

“Coping With Conflict. . . Biblically!”

Our goal is to look further at the subject of conflict, and to consider more choices in this often, daily problem.

Though many couples may never come to blows (praise God), emotional tension can mount and be reflected in many different ways.

It is imperative to the health of a marriage -- that the partners learn to properly handle and resolve conflicts in such a way that they grow in the spiritual lives, both toward God and toward one another.

Focus On The Word

“Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye might inherit a blessing.” (1 Pet. 3:8-9)

Why Do We Have Conflicts?

1. One of the major problems is unrealistic expectations.
2. Idealistic myths are embraced by many that Christians ought not have problems, so *“we won’t have disagreements or disputes like our parents had,”* is what we say to each other as we actually practice denial.
3. If there is conflict (or when) one spouse assumes the other is unspiritual or that their marriage is in some way faulty.
4. Conflicts will come. We have a sin nature, so naturally we will sin against our mate and it does not matter how much we love them, or seek to practice such a love. A good marriage is two people being *“very good forgivers and very good forgetters.”*

Other Causes of Conflicts

A. Differing view points/ tastes:

Marriage is the union of two individuals with different spiritual, economic, emotional, physical, social, and intellectual backgrounds. No two families are alike and the merger of two independent personalities with distinct ways of life (based on their years of training in their families of origin) requires many major adjustments.

1. Their preconceived tastes and viewpoints have been called extra baggage that we carry into our new homes.
2. Some of this may be useful, some must be thrown away, but be sure there will be conflicts.
3. What makes conflicts serious is basically two things -- what causes them, and what we do with them. If they come from bitterness, resentments, grudges, etc., held then they are very serious. What we do with them, how we handle them, and correct them is what makes the difference.

B. Differing values/ priorities:

1. It is not unusual that married partners differ in their value structure or priorities in life.
2. Unity is dependent upon both embracing the Word of God. God’s viewpoint for life, and a yielded life of service is the key. (Col. 3:1-4; Matt. 6:31-33)

C. Daily pressures:

1. Modern day life is so fast paced that many couples are living on the brink of constant irritation. (See shared chart).
2. Then, the least frustration can bring more conflict. Often one will react quickly without investigating the facts.

D. Blocked desires:

1. Conflicts also come because of the intentional or unintentional blocking of goals and desires of our spouse.
2. There must be much give-and-take in a marriage: plans must be discussed openly, or conflicts will be a source of much frustration and anger.
3. Both must give **deference to the other**. . . for marriage is a ministry of serving one another, a ministry to another whom we love.

E. Sinful attitudes: (possibly habits lived for years)

1. One such attitude is jealousy.
2. Another is selfishness . . . a self centered life,
3. yet another is indifference.
4. And just how patient are you? Are you a type **A** personality?

What If I Blow Up?
(Consider this together)

1. When selfish anger, or any other unbiblical response to conflict does occur, it is important to confront it for what it is. To deny the presence of sin is to invite disaster. To confess sin is to invite God's blessing. (1 Jh 1:7, 9)
2. Confession must be first made to one's own self, acknowledging the anger about a matter must first take place in the heart and mind of the offender.
3. The repression of anger and pride under the false guise that they don't exist is like putting a time bomb in the closet of our inner being. . . it will go off.
4. On the other hand uncontrolled expression of anger is not the answer. Venting our anger only exaggerates the problem.
5. Proverbs 29:11 warns us that "*a fool uttereth all his mind*" which would teach us to hold our tongue, *blasting of* is surely not the answer.
6. After admitting our sin to ourselves and confessing sin to God. . . we must confess it to the family member involved (maybe to the whole family). This confession must be handled properly, lest we actually cause further hurt feelings and build more conflict.

Guidelines for Confronting Conflicts:

- A. Speaking the truth in love.** (Eph. 4:15, 25; Col. 3:8-9)

- B. Dealing with the real issue today, now.** (Eph. 4:26, 27)
 - C. Attacking the problem, and not the person.** (Eph. 4:29)
 - D. Right action, not reacting sinfully.** (Eph. 4:30-32; Col. 3:9-14)
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Added Suggestions For Solving Conflicts:

1. Prepare a proper setting for discussing the problem, work at this list together.
2. The expression of intimate feelings before others who are not involved or at tense times, only adds to the difficulty of the situation.
3. Taking time to pick a proper moment to discuss a problem often helps people to think more clearly and reduces needless stress.
4. Be humble! Put away pride! A willingness to sincerely admit that *"It's my fault, I have hurt you, and I want to correct my mistake,"* goes a long way toward settling conflict.
5. Keep in mind that a humble admission of wrong is quite different than merely manipulating your mate by insincerely saying, *"It's all my fault,"* just to get off the subject.
6. When confronting another person with a problem. . . try to have a potential solution in mind to present as a possible answer to the problem.
7. Focus on problem solving, not just problems in general. Be specific, work on one problem at a time.
8. An ounce of prevention is worth a lot. . . by
 - giving a lot of love
 - dismiss petty differences,
 - cover problems with a mantle of love, forbearing, forgiving.
 - put away a defensive stance, don't be easily offended.
 - Practice a lot more humor, for good, clean fun adds a lot to life and smooths out the way through many difficulties.
 - Pray over any and all things each day.
9. When expressing feelings, it is wise to use expressions like: *"I feel,"* rather than inflammatory words such as *"you are, you never, or you always."* It is wise not to use sweeping accusations that hurt the spouse and are not true. Attempt to solve, not ignore, resist, or give the silent treatment.