



CEASEFIRE: RESOLVING INNER AND RELATIONAL CONFLICT

A selection of Bible verses to consider

Our history & way of life

Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." Luk 10:38-42

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ... Eph 4:29-5:4

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus Phil 2:5

When a man's ways please the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him. Prov 16:7

Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger Eph 4:26

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. "Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, ... Mat 18:1-35

The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. Ps 103:8

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her Eph 2:25

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you. Jam 4:7-10

If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. 1Jn 4:20

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; ...
1 Cor 13:1-13

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. 1 Pet 3:7

Causes of conflict

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses. Prov 10:21

A brother offended is more unyielding than a strong city, and quarreling is like the bars of a castle. Prov 18:19

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger quiets contention. Prov 15:18

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan. Prov 29:2

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. Prov 15:1

A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends. Prov 16:28

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; Heb 12:15

A gentle tongue is a tree of life, but perverseness in it breaks the spirit. Prov 15:4

Do not hastily bring into court, for what will you do in the end, when your neighbor puts you to shame? Prov 25:8

The fear of man lays a snare, but whoever trusts in the Lord is safe. Prov 29:25

For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Eph 6:12

Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment. Jn 7:24

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Phil 2:3

If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame. Prov 18:13

A greedy man stirs up strife, but the one who trusts in the Lord will be enriched. Prov 28:25

But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."
Jam 4:6

What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? Jm 4:1

Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Phil 2:3-4

More complex situations

“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Mt 18:15-17

Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him Lk 17:3

You shall not be partial in judgment. You shall hear the small and the great alike. You shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. And the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.’ Deut 1:17

And the king said, “Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one and half to the other.” Then the woman whose son was alive said to the king, because her heart yearned for her son, “Oh, my lord, give her the living child, and by no means put him to death.” But the other said, “He shall be neither mine nor yours; divide him.” Then the king answered and said, “Give the living child to the first woman, and by no means put him to death; she is his mother.” And all Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered, and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him to do justice. 1Kgs 3:25-28

Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses. 2Tim 5:19

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, ... 1Cor 6:1-8

It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. ... 1Cor 5:1-13

Ways of responding

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; Jm 1:19

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Phil 2:4

Bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Col 3:13

When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life! So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church? I say this to your shame. Can it be that there is no one among you wise enough to settle a dispute between the brothers, ... 1Cor 6:1-7

“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with the judgment you pronounce you will be judged, and with the measure you use it will be measured to you. Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when there is the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye. ... Mt 7:1-29

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord. Lev 19:18

Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. Gal 6:1

Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense. Prov 19:11

Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, Eph 4:15

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. Rom 13:1-4

Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. Luk 6:30

But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, Mt 5:44

To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Lk 6:29

If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat, and if he is thirsty, give him water to drink, for you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you. Prov 25:21-22

Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger; for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. Jm 1:19-20

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Eph 4:32

Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 1Pet 3:1

Therefore, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working. Jm 5:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be competent, equipped for every good work. 2 Tim 3:6-17

Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. Mt 5:25-26

Healthy conflict

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. Jm 1:2-4

Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. 1Cor 13:4-7

Unity and reconciliation

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Rom 12:17-21

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Mt 5:9

Leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Mt 5:24

He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Mic 6:8

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love,

which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Col 3:12-15

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. Mt 5:23-24

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; 2Cor 5:18

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ... Jn 17:20-26

Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ... Rom 12:16-21

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Rom 12:18

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Phil 2:1-2

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid. Jn 14:27

Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. Eph 4:29

But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere. And a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Jm 3:17-18

May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus. Rom 15:5