

Where It All Leads

Number four in the series: *Make Peace Not War*
Biblical tools for handling conflict
January 23 & 24, 2010

Drama, Intro:

We've all felt anxious over conflict and awkward trying to resolve it. Pain over people problems is part of life. You've been offended in the past and you'll be offended again. How we deal with troubles displays our Christian character or lack of it. Fortunately, we can change and grow; and that is why we're studying this topic together.

When I meet with a couple planning their wedding, it's always interesting to hear about the evolution of their relationship. A big milestone in the process of two people coming together is when they realize *where* the relationship is heading. Sometimes one or both of the partners puts on the brakes at that point, saying, "I'm not sure I want to go *where this leads*." That is a time for decision. Some people don't think they can make that commitment. It is scary to admit *where the road leads*.

In our series, we've been studying the Bible to learn how to handle conflict. It's time to recognize *where this process points* and decide if we really want to go there.

The target is reconciliation; that's where it all leads. Reconciliation means two opposing parties resolve their conflict and come back together. And what I want to say today about reconciliation is that it requires *forgiveness*. Reconciliation is the desired result of all that we've covered so far; *it is the destination* of all these principles and practices of conflict management. And *forgiveness is how we get there*. Without full forgiveness, the offense is not resolved and we're right back where we started.

When we talk about forgiveness, we want to be careful that we are working with the right definition and an accurate description. Forgiveness can mean different things

to different people. Let's lay some groundwork on *what it means* to forgive. We'll also learn *how* we can forgive and *why* we should forgive.

1. To forgive is unnatural. Let's admit that. But it can be supernatural!

To forgive is hard! It's difficult to find the courage to pursue reconciliation. It's easier to *boil in bitterness* and dwell on the *poisonous pain*. The *normal* thing to do is to paste on a fake smile and bury bad memories, only to have the resentment surface at inopportune times. *The natural thing* is to react to being hurt with harsh words.

To forgive *doesn't seem right*. It flies in the face of justice. We want people to *get what they deserve*. We want *other* people to experience the consequences of their choices; but we want mercy *for ourselves!* When someone crosses us, we rehearse what we should've said. We hold on to our hurts and stew over unresolved grudges. We stuff our feelings or blow our tops. It seems *neither fair nor easy* to let go of *our right to wrong* others.

When we've been injured, we want to retaliate in hostility by taking vengeance. **1 Pet. 3:9 - Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult**. This seems unnatural. But we can approach forgiveness supernaturally by giving it to God.

1 Pet 2:21-23 - Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps. ...When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. What an example: put yourself and the situation in God's hands. Trust that God will strengthen you and set things right some day. There is hope because God gives the strength. **Luke 18:27 - What is impossible with men is possible with God.**

A hurting friend was talking about how he is managing after a terrible betrayal: *From a merely human viewpoint forgiveness is very difficult. I knew I couldn't move on while harboring this hurt. I could see that I would be stifled and sick. So I asked the one who is able to forgive anyone to help me. That's the only way to forgive the huge violations. God's forgiveness is like the deepest ocean.*

2. To forgive is to set someone free.

In fact, it sets two people free!

Mt 18:21-35: The unforgiving person is handed over to torturers! When we hold on to how much others owe us, we only hurt ourselves. *"Unforgiveness is the poison we drink hoping others will die."*

Seminary president: *"If I insist on dredging up the bitter sludge of some past offense, it is my own spirit that becomes poisoned. The world is filled with wounded Christians who refuse to let the guilty person go, only to find that they are the ones who are bound, shut off from loving relationships, forever turbulent within."* Forgiveness set the captives free! The offender and the offended!

*You mean let them off the hook? When you forgive it doesn't change the past but it sure will change the future! To forgive doesn't mean to pretend that it didn't hurt. It *did* and *does* hurt. But *what we do* with that hurt is what matters. Withholding forgiveness and staying actively angry is unhealthy in every way: emotionally, relationally, physically and spiritually. **Eph 4:26,27 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.** What is that saying? Not all anger is sinful but it easily becomes so when we *stew* over it. *Unresolved anger is a tool in the hands of the enemy. He wants the wound to fester.**

The alternative to dwelling on disappointment is to take control of your thoughts and yield them to God. **2 Cor. 10:5 ...we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.** We don't allow our minds to wander haphazardly out of bounds but discipline ourselves mentally. Have you been at the mercy of your thoughts? Now *you* take *them* captive. Break free from the bondage of bitterness. You can be free

T - What is actually happening when we forgive?

