

A cinematic photograph of three men in ancient-style robes. The man in the center, with a dark beard and hair, is shouting and pointing his right index finger towards the man on the right. The man on the left, with a long grey beard, looks on with a serious expression. The man on the right, with a dark beard, has his hands raised in a gesture of surprise or defense. The background shows a bright, sunlit interior with large columns and a distant crowd of people.

Resolving Disputes in the Congregation

When there is a dispute between
individuals, the following
"Reconciliation Plan" should be
followed

Step 1: Be proactive in resolving
conflict

Ephesians 4:25-26

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH EACH ONE of you WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another. **BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN**; do not let the sun go down on your anger,

Luke 12:58

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, **on your way there make an effort to settle with him**, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.

Matthew 5:21-26

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell. (Continued...)

"Therefore if you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar and go; **first be reconciled to your brother**, and then come and present your offering. "**Make friends quickly with your opponent** at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

(Continued...)

Step 1: Be proactive in resolving conflict

"Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent.

Step 1: Be proactive in resolving conflict

Proverbs 27:5

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Better is open rebuke Than love that is concealed.

Proverbs 6:1-5

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

My son, if you have become surety for your neighbor, Have
given a pledge for a stranger, If you have been snared with
the words of your mouth, Have been caught with the words
of your mouth, Do this then, my son, and deliver yourself;
Since you have come into the hand of your neighbor, **Go,
humble yourself, and importune your neighbor. Give no
sleep to your eyes, Nor slumber to your eyelids;**

(Continued...)

Step 1: Be proactive in resolving conflict

Deliver yourself like a gazelle from the hunter's hand And
like a bird from the hand of the fowler.

Step 2: The offended party should approach the offender in private

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Leviticus 19:17

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

You shall not hate your fellow countryman in your heart;
you may surely reprove your neighbor, but shall not incur
sin because of him.

Step 2: The offended party should approach the offender in private

Luke 17:3

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"Be on your guard! **If your brother sins, rebuke him;** and if he repents, forgive him.

Step 2: The offended party should approach the offender in private

Matthew 18:15

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"If your brother sins, go and show him his fault **in private**; if he listens to you, you have won your brother.

Step 2: The offended party should approach the offender in private

Proverbs 17:9

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

He who conceals a transgression seeks love, But he who repeats a matter separates intimate friends.

Step 2: The offended party should approach the offender in private

Proverbs 25:9

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Argue your case with your neighbor, And **do not reveal the secret of another,**

Step 2: The offended party should approach the offender in private

Testament of Gad 6:1

(RHCVKJ, R.H. Charles Translation, Edited by Ken Johnson, Th.D.)

My children, put away hatred. Love one another in thought, word and deed. I spoke kindly of Joseph when I was with my father, but privately hatred darkened my mind to the point I wanted to kill him. Love each other. **And if a man sent against you, talk to him gently.** Do not foster the poison of hatred or guile. If he confesses and repents, forgive him. If he denies it, do not argue with him in case he swears and you sin twice. (Continued...)

Step 2: The offended party should approach the offender in private

Do not rebuke him publicly because it may cause others to hate you or gossip about you causing great sin. If he denies it but is convicted in his heart, do not speak of it any further. For he who denies but repents will do you no more harm. Instead, he will honor, respect and be at peace with you. If he continues in his wrongdoing, forgive him from the heart and give the vengeance to God.

Step 3: If the conflict is not resolved,
the offended party should approach
the offender with a small number of
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Deuteronomy 19:15

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed;
on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.

Step 3: If the conflict is not resolved, the offended party should approach the offender with a small number of witnesses

First Timothy 5:19

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do not receive an accusation against an elder except **on the basis of two or three witnesses.**

Step 3: If the conflict is not resolved, the offended party should approach the offender with a small number of witnesses

Matthew 18:16

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"But if he does not listen to you, **take one or two more with you**, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED.

Step 3: If the conflict is not resolved, the offended party should approach the offender with a small number of witnesses

Second Corinthians 13:1

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

This is the third time I am coming to you. EVERY FACT IS **TO BE CONFIRMED BY THE TESTIMONY OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES.**

Step 4: If the conflict is still not resolved, the offended party should bring the matter to the leaders of the congregation

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Exodus 18:13-26

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

It came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, "What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?" Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God.

(Continued...)

Step 4: If the conflict is still not resolved, the offended party should bring the matter to the leaders of the congregation

"When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor and make known the statutes of God and His laws." Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you are doing is not good. "You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. "Now listen to me: I will give you counsel, and God be with you. (Continued...)

Step 4: If the conflict is still not resolved, the offended party should bring the matter to the leaders of the congregation

You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk and the work they are to do. "Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over them as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. "Let them judge the people at all times; (Continued...)

