

Biblical Foundations**A. The Gospel and Biblical Peacemaking**

Genesis 1–4

Genesis 3:15 → Romans 16:20

- Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.”
- Romans 16:20, The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.
 - Our God is the God of Peace (Rom 15:33; 16:20; Phil. 4:9; Heb 13:20)
 - We can summarize God’s whole plan of redemption as his peacemaking work!¹

Four aspects of God’s peacemaking work in Romans:

- 1) Vertical peace (Rom 1:7; 2:9–11; 3:17; 5:1–2; 8:6–8; also Num 6:24–26; Isa 57:18–21; Eph 2:11–18)
- 2) Internal peace (Rom 8:6; 15:13; also John 14:27; Phil 4:6–9)
- 3) Horizontal peace (Rom 12:18; 14:19; also Acts 24:16; Gal 5:22–23; Eph 4:3)
- 4) Global peace (Rom 16:20; also Rev 21–22)

Our Hope? God’s grace!

Our God is the God of peace. He has made peace with us, he pours out his peace into us, he calls and enables us to pursue peace with others, and one day he will bring final global peace.

B. Three Hope-filled Perspectives for Viewing Conflict

1. Conflicts are _____; therefore _____ them.

We are fallen sinners living with fallen sinners in a fallen world (1 John 1:8, 10; James 3:2; 1 Tim 1:15)

2. Conflicts are _____; therefore _____ them.

God calls us to resolve conflicts actively, diligently, and quickly

¹ On the Bible’s mega-theme—its storyline—of peace, including the new covenant as a covenant of peace, see Isaiah 32:14–18; Ezekiel 34:22–25; Haggai 2:6–9; Luke 1:76–79; 2:13–14; Ephesians 2:14–18; 6:15; Hebrews 13:20–21.

- Matthew 5:23–25, “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. Settle matters quickly....”
- Matthew 18:15, “If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.”
- Acts 24:16, So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.
- Romans 12:18, If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.
- Romans 14:19, Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification
- Ephesians 4:3, Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.
- 2 Timothy 2:22, Flee the evil desires of youth, and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.
- Hebrews 12:14, Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy. . . .

3. Conflicts are _____; therefore _____ them.

Opportunities to know and please God, to become more like Jesus, and to love and minister to others.

Three Steps in Pursuing Peace:

Step #1 – Please God

Step #2 – Repent (on heart and behavior levels)

Step #3 – Love

Step #1 – Please God (in response to God’s Grace)

A. What does it mean to please God?

To bring God _____ by being and doing what God _____, in response to God’s saving grace in Christ (2 Cor 5:9–10; 5:14–15; 2 Tim 2:3–4; 1 Thess 4:1–2; Ps 19:14; Heb 13:20–21)

2 Corinthians 5:9, So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

2 Corinthians 5:14–15, For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.

B. How can pleasing God change how we pursue peace amid conflict?

1. Failure to please God by you or the other person (or both) is the ultimate _____ of all conflict.
2. This goal keeps your focus on _____, not on the conflict issues or on the other _____.
3. In Christ, this goal is always _____, no matter how the other person acts.
4. This goal will _____ your efforts.
5. God _____ bless your efforts by bringing reconciliation.
Prov. 16:7, When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.
6. If you _____ please God, God will bring full reconciliation
7. Even if the other person does not seek to please God, you can experience God's comfort and _____.
8. You must _____ your commitment to please God, even if the other person does not or if the relationship gets worse.
9. When this goal governs you, the other person's sins, offenses, failures, etc. become _____, not _____, to please God and grow as a Christian.

The Pleasing God Prayer

My goal in life, at all times, must be to *Please God*, not myself or others.
Father, help me to please you in all my thoughts, words, actions, and desires.

PURSUING PEACE | HANDLING CONFLICT GOD'S WAY

SESSION 2: GETTING TO THE ROOT OF OUR CONFLICT

Step #2a – Repent (on the Heart Level)

A. God's Target: Our Hearts

The heart = the seat or control center of your _____ person—what rules, drives, and controls you—your beliefs, motives, will, desires, affections, intentions, etc.

