The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Conflict

Easy Reference Guide

The 4 G's of Peacemaking [pg. 38]

1. **Glorify God** (1 Cor 10:31) How can I please and honor God in this situation?
2. **Get the log out of your eye** (Matt 7:5) How can I show Jesus’ work in me by taking responsibility for my own contribution to this conflict?
3. **Gently restore** (Gal 6:1) How can I lovingly restore others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?
4. **Go and be reconciled** (Matt 5:24) How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?

Step 1: Glorify God

When someone mistreats or opposes us, our instinctive reaction is to justify ourselves and do everything we can to get our way. This selfish attitude usually leads to impulsive decisions that only make matters worse. The gospel of Jesus Christ provides the way out of this downward spiral. When we remember what Jesus did for us on the cross, our blinding self-absorption can be replaced with a liberating desire to draw attention to the goodness and power of God (Col 3:1-2) [pg. 20].

Every response to conflict costs you something; you must give up one thing to gain another. [pg. 27]

Responses to Conflict [pgs. 23-27]

*Escape Responses*

- Denial (Gen 16:1-6; 1 Sam 2:22-25)
- Flight (Gen 16:6-8)
- Suicide (1 Sam 31:4)

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1 All material is taken directly from Ken Sande’s *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Baker: Grand Rapids, 2004). The majority of this reference guide is direct quotations from the book, although certain portions have been shortened or emphasized to make the material available for easier reference. This compiler has offered no original thought to this data. All material (including references to particular texts of Scripture) is fully the intellectual property of Ken Sande and Peacemaker Ministries.

2 Image copied from [http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.958151/k.5236/The_Slippery_Slope_of_Conflict.htm](http://www.peacemaker.net/site/c.aqKFLTOBIpH/b.958151/k.5236/The_Slippery_Slope_of_Conflict.htm)
Attack Responses

- Assault [force or intimidation] (Acts 6:8-15)
- Litigation [taking to court] (1 Cor. 6:1-8; Matt 5:25-26)
- Murder: Acts 7:54-58; 1 John 3:15; Matt 5:21-22

Peacemaking Responses

- **Personal Peacemaking**
  - Overlook an offense (Prov. 19:11; 12:16; 17:14; Col 3:13; 1 Pt. 4:8)
  - Reconciliation: confession, loving correction, and forgiveness (Matt 5:23-24; Prov. 28:13; Gal 6:1; Matt 18:15; Col 3:13)
  - Negotiation: cooperative bargaining over material issues in which you and the other person seek to reach an settlement that satisfies the legitimate needs of each (Phil 2:4)

- **Assisted Peacemaking** [requires the involvement of other people]
  - Mediation: objective outside people helping but having no authority to force a solution (Matt 18:16)
  - Arbitration: appointing someone to make a binding decision (1 Cor 6:1-8)
  - Accountability: if one refuses reconciliation, taking it to the church (Matt 18:17)

A Biblical View of Conflict

*Conflict* = a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone's goals or desires [pg. 29]

**4 Primary Causes of Conflict** [pg. 30]:

- Poor communication (Josh 22:10-34)
- Differences in values, goals, gifts, calling, priorities, expectations, interests, opinions (Acts 15:39; 1 Cor. 12:12-31)
- Competition over limited resources (Gen 13:1-12)
- Sinful attitudes and habits that lead to sinful words and actions (James 4:1-2)

**Key Thoughts on Conflict**

- **Conflict is not necessarily bad**...Many of these differences are not inherently right or wrong; they are simply the result of God-given diversity and personal preferences (1 Cor. 12:21-31) [pg. 30]
- We should seek **unity** in our relationships, we should not demand **uniformity** (Eph. 4:1-13; Rom 15:7; Rom 14:1-13) [pg. 30]
- Conflict is an opportunity to glorify God by... [pg. 31-34]
  - Trusting God: Instead of relying on your own ideas (Prov. 3:5-7)
  - Obeying God: obey what he commands (Matt 5:16; John 17:4; Phil 1:9-10)
  - Imitating God: Imitate Jesus (Eph. 5:1-2; 1 John 2:6; Eph. 4:1-3)
  - Acknowledging God: Giving God the credit for his work in you (Phil 2:13; 1 Pt. 3:14-16)

The 3 Dimensions of Peace [pgs. 43-47] (Rom 12:18)

1. Peace with God (Col 1:19-20; Rom 5:1-2)
2. Peace with Others (Eph. 2:11-18; Rom 12:18)
3. Peace with Yourself (Isa. 26:3; Isa. 32:17; Isa. 48:18)

**Trusting God in Conflict** [pgs. 59-73]
- **God is Sovereign over the Conflict**
  - It is not just the result of chance or the result of something done to you by someone else
  - It is an assignment from God
- **God is Good in Conflict**
  - The fact that God is good does not mean that he will insulate us from all suffering. Rather, it means that he will be with us in our suffering and accomplish good through it (Is 43:2-3)

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### Step 2: Get the Log Out of Your Eye

**The “Golden Result”** = People will usually treat us as we treat them. If we blame others for a problem, they will usually blame in return. But if we say, “I was wrong,” it is amazing how often the response will be, “It was my fault too.”

**Is This Really Worth Fighting Over?** [pgs. 79-99] (Prov. 19:11)

**Define the Issues**

- **Material**- property, money, rights, and responsibilities
- **Personal**- attitude and feelings between people

**Overlook Minor Offenses** (Prov. 19:11; 12:16; 15:18; 20:3; 17:14; 26:17; 1 Peter 4:8; Prov. 10:12; 17:9; Eph. 4:2; Col 3:13; Eph. 4:32)

- The offenses should not have created a wall between you and the other person or caused you to feel differently toward him or her for more than a short period of time.
- The offense should not be causing serious harm to God’s reputation, to others, or to the offender.
- To truly overlook an offense means to deliberately decide not to talk about it, dwell on it, or let it grow into pent-up bitterness.