3. To forgive is to extend grace.

Fortunately, God gives us enough to give away.

The guy in **Matt. 18** received great grace. To refuse to pass it on is a slap in the face of the Master. *Recognize the relative size of offenses.* We should be *overjoyed* that God has forgiven our huge debt. How others have hurt us is *insignificant in comparison*. Who are we to hold anything against anyone? **Rom: by grace we are saved.** That's how we're forgiven.

You may say: *I don't want to extend grace. The creep who hurt me doesn't deserve it.* Neither did we; that is what grace means - *undeserved* favor. As recipients of God's grace, we are to extend it to others. **Col 3:13 - Forgive as the Lord forgave you.** **Eph 4:32 - forgive each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.** How has he forgiven? Totally! **Jer. 31:34b - I will forgive their iniquity and their sin I will remember no more** (**Is 43:25 is similar**). Wait! He's omniscient. God doesn't forget in the sense of *being unable to recall* and he doesn't expect that from us. In order to think right about what it means for God to *forget* something we need to think of what it means when *he remembers* something or someone. It means to *refocus* attention on them. So, to *not remember* is to *choose not to give attention* to the matter. It is not that he *can't* remember but that he *won't*. He *chooses* not to hold the past against us. **Ps. 103:10 - He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities.** Instead, *Jesus paid our penalty.* **Ps 130:3,4 - If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness....** *To forgive is to not keep score.* **1 Cor 13:5 Love...doesn't take into account a wrong suffered.** We're to pass on this grace. Don't worry, there is enough! **Rom 5:17 God's abundant provision of grace...** *Extravagant!*

But don't misunderstand grace. *God's forgiveness* is not a denial of the severity of the offense. Don't confuse forgiving with making an excuse: *It wasn't really wrong*

under the circumstances. He couldn't help it. Forgiveness is rooted in reality. Forgiveness calls the wrongdoing what it is. *It was wrong but God is a forgiving God and I'm going to extend that same forgiveness because of and by his grace.*

4. To forgive is active, not passive. *It involves what we do as well as what we don't do!*

It is not just shrugging your shoulders. It is more than brushing off the offense. *I don't hate him; isn't that enough?* Forgiveness is not primarily about your feelings; it is a decision. In fact, it involves several decisions and effort! **Rom 14:19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.** **Eph 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.** **Heb 12:13 Make every effort to live in peace with all men...** **Ps 34:14 seek peace and pursue it!**

Earlier I read a couple verses that tell us we're to forgive as God does. I want to reread them, this time in context, so we can get a more complete picture of what needs to be done. These passages show that forgiveness is not merely passive indifference, but it involves a variety of activities on our part. **Eph. 4:31-5:2; Col 3:12-14.**

Those verses give us plenty to do. Of course, sometimes we can't do enough because it is not entirely up to us. **Rom 12:18 - If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.**

5. To forgive is commanded. Don't think of it as optional. *It is part of what it means to follow Christ!*

Forgiveness is something Christ *requires* from his followers. He took it to a wild level. **Luke 6:27,28 - But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who ill-treat you.**

Followers of Christ are to *really follow*, even when that involves *self-denial*. We are to *emulate his example* and do *what he did*. Jesus asked the Father to forgive those who were killing him. He extended *undeserved unilateral forgiveness*.

Forgiveness is a conspicuous part of the Lord's Prayer: Mt 6:12 - Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. Then he elaborations on this petition: 14,15 - For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins. It doesn't sound optional, does it?

Wait, I thought that we were forgiven based on the work of Christ on the cross! We are. The act of showing mercy through forgiving does not earn salvation, but it is a manifestation of saving faith. It reveals the condition of our hearts. These verses show that forgiving others is central to what it means to be Christian.

You're saying I have to forgive? How can I pretend? You don't have to! That is not what God is asking. Forgiveness doesn't trivialize sin and mean you have to say it is okay. *The fact that it had to be forgiven shows that it wasn't okay.* It doesn't *give permission* to go do it again. Forgiving doesn't mean *you have to endure being stepped on like a doormat*. It doesn't ignore the obvious. Forgiveness does not always wipe out consequences. It does not immediately restore the relationship with full trust and privileges; that would make a mockery of the offense.

