

# HANDLING CONFLICTS AND FIGHTS IN THE CHURCH...

RCCG FAMILY PRAISE CHAPEL

BIBLE STUDY 2020

# DEFINITION

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- “conflict is a difference in opinion or purpose that frustrates someone else’s opinion or purpose.”
- “conflict in the congregation is a situation in which two or more members or factions struggle aggressively over what is or appears to be mutually exclusive beliefs, values or assumed powers or goals.”

# THE QUESTION: HOW DO YOU HANDLE CONFLICT WHEN IT ARISES?

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- A recent survey of 60 pastors on how they resolve **church** conflict showed the following:
  - talk about it (44%)
  - prayer (25%)
  - kindness (18%)
  - church discipline (18 %)
  - read Bible (5%)
  - fasting (2%)
  - run away (2%).

# SOME OF THE MOST TYPICAL RESPONSES TO CONFLICT ARE THE FOLLOWING:

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- **1. Avoiding:** “Problem? What problem?”
- **2. Accommodating:** “I give up” (people pleasers)
- **3. Compromising:** “Let’s just split the difference”
- **4. Competing:** “I win; you lose”
- **5. Collaborating:** “You scratch my back, and I’ll scratch yours”.

## II TIMOTHY 2:23-26

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- A church is a family and conflicts are **unavoidable**, but how it is handled will determine whether the experience will be positive or negative.
- **Are there any issues worth battling over?** – What are the majors and minors? The following are four issues worth battling over in the church:
  - **1. Biblical fidelity.** No discounting the teachings of Christ
  - **2. Living out what we believe.** Biblical teaching must affect daily lives
  - **3. Our church's unity.** All members must support this, divisiveness is sin
  - **4. Verbal integrity.** Remaining truthful in confrontation or conflict.



# **CONFLICT RESOLUTION GENERAL PRINCIPLES:**

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- **Your Temper - Your temper is the number one thing you have control over. “Whoever is slow to anger has great understanding but he who has a hasty temper exalts folly”. – Proverbs 14:29; 15:18; 25:8; Eccl. 7:9; Num 12:3; Jm. 1:19; 3:17-18**

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- **Evaluate your part in the conflict** – what did you contribute to get to where you are?
  - **Matthew 7:1-5** (removing the log from your own eye first is necessary before helping others).



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- **Leave Revenge to God. Never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God.** For the Scriptures say, “I will take revenge; I will pay them back,” says the Lord. – **Lev. 19:18; Romans 12:19 (14-21); Prov 24:29; Luke 6:27-29**
  - You don’t have all of the facts and the way you respond can place you in opposition to God and His clear judgment **1 Sam 25:26, 33 (David and Abigail); prophecy against Edom Ezek. 25:12-13.**

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- **Focus on the Positive and be careful what you say. – 1 Thessalonians 5:11; Prov 15:1**  
Emphasize the positive and alleviate the negative.  
**Ephesians 4:29**

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- **You are Responsible for Your Own Behavior.** The reality is that our behavior is not dependent on the behavior of someone else.
  - Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. – **Romans 12:17; Prov 12:19; Matt 5:39; 1 Thess. 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9; 1 Cor 6:6-7; Col 4:5.**

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- **Accept Each Other's Faults.** Make allowance for each other's faults and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. – **Colossians 3:13; Rom 15:1-3**

# HOW DO WE RESOLVE INDIVIDUAL CONFLICT?

MATT 18:15-17; LEV 6:2-7;  
DEUT. 17:6; 19:15; ACTS  
6:1-3; 15:6-7



## WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

- **Go to the person who offends you and talk it over. (Matt 18:15-17)**
- **Don't let the sun go down on your anger. (Eph 4:26)**
- **Let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger. (Jm 1:19)**
- **Don't give full vent to your anger. (Prov 29:11)**
- **Don't get caught in name-calling bullying (Matt 5:22)**
- **Do not take revenge on a violator (Rom 12:19; Heb 10:30)**
- **Forgive those who anger you (Matt 6:14)**
- **Get to the source of the anger (Ps 139:23-24)**
- **Don't stay angry (Col 3:8)**
- **Release the anger to God (1 Peter 5:7)**
- **Proverbs 15:1 A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.**

# GO TO THE PERSON WHO OFFENDS YOU AND TALK IT OVER. (MATT 18:15-17)

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- **Go to the individual (not to others) to voice your concern - Matthew 18:15.** This is best done in love (**Ephesians 4:15**) and not to just get something off your chest. Accusing the person tends to encourage a defensiveness. Therefore, attack the problem rather than the person. This gives the person a better opportunity to clarify the situation or to seek forgiveness for the offense.