- Psalm 51:10, Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.
- Proverbs 4:23, Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life.
- Proverbs 23:26, My son, give me your heart. . . .
- Jeremiah 17:5,7, Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. . . .⁷But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him.
- Ezekiel 14:5, “I will do this to recapture the hearts of the people of Israel, who have all deserted me for their idols.”
- Joel 2:12–13, “Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning.” Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.
- Matthew 12:34b, “For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.”
- Matthew 15:19–20a, “For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man ‘unclean’. . . .”
- Galatians 5:16–24, So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. ¹⁷ For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸ But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. ¹⁹ The acts of the sinful nature are obvious. . . . ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is. . . .
- Hebrews 3:12–13, See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.
- Hebrews 4:12–13, For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

B. Discerning Our Heart Demands

1. James addresses the problem of conflicts, especially their _____ , not just the behavior.

James 4:1–3, What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?

² You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.

You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³ When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures.

Two ways a desire can be sinful:

- When we desire something that God _____
- When we desire something _____ (an inordinate, ruling, selfish desire)

In James 4:1–3, these conflict-causing desires are not necessarily desires for evil things but inordinate, ruling desires for even good things.

- “I must have (or need,² deserve, demand) a _____ who _____”
- “What I think I need, or what I desperately want, from this person is _____.”

2. Three simple criteria to discern if a desire has become inordinate desire/demand:

- Does it consume my thoughts?
- Do I sin to get it?
- Do I sin when I don’t get it?

C. The Throne-Staircase Heart Diagram and Four Response Steps

What should we do when our desires become demands?

² For a biblical view of “needs,” study 2 Peter 1:3; Luke 10:38–42; Psalm 27; 73:23–28; and Matthew 4:4.

1. R_____ the source

2. R_____ of letting the desire rule me

James 4:6, But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Joel 2:12–13, “Even now,” declares the LORD, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting and weeping and mourning. Rend your heart and not your garments. Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate. . . .”

3. R_____ on God and his grace, provisions, and promises

Hebrews 4:16, Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Philippians 4:11–13, I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

4. R_____ sinful responses with Christlike graces and behavior

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Step #2b – Repent (on the Behavioral Level) Heart Level)³

A. Two Common Problems with Our Apologies:

1. We fail to _____ ourselves, repent, and _____

Luke 18:9–14

James 4:6, But he gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says:
“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

2. Even when we do, our confessions are _____

B. Christ’s Call to Examine and Own Our Part in a Conflict

Matthew 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.

Matthew 7:3–5, “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.”

³ For further help, see chapters 5–6 in my book, *Pursuing Peace*.

Sins of Commission and Omission Chart

	<u>Commission</u> (What I said/did that I <i>should not</i> have said/did)	<u>Omission</u> (What I did not say/do that I <i>should</i> have said/did)
W o r d s		
A c t i o n s		
H e a r t		

- 1) By a “plank” (or “log”) Jesus refers to our sinful _____.

- 2) Jesus presents the proper order: You must start with _____. Jesus uncovers our tendency to ignore *our* sinful offenses and dwell on how *others* have wronged us.

- 3) Jesus assigns a greater _____ to our sins than to the other person’s sins by calling ours “planks” and his “specks.” You must _____ upon your offenses as more serious.

C. Confessing Our Behavioral Offenses:

Step #1: Identify your offenses. Start with prayerful, self-examination, before God, in light of Scripture, and record a specific, for-your-eyes-only “plank list.”

- Hebrews 3:12–13, See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness.

- Psalm 139:23–24, Search me, O 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.

- James 1:22–25, Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does.

Step #2: Confess your sins to God, receive his forgiveness in Christ (Ps. 51:1–4; 32:1–5; 103; 130:3–4; Prov. 28:13; 1 John 1:9; etc.), and seek his help to _____ (Romans 6; Galatians 5; 2 Peter 1; Ephesians 4; etc.)