**Formula for examining our attitudes during a conflict** [based on Phil 4:2-9]

- **Rejoice in the Lord always**- be God-centered
- **Let your gentleness be evident to all**- developing a proper attitude toward the conflict
- **Replace anxiety with prayer** – get rid of anxious thoughts
- **See things as they really are**- develop a more accurate view of others
- **Practice what you’ve learned**- use and obey God’s revealed principles

**The Progression of an Idol** [pgs. 102-109]

- **I Desire**
- **I Demand**
  - What am I preoccupied with?
  - “If only ____, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure”?
  - What do I fear?
- **I Judge**
  - Sinful judging often involves speculating on others’ motives
- **I Punish**
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The 7 A’s of Confession [pgs. 126-134] (Prov. 28:13)

1. Address Everyone Involved
2. Avoid If, But, and Maybe
3. Admit specifically
4. Acknowledge the Hurt
5. Accept the Consequence
6. Alter Your Behavior
7. Ask for Forgiveness (and allow time)

Part 3: Gently Restore

Just Between the Two of You [pgs. 143-161] (Matt. 18:15)

Go in person

When not to overlook:

- Is it dishonoring God?
- Is it damaging your relationship?
- Is it hurting others?
- Is it hurting the offender?

Speak the Truth in Love [pgs. 162-184] (Eph. 4:15)

Bring Hope through the gospel

Be quick to listen by… [pgs. 165-169]

- Waiting- give them time and hear them out (Prov. 18:13)
- Attending- pay close attention
- Clarifying- asking questions
- Reflecting- summarizing and paraphrasing
- Agreeing- acknowledge what you know is true before dealing with points of disagreement

A Healing Tongue… [pgs. 170-182]

- Breathes Grace
- Makes Charitable Judgments
- Speaks the truth in love
- Talks from beside, not from above
- Helps others examine the desires of their hearts
- Chooses the right time and place
- Talks in person whenever possible
- Engages rather than declares
- Communicates so clearly that you cannot be misunderstood
- Plans its words
- Uses “I” statements
- Is objective
- Uses the Bible carefully (only in a helpful manner)
• Asks for feedback
• Offers solutions and preferences
• Recognizes its limits

**Take One or Two Others Along** *(Matt 18:16)*

**Matthew 18 Process** [pgs. 186-196]

• Overlook Minor Offenses
• Talk in Private
• Take one or two others along
• Tell it to the church (church accountability)
• Treat him as a nonbeliever

**Developing a culture of peace in your church** [pgs. 198-199]

• Vision: church is eager to see peacemaking as an essential part of the Christian life
• Training: deliberate teaching/training
• Assistance: offering reconcilers to the body
• Perseverance: working hard to restore broken relationships
• Accountability: if members refuse to listen, church gets directly involved
• Restoration: forgiving and fully restoring those who have repented
• Stability: leaders serving long term in churches
• Witness: body is equipped to practice it openly as a witness

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**Part 4: Go and Be Reconciled**

**Forgive as God Forgave You** [pgs. 204-224] *(Col 3:13)*

*Forgiveness is neither a feeling, nor forgetting, nor excusing*

**Forgiveness is a costly activity**

• You may need to bear certain effects of the other person’s sin over a long period of time

*Forgiveness is a decision to make 4 promises...* [pgs. 207-210]

• I will not dwell on this incident
• I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you
• I will not talk to others about this incident
• I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship

*When is an offense is too serious to overlook?* [pgs. 210-211]

• When the offender has not yet repented, you may need to approach forgiveness as a 2-stage process:
  1. Having an attitude of forgiveness
  2. Granting forgiveness (you cannot fulfill promises 2-4 until repentance has taken place)

**Replacement Principle:** unless a deliberate effort is made to restore and strengthen a relationship, it will generally deteriorate [pg. 219]
PAUSE Principle of Negotiation [pgs. 228-245]

Prepare (Prov. 14:8, 22)

- Pray
- Get the facts
- Identify issues and interests
- Study the Bible
- Develop options
- Anticipate reactions
- Plan an alternative to a negotiated agreement
- Select an appropriate time and place to talk
- Plan your opening remarks
- Seek counsel

Affirm relationships

- Communicate in a courteous manner
- Spend time on personal issues
- Submit to authority
- Earnestly seek to understand
- Look out for the interests of others
- Address sin in a gracious manner
- Allow face-saving (don’t back others into a corner)
- Give praise and thanks (acknowledge where they are right)

Understand Interests

- An issue = and identifiable and concrete question that must be addressed in order to reach agreement
- A position = a desired outcome or a definable perspective on an issue
- An interest = what motivates people... concern, desire, need, limitation, or something a person values [Interests provide the basis for positions]

Search for Creative Solutions

- Search for solutions that will satisfy as many interests as possible

Evaluate Options Objectively and Reasonably

Overcome Evil with Good [pgs. 247-257] (Rom 12:21)

- Control your tongue (Rom 12:14)
- Seek Godly advisors (Rom 12:15-16; Prov. 27:5-6)
- Keep Doing what is right (Rom 12:17)
- Recognize your limits (Rom 12:18)
- Use the ultimate weapon: deliberate, focused love (Rom 12:20-21)