



**Biblical Suggestions
for Resolving
Conflict**
Joshua 22:1-34

Observations

- **Conflict is an inevitable part of life: (Learn to expect it)**
 - Marriages
 - Co-workers
 - Neighbors
 - Family Members
 - Church Members

How Does a Child of God Try To Resolve Conflict Using God's Instructions?

How Do We Try To Bring Peace to a Situation That Is Obviously Tension-Filled?



Background Information

- **The Children of Israel had left Egyptian bondage and were on their way to Canaan, the land God promised them**
- **Numbers 32 tells us that as they travelled on their way to Canaan, they passed through what they thought was some very rich and valuable territory for the livestock they had**
- **Two of the Twelve tribes, Reuben, Gad and $\frac{1}{2}$ of another, Manasseh, asked Moses if they could just remain there and not go into the land God had promised them**
- **Moses said if those $2 \frac{1}{2}$ tribes first help their brothers, the other 9 and $\frac{1}{2}$ tribes, to drive out the enemies once they all cross the Jordan river, he would then permit them to return to the land that they wanted east of the Jordan river**

Observations

- In Joshua 22, Joshua commends those 2 ½ tribes for keeping their commitment to the other tribes:

“You have done all that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded. For a long time now—to this very day—you have not deserted your fellow Israelites but have carried out the mission the Lord your God gave you. Now that the Lord your God has given them rest as He promised, return to your homes in the land that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you on the other side of the Jordan.” Joshua 22:1-4

- Scholars suggest that it took Israel about seven years to clear Canaan for the Israelite nation
- Joshua tells the 2 ½ tribes that you have kept your part of the commitment, and now I will honor our part
- But he reminds them, after they depart from the rest of the nation, to remain faithful to God (continue to respect God’s word in all you do). That’s what we tell our children when they leave us.

Observations

- So the 2 ½ tribes leave the Israelite nation in harmony with the others, but the peace they enjoyed changes to friction:

“And when they came to Geliath near the Jordan in the land of Canaan, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh built an imposing altar there by the Jordan. And when the Israelites heard that they had built an altar on the border of Canaan at Geliath near the Jordan on the Israelite side, the whole assembly gathered at Shiloh to go to war against them.” Joshua 22:10-12

- Now after fighting together, they’re about to fight each other
- One side did something “misunderstood” by the other side
- The 2 ½ tribes built what was thought to be a “rival altar” which the rest of Israel thought was a “visual rebellion” against the Lord.

Observations

- **Note that if the 2 ½ tribes had communicated their intentions ahead of time, they could have avoided being at the brink of war with their own brethren**
- **Someone has said, “People are like horses in a way. You can lead them just about anywhere, but they don’t like to be startled. If you surprise them, you might get kicked!”**
- **In marital relationships, it’s important to get “buy in” with your intentions especially when you’re planning something different (Ex. like discussing with your spouse a new boat before you buy it)**
- **You can expect “relationship tension,” when communication in a relationship is poor.**

What Instructions to Us Are Given in This Story About Resolving Conflict?

#1 Ask the Right Questions Before You Accuse Someone

- When speaking only out of anger you may say some things that you will regret later
- 9 ½ of the tribes of Israel are angry with the 2 ½ tribes and are ready to go to war. They gathered for war and sent their leaders (one from each tribe), to confront the tribes that they thought were guilty. This is what they said to them, vs 15:

“... How could you break faith with the God of Israel like this? How could you turn away from the Lord and build yourselves an altar in rebellion against him now? Was not the sin of Peor enough for us? Up to this very day we have not cleansed ourselves from that sin even though a plague fell on the community of God.”

