



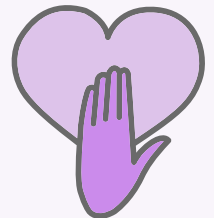
MANAGING CONFLICT

The book of Galatians is full of wisdom on how to manage conflict. Even though Paul's is writing to ministry leaders and giving them instruction on how to handle conflict in ministry situations, the principles he outlines apply to every relationship. I want to encourage you to pick up the Book of Galatians and read the first two chapters and finish with the first verse in chapter three. That may sound like a lot to read, especially if you were hoping to get this assignment done quickly, but it probably won't take you more than a few minutes. I believe it will help you gain powerful insight.

As you read, I want you to consider how these principles might apply to your own ministry. Because you do have a ministry. Not all ministries happen on a stage or a platform. Perhaps your ministry is motherhood or spending time with your grandchildren. Perhaps your ministry is in the marketplace, representing Christ to your coworkers and clients. Perhaps your ministry is to be a good wife. These principles offer tremendous wisdom on how to maintain self-respect in the face of opposition.

What do you consider to be your most important ministry or ministries?

- Your marriage or intimate relationship
- Your role as a mother
- Your influence in the marketplace or your career
- Your duty to care for your relatives
- Your witness as a single woman or widow
- Your support of an important cause
- Other



Whatever ministry you selected, conflict is inevitable. It's absolutely unavoidable. You can try different ways to avoid it, but if this is your typical approach, all you do is ignore it or internalize it in some way. In trying to avoid conflict, you sabotage the peace you were trying to preserve. Eventually it will cost more than you are willing to pay.



Synthetic peace is free at first, but like a loan shark racks up interest, eventually synthetic peace costs more than your sanity can afford.



Here are some of the conflict management principles Paul discusses in the first three chapters of Galatians. As you read these chapters from a different perspective, you may notice even more.

1

TAKE THE GRACE

God our father gave himself to rescue us from the present evil age. We can't manage our life well without His grace. Gal 1:2-4

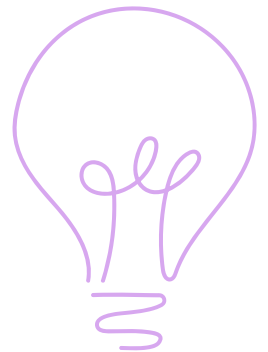
2

GUARD AGAINST CONFUSION

Don't turn away from the truth. Paul was shocked that believers were so easily snared. He said, "You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News, being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ." If that is going on in your relationship, the manipulation of truth is evil. Gal 1:6-7

Great pretenders still occupy pulpits, but deceit sits in pews as well. These controlling men masquerade their motives capturing unsuspecting women and hiding control under the guise of spiritual leadership.

- Has your partner used scripture as a weapon to control you?
- If so, what truths did he deliberately twist in order to control you?
- The antidote is the unaltered truth and it will set you free. Can you find scriptures to debunk his lies?



3

SEEK GOD'S APPROVAL

Paul puts it very bluntly. If you are still trying to please people, you can't be a servant of Christ (Galatians 1:10). The fear of man or his rejection is a trap!



Take a moment to measure your motives by considering the list below. **How often do you do something for your partner with an expectation of receiving the following in return?**

Often Sometimes Seldom Never

- ☐ **Reciprocity**
- ☐ **Gratitude**
- ☐ **Favor**
- ☐ **Approval**
- ☐ **Applause**
- ☐ **Affection**

Finding your worth in Christ and not the opinions of others is the only way to freedom. Remember, it's okay to please others if your motive has no personal agenda to gain approval or something you deem valuable. It is more blessed to give than receive. If you give with an expectation, however, you're not giving. You're negotiating to get your needs met.

4

DON'T GIVE INTO FALSE BROTHERS

In Galatians 2:4 Paul warns us that some so-called believers, false ones, who were secretly brought in, sneaked in to spy and take away the freedom believers have in Christ to make us slaves. Do you think this is still happening today? No doubt, but here's what he said: We did not give in to them for a moment!

Has your partner tried to take away some of your privileges or freedom in Christ? If so, what steps can you make to protect your rights?

5

DON'T BE IMPRESSED BY THOSE WHO SEEM TO BE IMPORTANT.

If you've placed your partner on a pedestal or think others are more important than you, remember that you are precious in God's sight. God has no favorites. (Galatians 2:6)



6

WHEN OTHERS ARE WRONG OPPOSE THEM FACE-TO-FACE

Paul said that when Peter (some versions refer to him as Cephas) came to Antioch, he had to oppose him to his face, in front of all the others for what he did was very wrong. He confronted him in order that others wouldn't be led astray by his hypocrisy. (Galatians 2:11)

It wasn't just Paul's advice. Remember what Jesus said in Matthew 18:18: "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you."

How do these examples of confrontation give you courage to confront your partner when necessary?

It's not wrong to esteem others as long as you don't devalue yourself in the process.

7

DON'T BE AFRAID OF THOSE WHO OPPOSE YOU

Paul confronted Peter because Peter was afraid of criticism from people who insisted on circumcision. (Galatians 2:12).

There will always be those who disagree with you. When you allow their potential criticism to make you cower, you're giving them control over your actions. You put yourself in bondage to their opinion. That is what the writer of Proverbs referred to when he said the fear of man will prove to be a snare, but whoever trusts in the LORD is kept safe (Proverbs 29:25).

The only way out of that bondage is to stop allowing fear to silence your voice. If you fear the criticism of others, pray this prayer. I promise you God will answer it! He wants you to grow strong in Him.



Lord, please help me exercise my faith. Help me notice opportunities where I can be authentic and share my opinions and desires with boldness and confidence, refusing to cower to others demands or criticism. Amen.



8

DON'T CONFORM TO FIT IN

Only chameleons conform to their surroundings. They change their opinion or behavior according to their environment. James 1:8 tells us that a double minded person is unstable in all they do. And the verse prior is alarming: That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord.

9

DO NOT BE BEWITCHED

How foolish can you be? Paul asks. After beginning with the spirit are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? (Galatians 3:1)

Slander is easy to recognize, but charm feels good and often motivates you to comply in order to receive more praise.

If your spouse or partner tries to manipulate you with praise or charm, here are some suggestions for resisting his control.

**to malign one with
slander or ensnare by
charm or feigning
praise**

bewitch

If your spouse or partner tries to manipulate you with praise or charm, here are some suggestions for resisting his control.

- **Just say thank you.** You don't owe him anything else for a compliment.
- **Clarify his intentions.** You might address the situation by saying something like, "You've been especially attentive lately? Is there something you're trying to butter me up for?" He'll probably say no but at least he'll know that you won't be easily swayed by his charm.
- **Don't cave into his agenda.** Remind yourself that if you give into his expectations, you are giving him control. And if you give him control, you lose yours!

How will you commit to turning aside from his control?