Step #3: Confess your sins to the other person and seek his forgiveness. (Ken Sande’s 7 A’s of Confession⁴)

1) A_____ everyone involved

2) A_____ “if,” “but,” and “maybe” language

3) A_____ specifically

4) A_____ the hurt (= express regret over how your sin hurt, embarrassed, provoked, or inconvenienced the other person).

5) A_____ consequences⁵

- Restitution (Luke 19:8–9; Exod. 21:18–35; 22:1–15; Lev. 6:1–5)
- Loss of privileges or possessions (2 Sam. 12)
- Slowness by the person to forgive or trust you (Prov. 18:19, An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city, and disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel.)

6) A_____ your behavior (or at least explain how you intend to do so)

What is your practical plan to deal with temptation and avoid recurrence?

7) A_____ for forgiveness, and allow time

- Don’t *demand* forgiveness. Allow time, especially if
- You may need to clarify what forgiveness means
- Beware if his response might minimize your sin

⁴ See Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, chap 6; and my use and application in *Pursuing Peace*, chap. 6.

⁵ Note: Christians must not confuse *consequences* with *punishment*. God *punished Jesus* our substitute for our sins (Rom 8:1,31–34; 1 Pet 2:24; 3:18). However, *we* might need to bear some *consequences* for our sins (2 Sam 12).

PURSUIING PEACE | **HANDLING CONFLICT GOD'S WAY** | **SESSION 4: SHOWING GOD'S GRACE TO "THAT" PERSON**

Step #3 – Love

A. Cultivate Grace Attitudes and Actions⁶

Colossians 3:12–15, Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³ Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴ And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵ Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

B. Including Forgiveness⁷

Two biblical categories of forgiveness: God's forgiveness of us (vertical) and our forgiveness of others (horizontal), but not "forgiving yourself"⁸

1. God's Forgiveness of Us in Christ

1) God's forgiveness is his decision, declaration, and _____ to not hold our sins _____ us, because of Jesus Christ

Hebrews 8:12, "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." (from Jer. 31:34; also Isa. 43:25)

Pictures of God's Forgiveness:

- Psalm 103:11–12, For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; ¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.
- Psalm 130:3–4, If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand? ⁴But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.
- Micah 7:19, You will again have compassion on us; you will tread our sins underfoot and hurl all our iniquities into the depths of the sea.
- Isaiah 1:18, "Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."
- Isaiah 38:17b, "In your love you kept me from the pit of destruction; you have put all my sins behind your back."
- Isaiah 44:22, "I have swept away your offenses like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."
- Jeremiah 50:20, "In those days, at that time," declares the LORD, "search will be made for Israel's guilt, but there will be none, and for the sins of Judah, but none will be found, for I will forgive the remnant I spare."

⁶ For further help, see chapter 7 in my book, *Pursuing Peace*.

⁷ For further help, see chapter 8 in my book, *Pursuing Peace*.

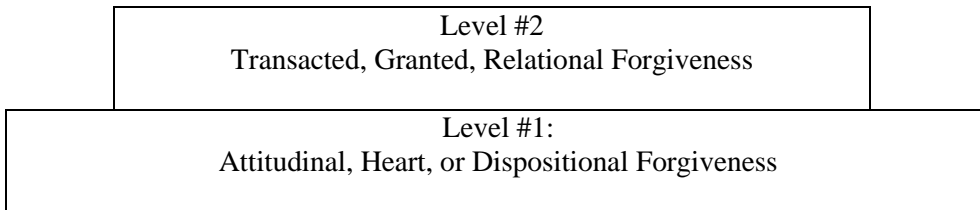
⁸ See my minibook, *Forgiveness: "I Just Can't Forgive Myself"* (P&R, 2000)