What does it mean to forgive? Let me lead you in a **prayer** that spells it out. In fact, this prayer challenges you to actually fill in a name. Do so, silently as we point this lesson up to God.

Page 137 in smaller peacemaking book. .

Haiti Relief Fund

You've been hearing about the terrible tragedy in Haiti. Christians around the world want to respond appropriately, with compassion and tangible help. Experts are saying that this is not the time to go there or to collect supplies, because of the congestion of transportation. The need is for prayer and money. Here at Dayspring we don't want to react with just a one-time response, we want to be of help for months to come, as the needs won't go away any time soon. Your pastors and elders had discussed how we can do the most good now and how to sustain that effort as part of our church's missional effort. We think it is especially important to support local churches in Haiti and organizations that are networked with them to minister to the needs. In God's eyes, our church is connected to what he is doing through churches there. 1 Corinthians 12:26 **If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it...**

We have confidence in many very reputable organizations like Compassion, World Vision, are others who are doing the right things the right way and will continue to do so. A task force here is evaluating which organizations are the *most* streamlined, the *most* effective and *best fit* our overall missions values. So, we're developing a strategy *for the long term*. But *for now*, we need to pray and give.

1. After each service, there will be a prayer gathering in room 302.
2. And after each service we will be receiving a special offering at the exit doors. What you can give may seem like *just a drop in the bucket*, but together we can flood Haiti with loving support in the name of Jesus Christ. 100% of what is received will go to the **Haiti Relief Fund**.

Pray

**Extra random thoughts that were not used in this message:
(More Meat)**

Can you imagine if someone you respect knew all your thoughts? God does!

1 Sam. 16:7 - God doesn't look at us like other people do, seeing only the outside.

Rev. 2:18 - Christ's eyes are like of a blazing fire.

Rev. 2:19 - He says that He knows the deeds of His people.

Rev. 2:23b - He is depicted as the one who searches hearts and minds. (Ps. 7:9)

Ps. 33:13-15 - He looks down and sees all, He understands.

Ps. 139:1-12 - He knows our thoughts; we have no privacy, even in our minds.

Pr. 5:21 - A man's ways are in full view of the Lord, and He examines all his paths.

Pr. 24:12 - Do you think He doesn't know? Don't pretend.

Jer. 16:17 - My eyes are on all their ways, nothing is hidden, nothing is concealed.

Jer. 17:10 - He sees the heart, examines the mind.

Jer. 23:24 - God is near. Can a man hide so that God doesn't know what is going on?

Lk. 16:15 - Jesus said that God knows our hearts.

1 Thes. 2:4 - He examines the motives of our hearts.

Heb. 4:12,13 - Nothing is hidden.

Mark 7:21-"From within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts..."

Let's not misunderstand this idea of judging. [Matt 7:1-5](#). Jesus is not saying that we are never to judge anyone but

that spiritual introspection is necessary before spiritual confrontation. It is not any critical thinking that is condemned, but hypocrisy.

The person who desperately wants to be first can't stand the success of another.

When do we need to speak up? When God's reputation is being dishonored. Rom 2:23,24. Is their behavior causing people to dishonor God? Does it damage your relationship? Then it is too serious to let go. Address it.

It is not about winning the argument.

Not a competition.

A very clear explanation of how the person has gone wrong is less powerful than a clear demonstration of loving concern.

We must match our method to the individual situation.

2 Tim 4:2c "correct, rebuke and encourage..."

Here are three different ways to apply God's Word.

Other lists are longer. There is more than one way to use this tool. Consider what is needed in your situation. Adjust your presentation according to the specific circumstances.

One way to differentiate between these words is to note that the first is an appeal to reason, the second: an appeal to the conscience, and the third: an appeal to the will. **R.** Some people harbor doubts and must be convinced through careful reasoning. Others have fallen into sin and must be straightened out. Still others are disheartened and fearful and must be encouraged. Same message, different manner.

[1 Thes. 5:14 - warn those who are idle, encourage the timid, help the weak....](#) You don't console the guy who is leaving

his wife: "She's not as pretty as she used to be and you've found someone younger, oh, you poor thing, I feel your pain." No! You give that boy some pain! Call him to back to his vows! Similarly, you don't beat the hurting over the head: "Pancreatic cancer? You must be in sin - repent!" No!

