



NewsLetter

Jean-Michel Etienne, Ph.D.

JANUARY 2024



Important steps to resolve marital conflicts in the Biblical way.

Is your marriage struggling with multiple conflicts that seem to never get resolved? Are you sick and tired of arguing about the same things repeatedly? Are you wondering if there is a way to ever solve these problems? If you are, then this publication is exactly what you are looking for.

There is a way to resolve conflicts with your spouse. If there is anyone who knows how to solve marital problems, it's the One who created marriage. The One who created you has revealed this plan in His Word. How do you do it? What is needed to resolve the conflicts in your marriage?

First, you must be willing to resolve the conflicts. The willingness to do something about the conflicts between you and your spouse is the most important place to start. In marriage counseling, this is the first question I usually ask a couple: "Are you willing to do whatever the Bible requires to resolve this conflict?"

Second, you must be willing to ask God for help. Ask Him to come in and take over your heart and life. As you reconcile with Him, you will be able to reconcile with your spouse.

Third, you must be willing to please God. This is essential before you begin to try to take any practical action in the process of reconciliation. The desire to please God will instantly motivate you to action that you would never ordinarily take. With this attitude, a willing heart, and the power of the Holy Spirit, you are now ready to take these practical steps:

1. You must restrain your anger. This is a choice you must make with every conflict that occurs because explosive anger is the primary reason that nothing gets resolved.

2. You must listen instead of trying to only prove your point.

This skill is only possible when your anger is under the control of the Holy Spirit. When your mate tells you something he or she is upset about, do you interrupt? Do you try to answer your loved one's concerns before he or she has even finished talking? Are you really listening, or merely thinking about how to answer? These are all signs that you are not listening.

3. You must confess your faults instead of blame shifting.

When there is a conflict between you and your mate, first determine your part in the disagreement. Is it your attitude, your tone of voice, your actions, or your choice of words that started the conflict? You should confess these things sincerely before you ever discuss your mate's faults. Honesty is the fastest way to resolve any conflict.

4. Act quickly. Jesus said, "Agree with your adversary quickly..." (Matt. 5:25). There are many reasons why this is an essential aspect in conflict resolution.

First, as time passes the facts get distorted. Second, the longer you wait to resolve a conflict, the harder your heart can get.

5. Ask forgiveness for your sin. To forgive is not an option; it is a command. Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling; a choice to please and obey God. You will never feel like forgiving anyone. The feeling of forgiveness only comes after you choose to forgive. Choose to show mercy and forgive. Then ask God to forgive you for holding resentment against your mate. This will enable you to find the solutions you are looking for in your marriage.

6. Find agreement through compromise. Agreement is found as you choose to give in and compromise in areas in which you have been stubbornly selfish. This will please God and demonstrate love toward your spouse.

7. Act even if your spouse will not. This is what God did with you. He demonstrated "His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8) Christ took the action of love even when we were still in rebellion against Him. When you take action to love and change what you are doing wrong, this brings powerful encouragement to provoke your spouse to love you and to change too.

8. What should you do if your spouse does not respond? Be patient, pray, and don't give up! Some people take longer to respond than others. This, again, is the posture that God has taken toward you.

You must be patient because most heated arguments are not resolved by just one conversation. If you wait and pray and there is still no response after a short time, go again and ask your spouse to consider the issues you have previously discussed. Continue to pray that God would cause your loved one to yield to the truth and take action. If your partner brings other issues to you in which you have been offending, follow the above steps again. Remember God's love continually seeks reconciliation with man. His love in you will do the same! Seek reconciliation!