## **GO TO THE PERSON WHO OFFENDS YOU AND TALK IT OVER. (MATT 18:15-17)**

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- **If the first attempt does not accomplish the needed results, continue with another person or persons that can help with mediation (Matthew 18:16).** Remember that your goal is not to win an argument; it is to win your fellow believer to reconciliation. Therefore, choose people who can help you resolve the conflict.

# ***SOME TIPS ON LOVING CONFRONTATION***

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- **Confronting offence requires grace, wisdom, patience, and humility.**
- **Check your motivation.** Will your words help or hurt? Will bringing this up cause healing, wholeness, and oneness, or further isolation?
- **Check your attitude.** Don't hop on your bulldozer and run your offender down. Approach them lovingly.
- **Check the circumstances.** This includes timing, location, and setting.
- **Check to see what other pressures may be present.** Be sensitive to where the other person is coming from.

# ***SOME TIPS ON LOVING CONFRONTATION***

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- **Listen to the other person.** Seek to understand his or her view and ask questions to clarify viewpoints.
- **Be sure you are ready to take it as well as dish it out.**
- **During the discussion, stick to one issue at a time.** Don't bring up several.
- **Focus on the problem, rather than the person.**
- **Focus on behavior rather than character.**
- **Focus on the facts rather than judging motives.**



# WHAT IS TRUE FORGIVENESS?

## **MATT 18: 15-20**

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# FORGIVENESS IS NOT PROBATION

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- **Forgiveness** means:
  - to stop feeling anger toward (someone who has done something wrong);
  - to stop blaming (someone);
  - to stop feeling anger about (something);
  - to stop requiring payment of (money owed etc).

# FORGIVENESS IS NOT PROBATION

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- **Probation** on the hand;
  - is the subjection of an individual to a period of testing and trial to ascertain fitness;
  - it is freedom ... under supervision;
  - it makes you feel unsettled, watched and distrusted.

# SO, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REALLY FORGIVE SOMEONE?

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- **A decision to release.**

- Forgiving isn't the same as forgetting.
- It isn't a divine form of amnesia.

- **A decision to sacrifice.**

- You'll have to accept the wound that you've received from your offender.

# SO, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO REALLY FORGIVE SOMEONE?

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- **It's a decision not to deal with the offender based on your knowledge of them and the offense they committed.**
- **Forgiveness is a releasing of emotional guilt you place upon the other person. It's a choice. It happens in the heart.**



# EXAMPLES OF FORGIVENESS

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- **Joseph Gen 50:20-21**
- **David I Sam 24:1-7**
- **2 Sam. 18:5; 19:23**
- **Solomon I kings 1:53**

**WHEN FORGIVENESS REALLY  
MEANS PROBATION. II COR.  
2:5-11**

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I Kings 2:1-10 (5-9)

**HOW DO YOU KNOW  
THAT YOU HAVE TRULY  
FORGIVEN SOMEONE?**

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# THE FIRST THOUGHT TEST

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- When the first thought you have about them is not the injury they caused in your life you have probably extended forgiveness.

## AN OPPORTUNITY TO HELP THEM TEST

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- Ask yourself: Would you help them if you knew they were in trouble and you had the ability to help?



# YOUR GENERAL THOUGHTS TEST

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- Can you think positive thoughts about this person?

# THE REVENGE TEST

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- Do you still think of getting even with the person?
- Rom. 12:17-21; Prov 20:22

## THE FAILURE TEST

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- When someone injures us we can often wish harm upon them. This is normal, but it's not part of the forgiveness process.

YOU KNOW YOU HAVE TRULY FORGIVEN  
WHEN YOU CHOSE NOT TO TALK ABOUT  
IT.

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