

The Christian Arsenal

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HOW TO PULL TOGETHER WHEN YOU'RE PULLED APART Marriage Matters

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Part 3 of 4

"A home filled with strife and division destroys itself." Mark 3:25 (LB)
Every relationship – even good ones – have conflict.

I. WHAT CAUSES CONFLICT?

"Do you know where your fights and arguments come from? They come from the selfish desires that war within you." James 4:1 (NCV)

There are **five areas that cause conflict** in marriages:

1. Money
2. Sex
3. In-laws
4. Children
5. Communication

Growing up, you learned one of five ways to deal with conflict:

1. "My way" – I fight until I win and you give in.
2. "No way" – There's No way you're going to get me to fight.
3. "Your way" – I always give in
4. "Half way" – I win some and I lose some
5. "Our way" – We work on mutual goals together, where we care about the relationship more than any single issue.

THERE TENDS TO BE THREE STAGES IN A MARRIAGE:

1. Happy Honeymoon
2. The Party's Over
3. Let's Make a Deal

II. HOW TO PULL TOGETHER WHEN PULLED APART

1. CALL ON GOD FOR HELP.

When you pray about the problem God will do one of two things:

- a. God will change your heart.
- b. God will change your mate's heart without even having to talk about it.

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I challenge you to practice what I call “ventilating vertically.”

“You quarrel and fight, you do not have, because you do not ask God.” James 4:2b (NIV)

Conflict often occurs when we expect other people to meet needs that only God Himself can meet in our lives.

How do I know when I’m looking to other people instead of God to meet my needs? It’s called ANGER. Anger is the warning light that says: “I’m expecting somebody to meet my needs!”

2. CONFESS MY PART OF THE CONFLICT

Before I start accusing, attacking and blaming, I need to do a frank evaluation and ask, “How much of this conflict is my fault?”

ADVICE: 2 THINGS

1. When I’m wrong – Admit it
2. When I’m right – Shut up

“Why do you look at the speck in another’s eye and pay no attention to the log in your own eye? Take the log out of your own eye first and you’ll be able to see clearly.” Matt. 7:3 (GN)

QUESTIONS I NEED TO ASK:

1. Am I being unrealistic?
2. Am I being insensitive?
3. Am I being over sensitive?
4. Am I being too demanding?
5. Am I being ungrateful?

THE MYTH OF INCOMPATIBILITY

Dr. Paul Tournier – “So called incompatibility is a myth invented by jurists in order to plead for divorce.”

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Dr. Paul Popineau – “I don’t believe in incompatibility. I don’t believe it exists. Almost any two people are compatible if they try to be. Your marriage is what you make it.

Dr. Arch Hart – “If people can be divorced for incompatibility, I cannot conceive why all of us are not divorced.”

The fact is, it’s not incompatibility. It is selfishness and an unwillingness to change.

3. CONVENE A PEACE CONFERENCE

Conflict seldom resolved accidentally. It must be dealt with intentionally. Conflict gets worse when you leave it alone.

“If you remember that someone has something against you, leave your gift at the altar and go at once to make peace. Then come back and offer your gift to God.”
Matt. 5:23,25 (GN)

“Likewise you husbands, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heir together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” I Peter 3:7 (NKJV)

“Be angry and do not sin: do not let the sun go down on your anger.” Eph 4:26 (NKJV)

Practical Steps on How to Have a Peace Conference

1. You need to choose the right time.
2. You need to choose the right place.
3. You need to come with a positive attitude.
4. You need to take the initiative.

4. CUT OUT ABUSIVE LANGUAGE

Learn how to attack issues without attacking each other.

You should never use the threat of divorce in your marriage.

“Do not use harmful words but only helpful words, the kind that build up and provide what is needed ...” Eph 4:19 (GN)

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“You must put away all these things – furious rage, malice, insults, and shouted abuse. Don’t deceive each other with lies anymore.” Col. 3:8 (Ph)

You never get your point across by being cross.

You will never be persuasive when you’re abrasive.

5. CONSIDER MY MATE’S PERSPECTIVE

I need to look at your viewpoint.

The secret to resolving conflict is to understand where people are coming from.

HOW DO YOU LEARN TO UNDERSTAND?

You listen more than you talk!

“We must bear the burden of being considerate of the doubts and fears of others ...” Romans 15:2 (LB)

“Look to each other’s interests and not merely to your own.” Ph. 2:4 (NEB)

6. CONCENTRATE ON RECONCILIATION, NOT RESOLUTION

Reconciliation – It means to re-establish the relationship.

Resolution – This means to resolve every issue.

You will discover there are some things you’re never going to agree on.

“Wisdom ... is peace-loving and courteous. It allows discussion and is willing to yield to others ...” James 3:17 (LB)

- You can have unity without uniformity.
- You can walk hand in hand without seeing eye to eye.
- You can have reconciliation without resolution of every issue.
- You can disagree without being disagreeable.

YOUR HOMEWORK – SCHEDULE A PEACE CONFERENCE

A COUPLE OF SUGGESTIONS:

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- Some of you need to get professional help.
- You need to realize that it's going to take some help from God.

“Let the peace of heart that comes from Christ always be present in your hearts ...” Col. 3:15 (LB)