

16-Are You Equipped To Resolve Conflict?

We all face conflict - conflict at work, conflict with your spouse, conflict with your kids, conflict with a boyfriend or girlfriend, conflict in the community. Because the world is broken there is conflict everywhere. National conflict, political conflict, economic conflict, relational conflict, sexual conflict. There's conflict in every area and every segment of society. Given the likelihood of conflict in your life, are you equipped to resolve conflict?

"Never pay back evil for evil to anyone... As much as possible, as far as it depends on you, live in peace with everyone." Romans 12:17-18 (NLT)

If your relationships aren't good, if you are carrying conflict and you don't know how to deal with it then you don't know how to be happy. Conflict sucks happiness and peace out of you. You can have everything, but if your relationships are a mess, you'll never be happy. You'll never experience true peace!

Even God recognizes that there are some people you can't live with in peaceful co-existence. They're called crazy makers! No matter how you try to appease, please, control, support, whatever... there is no magic answer. You've met people who are just unpleasable. Crazy makers will create conflict, so what's the answer?

Rick Warren in his series "You Make Me Crazy" proposes seven steps you can take to resolve conflict:

- 1-Take the initiative (right time, right place, pray before meeting, come with a positive attitude)
- 2-Confess your part of the conflict
- 3-You listen for the hurt
- 4-You consider their perspective
- 5-Tell the truth tactfully
- 6-Fix the problem, not the blame
- 7-Focus on reconciliation, not resolution

What is the common theme of these seven steps? Focus on the needs of the OTHER person. Put other's interests before your own and you will be a

peacemaker. Put your interests ahead of other's interests and you will be a Crazy Maker. The choice is yours. Consider the following verses:

2 Timothy 1:7: "God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but a spirit of power and love and self discipline."

Matthew 5:23: "If you're standing before the altar in the temple and you suddenly remember that somebody has something against you, you leave your offering there beside the altar and first be reconciled to that person. Then come and offer your gift to God."

Matthew 7:3: "Why do you notice the little piece of dust in your friend's eye, but you don't notice the big piece of wood in your own eye? First, take the log out of your own eye. Then you'll see clearly to take the splinter out of your friend's eye."

James 1:19: "Be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry."

Romans 15:2: "We must be considerate about the doubts and the fears of others."

Philippians 2:4-5: "Each of you should look not only for your own interests, but also the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."

Ephesians 4:15: "Speak the truth in love."

Proverbs 12:18: "Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."

Ephesians 4:29: "Do not use harmful words, but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed."

Colossians 3:8: "You must rid yourself of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips."

Romans 14:13: "Let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way."

Matthew 5:9: "Blessed are the peacemakers."

1 Timothy 2:5: "There is only one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and people. He is Jesus Christ."

Personal Reflection:

Who are the crazy makers in your life? Are you giving them power? Who is the Holy Spirit nudging you to talk to using this seven step process? When will you act on the nudging?

Group Discussion:

How do we focus on others who are hurting?

How can we support each other as we apply Rick Warren's process for reconciliation (and not resolution)?

Which of the seven steps is difficult for each of you? How can you overcome that challenge?