

CONFLICT WITH CONFLICT

1. God calls you to pursue peace with all (Romans 12:18 – “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”). The context of this call is crucial to see. Romans 12 opens by reminding us of God’s saving mercy in Jesus Christ (Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy....”). The resolution of conflicts is based on what God has done in Romans 1 – 11 BY HIS MERCY for us. *What does Romans 12:18 teach about resolving conflicts?*
 - A. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE to live at peace with others. Whether you are the offending party (Matthew 5:23-26) or the offended party (Matthew 18:15-17; Luke 17:3-4), Christ calls you to go to the other person and to interface with them. The fact that these texts also chare the other person to come to you must not excuse your delay.
 - B. God does not guarantee the outcome. “If it is possible” means that it might not be possible despite your best efforts. In Matthew 5:9 we read: “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.” Notice that God’s blessing rests on the peace-maker and not the peace-gainer.
 - C. The toughest tensions to tame are often family tensions. Notice, however, that Romans 12:18 speaks of seeking peace with “everyone.”

2. God teaches us how to view conflicts. The way you view something will Determine the course of action you choose to deal with that “something.”
 - A. Conflicts with others are sinful in that they displease God. When they Arise from self-centered hearts, involve hurtful words and actions – they displease God. They produce distance, disunity, and disharmony. What is the cure? PURSUE PEACE.
 - B. Conflicts are part of our fallen, sinful world. Many people throw in the Towel on relationships too soon. Can you imagine Adam and Eve, upon Their fall into sin, questioning whether they should have ever married? From Genesis 2 (a marriage made in heaven) to Genesis 3 (where they are in conflict with God and with each other) there is a drastic change. But the whole Bible, from Genesis 3 through Revelation 22 unfolds the Redeemer’s plan of reconciliation.
 - C. Conflicts are opportunities to trust God. The “good” spoken of in Romans 8:28 is us being made more into the image of Christ. Because conflicts are sinful, they must be resolved. Since they are inevitable, we should expect them; and if we understand that they are opportunities, we must seize them.

3. God directs us in Resolving Conflicts

- A. Our all-consuming goal must be to please God. This carries powerful implications. For one, it will pace your reconciliation efforts in terms of timing, energy, risk etc. If you tend to act rashly or blow up angrily, then a commitment to please God will harness you. If you tend to withdraw, procrastinate, or avoid conflict, then this commitment will push you. *Jesus must be both your director and your audience.*
- B. Ask yourself this simple question: **“WHOSE SIN BOTHERS YOU THE MOST – YOUR SIN OR THE SIN OF THE OTHER PERSON?”**