

Peace Maker

1. **Get real about ourselves (Get the log out of our own eye).**

We recognize that we often contribute to the conflict in our lives. We commit to examining our own attitudes and actions in order to better understand how we contributed to the conflict at hand. Where we become aware of sinful or inappropriate words or deeds on our own part, we commit to humbly confessing to one another and seeking forgiveness.

a. **Is this a minor conflict I should overlook? Prov. 19:11; Prov. 17:14, 9 Eph. 4:2, 32; Ps. 103:8-10**

Is this a time for me to mirror God's love, mercy, and forgiveness, and deliberately to overlook a minor wrong?

Discernment of Minor Wrongs

- a) Do not lead to long term bad feelings
- b) Do not cause serious harm to God's glory
- c) Do not become a source of bitterness
- d) Are not part of a hurtful pattern

b. **If I changed my negative attitude would there be peace? Phil. 4:2-9; Prov. 11:27**

Do I have an inflammatory negative attitude, resulting from a lack of focus and grateful dependence on the God of Peace paired up with an over focus on others' negative qualities?

c. **How much is this conflict going to cost? Matt. 5:25-26**

If I compare the potential costs of conflict, particularly the cost to God's glory, with the benefits of settling the matter quickly, is this matter worth fighting over?

d. **Is this one of those times I should wave my rights? Matt. 18:21-35; 1 Cor. 9:3-15; Matt. 26:53-54; Acts 25:10-12; Prov. 19:19**

Which of laying down my right or insisting on it seeks the good of others, draws attention to God's goodness and power and expands the outreach of the Gospel?

Think back through your life and share a story about a time of escalated conflict that was really over something not worth fighting over.

2. **Gently engage others (Gently restore).**

We believe that, "if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently." (Gal 6:1) Jesus also stated that once we have dealt with the log in our own eye, we can then see clearly to remove the spec from our brother or sister's eye. Therefore, we commit to talking to each other when conflict arises and when we observe sinful behaviour or patterns in our lives. More importantly, we commit to doing so with gentleness and respect as we consider ourselves humble servants to our brothers and sisters.

3. Get together on lasting solutions (Go and be reconciled).

We recognize that God's desire is not just resolution of the issue but reconciliation of the relationship. We also recognize the powerful impact of true forgiveness and seeking God honouring solutions to conflict situations. We commit to forgiving each other because of and in the way that Christ forgave us. We will not allow past conflict or offences to unduly influence present or future behaviour. We will not hold grudges for past events. We will strive together to make changes that will improve our interaction and relationships in the future.

Seeking Help

Following the biblical model of Matthew 18, we will seek help in resolving conflict only when initial efforts to reconcile one on one have failed. In this situation, we will limit outside involvement to one or two mature believers who are already aware of the situation and are mature enough to be unbiased and honest in their participation. In the event that such additional intervention still does not resolve the conflict, we will prayerfully seek the next level, ensuring confidentiality is maintained in every aspect.

Questions:

- What percentage of conflicts between believers would you say are commonly over things that could or should be overlooked?
- When is it appropriate to overlook an offense?
- Which of the questions from the outline do you think you would be wise to practice till they become part of your initial response to potential conflict?
- How can I use conflict as an opportunity to demonstrate the love and power of Jesus? (John 17:20-23)
- How do you confess wrongs honestly and effectively?
- How do you correct others effectively?
- How do you forgive others who have seriously hurt you in order to achieve genuine reconciliation?
- When do you ask the church for assistance in a conflict?