

CONFLICT AS STEWARDSHIP: DISPLAYING THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

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1. Stewards of the gospel in the midst of conflict (Matt. 25:14-30)
2. Many Christians struggle with conflict because they have only a “two-doors gospel.”
3. Through the gospel, God has not only given us eternal life, but also made us new creations with new purposes and powers for everyday life (Col. 1:6-12).
4. The gospel motivates peacemaking by revealing two things: what God has done for us through Christ, and who we are in Christ (Col. 3:12a).
5. Through the gospel, Jesus models the essential elements of peacemaking (Col. 3:12b-15).
6. How can you steward the gospel as a peacemaker? (Col. 1:6-12)
 - *Pray* that Christ would live in you so fully that your mind and heart would be transformed to be like his.
 - *Learn* (through faithful study) to delight in the gospel and understand its rich implications.
 - *Welcome* conflict as an opportunity to imitate Jesus and practice what he is teaching you (Eph. 5:1).

The gospel is the incredible news that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins and rescue us from eternal separation from God, and he rose from the dead to give us new life. Through faith in Jesus, we've been reconciled to God, adopted into his family, empowered to love even our enemies, and given the gift of enjoying Him forever.

A Glimpse of the Life-Changing Power of the Gospel		
	Apart from the gospel ...	Transformed by the gospel ...
<i>When I realize that a conflict exists ...</i>	I wait for others to come to me, especially if I think they are more at fault than I am.	I imitate Jesus by taking the initiative to seek reconciliation even if others seem to be more in the wrong (Rom. 5:8).
<i>My top priority when I'm in conflict ...</i>	I try to vindicate myself and make myself look good and right.	I try to bring glory to God by reflecting his reconciling love and character (1 Cor. 10:31; 2 Cor. 3:18; Ex. 34:5-7).
<i>When others behave like enemies ...</i>	I treat them like enemies, thinking and speaking ill of them, and avoiding them as much as possible.	I walk in Jesus' steps by loving them, acting like a friend, and sacrificing to be reconciled to them (Col. 1:21-22).
<i>When I've done something wrong ...</i>	I cling to my self-righteousness by concealing or minimizing my wrongs and shifting the blame to others.	I trust that Jesus has washed my sins away, so I can stop hiding my sins and more freely confess them to others (1 John 1:9; Prov. 28:13).
<i>When I or others keep doing the same sins ...</i>	I become discouraged and hopeless, so I give up on relationships or stop working to change myself.	I have hope because Jesus promised to steadily change us, so I can view conflict as a path to growth (Phil. 1:6).
<i>When others have done wrong ...</i>	I point out their sins with as much detail and persistence as is needed to force them to admit they are wrong.	I recall how kindly Jesus deals with me, so I seek to correct and restore others gently (Rom. 2:4; Gal. 6:1).
<i>When others hurt me deeply ...</i>	I dwell on their wrongs, indulge in self-pity, lash back, or try to have nothing to do with them.	I forgive just as God has forgiven me, refusing to dwell on their sin or let it stand between us (Eph. 4:32).
<i>When conflict persists in my church ...</i>	I look out for myself by withdrawing from relationships or moving on to another church.	I remember that Jesus died to make us a family, so I keep doing all I can to build my church's peace and unity (Phil. 2:1-11).

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