

Pursuing Peace Together



People reconciled to God by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are called to respond to conflict in a way that is remarkably different from the way the world deals with conflict (*Matt. 5:9; Luke 6:27-36; Gal. 5:19-26*). Conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, serve other people, and grow to be like Christ (*Rom. 8:28-29; 1 Cor. 10:31-11:1; James 1:2-4; 3:18*). Therefore, in response to God's love and in reliance on His grace, we seek to respond to conflict according to the following principles.

We cannot know our own hearts (*Jer. 17:9; Heb. 4:12*) and naturally respond to conflict through escape and attack responses. Therefore, we commit to learn what motivates our behaviors and attitudes through the application of the Gospel.

By God's grace, we apply these principles as a matter of stewardship, realizing that conflict is an opportunity, not an accident. Success in God's eyes is not a matter of specific results, but of faithful, dependent obedience. We pray that our service as peacemakers will bring praise to our Lord and lead others to know His infinite love (*Matt. 25:14-21; John 13:34-35; Rom. 12:18; 1 Peter 2:19; 4:19*).

Steps to Pursuing Peace Together

GLORIFYING GOD

Instead of focusing on our own desires or dwelling on what others may do, we will rejoice in the Lord and bring Him praise by depending on His forgiveness, wisdom, power, and love, as we seek to faithfully obey His commands and maintain a loving, merciful, and forgiving attitude. (*Ps. 37:106; Mark 11:25; John 14:15; Rom. 12:17-21; 1 Cor. 10:31; Phil. 4:2-9; Col. 3:1-4; James 3:17-18; 1 Peter 2:12*).

GETTING THE LOG OUT OF YOUR EYE

Instead of blaming others for a conflict or resisting correction, we will trust in God's mercy and take responsibility for our own contribution to conflicts – confessing our sins to those we have wronged, asking God to help us change any attitudes and habits that lead to conflict, and seeking to repair any harm we have caused (*Prov. 28:13; Matt. 7:3-5; Luke 19:8; Col. 3:5-14; 1 John 1:8-9*).

GENTLY RESTORING

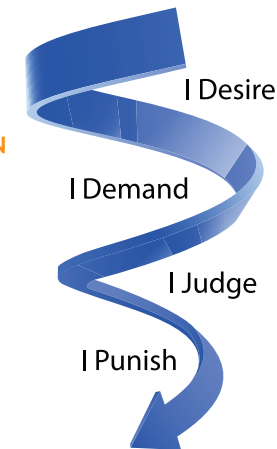
Instead of pretending that conflict doesn't exist or talking about others behind their backs, we will overlook minor offenses or we will talk personally and graciously with those whose offenses seem too serious to overlook, seeking to restore them rather than condemn them. When a conflict with a Christian brother or sister cannot be resolved in private, we will ask others in the body of Christ to help us settle the matter in a biblical manner (*Prov. 19:11; Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:29; 2 Tim. 2:24; James 5:9*).

GOING AND BEING RECONCILED

Instead of accepting premature compromise or allowing relationships to wither, we will actively pursue genuine peace and reconciliation – forgiving others as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us, and seeking just and mutually beneficial solutions to our differences (*Matt. 5:23; 6:12; 7:12; Eph. 4:1-3, 32; Phil. 2:3-4*).

Pursuing Peace Together calls us to do so through confession, correction, forgiveness, negotiation, and reconciliation.

PROGRESSION OF AN IDOL



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A CONFESSION

(*Matt. 7:3-5; 1 John 1:8-9; Prov. 28:13*)

- Address everyone involved (Those whom you affect)
- Avoid if, but, and maybe (Make no excuses)
- Admit specifically (Both attitudes and actions)
- Acknowledge the hurts (Understand and express sorrow for hurting someone)
- Accept the consequences (Such as broken trust or damage caused)
- Alter your behavior (Change attitudes and actions)
- Ask for forgiveness

FOUR PROMISES OF FORGIVENESS

(*Matt. 6:12; 1 Cor. 13:5; Eph. 4:32*)

- "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."

