

Peacemaker Workbook



This workbook is designed to help you resolve conflict in an effective and biblically faithful manner. In particular, it can help you to:

- Understand how a conflict began and is being prolonged
- Plan how to take responsibility for your contribution to a conflict
- Decide when and how to confront others regarding their wrongs
- Plan what you will say to others and how you will respond to their words and actions
- Negotiate just and reasonable agreements
- Overcome roadblocks to forgiveness and reconciliation
- Get help from other Christians when you cannot resolve a conflict in private
- Decide how to respond to people who refuse to deal with conflict in a reasonable manner

The principles and questions in this workbook are taken from *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Ken Sande, 3rd ed., Baker Books, 2004). You will find this workbook to be most helpful if you read the corresponding chapter in *The Peacemaker* before you attempt to answer the questions. To assist you in your study, many of the questions are followed by a reference to the related pages in *The Peacemaker* (e.g., "PM @ 5-7") and to key Bible passages.

This workbook may be used in two ways. First, it can serve as a self-study guide to help you plan how to resolve a conflict personally and privately. Second, if you need assistance from others to resolve a dispute, this workbook can help you to organize and communicate your thoughts and concerns as you seek their counsel.

May the Lord use this workbook to help you discern what will please and honor Him as you respond to conflict.

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Conflict Provides Opportunities

In 1 Corinthians 10:31-11, the apostle Paul teaches that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, to serve others, and to grow to be like Christ. This concern for faithfulness to God, compassion and mercy toward others, and righteous behavior is echoed throughout Scripture. In Micah 6:8 we are told, “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” In the same way, Jesus teaches us to pay attention to “the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness” (Matt. 23:23). As you live out the gospel and make the Lord’s priorities your priorities, you can turn every conflict into a stepping-stone to a closer relationship with God and a more fulfilling and fruitful Christian life.

1. Briefly summarize your dispute as you perceive it, placing events in chronological order. Include what you have done to resolve the dispute. (Use additional paper if necessary.)

2. Which response to conflict (escape, attack, or peacemaking) have you been using to resolve this dispute? (See the Slippery Slope diagram, PM @ 22-27.) How has your response made the situation better or worse?

3. From this point on, how could you glorify God through this conflict? (PM @ 29-34; see 1 Cor. 10:31; 1 Pet. 2:12; Prov. 3:5-7; Eph. 5:1; John 14:15-31). Specifically, how could you please and honor God in this situation?

4. How could you serve others through this conflict? (PM @ 34-36; see Luke 6:27-28; Gal. 6:1-2; Rom. 12:20; Matt. 18:15)

5. How could you grow to be more like Christ through this conflict? (PM @ 36-37; see 2 Cor. 12:7-10; Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:12-18)



**Digging
Deeper >>**

See the detailed questions at the end of chapter 1 in *The Peacemaker*.

Live at Peace

The message given by Jesus and the apostles is resoundingly clear: Whether our conflicts involve minor irritations or major legal issues, God is eager to display his love and power through us as we strive to maintain peace and unity with those around us. Therefore, peacemaking is not an optional activity for a believer. If you have committed your life to Christ, he invites you to draw on his grace and commands you to seek peace with others. Token efforts will not satisfy this command; God wants you to strive earnestly, diligently, and continually to maintain harmonious relationships with those around you. Your dependence on him and obedience to this call will show the power of the gospel and enable you to enjoy the personal peace that God gives to those who faithfully follow him.

1. Have you made peace with God by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior, Lord, and King? (PM @ 43-45; see John 3:16; Acts 16:31) If not, you can do so right now by sincerely praying this prayer:

Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I realize that my good deeds could never make up for my wrongs. I need your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins, and I want to turn away from them. I trust you now to be my Savior, and with your help I will follow you as my Lord and King, in the fellowship of your church.

