

Church Matters

“The Church and Conflict”

Dr. Nicolas Ellen / July 19, 2015 / Grace Fellowship Church

Understanding and Resolving Conflict (James 3:13-4:1-10)

Definition of Conflict: State of war, individual disputes or battles between people which manifest itself in attitudes, words and actions

I. Our selfish ambition can lead us to approach people in the wrong way leading to conflict. (James 3:13-16)

- A. Trying to arrange for our opinions to be agreed with or our preferences to be realized so we confront leading to conflict; Focusing on being right instead of what’s right leading to conflict.
- B. Presuming to know the other person’s motives and actions leading to confrontation producing conflict.
- C. Pointing things out in others that irritate and anger us that we want them to confess and change for our comfort and benefit instead of leading people to see sins that God wants them to confess and change for His Glory and their benefit.
- D. Demanding that people please us instead leading them to please God leading to conflict.

II. Conflict at its’ root, can be traced back to unmet desires within our hearts that we turn into lusts of our hearts demanding others to satisfy. (James 4:1-3)

A. Desires from within wage war against our mind, will, and affections. (James 4:1)

- 1. It’s something that someone else has that you want
- 2. It’s something that someone else controls giving you
- 3. It’s something that you can’t control getting or receiving

B. Here are some examples these desires:

- 1. To be in control
- 2. To be loved by others/belong to others
- 3. To be accepted/approved by others/ valuable to others
- 4. To be understood by others
- 5. To be respected by others
- 6. To be served by others/have personal preferences accommodated at all times
- 7. To be viewed as competent/held in high regard by others
- 8. To maintain a favorable position with others
- 9. To be satisfied by others
- 10. To be secure/safe with others

C. Your appetite for these desires leads you to be overly preoccupied with satisfying these desires resulting in all types of conflict. (James 4:2)

- D. Your appetite for these desires leads you to sin to satisfy these desires and to to sin when these desires are not satisfied resulting in all types of conflict and self-serving prayers. (James 4:2-3)
1. Lusting leading to murder
 2. Envy leading to fighting and quarreling
 3. Denying of prayer request because they are rooted in selfishness

III. There are seven keys steps to resolving conflict. (James 4:7-10)

- A. Examine yourself to see where you are being friendly with the world and walking in pride towards God and others and get the log out of your own eye. (James 4:4-6)
- a. Are my words seasoned with grace or sin?
 - b. Am I grumbling, complaining, slandering, or gossiping?
 - c. Are my words negative, critical, hurtful or destructive?
 - d. Have I exaggerated the truth?
 - e. Am I handling my responsibilities
 - f. Am I keeping my word?
 - g. Am I respecting or rebelling against God given authority?
 - h. Would I want someone to treat me the way I am treating this person?
 - i. What desires am I preoccupied with and what am I doing to satisfy them?
 - j. Am I withholding love?
- B. Free yourself from sin and resist the Devil by confessing, repenting, remorse, and replacing the sin through submission to Godly, thoughts, desires, words, actions and relationship patterns. (James 4:7-10)
- a. Talk with God about your specific sin and renounce it immediately
 - b. Admit to others how you have specifically sinned against them in attitude and /or action
 - c. Ask their forgiveness of your sin against them
 - d. Accept the consequences of your sin and make the necessary restitution
 - e. Alter your attitudes, actions, relationship patterns to line up with the standards of God
- C. Go and show your brother his faults. (Luke 17:3, Galatians 6:1)
- a. Speak the truth in love
 - b. Serve your brother in his faults
 - c. Allow him or her time to respond
- D. Rest and wait on God to do His Will. (2 Timothy 2:24-26)
- E. As much as it depends on you be at peace with the person(s) involved. (Romans 12:18-21)
- F. When the issue has been worked through cover it and move on. (1 Peter 4:8)
- G. If the issue remains unsettled begin the process of Church discipline. (Matthew 18:15-20)

Because you cannot control the thoughts, words or actions of other people, God will not hold you responsible for the ultimate outcome of a conflict; God will hold you responsible for your thoughts, words, and actions in the conflict

(Portions of this information was adapted from the Peacemaker by Ken Sande)