

Confrontation

Key Verse

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face..." Galatians 2:11a

Basic Biblical Understanding

Most people avoid confrontation, some people muddle through it, and a handful of people are equipped to address it well. If you happen to be in either of the first two groups, here are some preliminary thoughts to help move you towards that last group.

First, where there are differences, there are divisions. Where there are divisions, confrontation is inevitable. While confrontation feels uncomfortable, it's very normal and actually necessary for building authentic, healthy relationships.

Second, when you have to tip toe around certain topics or when there's not an opportunity to speak truth in love, the health of relationships often suffers and may be severed. Healthy relationships require open communication. Open communication often requires confrontation.

Third, biblical confrontation is NOT an opportunity to air out every grievance and petty issue you have against someone else. Biblical confrontation is usually reserved for 3 key areas: reestablishing unity, addressing sin, and/or encouraging wisdom.

Fourth, regardless of the reason for the confrontation, Scripture helps us frame out the way we should approach that conversation. According to Scripture...

- We're told to speak the truth in love. Ephesians 4:15
- We're told that our speech is ALWAYS to be gracious as though seasoned with salt. Colossians 4:6
- We're told to have humility and patience with the faults of others. Ephesians 4:2
- We're told that love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8
- We're told that pride precedes a fall. Proverbs 16:18
- We're told that a soft answer turns away wrath. Proverbs 15:1
- We're told to worry about nothing and pray about everything. Philippians 4:6

We are called to follow these principles at all times—not just in confrontational moments. Following these principles helps ensure that we're handling things with wisdom. If you try to confront someone without prayer, humility, grace, love, and patience, the situation will often blow up before it even gets started. In that case, you may be right in your reason for confrontation but wrong in your approach to confrontation. Always approach confrontation with biblical principles in mind.

Verses (ask God to show you how they apply to your life)

- "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men." Romans 12:18
- "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you..." Matthew 5:44

Helpful Questions and Application

1. This article shares some biblical principles to help us frame out a wise approach to difficult conversations. Which principles are the hardest for you to apply? Why?
2. Biblical confrontation is not about proving your point or hurting the offenders as much as they hurt you. Biblical confrontation should lead to healing and reconciliation. To accomplish this goal, make a list of the things you want to say...but shouldn't say...and in its place make a list of the Christ-honoring things you should say. Take this Christ-honoring list to God in prayer and ask Him to help you refrain from bringing up ANY of those things you shouldn't say in the anticipated conversation. After prayer and with continued dependence on God, destroy your first list.

Additional Resources

Scripture references: Proverbs 12:16; 1 Corinthians 13:4–7; Philippians 4:13

WordTruth article: ["Communicating the Sins of Others – Why, When and How"](#)