

Resolution: Understanding Anger & Resolving Conflict

“Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry-but don’t use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don’t stay angry. Don’t go to bed angry. Don’t give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.” Ephesians 4:26 (The Message)

Open:

What is your initial response to conflict in these areas (choose one):

- Within Your Family
- With Friends
- At Work
- With Your Spouse

Discover:

When is it okay to be angry?

Read each verse aloud:

“He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored.” Mark 3:5

“The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness.” Romans 1:18-32

“Jesus entered the temple area and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of those selling doves. 'It is written,' he said to them, "'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a 'den of robbers.'" Matthew 21:12-13

“A wise man controls his temper. He knows that anger causes mistakes.” Proverbs 14:29 (LB)

What do these passages teach us about righteous anger?

When are there times in our marriage that it is okay to feel and express righteous anger?

When is anger a sin?

Read each verse aloud:

"...but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favor. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it." Genesis 4:5-7

"In your anger do not sin': Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold." Ephesians 4:26-27

"In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent." Psalm 4:4

What do learn about anger and sin from these passages?

How do you know if you are feeling and expressing righteous or destructive anger?

Anger and Marriage

Which of these two types of anger do you express most often in regards to your spouse and/or family?

What are the common triggers of anger between you and your spouse?

When it comes to anger and your spouse, do you most typically express it or stuff it?

Moving From Anger to Conflict Resolution

“Love in all sincerity...care as much about each other as about yourselves.” Romans 12:9,16 (NEB)

“It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. “ 1 Corinthians 13:5

“Love your neighbor as yourself. But if you go on fighting one another, tooth and nail, all you can expect is mutual destruction.” Galatians 5:14-15 (NEB)

“Stop lying to each other; tell the truth, for we are parts of each other and when we lie to each other we are hurting ourselves.” Ephesians 4:25 (LB)

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” Romans 12:17-18

What do these verses teach us about conflict resolution in marriage?

What is the greatest lesson you have learned about conflict resolution in your marriage?

CONFLICT RESOLUTION TIPS

1. FOCUS YOUR FEEDBACK ON THE BEHAVIOR NOT THE PERSON

“Jesus straightened up and asked her, ‘Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?’ ‘No one, sir,’ she said. ‘Then neither do I condemn you,’ Jesus declared. ‘Go now and leave your life of sin.’” John 8:10-11

2. FOCUS YOUR FEEDBACK ON OBSERVATIONS NOT ASSUMPTIONS

“Do not entertain an accusation against an elder unless it is brought by two or three witnesses.” 1 Timothy 5:19

3. FOCUS YOUR FEEDBACK ON DESCRIPTIONS NOT JUDGMENTS

“Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. “ Romans 14:13

4. FOCUS YOUR FEEDBACK ON IDEAS, INFORMATION AND ALTERNATIVES, NOT ON ADVICE & ANSWERS

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs...” Ephesians 4:29

5. EXPRESS YOUR FEEDBACK AT THE RIGHT TIME

“There’s an opportune time to do things, a right time for everything on the earth...” Ecclesiastes 3:1 (Message)

Which of the conflict tips do you need to remember the next time you are in a conflict situation?

Close

How can you help yourself and your spouse resolve conflicts so that destructive anger isn't felt or expressed?

Pray that God would help each couple learn how express anger and to solve problems effectively.

Homework

Following your next conflict situation in your marriage, consider the following questions to see how you have applied tonight's Scripture to life. Four questions to consider after a conflict:

1. Was your discussion constructive or destructive?

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11

2. Did you speak harshly or with gentleness?

"Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us." 2 Corinthians 7:8-9

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Ephesians 4:2

3. Did you demonstrate acceptance to the person?

"Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you..." Romans 15:7

4. Did you communicate clearly?

"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes' and our 'No', 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one." Matthew 5:37