

# Relational Health, Wellness, Wholeness

## Relationships and Conflict: The Reality of Living

**SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY** Monday, August 9, 2021

[Genesis 4:8-9](#); [Luke 17:1](#); [1 Corinthians 1:10-11](#)

### STUDY & REFLECTION

As we approach this section of our study on **Relationships and Conflict**, I remind you of something I shared as we began our study on relationships. I warned you to not be disturbed or surprised that you find these teachings on relationships, *uncomfortable and even challenging*. As we embrace the knowledge that the Lord made us to walk together, and live together in friendship and harmony, we must face the truth of our present situation, sin caused a breach that manifests itself in strife and conflict in any relationship.

Whether it is in personal, social, business, or church relationships, one thing we see and experience on a recurring basis is disagreement and conflict. The Lord teaches us in Luke 17:1 that it is almost impossible that no 'offense,' will occur in a relationship. The passage in 1 Cor 1, points out that Paul was aware of the strife and contention that was occurring in the church at Corinth. This same condition and manifestation of the flawed human spirit can be seen in the gospels and epistles alike ([Phil 4:2](#)). The pervasiveness of conflict, contention, and strife, was and is a result of the sin of our first parents.

Certain levels of conflict will occur in any relationship of life. **None are exempt!** In fact, some level of disagreement is going to occur, no matter how solid or mature a relationship may be. In other words a level of conflict is a normal dynamic of life. But, we must be careful and have the spiritual courage and commitment to recognize such strife as an attempt of Satan to sabotage healthy productive relationships.

### ACTION ITEMS

As you study and reflect on the scriptures, choose one or two critical relationships in your life and evaluate them:

- Where is the conflict?
- How would you gauge its effect on the relationship?
- How have you handled it?

### INVOLVING OTHERS

Share the action items with others in your small group. Let others weigh in on what you have shared with their insights. Pray for each other to have the spiritual will and courage to begin to identify and address areas of conflict.



### STUDY & REFLECTION

Our group of scriptures may be difficult to study, but needful for our healing and growth in Christ. We must understand that we are truly born-again...but we are not complete or finished. Conflict, strife, and division have been ongoing in the Body of Christ, almost from the beginning. In each passage that we have before us, the writer is addressing real issues that were present in the church of his day, and are present in the church of our day.

The manifestation of our fallen nature present themselves in our view of, and interaction with one another, and reveals that we are in conflict with one another. The word conflict means we are in fact 'battling' one another. In conflict we collide with each other. It means we come into disagreement and clash and contradict each other. The New Testament writers connect this to a spirit of jealousy and immaturity which springs from feelings of rivalry with others or resentment with another's ability, achievement or success. Whereas the Lord intends for us to live and flow together in harmony and mutual regard and respect, our fallen nature drives us to be combative and competitive.

### Ouch!! Say it ain't so!!

### ACTION ITEMS

Using introspection and transparency, are you able to identify any of these dynamics negatively impacting your relationships?

Does any level of tension, anger, or jealousy, raise its head as you deal with others in the church?  
Recognizing such and identifying the condition is the first step in overcoming and destroying it.

### INVOLVING OTHERS

These interactions are difficult and often intimidating. **No one wants to share those things that cause us to be seen in a bad light with others.** Hopefully you are in a genuine small group that has demonstrated their care for you where you can mutually share and expose to the light of God's healing Word the defects that we all have to some degree. This is the path and place to health and healing.

### STUDY & REFLECTION

*Life and death lie in the power of the tongue! Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh!! The tongue is a small member of the body, yet it is a 'world of iniquity, and can set a world on fire!'*

### COMMUNICATION, WHAT IS SAID AND NOT SAID MEANS EVERYTHING!

We all know that communication, *what is said and what is not said* impacts and often determines the nature and quality of any relationship.

I can remember growing up, we were taught what was supposed to be a truism that would help us manage the mean and hurtful things that bullies would say to us: “sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me!” **What a lie!**

Scripture teaches us that words come from within...words are vocal manifestations of what lies in the heart. While admittedly sometimes we say things that we immediately regret, and they may not always convey the deep convictions that we hold, but they come from within. A genuine ministry of the Holy Spirit and the value of having mature Christians in your circle is that both help us to discipline and transform our hearts and therefore our communication.

Our words can be factual and yet be overly aggressive and cause damage. In the same but opposite way our holding within what we should share with others in a passive mode can also hurt and damage. The positive is also revealed in the wisdom writings, “*a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver!*” (Pro 25:11) “*A soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger!*” (Pro 15:1).

### ACTION ITEMS

- How would you evaluate the character and nature of your day to day conversations and verbal encounters?
- Do you endeavor to express yourself by finding ways to speak that edify and build up others?
- Do you find yourself being overly critical?

