

MISSION READY

**Conflict Resolution the
Matthew Way**

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Our Focus:

- Conflict Resolution in the Matthew Way
- The 8 Steps
- Practicing the Matthew Method Today
- Final Thoughts



Conflict Resolution in the Matthew Way

- Jesus provided us with a clear model for conflict resolution in Matthew 18:15-17.
- This biblical approach emphasizes the importance of addressing issues directly and with love.
- The process begins with a private conversation between the conflicting parties, reflecting Christ's desire for reconciliation and understanding.
- If the initial conversation doesn't resolve the conflict, Jesus instructs us to bring one or two witnesses who can help facilitate dialogue and ensure fairness.

Matthew 18: 15-17

“If your brother or sister[a] sins,[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’[c]

If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.

STEP 1: Prayer and Self-Examination

- Before engaging in any conflict resolution, we must first turn our hearts to God in prayer and honest self-examination.
- Take time to quiet your spirit and invite the Holy Spirit's guidance in understanding your role in the conflict.
- Ask yourself important questions:
 - What are my true motivations?
 - Have I contributed to this situation?
 - Am I harboring unforgiveness or pride?
- Genuine prayer opens our hearts to God's perspective and softens us to receive His wisdom.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

Psalm 139:23-24

Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

Step 2: Understanding the Other's Perspective

- Set aside our own preconceptions and practicing genuine compassionate listening.
- Listen to understand rather than to respond.
- Strive to see beyond surface-level disagreements to understand the underlying needs, fears, and concerns of others.
- This might mean:
 - asking gentle questions
 - reflecting on what we hear
 - and acknowledging the other person's feelings without judgment.



Luke 6:31

Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Step 3: Clear Communication

- Communicate with truth and grace.
- Be honest and compassionate in difficult conversations.
- Use “I” statements to reduce defensiveness.
- Express feelings and concerns clearly while staying sensitive to others’ emotions.
- Model Jesus’s balance of authority and gentleness.
- Listen actively and validate others’ feelings.
- Be mindful of tone and body language to maintain respect and openness.
- Pray for wisdom before speaking.
- Let truth and grace work together to build understanding.

Ephesians 4:15

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

Step 4: Identifying Core Issues

- Seek God’s wisdom and discernment to look beyond surface-level disagreements.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance to reveal root causes such as fear, pride, or unmet expectations.
- “Test everything” (1 Thessalonians 5:21) by separating facts from feelings and primary issues from secondary ones.
- Reflect on what each person is truly seeking and what biblical principles apply.
- Recognize that God can use conflict to shape spiritual growth and transformation.

James 1:5

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

1 Thessalonians 5:21

...but test them all; hold on to what is good,

Step 5: Engage in Collaborative Problem-Solving

- Approach conflict resolution with a collaborative spirit and a commitment to reconciliation.
- Brainstorm solutions together with God's principles of love, justice, and mercy in mind.
- Listen without judgment and combine ideas to create mutually beneficial outcomes.
- Focus on strengthening relationships rather than "winning."
- Write down agreed-upon solutions and action steps for clarity and accountability.
- Pray together for God's wisdom and guidance as you implement the resolution.

Philippians 2:4

...not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others

Step 6: Forgiveness and Reconciliation

- Christ models true forgiveness, even in the face of injustice (Luke 23:34).
- We are called to extend the same grace to others that Christ extends to us.
- Forgiveness means releasing resentment, not ignoring or minimizing hurt.
- Reconciliation often requires humility and taking the first step, even when we feel blameless.
- Jesus teaches that forgiveness is essential for our spiritual growth (Matthew 6:14–15).
- Through prayer and the Holy Spirit’s guidance, we gain strength to forgive as Christ forgives.

Luke 23:34

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”^[a] And they divided up his clothes by casting lots.

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Step 7: Making Amends

- Take intentional steps toward healing and restoration, following Jesus's example of reconciliation.
- Acknowledge your part in the conflict and express sincere remorse, whether through conversation, a letter, or restitution.
- Apply Matthew 5:23–24 by seeking reconciliation before offering your gifts to God.
- Offer a genuine apology, ask how you can make things right, and take steps to prevent future conflict.
- Go above and beyond to rebuild trust through forgiveness, sacrifice, and practical grace.
- Seek guidance from trusted friends or church leaders to ensure your actions reflect biblical principles and Christ-like love.

Matthew 5:23-24

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Step 8: Moving Forward in Unity

- Seek God’s wisdom and discernment to look beyond surface-level disagreements.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit’s guidance to reveal root causes such as fear, pride, or unmet expectations.
- “Test everything” (1 Thessalonians 5:21) by separating facts from feelings and primary issues from secondary ones.
- Reflect on what each person is truly seeking and what biblical principles apply.
- Recognize that God can use conflict to shape spiritual growth and transformation.

Ephesians 4:3

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

John 17:23

I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity.

Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Practicing the Matthew Method Today

FINAL THOUGHTS

- Many congregations have turned conflict into opportunities for spiritual growth.
- Both seasoned members and new believers can benefit from practicing conflict resolution the Matthew Way.
- Small groups and CCC ministries offer ideal spaces to apply these principles.
- If private steps fail, involving the wider church community reflects wisdom and respect for all parties.
- The goal throughout is restoration and healing, carried out with patience, humility, and Christ-like care.
- Matthew 18:15–17 provides the biblical framework for addressing conflict with wisdom and grace.
- Biblical conflict resolution becomes a transformative journey that deepens unity, peace, and spiritual maturity.

