

Biblical Conflict Resolution, Part 6 I make time for resolution

I. Resolve the Conflict in a Timely Manner.

- Matthew 5:23-24; I Peter 3:7
- When you have sinned against someone, God says it's your responsibility to pursue reconciliation in a timely manner. There's an immediacy to this command. It doesn't leave room for finishing our current task. It requires action.
- When we don't take this immediate action, there are consequences. One such consequence is that our prayers will be hindered.
 - Mark 11:25 says that an unforgiving spirit does it.
 - Psalm 66:18 says that the Lord won't hear our prayers when we're harboring wickedness in our lives. Isaiah 59:2 says something very similar.
 - James 4:3 says our wrong motives hinder our prayers.
 - Proverbs 28:9 says our prayers are an abomination when we turn away from the teaching of the law.
 - What's interesting is how many of these prayer-hindering attitudes are present in conflict. In conflict we tend to be unforgiving, we've sinned and aren't turning from it, if we're pursuing reconciliation or avoiding it, we're often doing it for the wrong reasons, and all of this is due to our turning away from the truths of Scripture.
- We absolutely need to make time for timely reconciliation *primarily* because God deserves our worship and obedience, but *secondarily* because there are consequences for our refusal to be reconciled. Therefore, the single most important reason to resolve conflict in a timely manner is that it's so important to God that He prioritizes our reconciling with each other over our attempts to please Him in public worship and even private prayer.

II. Biblical Anger and Immediate Resolution

- Psalm 4:4; Ephesians 4:26.
 - What is the significance of "the bed" and "the sun" in regard to conflict resolution? Reconciliation needs to be pursued before the sun sets. We need to schedule it into our day because they day will be over soon.
 - Unfortunately, not all reconciliation can perfectly happen in a moment or before the end of the day. Because of our sin, it often takes days, weeks, and years. Sometimes reconciliation is never achieved. God forbid that be because of our sin.
 - Sanctified Anger is God's Divine Anger being experienced in us, but here's the thing, the Bible teaches that Divine Anger is not sustainable for a human. It must come to an end in one of four ways:
 - Divine anger must end if the person at whom we're angry submits to Truth. Only sinful anger continues to burn after the individual repents and obeys God.
 - Divine anger must end if God judges the person. Only sinful anger continues after the person has received the righteous consequences of their choices.
 - If the person doesn't submit to God's truth and/or God doesn't judge the person right away, divine anger must end when you leave the person's presence. The idea of being in bed illustrates that the person with whom you have conflict is probably not with you. Only sinful anger continues to fester when the individual is no longer anywhere near you.

- If the person doesn't submit to God's truth and/or God doesn't judge the person right away . . . and if you can't leave the person's presence because the person is in bed with you, your divine anger must end when the evening comes. You are not the ultimate judge, there is no benefit in continuing to be angry when you're supposed to be sleeping. This also provides application for when your spouse is rebelling against God. Even though they're not repentant, even though they've not yet received God's judgment, and even though they're still in the room with you, you must abdicate your divine anger in light of the fact that God is the all powerful judge, and you are the exhausted Ambassador.
- Regardless of how you look at it, God expects us to pursue reconciliation as soon as possible. You might remember that you have sinned against someone else, stop what you're doing and deal with it. The other person may have sinned against you, talk to them about it right away, and don't make excuses for not dealing with it. Your anger, their sin, and even their refusal to repent does not excuse our responsibility to love them as God loves them.
- In order to make time for resolution, you have to make time for conflict, and—in so doing—you're making time for resolution. Don't drag your feet!

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