

**“I Love my Spouse, but Why do we Argue and Fight so Much?”**

**James 4:1-3**

***What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You do not have, because you do not ask God. When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.***

As one who has spent a lot of hours in trying to heal damaged relationships, I must constantly remind myself that there are many husbands and wives that have been married for many years who do have mutually satisfying relationships, and who celebrate their life together with much joy.

1. Some homes seem to be built on “feudin’, fussin’ and fightin’!” It is the way the members of the family relate to each other.
2. Other homes get along well most of the time, but, periodically, something comes up that brings conflict into the family, and things get heated for a while, then they smooth out again.
3. The Bible has a lot to say about conflict:

***Proverbs 12:18 Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.***

***Proverbs 14:17 A quick-tempered person does foolish things...***

***Proverbs 15:1, 4 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. The tongue that brings healing is a tree of life, but a deceitful tongue crushes the spirit.***

*Proverbs 25:28 Like a city whose walls are broken down is a person who lacks self-control.*

*Proverbs 21:9 Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome spouse.*

*Proverbs 27:15 A quarrelsome spouse is like a constant dripping on a rainy day;*

*Proverbs 29:11 A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control.*

*Proverbs 29:22 An angry man stirs up dissension, and a hot-tempered one commits many sins.*

4. Fighting and arguing are behaviors that escalate with use. When the persons involved in the argument do not understand how to resolve their problems, it can turn violent; people—including spouses—have been killed over petty, stupid disagreements!

**I. Why do people in general, and Husbands and Wives in particular, fight with each other?** Some of the answers might surprise you! We'll start with the easy answers, and then hit a couple of the hard ones! The first reason is: (expand)

- a. Our inherently selfish nature. (expand)
- b. The need to be in control or to control.
- c. Our different temperaments. (expand)
- d. Different Values and/or priorities. (expand)
- e. Lack of trust. "Is it possible to ever trust someone who has betrayed you?" Yes, but the process is slow, and trust must be earned!
- f. Our "work-situation." Sometimes it's
  1. Overwork
  2. Lack of work.
  3. Tendency to procrastinate.

- g. Lack of good Husband and Wife “role models.”
- h. Survival!
- i. Sin—usually and mostly secret sin!

## **II. Other factors that worsen our conflicts.**

- a. Time pressures.
- b. Noisy surroundings.
- c. Button-pushing!

## **II. Encouragements regarding Conflict-Resolution in the New Testament:**

***Philippians 1:27 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.***

***Phil 2:1-4 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.***

***Ephesians 4:16-32 (Selected parts.) "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. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.***

## **III. Helps in dealing with Conflict:**

- a. Identify the real source of the conflict!**

Sometimes the “conflict” is a symptom of a bigger issue that is *not* being discussed.

**b. Try to “hear” what the other person is saying** and try to see his or her point of view! You don’t have to “own” what he or she feels, but you do need to acknowledge his or her feelings!

**c. Remember the one standing in the shadows who would love to see the conflict worsen!**

***Ephesians 6:12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the [unseen] powers of this dark world...against the spiritual forces of evil.*** i.e. Satan wants to tear up your home and family!

**d. Work toward resolution of the problem, not winning the argument.**

1. Send “I feel” messages.
2. Speak the truth in love! Ephesians 4:15
3. Deal with one issue at a time!
4. Make no threats; give no ultimatums.
5. Seek “win-win” solutions.

**IV. NEVER, never be defeated!**

Keep working at it. When conflict arises, think about what is really going on. Is this really all that important? Couldn’t I bend a little, be flexible? Does it have to go my way? Lighten up! Give your spouse a little slack!

**To Recap:**

- a. Identify the *real source* of the conflict!
- b. Try to “hear” what the other person is saying and try to see his or her point of view!
- c. Remember the one standing in the shadows who would love to see the conflict worsen!
- d. Work toward *resolution of the problem*, not winning the argument.
  1. Send “I feel” messages.

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