

A Biblical View of Conflict

Introduction:

1. Very few people enjoy conflict, yet it is an inevitable part of our journey through this life.
2. Most people have developed habitual responses when conflict is encountered with another person. Here are a few of those responses:
 - **Avoiding** – You either deny that there is a conflict, or simply refuse to deal with it. No solutions are ever developed. This approach produces frustration and leads to more complicated problems.
 - **Accommodating** – You are hoping to preserve a relationship at all costs. This is when you automatically give in to the wishes of other people. Sometimes this is okay, but it may not be appropriate if they are clearly wrong and violating Scripture. Continually being a doormat can cause internal bitterness.
 - **Compromising** – You meet others halfway. You give and take. Again, this may be appropriate where no sin or evil is involved.
 - **Competing** – You only know two outcomes to conflict: winning and losing. So, you impose your will and your solutions on others. This type of person can typically be aggressive, domineering, and uncooperative.
3. Any time we leave God out of the picture and disregard His commands to deal with the underlying causes of conflict, it will be more difficult to resolve disputes and restore genuine peace.
4. Therefore, we must look at conflict biblically. The Bible explains why conflicts occur, and how we should deal with them. Let's examine some basic Bible principles in regards to conflict.

Some conflict involves issues that are neutral and beneficial.

1. All conflict does not occur over clear issues of right and wrong.
 - **Biblical Example:** Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-40
2. God created us as unique individuals. Because of this, we all possess different opinions, convictions, preferences, and perspectives. Vanilla or chocolate? Chevy or Ford? Gators or Seminoles? Starbucks or Dunkin'? Neither is right nor wrong.
3. When handled properly, disagreements in gray areas can stimulate productive dialogue, encourage creativity, promote helpful change, and generally make life more interesting.
4. We should seek **unity** in our relationships, but not **uniformity**. Romans 12:3-8
5. We should rejoice in our God-given diversity and learn to accept and work with people who simply see things differently than we do. Romans 14:1-13
6. Opinionated and strong-willed people have a problem with this. They don't see the benefit in diversity. They allow these areas of preference to cause conflict in their relationships with others. If this is you, admit it, pray about it, and decide to change.