### INVOLVING OTHERS

Dare to ask others to share their evaluation of your communication style and words. **Brace yourself to not be defensive.** Remember, these are your brothers and sisters, your friends. Let their sharing be of value to you becoming better.

### STUDY & REFLECTION

As we study how to develop and enhance healthy relationships, we must not fall into the trap all of us have been practitioners of and too many have become masters at...avoiding at all costs dealing with issues face-to-face.

A friend of mine, Deborah Smith Pegues wrote a masterful book some years ago entitled: Confronting Without Offending. In it she shared some tremendous insights that we as children of God can benefit from. She shared that Confrontation, which we tend to avoid like a virus, is in fact the 'bridge to harmony.' She shares that any offense or conflict has the potential to cause a permanent breach in a relationship. Confronting it effectively can bridge the gap and heal the breach if done in a timely and wise manner.

We tend to avoid confrontation because we may have had the unfortunate experience of a confrontation resulted in more conflict, ending in making matters worse. Perhaps a word study will be helpful. The word Confront is a compound word: *Con* which means with, and *fron* meaning to stand or meet face-to-face.

**To confront is the act of coming together face-to-face to resolve an issue.**

The attitude and objective of confrontation is vitally important. Godly confrontation is not an attempt to retaliate or get back at someone, or to prove them wrong. It is what we sometimes must do in order to understand and heal a rift. We stand, not as foes but as brothers and sisters in the Lord, with the deliberate intent and using wisdom to repair the breach.

In the scripture, Paul had to confront Peter. He stood before him as his brother face-to-face and with firmness but in love, discussed what took place and was able to heal the breach. As we move forward, we will explore confrontation to learn when to confront? Who should confront? How to confront?

### ACTION ITEMS

**Are you prepared to moving forward in the admonition of scripture?** We are commanded to endeavor to keep and restore unity and harmony. Look to see where you have avoided a rift in a relationship. Has the avoidance helped? Pray for the wisdom and ability to begin to address it.

### INVOLVING OTHERS

Discuss in your small group what it means to confront in a godly manner. In the past, has your confronting involved a measure of retaliation, of getting back at the other party? Commit to becoming a group that will become genuine repairers of the breach (Isa 58).

### STUDY & REFLECTION

**Everything does not have to be a matter of confrontation or contention.** We learn in Proverbs 19:11, *A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.* (NIV) Here spiritual maturity and insight prevents a real breach from occurring.

We cannot and should not confront every slight or offense. Some things are covered in love, no breach has occurred, and doesn't need confrontation. Knowing what or whether to confront, when to confront and how to confront is critical to building and managing healthy relationships.

**Confrontation may take place in three different situations:** 1: When we are offended 2: When we are the offender 3: When a fellow Christian is involved in sinful or unwise behavior.

In Matt 18:15 Jesus teaches us... *"if your brother (or sister) sins against you, go and tell him or her their fault between you and him or her alone...if they 'hear' you, you have gained a brother or a sister."* If this is not successful, other steps are outlined.

**Too often we are hurt and bury the hurt. This can lead to emotional frustration and even bitterness.**

In Matt 5:23-24 we learn that sometimes we have offended. The Lord teaches us that we are responsible to make it a priority to actively bring about reconciliation. Even if we are in the midst of worship we are to suspend the worship, and go to our brother or sister and seek agreement and reconciliation. Too often we notice a strain or negative shift in a relationship and do nothing about it. This is not healthy. It is a test of our spirituality and maturity to step up and ensure the health of the relationship. Maybe the most difficult scenario to confront is when a fellow Christian is involved in sinful or unwise behavior. Too often when we see or hear of this, we resort to avoidance or gossip. **We are admonished to approach the person humbly and with sensitivity, and nudge them back on the right path.** This confrontation presupposes your own maturity and that you have a prior relationship with the person that allows you access.

### ACTION ITEMS

Review the last year of your spiritual journey. Can you recall situations where now you realize that confrontation was called for but didn't happen? Have you been guilty of offending, but have not actively sought forgiveness and reconciliation?

**Let's face it.....we all have work to do!**

### INVOLVING OTHERS

A big step in ensuring healthy relationships is to open up to your small group. Allow them to share with you any issues that they identify that need effective, sensitive, Bible based confrontation and reconciliation.

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## Review and Commitment

**SCRIPTURES OF THE DAY** Saturday, August 14, 2021  
**Review Scriptures From This week**

### **YOUR ASSIGNMENT**

Each day of this week has required us to open up and be uncomfortable. Each topic and set of scriptures is huge, and requires us to **take a deeper look inward and a genuine step or leap forward** if we are serious about identifying areas or situations of conflict.

Choose a topic from one day. Review that subject or area and commit to seeing what you are willing to focus on and what you will commit to doing over the next few weeks in order to grow and mature in your relationship with others.

Shalom!!!