If you have prayed this prayer, it is essential that you find fellowship with other Christians in a church where the Bible is faithfully taught and applied. This fellowship will help you to learn more about God and be strengthened in your faith.

2. Are you experiencing the kind of internal peace you desire? If not, why? (PM @ 46-47; see Isa. 26:3; 32:17; 48:18)

3. Are you at peace with other people? If not, from whom are you estranged? Why? Will you go to seek reconciliation? (PM @ 46; see Rom. 12:18; Matt. 5:23-24)

4. How could this conflict damage your witness or the reputation of Christ? (PM @ 47-50; see John 13:34; 17:20-23)

5. Have you been striving earnestly to resolve this dispute or giving only partial efforts to make peace? (PM @ 51-53; 1 Cor. 1:10; Eph. 4:1-3)

6. Read Ephesians 4:29-32. Are you thinking, speaking, or acting in a way that might grieve the Holy Spirit? (PM @ 53)



**Digging
Deeper >>**

See the detailed questions at the end of chapter 2 in *The Peacemaker*.

Trust in the Lord and Do Good

When you are involved in a conflict, you must decide whether or not you will trust God. Trusting God does not mean believing that he will do all that you want, but rather believing that he will do everything he knows is good. If you do not trust God, you will inevitably place your trust in yourself or another person, which ultimately leads to grief. On the other hand, if you believe that God is sovereign and that he will never allow anything into your life unless it can be used for good, you will see conflicts not as accidents, but as opportunities. This kind of trust glorifies God and inspires the faithfulness needed for effective peacemaking.

1. Have you been looking at this dispute as something that happened by chance, as something done to you by someone else, or as something that God allowed in your life for a specific purpose? (PM @ 59-65; see Rom. 8:28-29; Ps. 32:10)

2. What questions, doubts, or fears do you have because of this dispute?

3. Read Psalms 37 and 73. What do these psalms warn you not to do?

What do they instruct you to do?

List the comforting promises they provide.

4. How would your feelings, attitudes, and behavior change if you started seeing this dispute as an assignment from a perfectly loving and all-powerful God? (See Matt. 26:42; 2 Tim. 1:12; 1 Pet. 2:23)

5. What good might God bring about if you respond to this conflict in a biblical manner?

Is This Really Worth Fighting Over?

Some conflicts can be properly resolved only through confession, confrontation, forgiveness, and negotiation. But there are many more that can be properly resolved simply by overlooking minor offenses or relinquishing rights for the sake of God's kingdom. Therefore, before focusing on your rights, take a careful look at your responsibilities. Before you go to remove the speck from your brother's eye, ask yourself, "Is this really worth fighting over?"

1. Describe the material issues in this conflict.

2. Describe the personal issues or offenses in this conflict.

3. Check your attitude (PM @ 83-90; see Phil. 4:2-8):

What can you "rejoice in the Lord" about in this situation?

Write down everything you can think of that is noble, right, or admirable about the other person in this dispute, including good memories or ways God has blessed you through that person.

4. What rights, legally or morally, do you have in this situation?

How might exercising these rights glorify God, advance his kingdom, benefit others, and benefit you?

How might laying down these rights glorify God, advance his kingdom, benefit others, and benefit you?

5. Which of the personal issues or offenses described in your answer to question 2 can you simply overlook? How might overlooking them please and honor God?

6. Which of the material issues described in your answer to question 1 can you simply give in on?



**Digging
Deeper >>**

See the detailed questions at the end of chapter 4 in *The Peacemaker*.

Conflict Starts in the Heart

James 4:1-3 provides a key principle for understanding and resolving conflict. Whenever we have a serious dispute with others, we should look carefully at our own hearts to see whether we are being controlled by unmet desires that we have turned into idols. These desires often disguise themselves as things we need or deserve, or as things that would advance God's kingdom. But no matter how good or legitimate a desire may look on the surface, if we have gotten to the point where we cannot be content, fulfilled, or secure unless we have it, that desire has evolved into an idol that diverts our love and trust from God. Fortunately, God delights in delivering us from our slavery to idols and enabling us to find true freedom, fulfillment, and security in his love and provision. And as we break free from the desires that have fueled our conflicts, we can resolve seemingly hopeless disputes and become more effective peacemakers.

1. Answer the following question with regard to this situation to identify desires that may have grown into controlling demands. (PM @ 102-106)

What am I preoccupied with?

How would I fill in this blank? "If only _____, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure with regard to this situation."

What do I want to preserve or avoid at any cost?

What do I fear may happen in this situation?

When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger, or depression? _____

Is there something I desire so much that I am willing to disappoint or hurt others in order to have it?

2. How are your expectations of others magnifying your demands on them and your disappointment in their failure to meet your desires? (PM @ 107)

3 How are you judging those who do not meet your desires? Are you feeling indignation, condemnation, bitterness, resentment, or anger? (PM @ 106-108)

4. How are you punishing those who do not meet your desires? (PM @ 108-109)

5. If you have identified any desires that have grown into idols in this situation, confess them to God and take hold of his wonderful love and promises as being far superior to anything this world can offer. (PM @ 109-114)

Confession Brings Freedom

To be an effective peacemaker, you need to deal honestly with your contribution to a conflict. As Paul told Timothy, “If a man cleanses himself from [sin], he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work” (2 Tim. 2:21). This cleansing process is inspired by Jesus’ promise that he has forgiven our sins and wants to purify us from the idols and habits that cause conflict (1 John 1:9). He calls us to cooperate in this process of repentance, self-examination, confession, and personal change. The more faithfully you draw on his grace and pursue these steps, the more useful you will be to him in making peace. At the same time, after you get the log out of your own eye, you will be better prepared to gently restore others.

1. Read Psalm 139:23-24, then ask God to help you see if you have sinned in any of the following ways in this situation. If so, note how.

- Allowed a desire to turn into an idol
- Used my tongue as a weapon (careless words, gossip, falsehood)
- Tried to control others
- Failed to keep my word or commitments
- Failed to respect authority, or failed use my authority graciously
- Was defensive or resisted correction
- Failed to treat others as I would like to be treated

2. Use the Seven A's to plan your confession:

Address everyone involved. To whom do you need to confess? (PM @ 127; Ps. 32:5; James 5:16; Luke 19:8)

Avoid if, but, and maybe. What excuses or blaming do you need to avoid? (PM @ 127-128)

Admit specifically. What desires have you allowed to rule you, and what sins have you committed? What biblical principles have you violated? (PM @ 128-129; Ezra 9:5-15)

Acknowledge the hurt. How might others feel as a result of your sin? (PM @ 130)

Accept the consequences. What consequences do you need to accept? How can you reverse the damage you have caused? (PM @ 131; Luke 15:19; 19:8)

Alter your behavior. What changes do you intend to make, with God's help, in the way you think, speak, and behave in the future? (PM @ 131-132; Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:20)

Ask for forgiveness. What might make the person you have wronged reluctant to forgive you? What can you do to make it easier for him or her to forgive you? (PM @ 132-134)

3. When will you make your confession?

Just Between the Two of You

Although it is often best simply to overlook the sins of others, there will be times when doing so only prolongs alienation and encourages them to continue acting in a hurtful manner. If you know that someone has something against you, go to that person and talk about it as soon as possible. Similarly, if someone's sins are dishonoring God, damaging your relationship, hurting others, or hurting that person, one of the most loving and helpful things you can do is go and help him or her see the need for change. With God's grace and the right words (including your own confession), such a conversation will often lead to restored peace and stronger relationships.

1. Is there someone who might have something against you?

If so, what does Jesus command you to do even before you seek to worship God? (PM @ 148-150; see Matt. 5:23-24)

2. How has (or might have) the other person sinned or done wrong in this situation?

3. Which of these offenses should you overlook, and which should you discuss with the other person? (PM @ 150-155; see Prov. 19:11). Why? (Is the person's conduct dishonoring God? Damaging your relationship? Hurting others? Hurting the offender himself?)

4. Would it be better to talk privately or to involve others right away? Why? (PM @ 143-148; see Matt. 18:15-16) Who might be a helpful mediator?



**Digging
Deeper >>**

To dig deeper, see the detailed questions at the end of chapter 7 in *The Peacemaker*.

Speak the Truth in Love

Part 3—Gently Restore

Ron Kraybill, a respected Christian mediator, has noted that “effective confrontation is like a graceful dance from supportiveness to assertiveness and back again.” This dance may feel awkward at first for those who are just learning it, but perseverance pays off. With God’s help you can learn to speak the truth in love by saying only what will build others up, by listening carefully to what others say, and by using principles of wisdom. As you practice these skills and make them a normal part of your everyday conversations, you will be well prepared to use them when conflict breaks out. In developing the skills of loving confrontation, you can see for yourself that “the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

1. Which listening skills do you have a hard time with: waiting, attending, clarifying, reflecting, or agreeing? Write down some things you will do or say to overcome these weaknesses. (PM @ 165-169; see James 1:19; Prov. 18:13)

2. How can you show that you are trying to believe the best about the other person (i.e., making charitable judgments)? (PM @ 170-171)

3. Would it be wiser to communicate in person, on the phone, or by means of a letter? Why?

4. Plan what you are going to say (PM @ 176-182; Prov. 12:18; 14:22)

The issues you believe should be addressed

The best time and place to talk

Words and topics to avoid

How to offer hope by focusing on the gospel (who God is, what he is like, and what he is doing)

Stories or comparisons that the other person will appreciate

"I" statements using words that describe your feelings

The benefits that will be produced by cooperating to find a solution

Take One or Two Others Along

By God’s grace, most conflicts between Christians can be resolved by talking personally and privately with someone who has offended you. When personal efforts do not succeed, Jesus has given us a simple yet effective process for involving other people who can promote understanding and agreement. When this involvement is carried out with prayer, wisdom, and reliance on the power of the gospel, God is pleased to use our efforts to promote just settlements and preserve relationships that would otherwise have been lost.

1. Are the personal or material issues in this conflict too serious to overlook or walk away from? Why? (Prov. 19:11)

2. If you must seek outside help to resolve this dispute, are there any individuals who are likely to be trusted and respected by both you and the other person? (PM @ 187-192)

3. What will you say to the other person to encourage him or her to allow other people to meet with the two of you to help resolve this dispute? In particular, how would you describe the advantages of getting outside assistance? (PM @ 188-190)

4. If the other person refuses to work voluntarily with others, would it be better to drop the matter or to ask the church to get involved? Why? (PM @ 192-193)

5. If all other avenues have failed to resolve this matter and you are considering filing a lawsuit, have you satisfied the biblical conditions for doing so? (PM @ 279-286; 1 Cor. 6:1-8; 10:31-11:1)

Forgive as God Forgave You

God commands us to forgive others in exactly the same way he has forgiven us through Christ (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). Biblical forgiveness is not a matter of feeling, forgetting, or excusing. True forgiveness is a choice to make four promises that model the commitments God makes to us whenever we seek his forgiveness. Then those promises must be followed up by thoughts, words, and deeds that demonstrate the reality of our forgiveness and promote true reconciliation.

If your opponent has refused to confess sins that are too serious to overlook, you can continue to apply the principles in chapters 7-9. Sins that have been confessed may be forgiven as follows:

1. Make the first decision of forgiveness: Admit that you cannot forgive on your own, and ask God to change your heart.
2. Note how each of the following passages applies to this situation.

Psalm 103:12

Psalm 130:3

1 Corinthians 13:5

Ephesians 4:32, Colossians 3:13

3. Write the four promises you will make to your opponent to indicate your forgiveness (PM @ 207-210).

“By God’s grace ...

I will not _____ on this incident.

I will not _____ this incident up and use it against you.

I will not _____ to others about this incident.

I will not _____ this incident stand between us or hinder our relationship.”

4. Circle the promise that will be the hardest for you to keep. Why is it the hardest?

5. If you are having a hard time forgiving your opponent, read Matthew 18:21–35. What is the point of this passage?

6. If you continue to struggle with unforgiveness, identify the roadblock by reading pages 213-218 in *The Peacemaker*.

7. How can you demonstrate forgiveness or promote reconciliation in thought, word, and deed?



**Digging
Deeper >>**

To dig deeper, see the detailed questions at the end of chapter 10 in *The Peacemaker*.

Look Also to the Interests of Others

Reconciliation often involves two dimensions. Personal issues may be dealt with through confession, correction, and forgiveness. Material issues may be resolved through negotiation. In most cases it is best to use a cooperative approach to negotiation, which seeks to find mutually beneficial solutions to common problems. In many cases, all it takes is a willingness to "look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). This process may be summarized as the "PAUSE Principle."

- Prepare
- Affirm relationships
- Understand interests
- Search for creative solutions
- Evaluate options objectively and reasonable

1. How can you prepare to negotiate a reasonable agreement in this situation (PM @ 228-231; see Prov. 14:8,22)?

2. How can you affirm your concern and respect for your opponent (PM @ 231-233)?

3. Understand the interests by answering these questions (PM @ 234-240; see Phil. 2:3-4):
Which material issues need to be resolved in order to settle this conflict? What positions have you and your opponent already taken on these issues?

What are God's interests in this situation?

What are your interests in this situation?

What are your opponent's interests in this situation?

4. In your search for creative solutions, what options did you think of that would satisfy as many interests as possible (PM @ 240-242)?

5. What are some ways that these options can be evaluated objectively and reasonably (PM @ 242-245; see Dan. 1:11-16)?

Overcome Evil with Good

Part 4—Go and Be Reconciled

Most conflicts can be successfully resolved through sincere confession, correction, forgiveness, and negotiation. Although many people will readily make peace, others will be stubborn and defensive and resist our efforts to be reconciled. Sometimes they will become even more antagonistic and find new ways to frustrate or mistreat us. Our natural reaction is to strike back at such people, or at least to stop doing anything good to them. We will also be tempted to think that biblical principles just won't work in this situation. But a true Christian never closes the Bible. Instead, we hold on even tighter to Scripture and dig deeper to find the encouragement and guidance we need to do what will please and honor God. Romans 12:14-21 is an excellent passage to look to at such time.

1. Which worldly weapons have you been using, or are you tempted to use, in this situation?

2. What "weapons" does God call us to use to overcome an enemy? (PM @ 247-249; see 2 Cor. 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18; Gal. 5:22-23)

3. How can the gospel of Jesus Christ guide, motivate, and empower you from this point forward?

4. Have you been using your tongue to bless your opponents or to speak critically of them?
How could you breathe grace to them in the days ahead? (PM @ 249-250; see Rom. 12:14)

5. To whom can you turn for godly advice and encouragement? (PM @ 250; see Rom. 12:15-16;
Prov. 27:5-6)

6. What can you keep on doing in this situation that is right? (PM @ 250-252; Rom. 12:17)

7. Have you done everything in your power to live at peace with your opponent?
Is it appropriate to turn to church or civil authorities to seek assistance in resolving this dispute?
(PM @ 252-253; see Rom. 12:19; Matt. 18:17; Rom. 13:1-5)

8. What needs does your opponent have that God may want you to try to meet? In other words, how
can you love your opponent in a deliberate and focused way? (PM @ 253-256; Rom. 12:20-21)

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you.
Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord,
because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.
—1 Corinthians 15:58



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