

How to be a peacemaker in your marriage?

Matt 5:9

9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

KJV

Every marriage experiences conflict as do churches.

There are three basic ways that people respond to conflict.

- **Peace Faking**

- **Denial**

- Pretend that the problem does not exist. Deny that the problem exists.

- Brings temporary relief but usually makes matters worse.

- **Flight**

- Divorce in marriage, change churches, end a friendship, or quit a job.

- May be necessary in some situation but only brings relief and does not lead to a correct solution to the problem that brings the most glory to God.

- **Suicide**

- It is the third leading cause of death among adolescents in our nation.

- **Peace Breaking**

- **Assault**

- Using various forms of personal attacks, intimidation, manipulation, and control to try to bend the will of another. Verbal attacks include personally attacking the integrity and motives of others, slander, and gossip. This always makes conflicts worse.

- **Litigation**

- Bend a person's will by taking them to civil court. The civil courts exist to resolve conflicts. Some cases may legitimately be taken before a civil judge. But this method normally fails to achieve complete justice and usually does irreparable harm to trust in a relationship. This damages the witness of Christians. Christians are commanded to settle their differences within the church.

- **Murder**

- This certainly will end a conflict. Christians do this in their hearts by harboring anger and contempt and then they distance themselves from the person they have judged.

- **Peace Making**

- All of these responses are commanded by God, empowered by the gospel, and directed toward finding just and mutually agreeable solutions to conflict.

- Overlook an offense-Proverbs 19:11; Col. 3:13; 1 Peter 4:8**

- Many disputes are so insignificant that they should be resolved by quietly and deliberately overlooking an offense.

Overlooking an offense is a form of forgiveness. It involves a deliberate decision not to talk about the offense, not to dwell on it, or let it grow into pent-up bitterness or anger.

[Reconciliation-Matthew 5:23-24; Proverbs 28:13; Gal. 6:1; Matthew 18:15;](#)

If an offense is too serious to overlook or has damaged a relationship, we need to resolve personal or relational issues thru confession, loving correction, and forgiveness.

[Negotiation-Phil. 2:4](#)

Even if we successfully resolve relational issues, we may still need to work thru issues related to personal beliefs, convictions, or other rights such as personal property. Thru a bargaining process you seek to reach a settlement that satisfies the legitimate needs of each side. Paul and Barnabas decided to settle their intense dispute by each starting their own ministry.

But if a dispute cannot be resolved thru one of these personal peacemaking responses then God commands us to use one of the next three peacemaking responses that could be called assisted peacemaking.

[Mediation-Matthew 18:16](#)

If two people cannot reach an agreement in private, they should ask one or more people who are known for their personal integrity to meet with them and help them communicate more effectively and explore possible solutions. These mediators may ask questions and give advice but they have not authority to force you to accept a particular solution.

[Arbitration-1 Cor. 6:1-8](#)

When you and an opponent cannot come to a voluntary agreement on an issue, you appoint one or more arbitrators to listen to your arguments and render a binding decision to settle the issue. It is better to be defrauded on material issues than damage your testimony and the body of Christ. Material issues include personal rights to property, position, and decision making.

[Accountability-Matthew 18:17](#)

If a person professes to be a Christian but refuses to be reconciled and follow the preceding steps of peacemaking, Jesus commands church leaders to formally intervene and to hold him or her accountable to Scripture to promote repentance, justice, and forgiveness. Church involvement is often viewed as negative among Christians, but when it is done as Jesus instructs- lovingly, redemptively, and restoratively, it can be the key to saving relationships and bringing about justice and peace.

Most married couples will not submit themselves to these three biblical steps of conflict resolution. If they have tried the first three and failed, they may go to mediation. But if mediation does not work they give up and resort to peace breaking-assault, litigation, and murder.

I have never seen or heard of a married couple submitting themselves to binding arbitration if their conflict was not resolved by one of the first four biblical steps!

Why is this? Our failure to submit to arbitration reveals the condition of our hearts and why the first four steps did not bring a resolution. Our failure to submit to binding arbitration reveals that we have an unfulfilled desire or personal ambition that has become an idol in our life.

It may even be a good desire that has become too important to us. When this occurs, we become self-deceived and believe that we are standing for God and suffering for righteousness. Instead we are guilty of what James said in James 4.

James 4:1-10

4:1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

KJV

Have you tried the first biblical steps to resolve your conflicts but they have failed because you have an unfulfilled desire or personal ambition that is more important to you than it should be? Will you release that unfulfilled desire or personal ambition to God and trust Him as you submit yourself to His Word and these biblical principles?