

Handling Conflict Biblically

**SKILLS:
BUSINESS & LEGAL
MATTERS**

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.

What is God's Will in Conflict?

- ⦿ 1 Corinthians 10:31 – God wants His own glory.
- ⦿ 2 Peter 3:9 – God wants “all to come to repentance.”
- ⦿ Romans 12:18-20 – God wants us to seek peace and to leave vengeance to Him.
- ⦿ Matthew 7:1-5 – God wants us to work on our own obedience before trying to “fix” others.
- ⦿ Galatians 6:1-2 – Christ’s law is to bear one another’s burdens, meaning the restoration from sin.
- ⦿ Matthew 18:15 – Christ wants us to be excited about winning our brother.
- ⦿ Psalm 133 / Philippians 4:2-3 – God wants believers to dwell together in unity and harmony.
- ⦿ Proverbs 8:14-15, 18:5 – God wants rulers to exercise justice.
- ⦿ Proverbs 25:8-10, Matthew 5:23-26 – God wants us to seek conflict resolution outside of court whenever possible.

BUSINESS CONFLICT

How to Handle Everyday Conflict with a Business

- Apply similar principles to a different realm.
- If you think a business has wronged you, seek to resolve your conflict with your point of contact.
- If the point of contact has no authority to resolve the issue, inquire who does have such authority.
- While public reviews of a business have some merit, avoid posting such reviews until you have made an attempt to resolve the issue.

Can I Sue a Business?

- ⦿ Yes, if it is warranted and necessary.
- ⦿ Suing a business and suing a person should be treated with the same weight.
 1. Have you considered that you might be wrong?
 2. Have you sought winsome resolution with one or more appropriate decision makers at the business?
 3. Would proceeding with the lawsuit damage Christ's reputation?

LEGAL ISSUES

Material Conflict with a Brother

- ⦿ When we have a monetary or property dispute (“material”), our thoughts can quickly turn to the courts for resolution.
- ⦿ When all parties are willing, it is beneficial for each one to make their case and resolve the matter privately, without other help (cf. Matt 5:23-26).
- ⦿ If the other party is a believer, we can appeal to wise Christians for mediation (1 Corinthians 6:2-3).

Material Conflict, Part 2

- If a believer is unwilling to “come to the table”, the other believer should begin Matthew 18 pursuit of that believer.
- However, if the other party is not a believer, a Christian should still try to make peace outside of court.

The Court System

- ⦿ The simple paperwork costs for a small claims action in DE are about \$60 (assuming that the defendant is compliant).
- ⦿ This does not include service costs, additional motions, lawyer's fees, enforcement costs and collection costs – and this doesn't factor in YOUR time!
- ⦿ Should you choose to be represented by an attorney, you could pay \$150-\$1,000 per hour for the attorney's work!
- ⦿ Small claims courts can take 1-3 months before a trial happens.
- ⦿ Small claims courts don't make the loser pay right away. Sometimes they can enforce payment, with enough information and after you have paid additional fees.
- ⦿ Even if you “win”, you lose a lot of time and money using the court system.

What if a Believer Does Not Cooperate?

- One could make the argument that, if the person is pursued to the point of excommunication in Matthew 18:17, that one could sue them as an unbeliever.
- However, the concerns of 1 Corinthians 6 are still partially in effect:
 - Exposing Christian disputes to unbelievers (v. 6)
 - Pursuit of excess/fraudulent gain (vv. 7-8)

What if a Believer Does Not Cooperate?

- If an excommunicated believer's *continued profession of Christ* would bring shame to Christ in front of an unbelieving judge, avoid the lawsuit.
- Pray for the grace to suffer wrongdoing with integrity and a good testimony (1 Peter 2:19-20).

What if You are Sued?

- ◎ Use similar principles, and also ask the following questions:
 - Does the other party claim to be a Christian? (1 Corinthians 6:1-8)
 - Do I believe that the other party has any merit in their claim? (Matthew 5:23-26)
 - Am I acting sinfully in any way? (Matthew 7:1-5)
 - Have I sought understanding of the other side(s)? (Proverbs 18:13, 17)
 - Considering all sides, what would be just to each party? (Matthew 5:40, Proverbs 31:9)

What if I Still End up in Court?

- ⦿ Seek to honor God and trust His outcome (Proverbs 16:7)
- ⦿ Pray for your authorities (1 Timothy 2:1-2)
- ⦿ Pray for your opponent-at-law (Matthew 5:44)
- ⦿ Don't expect the court to make every wrong right; a court is not God and it cannot do so (Romans 12:19)
- ⦿ Listen to advice, even if it is not what you want to hear (Proverbs 12:15)
- ⦿ Find ways to serve your opponent-at-law without compromising what you think is right (Romans 12:20)
- ⦿ Tell the truth without a deceitful agenda (Proverbs 6:16-19, 12:17)
- ⦿ Don't claim rights that aren't right (1 Corinthians 10:23)
- ⦿ Seek peace (Romans 12:18)
- ⦿ Proclaim the gift of justification in Christ (Romans 3:23-24)

But I DON'T Have This Kind of Conflict Right Now!

- You might soon!
- Your neighbor might need help with a conflict soon!
- Paul says that believers should be able to help other believers through conflict (e.g. Phil 4:3).
- Your own personal habits, doctrinal foundation, relational skills and reputation of integrity are preparing you now to serve your brother or sister later.

How to Prepare to Help in Conflict

- ⦿ Live at peace with God by maintaining “clean hands” (Psalm 24:4).
- ⦿ Seek an understanding of God’s character, works and will through Scripture (Psalm 119:10-11).
- ⦿ View your life as an expression of grace – both receiving and giving it (Matthew 10:8b).
- ⦿ Think and speak about life – especially sin and conflict – in Biblical categories (Ephesians 4:15)
- ⦿ Look for people’s desires underneath conflict (James 4:1-5).
- ⦿ Resolve your own conflict quickly (Matthew 5:25, Ephesians 4:26).
- ⦿ Concern yourself with pleasing God rather than other men or yourself (Galatians 1:10).s

Questions

