

Be a Peacemaker

Matthew 5:9

INTRODUCTION

Blessed are the peacemakers shall be called the children of God. Put another way, the children of God are peacemakers. That's who they are. It's what they do.

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35)

Jesus goes on to put a whole new light on this saying that angry judgment in the heart is the same as murder (Matthew 5:21-24)

What Causes Conflict?

“Conflict happens when you are at odds with another person over what you think, want, or do.”—Ken Sande, author of *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*

Conflict happens because we are different.

Conflict happens because of selfishness and unmet expectations.

- James 4:1-2— *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight.*
- Idolatry—when a desire becomes a demand, it has now become an idol. And idols always demand a sacrifice.
- Ken Sande makes this analogy:
 - Spark—People are different and want different things.
 - Gasoline—Differences get worse when sinful selfishness and pride drive our reactions.
 - Fire—Destruction results when we fail to respond properly and allow our sinful desires to continue driving our words and actions.

We will not be able to escape conflict.

- While conflict has the potential for destroying relationships, it can be leveraged to bring about much good and growth. But Unresolved conflict can do incalculable damage.
- This is why Scripture encourages us to work hard at this. To be courageous in this. To make every effort in this. Paul in writing to the church in Ephesus put it this way: ³*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.* (Ephesians 4:3)

What NOT to Do in Peacemaking

- Don't Go Too Big (Peace-Breaking)
- Don't Go Too Small (Peace-Faking)

Steps in Peacemaking—The 4 G's (Sande)

1.) GLORIFY God

How may I honor and glorify God in this situation?

- Determine to Become More Gospel-fluent
- Refuse to Judge (Matthew 7:1-2; Matthew 5:21-24)
- If possible, overlook the offense (Matthew 5:38-39; Proverbs 19:11; 1 Peter 4:8; Ephesians 4:2)
- When NOT to overlook an offense
 - When it's damaging your relationship
 - When it's hurting someone else
 - When it's hurting the person in sin
 - When it's damaging the testimony of Christ

2.) GET the Log Out of Your Own Eye (Matthew 7:3-5; Psalm 139:23-24; Proverbs 28:13)

How can I own my part in this conflict?

Search Your Own Heart First (Matthew 7:3-5; Psalm 139:23-24; Proverbs 28:13)

Should I, or Shouldn't I? Let Peace Make the Call (Colossians 3:15a)

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace.

7 A's of a Good Confession (Sande)

1. Address everyone involved (All those whom you affected)
2. Avoid *if*, *but*, and *maybe* (Do not try to excuse your wrongs)
3. Admit specifically (Both attitudes and actions)
4. Acknowledge the hurt (Express sorrow for hurting someone)
5. Accept the consequences (Such as making restitution)
6. Alter your behavior (Change your attitudes and actions)
7. Ask for forgiveness

3.) GENTLY Restore

How can I help others own their part of the conflict?

- This is going to take conviction, humility and courage
- Start by asking clarifying questions. Be slow in your response (James 1:19)
- Speak truth in love, gentleness, and respect (Ephesians 4:2, 15a; Galatians 6:1)
- Don't say anything that isn't intended to build them up (Ephesians 4:29)
- Think Truth, Grace, Wisdom

Speaking the right words (TRUTH) the right way (GRACE), to the right people, at the right time, in the right place (WISDOM)?

- But I Don't Wanna! (Proverbs 27:5)

Better is open rebuke than hidden love.

4.) GO and Be Reconciled

How can I give forgiveness and help reach a reasonable solution?

- If you have sinned against them... GO (Matthew 5:23-24)
- If they have sinned against God, you, or others... GO (Matthew 18:15-17)
- Be careful not to "forgive" their sin if it is against God or others—rather, continue to gently confront until they repent to God, and if need be, others
- If need be, begin the Matthew 18 process (Matthew 18:15-17)
 - Step #1—Just you and your brother or sister (face to face, if possible)
 - Step #2—Take one or two others along with you
 - Step #3—Take it to the church (elders, then if need be, congregation)

- Be ready and quick to forgive (Matthew 18:21-35)
- Be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18)

God is the Ultimate Peacemaker (2 Corinthians 5:16-21)

¹⁸All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation...

Questions for Personal Reflection/Group Discussion

1. Do you tend to go too big (peace-breaking) or too small (peace-faking) in conflict?
2. Review the Four G's listed above. Which one is hardest for you and why?
3. What stands out to you as the most important truth for you to remember and apply today?
4. Is there any ongoing conflict in your life that is still not resolved? What steps can you take, even today, to begin the peace-making process with that individual?
5. What are some biblical reasons for engaging in peace-making?