

Handling Conflict Biblically

SKILLS:

**MISUNDERSTANDING, HURT
& 'LESS THAN SIN' ITEMS**

Review

- ⦿ God has equipped the church to pursue and restore sinning members.
- ⦿ Humble repentance characterizes true Christians.
- ⦿ The church cannot allow the unrepentant in its fellowship.
- ⦿ Christ guides and blesses the patient exercise of pursuit and discipline, because it is the outworking of the Father's plan.

Round Peg, Square Hole

- Many of our situations do involve sin, so discussing the pursuit of a sinner is helpful...
- BUT, what about those situations that don't involve a clear sin?

Our Goal

- ⦿ Some people may seek to clarify and confront every issue.
- ⦿ Some people may try to cover and continue on as quickly as possible.
- ⦿ Our goal is not to balance the two extremes, but to act Biblically in all things.
 - Acting according to the commands and promises of Scripture will bring us to the place of God's greatest blessing.

Biblical Principles

- ⦿ We must honor any and all principles that apply to a given situation.
- ⦿ Generally applicable principles include:
 - Give benefit of the doubt (1 Corinthians 13:7)
 - Avoid speculative judgments about motives (1 Corinthians 4:5)
 - Listen to both sides (Proverbs 18:17)
 - Seek sympathetic understanding (1 Peter 3:8)
 - Develop trust with Godly friends (Proverbs 12:26, 24:21-22)
 - Love God and others above yourself (Mark 12:30-31)
 - Delight to avoid unnecessary offense (Proverbs 14:29)
 - Pursue peace and prevent bitterness (Hebrews 12:14-15)
 - Do not delay dealing with a matter (Ephesians 4:26)
 - Delight to forgive whenever possible (Proverbs 19:11)

Example of Misunderstanding

- ⦿ First instance – Benefit of doubt
- ⦿ Over time – BOD is reinforced or contradicted
- ⦿ Substantial BOD question – Request clarification (Proverbs 18:13, 17)
 - If clarification resolves issue – Put the issue to rest, affirm the brother/sister
 - If clarification does not make sense – Inquire about your own interpretation

Ways to Show Benefit of the Doubt

- ⦿ Investigate signs of hatred (Proverbs 10:12), impatience/anger (Proverbs 15:18) or evil desire (Proverbs 6:14) toward the person
 - Abandon fighting for your way (James 4:1-3, Proverbs 17:14)
- ⦿ Use generic information (if possible) to seek wisdom from other mature Christians (Proverbs 13:10)
- ⦿ Inquire about the person's well being (3 John 2)
- ⦿ Find out if the person sees any offense in your life (Matthew 5:23-24, 7:1-5)
- ⦿ Express a desire to increase your understanding about the situation (Proverbs 14:33)
- ⦿ Affirm your loving commitment to the brother/sister (e.g. Romans 15:7)

Your Turn

What Biblical principles do you use to handle misunderstanding?

Questions

