

Marriage & Family

Introduction to Conflict Resolution

I. THE BIBLE & CONFLICT RESOLUTION.

- A. We often have the mistaken idea that we should never get angry with one another. However, the Bible does not present a picture that conflict is off-limits for Christians.
- B. “In your anger do not sin’: Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold” (Eph 4:26-27).
- C. Jesus himself got angry (e.g., the cleansing of the temple in Jn 2).
- D. God himself is pictured as getting angry: When Moses kept refusing to lead the Hebrews from Egypt, we read, “The LORD's anger burned against Moses” (Ex 4:14).
- E. Thus, the question isn't whether we get angry, but how we deal with our anger.

II. DEALING WITH ANGER.

- A. Go over the “Conflict Resolution Worksheet” from the Alabama Marriage Handbook.
- B. Thinking about anger:(1)
 - 1. There are three emotional components of anger: thoughts, bodily responses, & behavior.
 - a. Thoughts:
 - Most angry thoughts come from cognitive appraisal. This is the mental process that helps us define and interpret what is happening to or around us.
 - The way we appraise our environment at any given moment is crucial in determining how we respond emotionally.

- When we are angry, the appraisals that we make are frequently distorted, influencing us to act in what appears to others a highly irrational way.
- Different people appraise different situations differently, and this is what often leads to conflict.
- We can appraise the *same* situation different ways at different times. This is what often happens when our anger subsides.

b. Bodily responses:

- Most people think of and define anger as emotional responses, but there are great somatic disturbances, as well.
- Research has demonstrated that anger changes your body in predictable ways and that frequent anger arousal is clearly detrimental. For example, anger arousal causes increased heart rate and blood pressure; this sets off a chain reaction in your normal physiology, making you more prone to heart problems, essential hypertension, and other illnesses that affect the quality of your life.

c. Actions:

- Anger actions are those behavioral patterns that make our anger more destructive.
- Yelling is a good example.

2. Go over the “Good & Bad of Anger” handout.

3. Go over the “When Your Anger is a Problem” handout.

III. DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

A. Go over “Signs of Domestic Violence” handout.

B. Go over “Types of Domestic Violence” handout from the Alabama Marriage Handbook.

(1) This information largely comes from Hendrie Weisinger, *Dr. Weisinger's Anger Work-Out Book* (Quill: New York, 1985).

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