

# RELATING TO OTHERS: CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Relationships with people can be both beautiful and at times, extremely challenging. God is one being who exists in three persons who experiences a loving, others-focused relationship. God created us in His image, which means that at the core of who we are, we were made to be in relationship. Relationships with others should be life-giving and joyous. The problem, though, is that because of sin we often tend to be self-seeking, doing things that fracture relationships with others and causing conflict. Through the power of Christ living in us, we are to strive to relate to others in love and work for unity, especially with those who are brothers and sisters in Christ.

*Read 1 John 4:20.*

Discuss: What do you think it means to love a brother or sister?

The book of Colossians gives us some practical truths on how to relate to others and resolve conflict in a Christ-honoring way.

## **Treat all people as equal in Jesus.**

*Read Colossians 3:9-11*

Jesus Christ gives us a renewed identity. This renewed identity has no distinctions among ethnicity, class, gender, or any other manmade division. As verse 11 says, Christ is all. Because of this

renewal, we must strive to remove barriers and distinctions we have of others from our minds.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss how seeing all people through their identity in Christ grows love and respect for them.

What kinds of challenges and issues come from focusing on earthly divisions?

## Treat people with the compassion that Jesus has shown you.

*Read Colossians 3:12-13*

God has chosen to call us into His family through the death and resurrection of Jesus. When Jesus died on the cross for us, He displayed His compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience towards us. We are challenged to extend this same compassion to others, especially when we have been wronged. Although it feels natural to retaliate, we are called to forgive as the Lord has forgiven our offenses against Him.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss specific things that people do that make it hard for you to show compassion.

How does this passage motivate a desire to work towards compassion even though it is hard?

## Let the peace of Jesus rule your relationships with people.

*Read Colossians 3:14-17*

The term “rule” used in this passage means “to umpire.” In other words, we are called to allow the peace that Jesus brings to umpire our hearts. When we are in conflict with others, the

peace of Jesus gets between us like an umpire and settles the dispute, helping us to decide how to think, reason, and respond.

Discuss: Read the passage again and discuss some of the ways mentioned that we can allow the peace of Christ to rule our hearts. If we were filled with God's word, thankfulness, psalms, and spiritual songs, what impact would it make on resolving conflict?

## Main point

At all times, we should strive to love others and be at peace with them. When there is conflict between us and a brother or sister in Christ, we should do all that we can to reconcile with them. (Romans 12:17-18) (Matthew 5:23-24)

1. Remember that Jesus took the first steps of reconciliation with us. Let that guide our emotions.
2. Pray for courage and peace to confront the problem face to face.
3. Take time to talk through misunderstandings. Be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Most conflict is from unintentional harm and poor ability to communicate feelings.
4. Own any wrongdoing you have done, and apologize.
5. Offer a solution, something you would be willing to do to mend the relationship.

## Personal Application

What is your greatest struggle in resolving conflict?

What changes would you need to make to be better at resolving conflict with others?

Is there any unresolved conflict that you have currently with a brother or sister in Christ?