- Now the Israelite nation begins to compare the actions of these 2 ½ tribes to some of the worst rebellions against God suffered in Israelite history

The “Sin of Peor”

- **While God was leading the Israelite nation from Egypt to the promised land, the Israelite men began to indulge in sexual immorality with some of the women in the cities along the way (Numbers 25)**
- **Because of their voluntary disobedience to God, He sent a plague to the people that caused the death of 24,000 Israelites. That’s why we are concerned about COVID spread (what I choose to do may affect your outcome)!**
- **Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, the high priest, followed an Israelite man taking a forbidden woman to his own tent and ran a spear through the body of the man and the stomach of the woman, Numbers 25:6-9. Then God called off the plague.**
- **Their point to the other 2 ½ tribes was: What we see as your disobedience may cause us to pay the consequences**

Next They Brought Up the Sin of Achan in Their Rebellious History (P.T.S.D.)

- In Joshua 7, during their battle with Jericho, a man named Achan had stolen some devoted items that they were told not to keep; and he hid them in his own tent for his own use.
- Their point was that the “whole community suffered” due to Achan’s disobedience. He wasn’t the only one who suffered consequences for his behavior. There was “sin in the camp!”
- 36 men died in Israel’s next battle because of Achan’s sin in the battle of Jericho. And so, their thinking was: This altar you have separately built is wrong and could get us all in trouble with God!
- We learn here that wrong assumptions can lead to false accusations! We should ask before we accuse, hoping for the best. This is what the Israelite leaders failed to do

How Did the 2 ½ Tribes Answer Their Accusers?

#2 They Spoke the Truth in Love

- If they had answered in the same way that they were accused, their conflict could have escalated to violence with their brothers. Listen to how they answered the Israelite nation, summarized here, Joshua 22:22-29:

“... The Mighty One, God, the Lord! The Mighty One, God, the Lord! He knows! And let Israel know! If this has been in rebellion or disobedience to the Lord, do not spare us this day ... If we have built our own altar to turn away from the Lord and to offer burnt offerings and sacrifices may the Lord himself call us into account.”

- Notice their disposition. Proverbs 15:1, ***“A soft answer turns away wrath but harsh words stir up anger”***

***“No! We did it for fear that some day your descendants might say to ours, ‘What do you have to do with the Lord, the God of Israel? The Lord has made the Jordan, the boundary between us and you—you Reubenites and Gadites! You have no share in the Lord.’ So your descendants might cause ours to stop fearing the Lord. That is why we said, ‘Let us get ready and build an altar—but not for ... sacrifices.*”**

On the contrary, it is to be a witness between us and you and the generations that follow, that we will worship the Lord ... Then in the future your descendants will not be able to say to ours, ‘You have no share in the Lord.’”

And we said, ‘If they ever say this to us, or our descendants, we will answer: Look at the replica of the Lord’s altar, which our ancestors built not for sacrifices, but as a witness between us and you.’

- **How do you know a church is scriptural?**

Does it seek to replicate the teachings of God’s word?

Paul Sent The Young Man Timothy to the City of Corinth to “Replicate the Church” There, 1 Corinthians 4:17

“For this reason I have sent to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.”

- That’s why it’s Important that this local church fellowship replicates New Testament Christianity, 1 Corinthians 1:10
- This is why churches split on our society
- Rather than “replicate,” they begin to “legislate” church doctrine which generates “vain worship” to God, Matthew 15:7,8

#3 Both Sides Sought God's Glory

- When the nation of Israel heard the response from the tribes of Gad, Reuben, Manasseh they were pleased, vs.32-33

“... and the leaders returned to Canaan from their meeting with the Reubenites and Gadites ... and reported to the Israelites. They were glad to hear the report and praised God. And they talked no more about going to war against them to devastate the country where the Reubenites and Gadites lived.”

- At the end of the day with both sides, the conflict was:

How do we ALL glorify God?

- It wasn't about which side was right this time (keeping score)
- Paul even argues that when God's people have disputes it is better to “suffer wrong,” than to bring shame on the cause of Christ just because you are deprived of what you believe you're due, 1 Corinthians 6:7

The Plan of Salvation

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38