Step 4: If the conflict is still not resolved, the offended party should bring the matter to the leaders of the congregation

and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you, and they will bear the burden with you. "If you do this thing and God so commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all these people also will go to their place in peace." So Moses listened to his father-in-law and did all that he had said. (Continued...)

Step 4: If the conflict is still not resolved, the offended party should bring the matter to the leaders of the congregation

Moses chose able men out of all Israel and made them heads over the people, leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. They judged the people at all times; the difficult dispute they would bring to Moses, but every minor dispute they themselves would judge.

Step 4: If the conflict is still not resolved, the offended party should bring the matter to the leaders of the congregation

Matthew 18:17

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; **and if he refuses to listen even to the church**, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Step 5: The offended and the witnesses should pray for the offender

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Colossians 1:9

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

For this reason also, **since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray** for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,

Step 5: The offended and the witnesses should pray for the offender

Ephesians 6:18

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit,
and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance
and petition **for all the saints,**

Step 5: The offended and the witnesses should pray for the offender

First Timothy 2:1

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

First of all, then, I urge that entreaties and **prayers,**
petitions and thanksgivings, be made on **behalf of all men,**

Step 5: The offended and the witnesses should pray for the offender

James 5:16

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, **and pray for one another so that you may be healed.** The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Step 5: The offended and the witnesses should pray for the offender

Luke 6:28

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

bless those who curse you, **pray for those who mistreat
you.**

Step 5: The offended and the witnesses should pray for the offender

Matthew 18:19-20

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"Again I say to you, **that if two of you agree on earth about anything that they may ask,** it shall be done for them by My Father who is in heaven. "For where two or three have gathered together in My name, I am there in their midst."

Step 5: The offended and the witnesses should pray for the offender

Romans 12:14

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Step 6: The offended should forgive
the offender

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Ephesians 4:31-32

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, **forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.**

Step 6: The offended should forgive the offender

Luke 17:3-4

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"Be on your guard! If your brother sins, rebuke him; and if he repents, **forgive him**. "And if he sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, '**I repent, forgive him.**'"

Step 6: The offended should forgive the offender

Luke 6:37

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"Do not judge, and you will not be judged; and do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; **pardon, and you will be pardoned.**

Step 6: The offended should forgive the offender

Mark 11:25

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"Whenever you stand praying, **forgive**, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father who is in heaven will also forgive you your transgressions.

Matthew 18:21-22

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and **I forgive him**? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but **up to seventy times seven**."

Second Corinthians 2:5-8

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

But if any has caused sorrow, he has caused sorrow not to me, but in some degree--in order not to say too much--to all of you. Sufficient for such a one is this punishment which was inflicted by the majority, so that on the contrary **you should rather forgive and comfort him**, otherwise such a one might be overwhelmed by excessive sorrow. Wherefore I urge you to reaffirm your love for him.

Step 7: The offended may put up boundaries against the offender

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First Corinthians 15:33

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do not be deceived: "**Bad company corrupts good morals.**"

Step 7: The offended may put up boundaries against the offender

Proverbs 22:24-25

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Or you will learn his ways And find a snare for yourself.

Step 7: The offended may put up boundaries against the offender

Titus 3:10-11

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Reject a factious man after a first and second warning,
knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being
self-condemned.

Forgiveness vs. Boundaries

Forgiveness

Colossians 3:13

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

bearing with one another, **and forgiving each other,**
whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord
forgave you, so also should you.

Matthew 6:14-15

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"For if you **forgive others for their transgressions**, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. "But if you do not forgive others, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.

Boundaries

First Corinthians 5:11

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--**not even to eat with such a one.**

Matthew 7:6

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"Do not give what is holy to dogs, and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

Proverbs 4:23

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow
the springs of life.

Second Thessalonians 3:14-15

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and **do not associate with him**, so that he will be put to shame. **Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.**

Testament of Asher 4:1

(RHCVKJ, R.H. Charles Translation, Edited by Ken Johnson, Th.D.)

They say putting a murderer to death is evil. But in reality it is a good work because it have roots and destroys evil from the land. They do not understand that it is not hypocritical to show mercy on a truly repentant adulterer and thief, but punish the unrepentant sinner, both righteousness because he follows the Lord's example in that he refuses evil that appears to be good in that which is obviously evil.

(Continued...)

They also think it hypocritical to strive against those who carouse, but the righteous know that by tolerating sinners they will pollute their souls and defile their own speech. **It is a righteous act to both refrain from these actions and forcibly stop others from doing them.** Such men are like stags and hinds, because in a wild condition they seem to be unclean, but they are altogether clean. (Continued...)

