

Handling Conflict Biblically

SKILLS:

**CONQUERING BITTERNESS &
REBUILDING TRUST**

Review

- God gives us our conscience as a subjective awareness of moral standards.
- Our conscience is a valuable tool in our own sanctification and in conflict resolution.
- We must be careful to follow our conscience and feed it Biblical information.
- No one should ever violate their conscience, for fear of becoming desensitized to God's conviction through it.

What is Trust?

- Trust is your confidence in another person (e.g. Psalm 21:8, Psalm 118:8, Proverbs 25:19).
- It should be given to faithful people – those who can fulfill one's confidence (Proverbs 25:19).
- For a believer, giving trust means to recognize those who honor God and who live truthfully (Proverbs 12:22).
- Keeping trust should result in refreshing relationships (Proverbs 25:13).

Examples of Trustworthy Biblical Characters

- A Godly wife (Proverbs 31:11)
- A true friend (Proverbs 27:9-10)
- The Thessalonian church (2 Thessalonians 3:4)
- The Corinthian church (2 Corinthians 7:4,14-16)
- Timothy (2 Corinthians 8:23)

What Kinds of Sins Break Trust?

- Gossip (Proverbs 11:13)
- Lying (Proverbs 12:22, 14:5)
- Selfishness (Proverbs 20:6)
- Perverse Speech (Proverbs 19:1)
- Dishonest Gain (Proverbs 28:6)
- Promise Breaking (Proverbs 25:19)
- Greedy Haste (Proverbs 28:20)
- Sexual Sin (Proverbs 23:27-28)
- Ultimately, any sin!

Forgiveness Review

- Forgiveness is the gracious release of offense stemming from sin, conditioned upon the offender's repentance.
- Forgiveness, both from God and from man, is a moment-in-time action.
- Forgiveness removes the barrier of sin from a relationship.

Forgiveness and Trust

- Forgiveness and trust are often relevant to the same situations, but are not the same thing.
- We can and should forgive a faithless man whenever he repents (Luke 17:3-4).
- **HOWEVER**, we should not trust a man who can be described as faithless (Proverbs 25:19).
- How do we handle relationships when everyone eventually will break trust?

Restoration and Trust

- ⦿ Restoration from sin always entails some measure of restored trust.
- ⦿ Hebrews 12:12-13 – When a Christian receives discipline from the Lord, he should be strengthened and healed (made obedient, which should gain trust).
- ⦿ Galatians 6:1 – A sinning Christian should be restored, meaning to be set in order. This, too, should allow some trust to be restored.

How People Change

- Ephesians 4:23 – We are being renewed in our minds.
- As we live out our new life in Christ, we should see new thinking and new actions:
 - Liars honor their neighbors in the body of Christ by speaking truth (4:25)
 - The belligerent seek to disarm the devil by resolving conflict quickly and peaceably (4:26-27).
 - Thieves start thinking of themselves as givers and work to support their generosity (4:28).
 - Foolish talkers see their words as powerful, tailor-made acts of grace for each situation (4:29).

When to Trust Again

- Extending trust to someone who has broken it is a wisdom decision, guided by an understanding of repentance and change.
- Rather than your own emotions, evaluate your relationships based on Biblical doctrine.

Suggested Inquiries

- Does the person understand how their desires and thoughts contributed to the breach in trust?
- Does the person understand what actions contributed to the breach in trust?
- Have their thoughts changed?
- Are there new actions to prove it?
- Is this person faithful in their new habits?
- Is there an evident desire to honor Christ?

Terms of a Relationship

- Difficult situations arise when trust has not been (fully) restored, but when there is some other bond between parties.
 - Marriage – 1 Peter 3:1-7
 - Servants/Employees – 1 Peter 2:18-20
 - Church – Philippians 4:2-3, Acts 15:36-41
- In such cases, Christians must obey God and fulfill their covenant with the other party, without using the broken trust as an excuse.

Questions

