

How To Have A Fair Fight (Managing Conflict)

*Fools have no interest in understanding; they only want to air their own opinions.
Proverbs 18:2(NLT)*

Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage. He didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married... and she didn't have to hear about how well his mother could cook!

Conflict Is Normal

No married couple has ever lived free of conflict. People get married with a misguided belief that a happy marriage is a conflict free marriage. They lack an understanding of what makes a successful marriage work. Too often it is simply two people having unrealistic expectations. They think that because they are disagreeing that their marriage must be failing. Even happily married couples have irreconcilable differences, they just know how to manage them.

Correction and Encouragement

Managing conflict involves two ongoing activities, correction and encouragement. These two are inseparable. No human ever matures beyond the need for encouragement, (because we are all still growing), or correction, (because we all still sin).

Still Growing

1 Peter 2:2 Like newborn babies, you must crave pure spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation.

2 Peter 3:18 Rather, you must grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ.

Still Sin

1 John 1:8-9 If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth. But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

1 John 2:1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father.

Re-Education

Many times when our spouse disappoints us, our response is anger and unkindness rather than love and self-control. At other times we just withdraw refusing to deal with a sinful attitude. As couples, we can spend a lifetime avoiding conflict, choosing a superficial “peace at any price”. We can get stuck in our sin, ignorance and pride.

Conflict simply reveals the weaknesses in our marriage and the temptations in our heart. Conflict resolution will draw us closer together. For most of us, the hardest changes involve re-educating our heart and mind and taming our tongue.

Proverbs 27:17 As iron strikes iron, so the countenance of a friend.

Taming The Tongue.

- Matthew 5:9 (KJV) Blessed are the **peacemakers**: for they shall be called the children of God.
- James 3:16 (KJV) For where **envying** and **strife** is, there is confusion and every evil work.
- Proverbs 17:14 (NIV) Starting a **quarrel** is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.
- Proverbs 20:3 (NIV) It is to man’s honor to avoid **strife**, but every fool is quick to **quarrel**.
- James 4:6 (NIV) But he gives us more grace. That is why the scripture says: “God opposes the **proud** but gives grace to the humble.
- Proverbs 29:22 (NIV) An **angry** man stirs up dissention, and a **hot-tempered** one commits many sins.
- Proverbs 21:19 (KJV) It is better to dwell in the wilderness than with a **contentious** and **angry** woman.
- Proverbs 26:21 (KJV) As coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire; so is a **contentious** man to kindle **strife**.
- Philippians 2:2 (NIV) Then make my joy complete by being **likeminded**, having the same love, being **one in spirit and purpose**.
- 1 Peter 3:10 (NIV) For the scriptures say, “If you want to enjoy life and see many happy days, keep your tongue from speaking evil and your lips from telling lies.