PAUSE PRINCIPLE OF NEGOTIATING

Prepare, affirm relationships, understand interests, search and evaluate solutions. (*Phil. 2:3-4; Matt. 7:12*)

Pursuing Peace Together

Using Biblical Principles



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Unmet Desires Cause Conflict

Relational conflicts occur when our desires are unmet by others (*James 4:1*). At times even God fails to meet our expectations or disappoints us. For example, His direction to "wait" (see *Ps. 27:14*) can frustrate our desires.

Desires may be good, helpful, even godly or they may be hurtful or harmful (*James 4:2*). Any desire, especially unmet, can trigger conflict when it becomes a demand.

Frustrated desires naturally become demands. Demanding that you meet my desires demonstrates an idolatrous heart (see *Luke 38-42*). Having an idolatrous heart is a First Commandment problem, one that can lead any Christian to serving something other than God.

Pursuing Peace Together Occurs in Three Dimensions

The Bible provides a powerfully effective way to deal with relationships. These truths may be organized into the above discipleship paradigm, "Relational Wisdom."

- Relationships are three dimensional (*Eph. 4:30-32*):
God, Self, Others
- Relationships involve two dynamics
Aware - What do I know? (Knowledge)
Engaging - What will I do? (Action)

The Gospel provides the motive, pattern, and power for relational wisdom, resolution of conflict, and reconciliation.



The Gospel is Essential to Peacemaking

The Gospel provides the path to resolving conflict. It is God's only solution to conflict. It is what He did to resolve our broken relationship with Him. Jesus came into this world to be the sacrifice for our sins (*1 John 1:7, 9*). As we confess our sins He forgives, transforming us into the image of Christ (*Rom. 8:29*).

This same Gospel is how we relationally resolve conflict. His transforming work is both personal and relational. The letter of James outlines the process. Peacemaking is essential if we are to experience His righteousness (*James 3:18*). Applying the Gospel enables our ability to stop escaping from or fighting against others in conflict, empowering us to glorify God and resolve the most challenging conflicts.

Peacemakers are people who breathe grace, inspired by the Gospel, personally drawing near to God through the work of Jesus Christ. They offer that same grace to others through His love, mercy, and forgiveness. Through peacemaking responses we overcome anger, prevent bitterness, promote justice, and demonstrate repentance and reconciliation (*Heb. 12:15; 2 Cor. 5:20-21*).



PERSONAL PEACEMAKING RESPONSES:

Overlook an offense - Forgiving an offense without a conversation with the offender (*Prov. 19:11; 1 Peter 4:8*).

Reconciliation - Discussing and resolving personal offenses through confession, loving correction, and forgiveness (*Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15; Prov. 28:13; Gal. 6:1-3*).

Negotiation - A cooperative process in which people seek to reach a mutually agreeable settlement of their substantive differences through an exchange of promises (*Phil. 2:3-4*).

Escape Responses are responses that attempt to avoid the conflict rather than resolve it.

Denial - Acting as if the conflict does not exist.

Flight - Avoiding facing the problem.

Suicide - Relationally, this response is dying to the other person.

ASSISTED PEACEMAKING RESPONSES:

Mediation - Is a third party assisting others resolve and reconcile? (*Matt. 28:16; Phil. 4:3*)

Arbitration - (*1 Cor. 6:1-8*)

Accountability - (*Matt. 18:17-20; Gal. 6:1-3*)

Attack Responses are responses that bring pressure to bear in an effort to eliminate opposition.

Assault - Use of force or intimidation (physical, verbal, or relational) to compel acceptance of your demands.

Litigation - Relationally, this is making and prosecuting a judgment about another person, often in the court of public opinion (see *James 4:11-12*).

Murder - We kill or destroy our relationship with the other person (*James 4:2, 1 John 3:15*).

Crossroads Resolution Group, LLC exists to work alongside churches, groups, organizations, and individuals, helping them **respond and resolve conflicted relationships** and situations in a biblically faithful manner, benefiting those involved and those watching.

CRG works in ministry partnership with RW360. (www.rw360.org). This brochure is adapted with permission from RW360 and *The Peacemaker*.

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We hope you experience the blessing of Hebrews 13:20-21!