Comfort the afflicted, afflict the comfortable.

Note: you *match the method*; you don't *mess with the message*. We aren't free to edit God's Word. We are to communicate the unchanging word in the contemporary vernacular, but not recompose its content.

We must demonstrate sensitivity and be diligent.

4:2d "with great patience and careful instruction."

People tend to choke when the Bible is jammed down their throats. Did this happen to you?

Patience is needed because many good things take time. You don't harvest before the fruit is ripe. Your children need you to follow through with this part of this verse!

Careful instruction, as opposed to careless. Gently help people to understand.

Confront, speaking the truth in love. Other solutions seem to be easier. They are. They are cheaper. But His ways are not our ways. **My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,** says the Lord. **"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts"** (Isaiah 55:8-9).

Challenging to stay engaged when all you want to do is to walk away. Easy to bury feelings, but unhealthy. Speaking up can be tough. God says to overlook small offenses. We

want to put hem under the magnifying glass. Build a wall may seem satisfying. Talking them down may feel satisfying, but it is sin. It seems like God doesn't get it.

Trust him.

At some point, enough is enough. You know you need to speak up. Can't let go. Can't overlook it. Minor things are piling up and it is now a major issue.

If you saw someone affected by a physical problem, you'd try to help. But when it is moral or spiritual problem. Their issue causes others pain. And hurts them as well.

Our tendency is to ignore the issue. Or to disconnect the relationship. If we address the issue, they will think we are arrogant, on a superiority complex. Judgmental. Why not? We have something to lose. It is awkward, scary.

Rule: deal directly. Talk to, not about.

Do we go around randomly correcting people? NO.

Matt 18:15 - go nose to nose and lay out the list of offenses? What is the important thing? Justice? Or helping the other person? Force them to admit? The context has to do with tracking down a wandering sheep. Rejoice when it is back in the fold. The next part of the teaching points out that we are to demonstrate the same mercy we have received. We are imitate the Shepherds love. Don't hunt people down and make them comply with your expectations and meet your demands.

Prov 24:11,12 - don't excuse yourself if you aren't doing what you know needs to be done.

James 5:19,20 - Bring the person back! Their life is at stake.

Others need your guidance: Use promiscuity as an example. *You're giving part of yourself away that you can't get back. Certainly forgiveness is available, but you're dismantling yourself, piece by piece.*

Let them do their own thing? Is that in their best interest?

Gal 6:2 Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Handling Criticism

Do we feel obligated to leap to the defense and cut someone off mid-complaint? Possibly to retaliate in return?

Ex. 18. Moses: I don't think that any of us like to receive advice, particularly if we have been burning the midnight oil and may be a little burnt out, "the audacity!" We are being detailed to death and someone else comes along and pretends to know the score. Internal ambition, external intimidation. Fighting to keep head above water. Submerged under a sea of needs. What to do when someone throws a life saver and it hits you in the head?

Flow: 1-6 - Father in law comes to town. 7-12 - They enjoy fellowship. 13 - Jethro observed Mo's work. 14 - questioned it. 15,16 - Mo explains, 17-23 = Jethro critiqued system. 24-26 - Moses implemented changes.

This example of Moses makes a specific point: There are times when the criticism is constructive and we should accept it.

Nehemiah review: ch 1 - Neh, cupbearer to king Art. is in Suza, capital of Persian empire. Heard news of plight of

Jerusalem, wept, prayed and planned. Ch 2 - Waited, asked for permission to travel the 800 miles and initiate a program to rebuild the walls of the city. He inspected the situation, motivated the people. Meet his critics in 2:10, but see 2:19,20!

In ch 3, he assigned the work and the project got off to a successful start.

Happens again in ch 4. Sanballat furious, mocked them, "What are these feeble Jews doing?" Tobiah chimes in, "What they are building-- if a fox should jump on it, he would break their stone wall down!" Is mockery innocuous? "Sticks and stones..." No, ridicule is effective, easy and demoralizing. It strikes at hidden insecurities. They wouldn't have cared much except that Neh was being so effective.

