

Summary and Application

Conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, to serve others, and to grow to be like Christ. These opportunities, which are sometimes described as being faithful to God, being merciful to others, and acting justly ourselves, are commended throughout Scripture. In [Micah 6:8](#) we are told, “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” In the same way, Jesus teaches us to pay attention to “the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness” ([Matt. 23:23](#)). As you live out the gospel and make the Lord’s priorities your priorities, you can turn every conflict into a stepping-stone to a closer relationship with God and a more fulfilling and fruitful Christian life.

If you are presently involved in a conflict, these questions will help you apply the principles presented in this chapter to your situation:

1. Briefly summarize your dispute as you perceive it, placing events in chronological order as much as possible. In particular, describe what you have done to resolve the dispute.
2. Which response to conflict (from the slippery slope diagram) have you been using to resolve this dispute? How has your response made the situation better or worse?
3. What have been your primary goals as you’ve tried to resolve this dispute?
4. From this point on, how could you glorify God through this conflict? Specifically, how could you please and honor God in this situation and bring praise to Jesus by showing that he has saved you and is changing you?
5. How could you serve others through this conflict?
6. How could you grow to be more like Christ through this conflict?

7. What have you been relying on for guidance in this situation: your feelings and personal opinions about what is right or the careful study and application of what is taught in the Bible? What will you rely on in the future?
8. What are you struggling with most at this time (e.g., your opponent's attacks, controlling your tongue, fear of what is going to happen, lack of support from others)?
9. How could you use the resources God has provided (the Bible, the Holy Spirit, or other Christians) to deal with these struggles?
10. If God were to evaluate this conflict after it is over, how would you like him to complete these sentences:
 "I am pleased that you did not ..."
 "I am pleased that you ..."
11. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

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The message given by Jesus and the apostles is resoundingly clear: Whether our conflicts involve minor irritations or major legal issues, God is eager to display his love and power through us as we strive to maintain peace and unity with those around us. Therefore, peacemaking is not an optional activity for a believer. If you have committed your life to Christ, he invites you to draw on his grace and commands you to seek peace with others. Token efforts will not satisfy this command; God wants you to strive earnestly, diligently, and continually to maintain harmonious relationships with those around you. Your dependence on him and obedience to this call will show the power of the gospel and enable you to enjoy the personal peace that God gives to those who faithfully follow him.

If you are presently involved in a conflict, these questions will help you apply the principles presented in this chapter:

1. Have you made peace with God by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior, Lord, and King? If not, you can do so right now by sincerely praying this prayer: *Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I realize that my good deeds could never make up for my wrongs. I need your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins, and I want to turn away from them. I trust you now to be my Savior, and with your help I will follow you as my Lord and King, in the fellowship of your church.*

If you have prayed this prayer, it is essential that you find fellowship with other Christians in a church where the Bible is faithfully taught and applied. This fellowship will help you to learn more about God and be strengthened in your faith.

2. Are you at peace with other people? If not, from whom are you estranged? Why?
3. Are you experiencing the kind of internal peace you desire? If not, why?
4. Has the peace and unity of the Christian community been disrupted by your dispute? How?

5. What effect might this conflict be having on the reputation of Christ?
6. Is there someone who might have something against you? What have you done to be reconciled? Do you believe that you are free to worship God, or do you need to make another effort to restore unity with that person?
7. Why and how might Satan be aggravating this dispute?
8. Have you been striving earnestly to resolve this dispute or giving only partial efforts to make peace?
9. Have you remembered the forgiveness you have in Christ and drawn on his grace to resolve this dispute, or have you been working in your own wisdom and strength? Who will you depend on from this point on?
10. Read [Ephesians 4:29-32](#). Are you thinking, speaking, or acting in a way that might grieve the Holy Spirit?
11. Are you involved in a lawsuit? If so, what have you done to follow [1 Corinthians 6:1-8](#)?
12. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

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When you are involved in a conflict, you too must decide whether or not you will trust God. Trusting God does not mean believing that he will do all that you want, but rather believing that he will do everything he knows is good. If you do not trust God, you will inevitably place your trust in yourself or another person, which ultimately leads to grief. On the other hand, if you believe that God is sovereign and that he will never allow anything into your life unless it can be used for good, you will see conflicts not as *accidents* but as *opportunities*. This kind of trust glorifies God and inspires the faithfulness needed for effective peacemaking.

If you are presently involved in a conflict, these questions will help you to apply the principles presented in this chapter:

1. Have you been looking at this dispute as something that happened by chance, as something done to you by someone else, or as something that God allowed in your life for a specific purpose?
2. What questions, doubts, or fears do you have because of this dispute?
3. Read [Psalms 37](#) and [73](#). What do these psalms warn you not to do? What do they instruct you to do? List the comforting promises they provide.
4. How would your feelings, attitudes, and behavior change if you started seeing this dispute as an assignment from a perfectly loving and all-powerful God?
5. What good might God bring about if you respond to this conflict in a biblical manner?
6. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

