

Conflict: Don't Avoid It

Matthew 5:23 “Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

When Amy and I were first married, Amy wisely wanted to address any disagreement or conflict that came up. I, on the other hand, was like most people, and I would avoid dealing with conflict. This caused much unneeded tension in our early years.

Over the years, I have seen how most churches, preachers, spouses, and parents avoid any conflict or controversy just like I used to. Actually, we have a tendency to view anyone who tries to fix the conflicts as the enemy. **The preacher who names sin and deals with specific sins is “controversial”, “angry”, “mean”, and ultimately avoided like the plague.** Dealing with conflict is taboo to most of us, and those who address it are considered and treated as the “real problem”.

You know what would eventually happen with my avoidance of any issues in our marriage? I eventually would blow up. **Conflicts, disagreements, and problems cannot be avoided for long before there is serious damage.** Spouses and friends blow up in anger at each other. A dangerous divide is created between parent and child/teen. Churches split. Preachers leave their churches or ministries.

Many think of Mt. 5 as “The Beatitudes”, but something far greater occurred in Jesus' sermon on the mount. Starting in Mt. 5, Jesus revealed that Grace demands and enables us to be and do far more than the law ever could. Verses 23-24 are one of those examples. **Whenever you and I are aware of “ought” (anything) that our brother has against us, we are to address it immediately before we bring to God any gift, prayer, praise, etc...!** We are not to avoid conflict. We must face it immediately.

Parents, if your child is disobedient or has a negative attitude in public or in private, **you must address that conflict immediately or things will get worse.**

Ecclesiastes 8:11 “Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.”

It may seem terribly inconvenient right now, but it will be far better in the long run.

Husbands/wives, you must deal with each disagreement, conflict, problem, or issue that arises between you and your spouse. It may take time, but it will be eternally worth it. It seemed to take a long time dealing with all of our grievances when Amy and I were first married, but now we almost are never at odds or disagreement with each other. We are not just “one flesh”. We are “one” in everything! You must not avoid conflict.