

CHURCH OF CHRIST, BROOKFIELD, IL

In The Midst of Conflict

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June 21, 2015

Colossians 3:12–17 (NIV)

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

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Sermon Thesis:

Conflicts can be resolved when we allow the Bible to be our guide.

Objectives:

- I. Disagreements are inevitable
- II. The pain of discord
- III. Three phases of relationships
- IV. Source of conflicts
- V. Why differing viewpoints turn into conflicts

Introduction:

When discord and conflict are evident we should understand why they exist. Humans in our fallen nature will always have conflict. There are reasons why we fall into the midst of conflict. While we are there, application of the scriptures will help us to grow and develop into what the Lord can bring about from these often-difficult situations.

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Sermon Outline:

I. Disagreements are inevitable

- A. That doesn't mean God made a mistake
 - 1. Adam and Eve – tailor-made for each other became enchanted with each other
 - 2. Isaac and Rebecca – had their disagreements
- B. Contrary to what many think, the difference between a happy and unhappy home is not the presence or absence of differing views.
- C. The basic difference is that in one home people face and solve their conflicts, whereas in the other, they don't know how to.
- D. There are no conflict free relationships. What counts is working them out together.
 - 1. Emotional incompatibility is a myth
 - 2. There are no misunderstandings and mistakes that cannot be corrected when there is a willingness to do so.

II. The Pain of Discord

- A. Biblical data, historical records, and personal experience all indicate that in interpersonal relationships disagreements are inevitable.
- B. Your personal happiness is affected by the way you handle the disagreements that arise.

Psalms 133:1 (NIV)

¹How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

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C. The way you respond to disagreements will affect all areas of your life.

III. Three Phases of Relationships

A. Data indicates that most American marriages go through three phases.

B. Ecstasy or Enchantment

1. Romance reigns; everything is wonderful
2. Mate can do no wrong

C. Reality or Conflict

1. Forced to recognize they don’t always see eye to eye
2. Slowly, conflicts arise between them
 - a. From here, branch out in one of three directions
 - b. Divorce
 - c. Unhappy status quo
 - d. Learn how to resolve disagreements and conflict

D. Maturing Relationship or Growth and Development

1. Marital disagreement provides a context for progress
2. Learn to apply Biblical principles

James 4:1 (NIV)

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?

IV. Source of Conflict

A. Differentness is the major contributor to conflict. Members of a family can differ on any front.

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B. These disparities frequently provide occasion for the disagreements and misunderstandings that can lead to contention.

1. Interests

a. We have different gifts and talents given us by God

Romans 12:4–6 (NIV)

⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith;

b. We want others to be interested in the same things we are.

2. Decision-Making styles

a. Some make decisions very quickly

b. Others take more time

3. Divergent Lifestyles

a. Some like to live in the fast lane

b. Others are more laid back

4. Punctuality

a. Some place a high priority on being on time or even being early

b. Others feel they get there, when they get there

C. Differences may account for many conflicts

1. Age

2. Training

3. Priorities

4. Values

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5. Experiences

- D. Areas where differences exist are innumerable, even the best families have different perspectives
- E. Recognize that everything is a matter of right and wrong, bad or good, some things are just different
- F. Differences can turn a harmonious home into a war zone.

V. Why differing viewpoints turn into conflicts

- A. Desires that battle within us and because we want something we cannot have

James 4:1–3 (NIV)

4 What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? ²You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

- B. We want others to
 - 1. Think the way we think
 - 2. Believe what we believe
 - 3. Act the way we act
- C. When they don't we become frustrated and conflict arises
 - 1. We respond in any number of sinful ways
 - 2. We try to force compliance
 - a. Nagging
 - b. Shouting
 - c. Constant arguing

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- d. Verbal browbeating
 - e. Pressure
 - f. Hurt
 - g. Pout
 - h. Cry
 - i. Withdraw
 - j. Frown
 - k. Clam-up
 - l. Uncooperative
3. Our efforts to control the situation produces conflict because our desires are being thwarted

Philippians 2:3 (NIV)

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

- 4. This is how our scripture text comes into play
- D. Sometimes discord arises for a radically different reason. At times, people oppose us because we stand for righteousness.

Matthew 5:10–11 (NIV)

¹⁰Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me.

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E. Christians can expect opposition from the world

Matthew 10:35–36 (NIV)

³⁵For I have come to turn “ ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

³⁶ a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’

F. We like to think that everytime there are clashes with family members it is because we are standing for Christ. More often than not, it is selfishness.

G. In most cases discord is associated with

1. Selfishness
2. Unreasonable expectations
3. Overbearing attitudes
4. Desire to control
5. Jealousy
6. Excessive ambition
7. Insensitivity
8. Ungodly motives
9. Pleasure seeking
10. Idolatry (self)
11. A feeling-oriented life

H. People falling into these categories need to be gently called to repentance and confession of sin

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Conclusion:

In the midst of conflict we need to recognize this teaching so that we may move to resolution, grow and mature. We need to allow the Holy Spirit and His teaching to renew our minds and character. The Bible's teaching is able to direct our steps that we can resolve conflict and move into better relationships.

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Invitation:

Romans 10:17 (NIV)

¹⁷Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word about Christ.

Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)

⁶And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Luke 13:3 (NIV)

³ **I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.**

Romans 10:9–10 (NIV)

⁹If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

Acts 2:38 (NIV)

³⁸Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 2:10 (NIV)

¹⁰ **Do not be afraid of what you are about to suffer. I tell you, the devil will put some of you in prison to test you, and you will suffer persecution for ten days. Be faithful, even to the point of death, and I will give you life as your victor’s crown.**