

III. Practical Steps you can take to resolve conflict

1. Focus on what I can do to correct it
2. Focus on understanding the other person's perspective
3. Encourage open discussion, allowing both parties to express their feelings
4. First admit that I am part of the problem
5. Recognize I cannot do anything to change the other person
6. Focus on my thoughts about the issue and examine them biblically
7. Focus on what my spouse is feeling and try to understand
8. Focus on the situation and try and understand the facts
9. Focus on changing my behavior comparing my actions against biblical principles
10. Listening to the other person describe what they think I should change about my behavior
11. Focus on using proper words, tone of voice and body language in what I say
12. Take time to point out in the midst of our disagreement things I appreciate
13. Appreciate the different perspective the other person has and try and learn from that difference
14. Write down specific repeatable and attainable ways I can better serve in the future
15. Commit to solve the root cause of the immediate conflict permanently before moving on

Key Resources:

1. *The Christian Counselor's Manual*, Jay Adams pages 348-367
2. *The Heart of Anger*, Lou Priolo

Biblical Counseling Sunday School Class

Anger and Conflict Resolution

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I. How can you distinguish between anger and sinful anger?

Ephesians 4:26 NIV: In your anger (or-gid-zo) no not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry (parorg-is-mos)

Psalms 4:4 NLT: Don't sin by letting anger gain control over you. Thing about it overnight and remain silent. **Psalms 7:11 NLT:** God is a judge who is perfectly fair. He is angry with the wicked every day. **Proverbs 29:22 NIV:** An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered man commits many sins. **Proverbs 22:24-25 NLT:** Keep away from angry, short-tempered people, or you will learn to be like them and endanger your soul.

There are two types of emotional expressions that result when anger becomes sinful.

1. Ventilating anger or "blowing up"

Proverbs 29:11: A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control. **Proverbs 25:28:** Like a city whose walls are broken down is a man who lacks self-control.

2. Internalizing anger or "clamming up"

Matthew 18:15: If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault. **Ephesians 4:26:** Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry

Both of these errors do not properly focus the energy of anger.

Anger is an emotion God gives to us for the purpose of destroying something. If we "blow up" in anger we attempt to destroy the

person with whom we are angry. If we “clam up” we internalize our anger and it works to destroy us. Correctly directed, anger can be focused at the problem in order that it might be destroyed

II. How can we ensure we focus our anger on the problem rather than “blowing up” or “clamping up”?

1. Remember to keep the step of “biblical thinking” between the circumstances that stimulate emotions and our actions.

Stimulus → Biblical Thinking → Emotions → Actions → Character

2. Learn to recognize UNBIBLICAL thinking in our own thoughts first instead of trying to justify a right to escape from the conflict.

- a. “They won’t listen”: God’s word says: listen to advice and accept instruction: Proverbs 19:20
- b. “They only care about themselves” God’s word says: don’t judge motives: Matthew 7:1
- c. “I can just learn to live with it”: God’s word says: I can do all things through Christ: Philippians 4:13
- d. “I can’t take the pressure”: God’s word says: He won’t give you more than you can bear: I Corin 10:13

3. Make sure your ATTITUDE is biblical. Thinking and attitude go hand in hand. An attitude is a cluster of thoughts, repeatedly expressed and reinforced so that it influences your behavior and character.

- a. **Exercise humility: James 3:13-18:** Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish

ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness.

- b. **Practice meekness: Proverbs 12:18:** Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. **Proverbs 15:1:** A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. **Proverbs 15:4:** The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit. **II Timothy 2:24-25:** And the Lord's servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth.
- c. **Be patient: Proverbs 19:11** A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense. **I Corinthians 13:4** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.
- d. **Be forgiving: Colossians 3:12-14** Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. **I Peter 4:8:** Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

4. **Practice the biblical process of conflict resolution. This is also a chance to use the Four Rules of Communication**
 - a. **Stay Current:** Matthew 18:15-17; Gal 6:1
 - b. **Be Honest:** Eph 4:15
 - c. **Attack the Problem not the Person**
 - d. **Act don't React**