

Introduction: A biblical perspective on conflict

- It's inevitable. John 16:33
- It flows from our differences in perspective. Acts 15:36-41
- It flows from our selfish desires. James 4:1-3
- It can be rooted in personality or style differences. Philippians 4:2-3

Summary: Conflict is normal, healthy conflict provides an opportunity for growth, but can be destructive unless addressed wisely, lovingly, and with rules to govern the process.

¹² So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

¹⁴ Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

¹⁷ Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:12-17

How to resolve conflict peaceably:

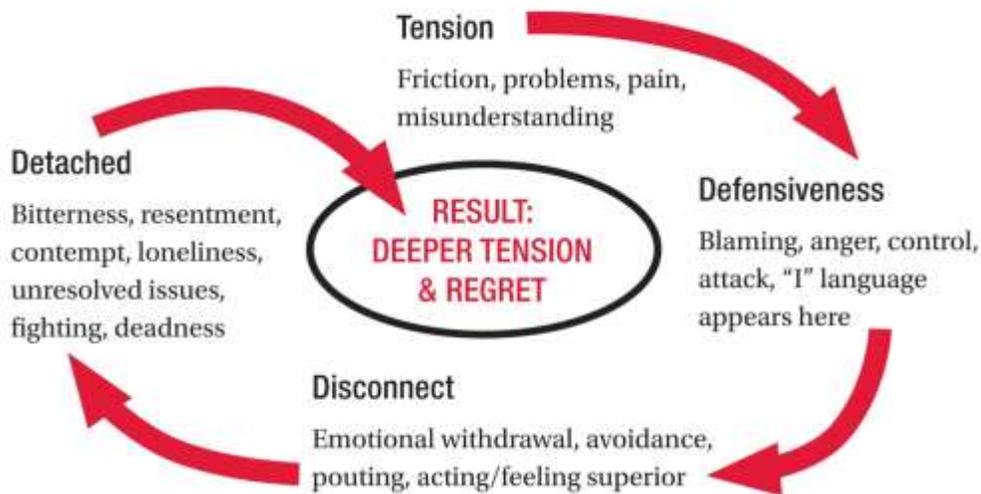
I. The command – we are to deal with our mates as Christ deals with us.

Colossians 3:13-15

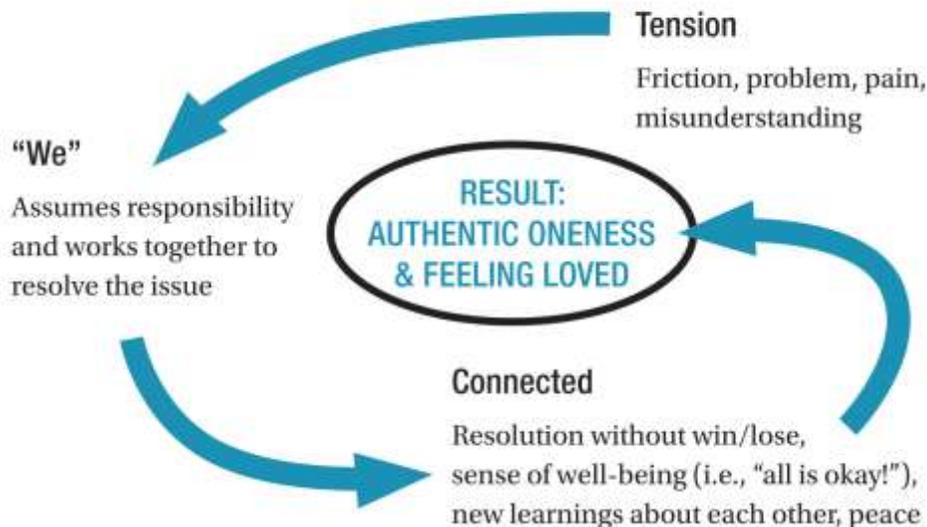
1. “Bear with one another” – cause of tension
2. “Forgiving one another” – hurt and/or offense
3. “Whoever has a complaint” – personalized, ongoing
4. “Just as the Lord forgave you” – required response
5. “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts” – let God be the umpire
6. “Called into one body” – priority of unity
7. “Be thankful” – focus on what we have, not what’s lacking

II. We all respond to “tension” positively or negatively.

NEGATIVE CONFLICT DANCE



POSITIVE CONFLICT DANCE



Note: Negative and Positive Conflict Dance images by Dr. Jim Burns, HomeWord ministry.

III. How to “DIFFUSE” conflict in your marriage

- D** - _____ the problem on your own. Proverbs 15:14 & 21:2
- I** - _____ a time to talk. Matthew 5:23-24
- F** - _____ on the “perceived” problem, not the person. Proverbs 18:19
- F** - _____ their pain as though it were your own. Proverbs 17:17
- U** - _____ the root problem. Proverbs 20:5

<u>Symptom</u>	<u>Root</u>
Money	Values, Priorities, Power / Control Issues
Sex	Communication, Unmet Emotional Needs, Past History / Baggage
In-Laws	Loyalty, Expectations
Children / Work	Roles and/or Goals

- S** - _____ things right between you. James 5:16
 1. Own your responsibility.
 2. Confess - “I was wrong. . .”
 3. Ask for forgiveness - “Will you forgive me?”
- E** - _____ a **specific action plan** that addresses the issue discussed; write it down. James 1:22-25
 - Husband – I commit to . . . by . . . (when?)
 - Wife – I commit to . . . by . . . (when?)

Discussion Questions:

1. How did your family handle conflict when you were growing up?
2. When conflict arises, do you tend to become more a “turtle” or a “shark”?
3. What specifically did you learn about resolving conflict that was most helpful?
4. Is there a specific issue in your marriage that needs to be diffused? Are you willing to put into practice the “diffuse conflict” game plan you learned today? When and how will you go about it?