

Conflict Resolution the Bible Way

Introduction: As we navigate through a challenging political landscape, it's essential to remember that we are called to be peacemakers. Today, we'll explore how the Bible offers us timeless principles for resolving conflicts, especially during this election week. Let's look at five key points that will help us address disagreements with grace and wisdom.

Text: **Matthew 5:5-9 (MSG)** *"You're blessed when you're content with just who you are—no more, no less. That's the moment you find yourselves proud owners of everything that can't be bought. ⁶ You're blessed when you've worked up a good appetite for God. He's food and drink in the best meal you'll ever eat. ⁷ You're blessed when you care. At the moment of being care-full, you find yourselves cared for. ⁸ You're blessed when you get your inside world—your mind and heart—put right. Then you can see God in the outside world. ⁹ You're blessed when you can show people how to cooperate instead of compete or fight. That's when you discover who you really are, and your place in God's family.*

Matthew 5:9 (KJV) *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

Leadership isn't about winning. It's about brining people **with you** to the finish line! – John Maxwell

Our goal is not to fight with the person or prove them wrong. Our goal is simply to hold space and make them feel heard. And that's a skill that we have to do better at as employees, as brothers, as sisters, as Americans - Simon Sinek

1. Seek God's Wisdom First

James 1:5 (ESV) *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him.*

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT) *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.*

Philippians 4:6-7 (ESV) *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

Colossians 3:15 (NLT) *And let the peace that comes from Christ rule in your hearts. For as members of one body you are called to live in peace. And always be thankful.*

Example: King Solomon, known for his wisdom, sought God's guidance when faced with difficult decisions. His request for wisdom over riches set a precedent for how we should approach our conflicts—by first seeking God's divine guidance.

2. Practice Active Listening

When you are in the "heat of the moment" or in a high emotional state, don't make major life decisions. Stop, pray and discern what the Holy Spirit is speaking before moving forward.

James 1:19 (ESV) *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*

Proverbs 18:13 (NLT) *Spouting off before listening to the facts is both shameful and foolish.*

Ecclesiastes 3:7 (ESV) *A time to tear, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

Proverbs 15:28 (NLT) *The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking; the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words.*

Moses listened to the grievances of the people in Exodus 18, demonstrating the importance of gathering all perspectives before making decisions. His father-in-law Jethro advised him on leadership, emphasizing the need for understanding.

3. Respond with Grace

Proverbs 15:1-4 (ESV) *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. ² The tongue of the wise commends knowledge, but the mouths of fools pour out folly. ³ The eyes of the Lord are in every*

place, keeping watch on the evil and the good. ⁴ A gentle^[a] tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit.

Colossians 4:6 (ESV) *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

Ephesians 4:29 (NLT) *Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.*

1 Peter 3:9 (ESV) *Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.*

Matthew 5:44 (NLT) *But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you!*

Jesus exemplified grace in confrontation. When faced with hostility, He responded with love and forgiveness, even on the cross, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).

4. Pursue Reconciliation

Matthew 5:23-24 (ESV) *So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.*

Romans 12:18 (NLT) *Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.*

2 Corinthians 5:18 (ESV) *All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*

Galatians 6:1 (NLT) *Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path.*

The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32) illustrates the power of reconciliation. The father's willingness to embrace his wayward son reflects God's heart for restoring broken relationships.

5. Commit to Unity in Christ

Ephesians 4:3 (ESV) *Eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Philippians 2:2 (NLT) *Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.*

Colossians 3:14 (ESV) *And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

Romans 15:5-6 (NLT) *May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.*

The early church faced significant divisions, yet they committed to unity in the Spirit (Acts 2:42-47). Their dedication to fellowship and shared purpose helped them navigate conflicts and grow the church.

Conclusion: As we engage in discussions this election week, let us embody these principles of conflict resolution. By seeking wisdom, listening actively, responding with grace, pursuing reconciliation, and committing to unity, we can reflect Christ's love in a divided world. May we be agents of peace and hope, demonstrating that with God's help, we can navigate conflicts in a way that honors Him and brings us closer together.

Let's pray for wisdom and strength to implement these principles in our lives, especially in our conversations and interactions during this crucial week. Let us follow **Matthew 5:16** (KJV) and "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Offering: **Proverbs 11:24-25 (NIV)** *One person gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous person will prosper; whoever refreshes others will be refreshed*

Heart for Humanity

Proverbs 19:17 NIV *Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will reward them for what they have done.*

Proverbs 28:27 NIV *Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them receive many curses.*

Proverbs 22:9 NIV *The generous will themselves be blessed, for they share their food with the poor.*

Isaiah 58:10 NIV *And if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday*