



Course Name: Conflict Management - Biblical Origin

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Course description:

This course deals with principles for understanding and resolving conflict in the home, the church, and life in general. This particular lesson will focus on the biblical record of the beginning of conflict and how ubiquitous and consequential it can be.

Course Objectives: By the end of this class students will be able to:

- A. Identify five spheres of conflict evident in Genesis chapter three.
- B. Discuss the common human tendencies that lead to conflict.
- C. Apply principles from the text to avoid inappropriate conflict.

Outline of the class:

- A. Read the text of Gen. 3:1-19
- B. Invite the class to identify as many conflict dichotomies as possible in the text and who was involved.
- C. Gangel and Canine (2002, p.155) discuss five:
 - 1. Conflict between God and man
 - 2. Interpersonal conflict between Adam and Eve
 - 3. Conflict between man and the physical world
 - 4. Spiritual conflict involving man and Satan
 - 5. Internal conflict within man
- D. Divide the class into groups of 3-5 and assign them come up with three reasons why these conflicts took place.
- E. Afterward, ask the groups to report on their reasons and answer the following questions:
 - 1. What are the human tendencies that are partially responsible for the conflict?
 - 2. What are the situational elements that are partially responsible for the conflict?
 - 3. Discuss how those conflicts could have been avoided before they began. What are some of the “small things” that might have easily made the results very different?

4. How is the conflict that we experience today related to what we see in Gen. 3?
- F. Ask the students to apply the following simple biblical principles from Proverbs to the circumstance in Gen. 3 and ask how they would have changed the dynamic of the situation.
1. Avoiding conflict can be good (20:3)
 2. Peace with God reduces conflict with others (16:7)
 3. We are responsible for our tempers (16:32)
 4. Manage conflict in its early stages (17:14)
 5. Listen to all sides, don't decide too early (18:17)
 6. A third party (or method) can help (18:18)
 7. Some conflicts are not worth the cost (19:11)
 8. Kindness can reduce destructive conflict (21:14)
 9. Be slow to get into other's conflict (26:17)
 10. Conflict must be fed to continue (26:20-21)

Conclusion:

- A. Conflict is almost as old as humanity. In fact, it may be older since God and Satan were already at cross purposes!
- B. If Adam had provided godly leadership as he had been commissioned to do, the conflict we read about in Gen. 3 would have been very different.
- C. Leadership in the family and among the people of God must give attention to the example of scripture in dealing with conflict.
- D. In the next lesson, we will discuss specific types and causes of conflict and how we can use our understanding of conflict to address it more appropriately.