

**"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."  
(1 Corinthians 10:31)**

The aspects of biblical womanhood listed in Titus 2 are worked out in the context of relationships – those with family members (parents, husbands, children), friends, church members, coworkers and acquaintances – so it is important for us at the outset of our Titus 2 study to look at some general principles regarding how to apply the Gospel in our relationships. Because we live in a fallen world, we are fallen people in relationships with other fallen people, so we *will* encounter conflict in our relationships. Even for those who are Christians, the remnant of sin in our hearts can easily cause us to deal with others in an ungodly and destructive way.

As we examined in our last session, it is only by God's grace, and with the Gospel as our foundation, that we can respond to life's situations in a godly way. We cannot expect to effectively address conflict and enjoy true peace in our relationships if we are not drawing on the transforming power that only comes through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

Today we will do a brief overview of some of the key principles of biblical peacemaking. Many of you will remember the retreat in 2008 where Pastor Chris taught on these principles, loosely based on Ken Sande's book, "The Peace Maker – A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict". Much of the content presented here is from this book.

What is conflict?

---

---

---

What are the four main causes of conflict?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

People tend to respond to conflict in one of three ways: by escaping, attacking, or peacemaking. Do you remember "the slippery slope"?



Private Responses → Public Responses

Voluntary Solutions → Forced Solutions

### Escape Responses (avoidance; peace-faking)

Denial - pretend it doesn't exist; common in church due to belief that conflict is wrong/dangerous; we think we should always agree, and we're afraid of damaged relationships

Flight - run away (eg - leave the house, end a friendship, quit a job, file for divorce, leave the church); this only postpones a proper solution (\* note - it is sometimes appropriate to withdraw temporarily to calm down, pray, etc..; also appropriate to flee threatening circumstances like abuse - eg. David flees when Saul tries to kill him 1Sam 19:9-10)

Suicide - resorted to when people feel they've lost all hope of resolving conflict

### Attack Responses (peace-breaking)

Assault - verbal attack (includes gossip, slander), physical violence, efforts to damage someone financially or professionally

Litigation - taking someone to court; although sometimes legitimate, it often damages relationships and fails to achieve complete justice; Paul encourages the Corinthians to settle their differences within a church context, rather than in a civil court (1 Cor 6:1-8)

Murder - the response when one is desperate to win the dispute (eg - the stoning of Stephen in Acts 7:54-58); most Christians wouldn't actually physically kill, but we

mustn't forget we are guilty of murder in the eyes of God when we hate our brother/sister or harbour anger towards them (1Jn 3:15, Mt 5:21-22).

**Peacemaking Responses**

-these responses are commanded by God, empowered by the Gospel, and directed towards finding mutually agreeable solutions.

| Personal Peacemaking |   | Assisted Peacemaking |  |
|----------------------|---|----------------------|--|
| Overlook             | Prov 19:11 "Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense."<br>1 Pet 4:8 "Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins."<br>***we cannot overlook if the conflict has dishonoured God, has permanently damaged the relationship, or has hurt the offended or the offender** | Mediation            | Mt 18:16 "But if he does not listen, take two or three others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses."   |
| Reconciliation       | Mt 5:23-24 "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."   | Arbitration          | -when you can't come to a voluntary agreement on a material issue, appoint an arbitrator within the church where possible (vs. civil court)<br>1 Cor 6:4 "So if you have such cases, why do you lay them before those who have no standing in the church?" |
| Negotiation          | Phil 2:4 "Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others."<br>-negotiation concerns material issues<br>- of money, property or other rights<br>-seek to satisfy needs of both sides  | Accountability       | Mt 18:17 "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."   |

Contrasting the 3 Responses:

|        | Escape  | Peacemaking   | Attack  |
|--------|---|---|---|
| Focus  | Focus is on me – choose the easy, convenient, non-threatening way out | Focus is on us – we are aware of everyone's interests, especially God's, and we work towards mutual responsibility in solving the problem | Focus is on you – I blame you and expect you to give in and solve the problem |
| Goal   | Peace-faking – pretend all is well                                    | Genuine harmony   | Peace-breaking – sacrifice peace and unity to get what I want                 |
| Result | Broken relationship   | True reconciliation   | Broken relationship   |

The Bible presents us with a radical view of conflict (1 Cor 10:31-11:1). It encourages us to look at conflict as an opportunity. There are three main opportunities for the Christian that arise out of conflict.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

These three opportunities of conflict give rise to the four basic principles of peacemaking. Write down the question that summarizes each principle.

1. Glorify God

---

---

---

2. Get the log out of your own eye

---

---

---

3. Gently restore

---

---

---

4. Go and be reconciled

---

---

---

Why is peace in our relationships so important? (Read John 17:20-23)

---

---

---

"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?" (Micah 6:8)

Questions for Reflection:

1. Think about a conflict you are currently experiencing or have had in the recent past. How might you trust, obey and imitate God in that situation?

---

---

---

2. How has your attitude about a conflict influenced the way you've treated someone? Can you identify areas in your life in which idolatry has led to sinful words or actions (with someone else or with God)?

---

---

---

3. What does it mean to forgive others as God has forgiven us? What are some areas in your life where reconciliation has been withheld?

---

---

---

4. Where do you most often find yourself on the slippery slope? Are you a peace-faker, a peace-breaker, or a peace-maker? If you tend not to respond in a peace-seeking way, pray to God that He will help you in this area of your life. He is powerful to transform your heart, your ways, and in turn, your relationships.

As we move ahead in Titus 2, the principles that we have examined here will help us as we consider how we are to carry out our womanly roles in our families and our church in way that glorifies God.