2) God’s forgiveness is our _____ and model for forgiving others

Ephesians 4:32, Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

Matthew 18:21 –35

2. Our Forgiveness of Others – On Two Levels



Level #1: Attitudinal	Level #2: Transacted
Jesus’s command in Mark 11:25, “And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive him, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”	Jesus’s command in Luke 17:3b–4, “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, ‘I repent,’ forgive him.”
Jesus’s prayer in Luke 23:34a, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”	God’s answer in Acts 2:36–41, esp. 2:38, Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.”
Vertical, in God’s presence, between God and me	Horizontal, in offender’s presence, between him and me
Unconditional; independent of offender repenting	Conditional; dependent on offender repenting
My commitments to God: 1) Entrust the offender to God and release him from my judgment (James 4:12; Gen 50:19; 1 Pet 2:22–23; 4:19; Rom 12:19–21) 2) Repent of and get rid of my bitterness (Eph 4:31–32) 3) Be willing to grant transacted forgiveness and reconcile, if he repents (Matt 18:12–14 with 18:15–17; Luke 17:3–4)	My commitments to the offender: To not raise offense to . . . 1) Myself (not dwell on) 2) The other person (not use against later) 3) Others (not gossip)

3. Practical Steps in Applying the Two Levels:

1) Always start with Level 1 Attitudinal/Heart Forgiveness

2) If needed, go directly ____ the offender to “show him his fault” (Matt 18:15) or “rebuke him” (Luke 17:3b), with the goal of reconciliation (Matt 18:15, to win him over) and restoration (Gal 6:1, restore him gently).

Lev 19:17–18, “Do not hate your brother in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in his guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”

3) If the person repents, grant Level 2 Transacted/Granted Forgiveness.

1 Cor 13:5, “[Love] is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.”

4) Then seek to _____ any remaining issues and seek to _____ the relationship to a proper level

Red flag: “I forgive him but I . . .”

5) As needed, continually _____ your promises and _____ of any violations

4. Dealing with Resentment and Bitterness

Remember God’s forgiveness, mercy, and compassion in your life and let that move you toward attitudinal forgiveness. When we don’t seek to forgive offenders attitudinally in our hearts⁹ . . .

1) We are forgetting the massive sin debt God forgave us (Matt. 18:21–35; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13)

2) We are declaring we don’t need God’s forgiveness in our life (Mark 11:25; Matt. 6:12–15; 18:21–35)

3) We are declaring we don’t need God’s mercy on the Day of Judgment (Matt. 5:7; James 2:13; Luke 6:36; Micah 6:8)

4) We are assuming God’s role as Judge and Executioner (James 4:12; Rom. 12:19; Gen. 50:19)

5) We are forgetting that the offender, as a sinner, is in one sense deceived and enslaved by his sin. We lack compassion (Luke 23:34a; John 8:34; Matt. 9:36; Col. 3:12–13; Eph. 4:30–5:2; 1 Cor. 2:7–8; 2 Pet. 2:19)

6) We are forgetting the fact that, as a sinner, we are capable of the same sins, and that the same root sins may already reside in us (Jer. 17:9; 1 Cor. 10:12; Prov. 16:18; Heb. 3:12–13)

⁹ For further help, see chapter 9 in my book, *Pursuing Peace*, or similar contents in my minibook version, *Freedom from Resentment: Stopping Hurts from Turning Bitter* (New Growth Press, 2010).

PURSuing PEACE | HANDLING CONFLICT GOD'S WAY | SESSION 5: WHEN MORE WORK IS NEEDED

Step #3 – Love (cont'd)

C. Confronting in Love¹⁰

1. When to Overlook and When to Confront an Offender

1) The dilemma:

❖ Many texts call you to _____ or cover over someone's sin:

Prov 10:12, Hatred stirs up dissension, but love covers over all wrongs.

Prov 12:16, A fool shows his annoyance at once, but a prudent man overlooks an insult.

Prov 17:9, He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

Prov 17:14, Starting a quarrel is like breaching a dam; so drop the matter before a dispute breaks out.