Notice what he didn't do - retaliate. Neh had a unique approach to problem solving - prayer! He recognized that he was in spiritual warfare and he brought the matter to God's attention. He saw the attack accurately, they were taunting God. He fought back on his knees. Didn't lower himself to get into a shouting match. Gets worse - 4:1-6 mockery, 7-23 rumors and threats of open attack. Ch 5 internal disunity. Ch 6 - Personal attacks against Neh. General ridicule turn to personal intimidation. Amateur theologian Carl Perkins wrote the profound lyric, "Uh, huh, honey, stay offa my shoes..." Your blue suede shoes will get scuffed up in life. 6:5-9 Countered it by being very direct!

This example of Neh makes a specific point: There are times when the criticism is destructive; we should reject it.

The "wise man" in Proverbs

Reproof, correction, rebuke, admonition, counsel, guidance, advice. Suggest an alternative.

Prov. 9:8,9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning.

Prov. 10:8 The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be thrown down.

Prov. 12:15 The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, But a wise man is he who listens to counsel. We need it, It functions like pain, it calls attention to an unhealthy state of things.

Prov. 13:1 A wise son accepts his father's discipline, But a scoffer does not listen to rebuke.

Prov. 16:21 The wise in heart will be called discerning, And sweetness of speech increases persuasiveness.

Prov. 19:20 Listen to counsel and accept discipline, That you may be wise the rest of your days. Also leads to understanding and prudence.

Prov. 29:11 A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.

Need it 12:1; 13:18; 15:32.

15:1 - gentle answer turns away wrath. Their motivation is between them and God, you look for truth.

Is the criticism valid? 3:11,12 - do not reject the discipline of the Lord. Is this just someone's opinion or does it find its origin in the word of God? Is the motive pure? Mouth can be used to destroy - 11:9 - is the person looking to tear you down or build you up? Eph 4. Wrecking crew poem.

Options - fear [dog barks at reflection in mirror - thinks it is confronting an intruder] create dependency? Constant need to be right, controller is dependent upon everyone else's conformity to bolster his own sagging ego. Display their own knowledge or skill? Only displays emptiness of heart.

Others 12:18; 16:18.

There are those who think that they have the spiritual gift of complaining. It makes a difference if you are hearing feedback from someone who is always seeing fault and someone who rarely speaks a discouraging word. There are people who would look at the grandeur of a peacock displaying its plumage and comment on its skinny legs. Consider the source. Take them with a grain of salt; don't totally ignore them. Some criticism is motivated by love and should be received with a teachable spirit. These examples from the Proverbs make a specific point: Even when criticism is painful, we can learn from it.

Jesus

Lk. 22:63; 23:35-37. 1 Pet 2:21-25. Why endure such treatment?

People called him a glutton, a drunk, a friend of sinners and demon possessed! He was misunderstood, and rejected. He said to pray for our enemies! Mt 5:43-47. He was not overcome with bitterness. Heb - we have not yet shed blood.

The example of Jesus makes a point: When unfairly criticized, we should consider Christ.

Said follow my example only once. Jn 13 - washing the disciples' feet. Setting aside rights.

Criticism is unfortunately a common problem in families. Like physical families, the spiritual family also suffers from this malady. Some have suggested we simply have a complaints department in the back but never have the window open.

Just don't address it? Gal 6:1. Intervene. Waking up a friend in need is more loving than letting him sleep.

Do I need to take this issue personally? Even Joseph didn't.
Gen 50:20 God intended it for good.

Prov. 23:9 - Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words. *This isn't working.*

Prov. 9:8,9 Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser, Teach a righteous man, and he will increase his learning.

Prov. 10:8 The wise of heart will receive commands, But a babbling fool will be thrown down.

Don't say you are at the mercy of your mind. Decide to dwell on things that are good. **Phil 4:8 - Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.** It is up to you. The *choice* is yours.

Rom. 12:19 -Never take your own revenge... but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

Ps 86:5 - You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you.

We don't get what we deserve: that's mercy. And we get what we don't deserve: that's grace.

God has forgiven my sin. **Rom 3:23; 6:23; James 2:10; Titus 3:5.** I deserve the spiritual death penalty.

Eph 4:26,27 - "In your anger, do not sin." [NIV] Control your anger, do not let it control you. Differentiates between anger and sin but implies that uncontrolled anger can lead

there. All anger ≠ sin. Jesus [Jn 2:13; Mt 21:12] "Anger of God."

