

**Conflict Resolution PeaceMakers 4 G's Glorify God, Get the Speck out, Gently Confront, Go and be reconciled. Mt. 18 STOP Acronym**  
*James 4:10 Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up.*

**Pre-Step 1: Pray — Ask God if you should bring up a conflict**  
***How can you know when to talk and when to be quiet?***

**The Bible says at times it's best to remain silent.** If you bring up everything on your mind, you will drive people away.

*Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs. (Proverbs 10:12)*  
*A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult. (Proverbs 12:16)*

**On the other hand, some conversations simply need to happen** — even if they produce tension. In fact, there are times when a rebuke or exhortation is in order. **If you talk as a friend**, you can discuss painful things.

*Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses. (Proverbs 27:5-6)*

*As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another. (Proverbs 27:17)*

**Pre-Step 2: Pray — Ask God for a respectful attitude**

**Pray for a spirit of love, forgiveness and humility.**

**Pray for help to speak politely and respectfully.**

**Ask for wisdom to see your part in the problem.**

*Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. (Matthew 7:3-5)*

**Notice that Jesus gave us three steps in Matthew 7:3-5:**

- First, take the plank out of your own eye.
- Once you take the plank out of your own eye you can see clearly. (It's impossible to see clearly while the plank still is in your eye.)
- Once you admit and confront your own sins, you can help others. Think plane and oxygen mask.

**Pray for a servant's heart.** How can I be of help?

**Pray to have an eternal perspective.**

*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)*

## Use the STOP Acronym.

### **Step 1: Share wisely... (S TOP) Share your feelings:**

Put a lot of thought and care into how you begin your conversation so you can set a positive tone for all that follows. Don't say the first words that come to your mind. *Do you see a person who speaks in haste? There is more hope for a fool than for them. (Proverbs 29:20)* **Introduce your subject in a way that makes it as easy as possible for the other person to respond well.** Bring up things as a friend speaking to a friend, not as a warrior confronting an enemy. As the Bible says, *"pleasant words promote instruction" (Proverbs 16:21).*

**Choose a good time to talk. Meet privately.**

**Try one of these ways to Begin the conversation —**

- **Affirm the person.** The apostle Paul frequently used this technique in his letters. For example, although he had many critical things to write to the Corinthians, he began his first letter with recognition of strengths and words of encouragement (1 Corinthians 1:1-9).
- **Directly, but gently, introduce the topic.** Don't hint about what is bothering you. Be direct, but friendly. For example, you could say, "I am feeling tense about something and I really want to work it out. Could we talk?"
- **Express your feelings instead of attacking.** For example, you could say, "I felt really hurt when you interrupted me," instead of, "You are such a jerk."

*Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. (Galatians 6:1)*

### **Step 2: "Tell the Truth" as you speak and listen respectfully.**

**S T Tell the "Truth"**

**Determine that you, personally, will talk in a loving, godly manner** regardless of how the other person talks. The way you talk usually is more important than whether you are right or wrong, whether your spouse listens to you, or whether you get your way. In other words, the process usually is more important than the result. **Speak courteously as a friend, not as an enemy.** Demonstrate love, patience, and wisdom, regardless of how they talk. As Paul wrote, "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up" (1 Corinthians 8:1).

*Pleasant words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones. (Proverbs 16:24) By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (John 13:35)*

\_\_\_ **Listen intently.** Try to see through others' eyes.

\_\_\_ **Speak courteously.** Never use filthy language. (Read James 3:10.)

\_\_\_ **Share feelings** and opinions without attacking.

\_\_\_ **Make your point fairly quickly.** Avoid long speeches.

\_\_\_ **Seek to minister to** the other person.

### **Step 3: Outline a Plan (STOP) Outline a plan**

- \_\_\_ **Be gracious.** Be willing to agree to disagree but affirm your unity.
- \_\_\_ **Outline a plan and have ongoing talks** if necessary. What can we do?
- \_\_\_ **Submit to one another in Christ Eph. 5:21**
- \_\_\_ **Brainstorm possible resolutions.** Option neither of you thought about.
- \_\_\_ **Seek mutual resolutions** (“win/win”), not personal victories.
- \_\_\_ **Ask, “What would Jesus want me to say or talk?”**
- \_\_\_ **Speak honestly.**
- \_\_\_ **Realize that people remember things differently.**
- \_\_\_ **Stay on the subject at hand.** Don’t keep bringing up new topics.
- \_\_\_ **Avoid provocative words** such as “always” and “never,”
- \_\_\_ **Control my anger.**

*He who loves a quarrel loves sin; he who builds a high gate invites destruction. (Proverbs 17:19)*

*It is to a man’s honor to avoid strife, but every fool is quick to quarrel. (Proverbs 20:3)*

\_\_\_ Ask for and receive, say **“I’m sorry, Will you forgive me.”**

*(Eph. 4:32 Instead be kind to one another, compassionate, forgiving one another, Just as God in Christ also forgave you.)*

### **Step 4: PRAY TOGETHER (STOP) PRAY TOGETHER**

There is no single pattern for how your discussion should conclude. However, the following guidelines will help you end your talks courteously and peacefully.

#### **Pray — Ask God for a respectful attitude**

**Hold hands when possible.**

**Pray for a spirit of love, forgiveness and humility.**

**Pray for help to speak politely and respectfully.**

*May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)*

*Set a guard over my mouth, O LORD; keep watch over the door of my lips. (Psalm 141:3)*

**Pray to understand that conflicts are normal.** Expect problems. Everyone (including you) is imperfect.

**Pray for a servant’s heart.** How can I be of help?

**Pray to have an eternal perspective.**

*For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. (2 Corinthians 4:17-18)*

Remember Jesus' directive in Mt. 7:7. ASK

"Humble yourself before the Lord and He will lift you up." James 4:10