Prov 19:11, A man's wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.

Matt 5:39, But I tell you, Do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

1 Cor 13:5, It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

1 Peter 4:8, Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

❖ Many texts call you to _____ or rebuke his sin:

Lev 19:17–18, “Do not hate a fellow Israelite in your heart. Rebuke your neighbor frankly so you will not share in their guilt. Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Prov 9:8, Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you.

Prov 19:25, Flog a mocker, and the simple will learn prudence; rebuke a discerning man, and he will gain knowledge.

Prov 27:5–6, Better is open rebuke than hidden love. Wounds from a friend can be trusted, but an enemy multiplies kisses.

Prov 28:23, Whoever rebukes a person will in the end gain favor rather than one who has a flattering tongue.

Matt 7:5, 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.

Matt 18:15, “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.

Luke 17:3b–4, “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

1 Cor 5:11–13, But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who claims to be a brother or sister but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or slanderer, a drunkard or swindler. Do not even eat with such people. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. “Expel the wicked person from among you.”

Gal 6:1–2, Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. ² Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

1 Tim 5:20, Those who sin are to be rebuked publicly, so that the others may take warning.

Titus 3:10, Warn a divisive person once, and then warn them a second time. After that, have nothing to do with them.

¹⁰ For further help, see chapter 10 in my book, *Pursuing Peace*.

James 5:19–20, My brothers and sisters, if one of you should wander from the truth and someone should bring that person back, remember this: Whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins.

2) Which should we do when?

Our default response should be to _____ offenses. But confronting is sometimes wise and loving:¹¹

- a. When the person is “caught” (trapped) in a sin or a pattern of sin (Gal 6:1–2)
- b. When the offense is serious (as suggested by sin lists like 1 Cor 5; 6; Gal 5; Rom 1; Rev 22)
- c. When the person’s Christian testimony or ministry usefulness is jeopardized by his sin.
- d. When your relationship with person is strained or undermined.
- e. When the reputation of God, Christ, or his church is threatened or injured
- f. When the unity of Christ’s church is disrupted

Rom 16:17, I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them.

- g. When others are harmed by the person’s sin

Prov 24:11, Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter.

- h. When the person seems willing to be confronted or might welcome your help

Prov 9:7–8, “Whoever corrects a mocker invites insult; whoever rebukes a wicked man incurs abuse. Do not rebuke a mocker or he will hate you; rebuke a wise man and he will love you.

Prov 23:9, Do not speak to a fool, for he will scorn the wisdom of your words.

Prov 26:4–5, Do not answer a fool according to his folly, or you will be like him yourself. ⁵Answer a fool according to his folly, or he will be wise in his own eyes.

2. Prerequisites for Wise, Loving Confrontation

Examine yourself. It may be wise to invite a mature Christian friend to help you assess your readiness.

- 1) Have you _____ your sins to God and the other person and received their forgiveness (Matt 7:1–5)?

¹¹ Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker* 3rd ed., 150–153, offers four helpful guidelines: An offense is too serious to overlook when (1) it dishonors God, (2) damages your relationship, (3) hurts other people, or (4) hurts the offender. Alfred Poirier, *The Peacemaking Pastor*, 139, suggests two questions: (1) Is the offense a persistent sin, a habitual sin, or the result of bondage to a particular sin? (2) Is the offense hindering my relationship?

- 2) Do you have the proper Christlike _____ (consider the “grace” qualities in passages like Gal 5:22–23; 6:1–2; Eph 4:1–3; Col 3:12–17; 1 Pet 3:8; 1 Cor 13:4–7; Matt 5:3–12; Jas 3:17–18) and are you already forgiving him _____ (Level 1 Forgiveness) (Mark 11:25; Luke 23:34a)?
- 3) Do you have the right _____ goal: to “show him his fault” to “win” the person (Matt 18:15), to “rebuke him” (Luke 17:3), and “restore him gently” (Gal 6:1)?
- 4) Do you really believe—are you convinced—that this is the most _____ action you can take (Gal 6:1–2; Lev 19:17–18; Prov 27:5–6; Jas 5:19–20)?
- 5) Are you willing to take any or all the _____ step(s) in Matthew 18:15–17 (and other texts) that God might require?
- 6) Are you seeking to please and _____ God more than people (Ps 56:3–4; Prov 29:25; John 12:42–43; Gal 2:11–13)?
- 7) Are you _____ for the other person and for yourself as you consider confronting him?
- 8) Do you need any biblical _____ first about these matters?

