

ATTACKING CONFLICT

Ephesians 2:14-16 "For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity."

CONFLICT STYLES

1. Competitive – Operate from a position of power, drawn from things like rank, expertise, or persuasive ability.
Good – A big help in emergency situations
Bad – Leaves people feeling bruised
2. Collaborative – Try to meet the needs of all people involved. Can be assertive but realize everyone and their viewpoint is important.
Good – brings together a variety of viewpoints
Bad – Can result in a trade-off that leaves the real problem unresolved
3. Compromising – Attempt to find a solution that is partially satisfying to everyone
Good – Helps break a stalemate
Bad – Everyone must give up something, which leaves the danger of placing peace above truth
4. Accommodating – Willingness to meet needs of others at personal expense
Good – Makes peace more valuable than winning
Bad – Correct procedure may be forfeited when it is not warranted
5. Avoiding – Seeks to avoid conflict entirely
Good – O.K. if the issue is trivial
Bad – Provides a weak and ineffective long term solution

A GOOD APPROACH

- Truth in love is of first priority. Pressure of the situation does not outweigh mutual respect and constructive behavior
- Keeps people and problems distinct. In this manner the "issue at hand" is the "issue of discussion." Seeks to build up the character of people involved.
- Listen first and talk second
- Set out the facts using Scriptural definitions
- Explore options that will uphold truth and promote the Cause of Christ

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

1. Play by the rules above so there is a clear understanding
2. Gather information so that motivations and goals are explored and not just actions. Remain flexible and clarify emotions involved.
3. Agree on the issues
4. Brainstorm Scriptural solutions with patience, respect, and love