

Biblical Conflict Resolution, Part 10 I speak kindly

I. Speak Patiently

- I Corinthians 13:4
 - Not only must we be humble to speak wisely, we can't speak lovingly without being humble either. Jealousy, bragging, and arrogance are all prideful and unloving.
 - But at the beginning of the verse we learn that love is patient and kind. But what does it truly mean to be patient? Is patience simply putting up with someone? Is it sitting in silence as we are annoyed by their slowness to speak or respond biblically?
- Romans 12:9-13
 - Patience is not hypocritical. We mustn't act like everything is okay—we're being patient—when we're seething inside. Patience is not a superficial facade; it has to be real.
 - Patience is righteous. We must abhor impatience. We must abhor the superficial facade of mere tolerance.
 - Brotherly love is the companionable relationship wherein we want and work toward God's best interest for the other person. Our patient love is in their best interest.
 - Patience requires diligence. We must keep up our guards. We must be vigilant not to slip into selfish self-worship and be annoyed by their lack of response or inappropriate response. We need to be fervent to glorify God, and serve Him—worship Him—in our patient
 - Rejoicing in hope helps us be patient because we have the right foundational worldview that God is working in this situation and that we and the other people in the conflict can and will glorify God as we submit to Him.
 - And then there's persevering in tribulation. Conflict is a kind of tribulation. If the other person has sinned against us, it's hard, but God wants us to persevere through it.
 - Patience requires struggle. No patience is required when things are going our way. And yet it's the fact that things *aren't* going our way that becomes the justification for our lack of patience. communication with the other individual.
- Psalm 37:7-9
 - Our ability to be patient—though it may be focused outward on the other individual—is actually motivated in God. We're resting patiently and waiting contentedly because we're relying on God, not the other person.
 - If you want to resolve conflict in a way that pleases the Lord, you have to be loving, and that means you have to be patient in the interactions.

II. Speak Kindly

- Ephesians 4:31-32; Colossians 3:12-13
 - Our modern understanding of what it is to be kind is not very biblical. The root word translated "kind" and "kindness" in these verses refers to something that is righteous, useful, and virtuous. It's actually presented as the polar opposite of the word "bitterness" in verse 31. The word bitterness didn't refer to resentment, but described extreme wickedness. So, how does understanding the original meaning of the word need to affect our view of what God expects from us in conflict?
 - Kindness is akin to righteousness. Our words need to be good, serviceable, gracious, fit, virtuous, and able to be used for reconciliation.
 - Kindness does not necessitate a certain tone or even certain vocabulary. As long as biblical truth is spoken in godly love, we're speaking kindly for the need of the moment.

- I Peter 3:8-11
 - The word translated “kindhearted” in this passage is the same word translated “tenderhearted” in the Ephesians 4:32 passage. It can also be translated “compassionate” and even “pitiful.” It’s also important to recognize that compassion is an integral part of being merciful.
 - Compassion feels for the person and desires their best—God’s best for them. But please remember that a person in sin is rarely going to hear the truth spoken in love and interpret it as being kind—short of an act of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit.
- Proverbs 27:6
 - Kindness does not get to be defined by the person in sin. God’s Word gets to define it, and kindness sometimes hurts.

III. Speak Forgivingly

- Matthew 6:14-15; Colossians 3:12-14
 - We’re not being loving if we refuse to forgive. If we refuse to forgive we’re working against reconciliation, and the conflict is our fault.
 - Those verses hold both amazing promises for genuine conflict resolution as well as the high standards we must keep in order to achieve it.
 - Please know that you can’t forgive someone who hasn’t asked for it, and you can’t make someone ask for forgiveness.
 - Since you can’t truly forgive someone who hasn’t asked for it, you should always be ready and willing to forgive when and if they do.