They walk in a zeal for God, and abstain from what God also hates and forbids by His commandments, and they ward off the evil from the good.

When the offended approaches the offender, the following character traits should be exhibited

Humility and Love

Ephesians 4:2

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

with all **humility and gentleness, with patience**, showing
tolerance for one another in love,

First Corinthians 13:1-13

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, **but do not have love**, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, **but do not have love**, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, **but do not have love**, it profits me nothing. Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; (Continued...)

love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away.

(Continued...)

For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love.

First John 3:13-18

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; **and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.**

(Continued...)

But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

John 13:34

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, **that you also love one another.**

Philippians 2:3-4

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but **with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves**; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

First John 4:7

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and
everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.

Be Slow to Anger

Ecclesiastes 7:9

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do not be eager in your heart to be angry, For anger
resides in the bosom of fools.

Ephesians 4:26-29

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity. He who steals must steal no longer; but rather he must labor, performing with his own hands what is good, so that he will have something to share with one who has need. Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

First Thessalonians 2:6-7

(ASV, American Standard Version)

nor seeking glory of men, neither from you nor from others,
when we might have claimed authority as apostles of
Christ. But **we were gentle in the midst of you**, as when a
nurse cherisheth her own children:

Galatians 6:1

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Brethren, even if anyone is caught in any trespass, you who are spiritual, **restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness;** each one looking to yourself, so that you too will not be tempted.

James 1:19-20

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

This you know, my beloved brethren. But everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak **and slow to anger;** for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.

Proverbs 14:29

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he
who is quick-tempered exalts folly.

Proverbs 16:32

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

Proverbs 29:11

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it
back.

Proverbs 29:22

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man
abounds in transgression.

Proverbs 30:33

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

For the churning of milk produces butter, And pressing the
nose brings forth blood; **So the churning of anger
produces strife.**

Psalm 4:4

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Tremble, and **do not sin**; Meditate in your heart upon your bed, and **be still**. Selah.

Seek Peace

First Peter 3:8

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

To sum up, **all of you be harmonious**, sympathetic,
brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit;

Matthew 5:9

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called
sons of God.

Proverbs 16:7

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, He makes
even his enemies **to be at peace with him.**

Romans 12:16-19

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation. Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, **be at peace with all men**. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord.

Romans 14:19

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

So then we pursue the things **which make for peace** and
the building up of one another.

Speak Constructively

Ephesians 4:29

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, **but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment**, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

James 3:9-12

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God; **from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing.** My brethren, these things ought not to be this way. Does a fountain send out from the same opening both fresh and bitter water? Can a fig tree, my brethren, produce olives, or a vine produce figs? Nor can salt water produce fresh.

Proverbs 12:18

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword,
But the tongue of the wise brings healing.

Proverbs 15:1

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs
up anger.

Proverbs 26:4

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do not answer a fool according to his folly, Or you will
also be like him.

Let Go of Grievances

Colossians 3:13

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

bearing with one another, and forgiving each other,
whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord
forgave you, **so also should you.**

Hebrews 12:15

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; **that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble,** and by it many be defiled;

Leviticus 19:18

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, **but you shall love your neighbor as yourself;** I am the LORD.

Seek Wisdom

James 1:2-8

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, so that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. **But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.** (Continued...)

But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind. For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

James 3:17

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

But the **wisdom from above is first pure**, then peaceable,
gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits,
unwavering, without hypocrisy.

Proverbs 13:10

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Through insolence comes nothing but strife, **But wisdom
is with those who receive counsel.**

Proverbs 18:1-2

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

He who separates himself seeks his own desire, **He quarrels against all sound wisdom.** A fool does not delight in understanding, But only in revealing his own mind.

Avoid Quarrels

Philippians 2:14-16

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain.

Proverbs 15:18

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger
calms a dispute.

Proverbs 20:3

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, But any
fool will quarrel.

Proverbs 3:30

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Do not contend with a man without cause, If he has done
you no harm.

Second Timothy 2:23

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

But **refuse foolish and ignorant speculations**, knowing
that they produce quarrels.

Show the fruit of the Spirit

First Peter 2:21

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for **you to follow in His steps,**

Galatians 5:22-23

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

But the fruit of the Spirit is **love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**; against such things there is no law.

Conflict

Gentle

First Thessalonians 2:6-7

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, even though as apostles of Christ we might have asserted our authority. But **we proved to be gentle among you**, as a nursing mother tenderly cares for her own children.

Forgiveness

Seventy Times Seven

Matthew 18:21-22

(NASB, New American Standard Bible)

Then Peter came and said to Him, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I **forgive him?** Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but **up to seventy times seven.**