** See Matthew 7:21a; Luke 13:22-29. Response: repent or perish, Luke 13:1-5.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven. . . ." (Matthew 7:21a)

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it." (Matthew 7:13-14)

- **Backslidden believer:** See Psalms 51; 32. Response: return to your first love, Revelation 2:1-7.

"Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love." (Revelation 2:4)

- **Believer:** (On this side of the cross): Like Peter, who says to Jesus in John 6:68-69:

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." (John 6:68-69)

(To manage conflict God's way) 2. Think biblically, life accordingly. Experience *radical* change by getting God's Word every day; 2 Timothy 3:16-17 – **The Holy Spirit, the Holy Scriptures!**

- a. David's perspective:** Where did conflict originate? See Genesis 2, 3: the serpent. The aftereffects: **Conflict** between Cain and Able, Genesis 4:1-16. **Conflict** between Joseph and his brothers, Genesis 37-50.

b. Today's perspective:

- **The enemy:** See "5 I will" statements: Isaiah 14:13-14. Also, John 10:10; 1 Peter 5:8.
- **Our own desires:** James 1:14-15; 4:1-3.
- **World, flesh, devil:** 1 John 2:15-16.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world." (1 John 2:15-16)

- **Examples:** Ananias & Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). Paul, Barnabas, John Mark (Acts 15:36-41). Euodia and Syntyche and the “true companion’s” intercession (Philippians 4:2-3).

(To manage conflict God’s way) **3. Look to Jesus’ example.** He’s our model for life and ministry!

- a. **Jesus loved His disciples “to the end,” even Judas:** John 13:1-17 (Judas left in v. 30.)
- b. **Jesus’ “new” commandment:** John 13:34-35.

“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:34-35)

- c. **“One anothers”:** Greek *allelon* is used 58 times in the New Testament apart from the Gospels.
- d. **“Father forgive them”:** Luke 23:34.

(To manage conflict God’s way) **4. Follow Jesus’ pathway to peace** (insofar as it is up to you).

Here are 5 practical peacemaking steps straight from the Lord’s lips:

- a. **Pray the Lord’s Prayer** — Matthew 6:9-13 – Glorify God; God’s priorities; God’s provision, pardon (“as we forgive”), and protection.

“Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.” (Matthew 6:9-13)

- b. **Get right with God first** — Matthew 7:3-5 – Jesus calls us to self-assess first.

“Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” (Matthew 7:5)

Ken Sande’s “Peacemakers Pledge” puts it this way:

“Instead of attacking others or dwelling on their wrongs, we will take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts—confessing our sins, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused.”

- c. **Extend grace** — Matthew 5:38-45 – Love your enemies; remember the “Golden Rule,” Luke 6:31. **(Seek Biblical Counseling in abusive relationships.)**

“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. . . .” (Matthew 5:44).

Scottish minister William Barclay says:

“We can not love our enemies as we love our nearest and dearest. To do so would be unnatural, impossible, and even wrong. But we can see to it that, no matter what a man does to us, even if he insults, ill-treats and injures us, we will seek nothing but his highest good”

- d. **Talk to rather than about people** — Matthew 18:15-17 – Overlook minor offenses, address more serious ones; go to your brother. If not resolved, others in the body of Christ can assist. (**Consider Biblical Counseling.**)

“Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.” (Matthew 18:15).

Again, Ken Sande’s Peacemaker’s Pledge says:

“Instead of pretending that conflict doesn’t exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will choose to overlook minor offenses, or we will talk directly and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook. When a conflict with another Christian cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner.

- e. **Pursue peace and reconciliation** — Matthew 5:23-24 (Romans 12:18).

“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.” (Matthew 5:23-24)

Bible commentator Matthew Henry concludes. . .

“If a professed Christian is wronged by another, he ought not to complain of it to others, as is often done merely upon report, but to go to the offender privately, state the matter kindly, and show him his conduct. This would generally have all the desired effect with a true Christian, and the parties would be reconciled.”

APPLICATION:

The application is in the principles:

1) **Make Psalm 13:5-6 a reality:** Ensure you have a right relationship with God; think biblically, live accordingly; look to Jesus’ example; and follow Jesus’ pathway to peace.

The application is in Jesus’ practical steps:

2) **Specifically:** Pray the Lord's prayer; get right with God first; extend grace; talk *to* rather than *about* people; pursue peace and reconciliation . . . (seek Biblical Counseling as the Spirit leads).

CONCLUSION:

It all comes back to Proverbs 3:5-6, doesn't it?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to your spirit? What's your next step?

Let's pray.