Fight the <u>Good</u> Fight: A Biblical Guide to Conflict Reconciliation Round 7 – Fight Fire with Fire

Pastors Cliff and Jen Eckhart September 15, 2024



# The antidote to toxicity is God's wisdom!

"Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness...he who find me finds life and obtains favor from the Lord." Proverbs 8:18, 35

# Fight fire with fire!

"As iron sharpen iron, so one man sharpens another." Proverbs 27:17

"...for our God is a consuming fire." Hebrews 12:29

# Ephesians 6

10 — Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.

11 – Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. 12 – For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

# Ephesians 6

13 – Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.

- 14 Stand firm, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness,
- 15 and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

# Ephesians 6

16 – in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.

17 – And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

18 — With all prayer and petition, pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.

#### Two kinds of people:

- The easy offender
- The easily offended

"A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue of the wise makes knowledge acceptable, but the mouth of the fool spouts folly." Proverbs 15:1-2

- Inventory relationships
  - Who comes first?
  - Is it mutually beneficial?
  - Is it growing?
  - What happens more often than not?

To stay out of conflict, use the Word that you've applied to your life to help you respond with maturity and the character of Christ!

- Proverbs 17:14 "The beginning of strife is like letting out water, so abandon the quarrel before it breaks out."
- Proverbs 17:9 "He who conceals a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends."
- Proverbs 26:20 "For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down."

- 1 Peter 2:23 "…and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously."
- If anyone "had the right" to avenge an abuse, it was Jesus, but He didn't; in fact, He chastised the disciples when they suggested it (Luke 9:53-55)

- Proverbs 18:1 "He who separates himself seeks his own desire, he quarrels against all sound wisdom."
- Inventory relationships
  - Which ones are you encouraged by?
  - How do others view you?
  - Everyone brings something to the room.
  - Allocate time accordingly.
  - Spend time with people who are more advanced than you.

- Loving people unconditionally does not mean you will never have to defend yourself from people who do not share that ideology (Luke 22:36)
  - The war in Israel
  - Armed responders in church/school
  - Jesus had circles of friends, with varying levels of access.
    - Compassion for the crowds
    - Invested in the 12
    - Intimate access for the 3
    - Loved the 1

## **Desperate/Losing Tactics:**

- The "silent treatment"
- The "straw-carrier"
- "I'm fine/You're fine/Everything is Fine"
- The anonymous complainer



• When the conflict involves an unbeliever.

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- 1 Corinthians 7:14-15 "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her husband...yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace."
  - The parable of the lost sheep (Luke 15:1-6) applies to sheep, not wolves.

- When the conflict involves an unbeliever.
  - Matthew 10:14 "Whoever does not receive you, nor heed your words, as you go out of that house or that city, shake the dust off your feet."
    - The parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30) demonstrates that the Lord expects you to do the best you can with what you are given – not to keep fishing in a dry hole or spreading seed on infertile ground.

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- When the conflict involves an unbeliever.
  - 2 Corinthians 6:14 "Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?"
    - Cannot hold someone to a standard they do not believe in
    - Applies to all relationships: marriage, friendship, employment, in the church

- When the conflict is at work:
  - John 14:7 "...the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you."
  - 1 Corinthians 5:9-10 "I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; I did not mean at all with the immoral people of this world...for then you would have to go out of the world."
  - John 17:15 "I do not ask You [Father] to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one."

- When the conflict is at work:
  - Proverbs 16:26 "A worker's appetite works for him, for his hunger urges him on."
  - Be the best employee/employer you can be!
  - What drives you?

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1 Peter 3:15 – "...but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence."

#### • Not making an excuse for sin.

- The Corinthian church was chastised for this very thing (1 Corinthians 5:1-2)
- The more influence/responsibility you wield, the higher the standard you are held to. ("Above reproach" 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:6-7)
- Maturity has a responsibility to increase in responsibility.
  - Ephesians 4:15 we are to grow up in all aspects
  - Matthew 25 parable of the talents
  - Hebrews 5:12 by this time, you ought to be teachers

# If the relationship fails:

- Trust determines the degree to which you can interact
- Stay humble, stay obedient to the Holy Spirit
- We are known by the fruit we consistently produce, over time, verified by multiple witnesses
- The devil has to pay back 7 times what he stole (Proverbs 6:31)
- The Father never takes something away without bringing an upgrade in its place

## If the relationship fails:

- Trust the Lord to continue to work (Philippians 1:6)
  - Paul and Barnabas were each convinced they were right (Acts 15:39)
  - Paul eventually asked for the person who was the source of their disagreement (2 Timothy 4:11)
  - This is what heaven is for!

In all these situations, the only thing you can control is how you approach and respond to offenses!

# 2 Corinthians 5

17 - Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature, the old things passed away, behold, new things have come.
18 - Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation,

19 – namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. To live in unity and harmony with one another, have the attitudes of gratitude and humility.

Gratitude + Humility = Unity & Harmony = God's anointing!

Remember the true enemy, and fire back according to the Spirit of the Living God who lives inside you!

Armor on, swords up, ready to fight for the relationships that have been entrusted to you!



### Total cost: @\$41,000





# Total roof cost: @\$52,000









### Total cost: @\$12,000





Renovations still needed:

- Steeple removal
- Roof replacement
- Flooring

"And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:19