

The Heart of Conflict

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Roots of Conflict

- A. Jesus seemed to refuse to get involved in disputes between people.
(Luke 12:13-15)
- B. When in conflict, we usually focus on what the other person(s) should do or stop doing to make things right.
- C. Jesus calls us to examine ourselves first (Matthew 15:19; James 4:1-3)
- D. Conflict arises when internal desires become demands and we judge and punish those who block what we believe we need.

The Progression of an Idol

- A. Some desires are inherently wrong (vengeance, lust, greed).
- B. Some desires are good (clean home, intimacy with spouse, etc.).
- C. It is okay to discuss unmet good desires with another.
- D. But when they fail to meet the desire and become unwilling to discuss it, you have a choice:
 - 1. The Spirit:
 - a. trust God and seek fulfillment/strength/peace in Him
(Psalm 73:25)
 - b. ask Him to help you grow/mature regardless of the other
 - c. continue to love the other and pray for their sanctification
(Luke 6:27-28; I John 4:19-21)
 - d. God promises to conform you to Christlikeness through the situation (Romans 8:28-29)
 - e. we pursue glorifying God and pleasing Him
 - 2. The flesh:
 - a. dwell on disappointment and allow it to control you in your thoughts and conversation (Eph. 4:29-31)
 - b. become embittered toward the other (and maybe yourself and God)
 - c. the desire becomes a justified demand and we believe we are entitled to it
 - d. we believe we need the desire for happiness, security, significance, etc.
 - e. we pursue pleasing ourselves

E. Ask yourself these questions and pray Psalm 139:23-24:

1. What am I preoccupied with in my thoughts when I wake up and when I go to bed?
2. How would I finish this: "If only _____, then I would be happy or fulfilled."
3. What do I want to avoid or keep?
4. What am I afraid of losing or not getting?
5. How are you relating to others? How would they describe you?

Judging/Punishing

- A. When an idol is blocked, we tend to judge/condemn others not helping us.
- B. We become an "accuser" (like satan!).
- C. Beware of guessing another's motives. We aren't God and can't see their heart. (I Samuel 16:7)
- D. We will find ways to punish others who let us down. (usually aggression or withdrawing)

Deliverance from an Idol

- A. Acknowledge our sin of idolatry and repent of it. (Psalm 32:5)
- B. Accept Christ's forgiveness. (Luke 7:47; Romans 8:1)
- C. Study the Word. (Hebrews 4:12)
- D. Talk with other believers. (James 5:16; Galatians 6:1)
- E. Pray. (Psalm 142)
- F. Worship God alone. "Sin is what we do when we are not fully satisfied in God."

3 Basic Principles to Handle Conflict

1. Aim to glorify God
 - a. It is an opportunity to be like Christ (Matthew 5:9)
 - b. It is an opportunity to reflect God's character (Luke 6:27-36)
 - c. It is an opportunity to forgive (Ephesians 4:32)
2. Remove the log from your eye
 - a. Instead of judging the other, look inside yourself. What is going on inside you? (Col. 3:1-3; Mt. 7:3-5)
 - b. Matthew 23:25-28
3. Try to reconcile
 - a. Matthew 5:23-24; Matthew 18:15-20; Gal. 6:1-2; Heb. 12:14-15
 - b. Romans 12:18