

## Biblical Conflict Resolution, Part 2 | prepare your reaction

### I. Introduction

- II Corinthians 4:7-18
- Romans 5:3-5
- I Peter 1:6-7
- James 1:2-4
- Romans 8:28-29
- In order to glorify God in biblical conflict resolution, you must prepare your reaction to conflict. And that reaction must be . . . gratitude.

### II. We must be thankful for the disagreements and the conflicts in our lives.

- **Acknowledge that God is working.**
  - God is the one who tests our faith. God is the one working through the trial to accomplish His glory and our best. James 1:2-3
  - That's what Romans 8:28-29 explains as well. All things work together for good because God is working in all things to conform us to the image of His Son.
  - I Peter 1:6-7; II Corinthians 4:7-18
  - When conflict occurs between you and your spouse or children, God wants to use the situation—even their own sin—to open their eyes to *their* need for Him. He's working through the conflict to draw *everyone* in the conflict to Him.
- **Hope all things and believe all things of the other person.** I Corinthians 13:7
  - We need to approach times of conflict not only rejoicing that God wants to use the situation for all of our best, but that when the other people submit to Him, they will do the right thing. They too will respond the right way.
  - It's natural and human and fleshly to react to conflict assuming the other person is just going to continue being dumb and obstinate and wicked. But God calls us to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. That means that we must be thankful that God is working and that the other person can—by God's grace—respond and grow through this situation.
- **Be thankful for what God is doing in the situation and the fact that reconciliation is always possible in His strength.**
  - I Thessalonians 5:18; Philippians 4:6; Ephesians 5:20; Colossians 3:15, 17
  - We find so many commands in the Scriptures to be thankful for the various trials in our lives because we serve an awesome God Who is actively at work accomplishing His plan, empowering His people, and is ready to affect mighty change in everyone involved.
- **Follow Jesus' example.**
  - John 11:1-46
  - Jesus allowed Lazarus to die because He was fully committed to realizing God's perfect plan
  - Jesus was glad that He had not been there to heal Lazarus because He knew that the situation was going to be used to help His followers deepen their faith.
  - Jesus was glad Lazarus died—even though it brought Him to tears—because it provided an opportunity for God to be glorified.
  - Jesus was on this earth to bring ultimate glory to the Father, and Jesus was thankful that His friend died because He knew it was going to be used by God to strengthen His followers and ultimately give the Father all the glory for what was done.

## I. Conclusion

- We must reorient our reaction to conflict. Instead of becoming bitter or resentful or angry or fearful or depressed or hopeless in the face of conflict—even sustained conflict—we have been commanded by God to rejoice . . . not in the sin, but in the fact that God is powerful and loving and actively working in the situation to draw you and your family members to Him.
- **What is your attitude concerning the value of conflict?**
  - Most people try to avoid it. We run from it. We hate it.
  - We shouldn't actively try to create conflict. That would be a sin. However, we shouldn't run from it when it appears in our lives. We have a huge part to play in glorifying God by growing because of it and by influencing others to do the same. We need to be thankful for that divine calling. So, with that said . . .
- **What do you need to do differently to respond correctly to sinful conflict?**
  - The first thing we all have to do when people disagree with us—and even when they sin in that disagreement and create conflict—we need to consciously choose to be thankful for the situation. We need to intelligently trust God's promises and commands.
  - On the flip side, we need to actively fight the temptation to not be grateful. We have no right to not be thankful. Remember I Thessalonians 5:18, "***In everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.***"
  - But this shouldn't be ignorant faith. Our ability to be thankful must be rooted in the fact that we know and trust that God is fulfilling His plan . . . that this situation can be the best thing for us as long as we love Him and are working toward His purposes. Then this situation has the ability to conform us to the image of Christ. Consciously rehearse these truths to yourself. It will help you maintain the right mindset about the disagreement or conflict.
  - However, you also need to stop sinning in the disagreement. You're not glorifying God or changing for the better as you continue to do wrong in the conflict. This includes being sinfully angry, ungrateful, hopeless, anxious, depressed, and the like. If you're sinning against God and the other person in these ways, you're just as much part of the problem as they are.
  - But thank the Lord that despite your own stubborn rebellion, He still wants to use the situation to draw you to Him.
  - And that's the reaction you need to prepare to have. Your first reaction to disagreement and conflict needs to be, "Thank you, Lord, for allowing this situation into my life. I praise You for wanting to use this conflict to mature me and the other person. Dear God, may You be glorified as we both submit to your plan."

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