

Biblical Conflict Resolution, Part 8 I speak personally

I. Speak Lovingly

- Deal with Your Sin First.

- Intro

- I John 1:9-10
- If you truly searched your heart and carefully looked for the log in your eye, and you were unable to find it, then, no, I don't want you to apologize for something you didn't do. You'll be able to skip the rest of this episode and move to the next step.
- In conflict, it's nearly impossible to escape without giving into even the smallest temptations. And it may be small. Your sin in the disagreement may have only been that you unlovingly became frustrated with the situation. Well, that's a sin, so you likely discovered it as you dealt with your focus, and therefore, you should lead with it because Jesus wants you to deal with the sin in your own life before addressing theirs. Dealing with that sin will always involve asking for forgiveness.
- Of course, it's also very likely that you sinned more than the other people in the conflict. Regardless, though, of the quantity and quality of the sin, your responsibility—and some of the first words to come out of your mouth—is to make it right.
- Therefore, we need to ask, how do we make it right? There is no one English word that describes this process perfectly, so I like to use the word “apologize” because it comes the closest.
- A Christ-honoring apology is “a confession of sin, request for forgiveness, and commitment to change.”

- We apologize because we owe something.

- Matthew 6:12; Luke 11:4; Romans 13:8
- We should view our sin as a debt to God. God created us. We owe Him allegiance. We owe Him obedience. He is God, we owe Him everything He wants. So, when we sin, we have stolen something from Him. We've taken His glory.
- We own everyone love, but when we sin against them, we haven't given them what we owe. Our sin has put us in debt to them,
- It's very helpful to see our sin this way because it will help us understand the need for forgiveness. It will make it much easier to apologize when we realize that we have stolen something from God and/or others that needs to be forgiven.

- We apologize because we need spiritual health.

- Matthew 9:6
- Jesus healed many people, and He did it for many reasons. One reason He did it was to show His power, another was to confirm His authority, another was simply because Jesus is in the business of healing broken things, and another reason is that it was a physical picture of a deeper spiritual reality.
- We desperately need to be forgiven because it's far more important than physical health. This paralytic man was unable to work, function in his family, and be a profitable member of society, but his broken relationship with God was more important. And the same is true with us.

- **We apologize because we desire to change.**
 - Luke 17:3-4
 - To repent is to change direction. It's not merely stopping on our way down the wrong path, it's a deliberate turn so we can move the opposite direction.
 - A person who does not desire to be forgiven is a person who does not believe they need to change.
- **A good Apology Formula**
 - Luke 17:3-4
 - Confess the sin.
 - Ask for forgiveness.
 - Commit to change.
- **Does starting reconciliation by apologizing make us look weak or arm our opponent?**
 - This is not Christ-honoring thinking.
 - First, it's foolish. If we sinned, we owe it to God and them to seek forgiveness and pursue repentance.
 - Second, that kind of thinking is illogical. If it's a bad idea to apologize first, then neither of you will do it because you'll be perpetually waiting for the other one. So many people have said, "Well, if they apologized first, I'd apologize too, but they're just too stubborn." Of course, the people who say this are too blind to see their own hypocrisy.
 - Third, such thinking doesn't matter. Sinful people will twist our actions and words regardless. Jesus was perfect, and they found ways to adulterate what He said and did. Who cares if they take your righteous apology and try to throw it in your face?
 - Fourth, that kind of thinking is unfaithful. We need to trust God to vindicate us. We don't need to try to manipulate or con the situation.
 - None of these principles for biblical conflict resolution have anything to do with somehow causing the other person to do right. We're not here to change anyone. We're here to give God the worship He deserves, and all of our preparation, time making, and speaking is to be done to glorify Him regardless of whether the other person reconciles with us or not.
 - In conclusion, as you pursue reconciliation, the most important thing with which you can start is to acknowledge your sin, ask for forgiveness, and commit to growing in your conformity to Christ.
 - God demands it, the situation requires it, and it sets the stage for better communication moving forward.

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