

Encounter Church  
Sunday May 07, 2023

## Together at the Table From Conflict to Peace

INTRODUCTION: Conflict will come your way! But how you handle conflict is critical! Conflict will either bring us closer together at the table or separate us at the table!

Conflict gives us an opportunity to either be led by the Holy Spirit or walk after the flesh!

Conflict can be an awesome experience! It gives everyone involved the opportunity to discover what God's wants and then submitting to the desire of God! There's no better place to be!

Philippians 4:2-3- "Now I appeal to Euodia and Syntyche. Please, because you belong to the Lord, settle your disagreement. And I ask you, my true partner, to help these two women, for they worked hard with me in telling others the Good News. They worked along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are written in the Book of Life."

***Settle your disagreement because your differences are causing dissension in the church!***

These are people in the church who have worked with Paul! Their names are written in the Book of Life!

***The outcome of conflict is determined by how we respond to the conflict!***

***Conflict can put me in one of two positions.***

Ephesians 4:30-32- "And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you."

***I can be bitter, have anger and rage, use harsh words and even slander someone.***

***Or I can be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving!***

HOW CAN I GO FROM CONFLICT TO PEACE?

HOW CAN I STILL BE “TOGETHER AT THE TABLE” WITH THOSE I HAVE CONFLICT WITH?

### **1. Confront the Conflict**

(Matthew 5:23-24) Leave your gift at the altar and reconcile with those you have issues with or they have issues with you.

Matthew 5:25- “....settle your differences quickly.....”

Conflict unresolved leads to strife.

Proverbs 17:14- “The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.”

### **2. Involve only those necessary**

*You can turn a small conflict into a war when you involve others that are not necessary.*

*If you are not part of the problem or the solution you are not necessary!*

Proverbs 26:17- “You grab a mad dog by the ears when you butt into a quarrel that’s none of your business.”

***Unnecessary communication of a conflict to other people can adversely affect their life!***

Proverbs 26:20-22- “When you run out of wood, the fire goes out; when the gossip ends, the quarrel dies down. A quarrelsome person in a dispute is like kerosene thrown on a fire. Listening to gossip is like eating cheap candy; do you want junk like that in your belly?”

Involve only those necessary!

### **3. It’s about what’s right not who’s right**

Acts 15:1-2- “And certain men came down from Judea and taught the brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved.” Therefore, when Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and dispute with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others of them should go up to Jerusalem, to the apostles and elders, about this question.”

The Apostles and elders came together in Jerusalem to discuss the matter.

***THERE WAS MUCH DISPUTE!***

The great Apostle Paul is there. Barnabas is there along with Peter and James the half brother of Jesus who was also the pastor of the church in Jerusalem.

Barnabas and Paul speak. Peter speaks! Then James stands up and says, “it’s my judgement....” **CONFLICT OVER!**

***It was about what’s right and not who’s right!***

Pastor Jack Hayford- “The Spirit of God brought harmonious agreement among strong-willed leaders in the face of “no small dissension” and “much dispute.”

1 Peter 5:5-6- “In the same way, you who are younger must accept the authority of the elders. ***And all of you,*** dress yourselves in humility as you relate to one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” So humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honor.”

#### **4. Invite Jesus into your conflict**

***We need to ask Christ to permeate our conversations!***

***What would Jesus say to both sides!***

Sometimes I wonder if we already know what Jesus will say and that’s why we don’t want to ask Him to get involved!

HE MIGHT SAY SOMETHING LIKE THIS.

Matthew 6:14-15- “In prayer there is a connection between what God does and what you do. You can’t get forgiveness from God, for instance, without also forgiving others. If you refuse to do your part, you cut yourself off from God’s part.”

Matthew 5:43-48- ““You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the supple moves of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that. “In a word, what I’m saying is, Grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”

**WHY DOES TOOTHPASTE COME OUT OF THE TUBE? BECAUSE TOOTHPASTE IS IN THE TUBE.**

## **CONFLICT REVEALS WHAT'S ON THE INSIDE!**

*Here's what Jesus would say, "Let this conflict bring out who I've created you to be. Your true identity as a child of God!"*

*Kindness! Tenderness! A forgiving heart! A loving heart!*

### **CONCLUSION:**

Proverbs 17:1- "Better is a dry morsel [of food served] with quietness and peace Than a house full of feasting [served] with strife and contention."

God wants us to be "Together at the Table" in peace and not at the table with strife and contention!

Confront the Conflict. Involve only those necessary. It's about what's right and not who's right. Invite Christ into the conflict.

**Jesus what are saying in this conflict?**

What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?