3. Steps in Approaching and Confronting the Person

- 1) Contact the person to express your desire to talk to him privately about something especially important, either at that moment or at a mutually convenient scheduled time. Seek to secure his willingness to talk.
- 2) Talk with him in-person, privately, alone. (Only use phone, text, email, or postal mail to setup that).
- 3) State your concern humbly, using “I” messages. “John, I’m concerned about something and it’s been on my mind...”
- 4) *Ask* about the apparent offense; don’t *assume* and don’t accuse. Even if you have evidence, start by asking so as to give him opportunity to voluntarily repent.
- 5) Listen well, with Christlike compassion and wisdom.
- 6) If he repents, grant him Level 2 Transacted Forgiveness. Like God, you too decide, declare and promise to not raise the matter again...
 - ⇒ To yourself (dwell, brood)
 - ⇒ To others (gossip)
 - ⇒ To the person (use against, raise later)
- 7) Encourage him to deal properly with this sin area with Jesus’ help, offer to help in appropriate ways, suggest helpful people and resources, “breathe grace” (Sande), etc.
- 8) Then seek to resolve any remaining issues between you and to restore the relationship to its proper level. Note: Beware of an “I forgive him, but I don’t want to have anything to do with him” attitude.
- 9) If he is unwilling to meet with you, or to repent, or if he needs more time, don’t despair. Rejoice, you have sought to please God and served as God’s instrument to restore the other person. Pray for him. Be patient.

- 10) Consider making second or third efforts to talk with him. Give God time to soften his heart. Pray.
- 11) If things still remain unresolved, ask or appeal to him about involving a third party (Matt 18:16).
 Note: While his agreement to this is ideal, it is not required; you unilaterally can (and may need to) invite a third party. (See Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, pp. 188–189)

D. Serve the other person

Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Philippians 2:1–4, Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. (NIV2011; see also CSB 2020)

- 1) Godly listening and godly speaking
- 2) Godly practical actions

E. Dealing with Those Who Won’t Reconcile¹²

- 1) Keep your relationship with God central (Psalm 6:5–8; 73:23–28; Phil 4:11–13; Rom 12:18; Matt 5:9)
- 2) Review, renew, and re-do your personal peacemaking efforts
- 3) Seek help
- 4) Frame and follow a wise, Christ-centered plan to love and minister to the unrepentant other party (Luke 6:27–36; Rom 12:17–21; 1 Peter 2:21–23; 4:19)

The Luke 6 Ministry Game Plan and Chart (Luke 6:27–36)

Luke 6:27–28, 35–36 “But I tell you who hear me: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, ²⁸ bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. . . .

³⁵ But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. ³⁶ Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

¹² For further help, see chapter 12 in my book, *Pursuing Peace*.



Love, v. 27a

Mercy, v. 36a

Do _____, v.27b (= Practical acts of service for the other person ¹³)	_____, v.28a (= Speak well to ¹⁴ and about the other person)	_____, v.28b (= Specific ways to pray for yourself and the other person)



¹³ This might include setting firm limits on evil (Prov 19:19; Rom 13:1–7), although your motive is crucial: you can do the same right identical action (e.g., call the police) for different motives—love not revenge; faith not fear.

¹⁴ This might include loving confrontation/rebuke—active efforts to make peace, not settle for truce or appeasement (Lev 19:17–18, Matt 5:9; 5:21–26; 7:5; 18:15–18; Prov 27:5–6).