





## **CONFLICT RESOLUTION**

**Is the finding of a mutually agreeable, peaceful solution to a dispute or disagreement among two or more parties.**



## **GREAT CONTROVERSY**

## REVELATION 12:7, 8

**“And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, <sup>8</sup>but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.”**



## GENESIS 4:8



**“Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him.”**



## CHRIST'S METHOD

### Matthew 18 <sup>NKJV</sup>

<sup>15</sup> “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

<sup>16</sup> But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

<sup>17</sup> And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.”

## CHRIST'S METHOD

### AFFIRMED

“Our Redeemer understood the perversity of human nature; and in order to save the souls for whom He sacrificed His life, and establish His church in unity and prosperity upon the earth, He has given explicit rules for church-members to follow in dealing with one another.” —*Pastoral Ministry*, pg. 267

## CHRIST'S PROMISE

**Matthew 18:20** <sup>NKJV</sup>

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.”

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**Matthew 18**

1. We must speak privately with the person(s) that have offended us.
2. If they refuse to work with us, it is only then that we involve others in the process.
3. If they refuse to work with others who become involved in the process, you may be forced to administer church discipline of some sort.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**STEP #1 - Matthew 18:15** <sup>NKJV</sup> "...if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone."

- Often times, members will come to you expecting you to fix every situation. This is not your place nor your job.
- We must counsel our members to follow Scripture. If we jump in before insisting that the process is followed, then we bypass Jesus' clear instruction and cut ourselves off from receiving the blessing of following His counsel.
- Sometimes we have to coach people to do the right thing if we are aware of the conflict and neither side is willing to make the first move.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

### STEP #1 AFFIRMED

"Where are those...Who are striving to quell every dissension in the church, being peace-makers in Christ's name?...the churches in their present state of feeble love, of dissension and petty trial,—churches that are calling ministers from important work to settle their little manufactured difficulties, thus showing that they have no connection with God..."

—*Pastoral Ministry*, pg. 267

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**STEP #2 - Matthew 18:16** <sup>NKJV</sup> “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more,”

- This is where you can step in and try to bring both sides together.
- Always, always begin with prayer. We have the promise of receiving wisdom in **James 1:5** if we will but ask for it. Ask for it.
- The meeting may call for witnesses to be present who have knowledge of the conflict.
- You will want an uninvolved 3<sup>rd</sup> party to be present too so that:
  - Your actions are accountable and transparent
  - They serve as a witness to all that takes place

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**STEP #2 - Matthew 18:16** <sup>NKJV</sup> “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more,”

- Meet in a neutral location whenever possible. This allows both parties to feel equal and not disadvantaged in any way. This will not always be the church.
- Take the time to hear both sides thoroughly. You must have the most complete picture possible when attempting to assess the situation.
- Allow all parties to share without interruption. Mutual respect must be insisted upon.



## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**STEP #2 - Matthew 18:16** <sup>NKJV</sup> “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more,”

- Do not show partiality. If you allow one side to share you must do so for the other side. There can be no hint of favoritism.
- Do not try to go back and make right every little wrong that may be outlined. Some disputes go back for many years and it is simply not always feasible to address each little offense.
- While both parties are sharing, attempt to identify the root cause or causes of their dispute and take note of it. Patterns of behavior will present themselves if we are tuned into looking for them.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**STEP #2 - Matthew 18:16** <sup>NKJV</sup> “But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more,”

- Once everyone has had an opportunity to share, take the time to identify what you have discovered by way of root causes.
- Speak kindly, tactfully and without being judgmental or condemning. You are simply trying to state the facts.
- Kindly ask each party if they can see the same basic issues at play that you have identified.
- Once you have agreement on the issues, you can ask them what they would see as solutions to overcoming the issues. This may take some coaching. Be ready to offer Biblical solutions.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

### STEP #2 AFFIRMED - 1

“Never question the motives of your brethren; for as you judge them, God has declared you will be judged...Cultivate the habit of speaking well of your brethren. Let not pride or selfish righteousness prevent you from making a frank and full confession of your wrong-doings...you must have the spirit of meekness, of kindness, and be full of mercy and good fruits. Do not show partiality to one or more, and neglect other of your brethren...”—*Pastoral Ministry*, pg. 268

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

### STEP #2 AFFIRMED - 2

“The Spirit of Christ is grieved when any of His followers give evidence of possessing a harsh, unfair, or exacting spirit. As laborers together with God, each should regard the other as part of God’s great firm. He desires that they shall counsel together. There is to be no drawing apart, for the spirit of independence dishonors the truth we profess. One special evidence that the Spirit of Christ is abiding in His church is the unity and harmony which exist among its members.”—*Pastoral Ministry*, pg. 268

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

**STEP #3 - Matthew 18:17** <sup>NKJV</sup> “And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church.”

- If you take all parties through a solid, Biblical process and either or both parties still remain unchanged in their positions, you may have to move to some sort of church discipline:
  - Ask that positions be resigned if warranted
  - Censorship (1-12 months)
  - Disfellowship (removal of membership)
- Each of these steps also have a process that should be followed meticulously. Use the Board of Elders, Church Board, & the *Church Manual*.

## PRACTICAL APPLICATION

### STEP #3 AFFIRMED

“If he will not heed the voice of the church, if he refuses all the efforts made to reclaim him, upon the church rests the responsibility of separating him from fellowship. His name should then be stricken from the books. No church officer should advise, no committee should recommend, nor should any church vote, that the name of a wrong-doer shall be removed from the church books, until the instruction given by Christ has been faithfully followed. When this has been done, the church has cleared herself before God.” —*Gospel Workers*, pg. 500-501