Matt 5:23,24 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

Mark 11:25 And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions.

Mt 5:7 Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
James 2:13 ...judgment without mercy will be shown to whoever has not shown mercy.

Luke 17:3,4 - If your brother ...sins against you seven times a day, and returns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him.

Is. 55:6-9

Is 1:18 - God offers forgiveness.

1 Pet 4:8 "Above all, keep fervent in you love for one another because love covers a multitude of sins." **Prov 19:11 - overlook a transgression.**

Prov 20:22 - Do not say, "I will repay evil"; wait for the Lord, and He will save you. Focus on what God will do and what he already has done! Trust in God to be just. Taking out your frustrations on them does no good. **James**

1:20 - man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. Retaliation doesn't help.

Move on; don't live in the past. Look forward to the next chapter of your life.

Moments of pain feel permanently frozen in our minds.

Dwelling on offenses, holding grudges.

Rom 3:22.

Matt 18:15ff gives guidelines. Sin is sin and we don't pretend it is not.

Rom 15:1 the strong bear the support the weak. 1The 5:14 .
2 Cor 2:7,8.

Nothing reveals legalists like the way they treat the weak.
John 8.

If I have any standing with God, how did I get there? God's grace! Bask in his grace that you may have it to offer others.

"It's much easier to act like a Christian than to react like one. Anyone can put on an act. But your reactions reveal what is really in your heart." □ - Mark Batterson

How's that working for you?

In a context concerning forgiving **Col 3:15 - Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.** *Up to you! What do you let rule in your heart?*

On Peace.

1 Peter 3:8 Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. 9 Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult, but with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For, "Whoever would love life and see good days must keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech. 11 He must turn from evil and do good; he must seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."
From Ps 34:14

2 Th 3:16.

Peace is a blessing from God: Ps 29:11.

Someday, perfect peace: Is. 2:4.

The answer needs to go beyond human comprehension because the problems do. We do need God, but we have a part: Heb 12:14; Col 3:15; Rom 15:13.

God grants inner peace that tames our turmoils within.
Peace of mind. Inner serenity. Satisfaction of soul.

How we speak: Col 4:5; Eph 4:29,30 - If we are now alive in Christ, then we must not speak rotten words! Only words that build up. Mt 12:33,34 - words are an index of character! Don't want to hurt God - grieve the Spirit! Eph 4:31,32 - Hold your breath and count to 20. Try to understand the problem - sometimes it is not you at all. Maybe they're under pressure. Try to be objective and impartial. Behave in a way that does not give the person any new complaint! Prov 15:28; 19:11.

We must watch what we say. Words are very powerful!
James 3:2-12; Mt 5:29,30. You don't love me. We tend to remember critical statements.

This person is not your enemy! Satan is. No retaliation.
Problem solving. There are no points to gain. No contest to win. Why push buttons?

Gentle answer turns away wrath.

Some people think that they are always right. Explode.

Need to defuse.

Caught off guard. Natural action for some is to fight back!

Others tend to flee, to escape.

Col 3:12,13

What do the following verses have in common: Rom 12:17,18,21; 1 Thes. 5:15; 1 Pet. 3:9?

God says that vengeance and retribution are up to him (Dt. 32:35; Rom. 12:19).

Luke 6:27,28. Love your enemies.

Got to handle it God's way.

This takes trust.

Count on his care for you.

Prov 3:5,6 Trust empowers you to act in obedience.

Eph 4:1-3 - make every effort... it is going to be difficult.

We are scorekeepers. Do we keep track, write lists, and make mental notes? Think of the records we keep. Make a list! Do we tend to remember offenses as well?

Take a look at Ps. 37:7,8. What is involved in being "still before the Lord" rather than fretting over the inequities of life?

Read 1 Peter 5:7. This verse tells us that we can cast all our anxiety on God, knowing that he cares for us. What would this look like? Can you envision trusting in God, rather than nursing your grudge?

Look up Rom. 12:19. Consider what it would involve for you to let God take care of the situation that is currently bothering you.

Dan Schaeffer - *"Forgiveness is intentionally gazing again at our wounder and our wounds and deciding that we will no longer continue the role of the victim."*

