

A Peacemaker's Checklist

Appendix A in *"The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict"*
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Whenever you are involved in a conflict, you may apply the four basic principles of peacemaking by asking yourself these questions:

1. *Glorify God*: How can I please and honor the Lord in this situation?
2. *Get the log out of your eye*: How can I show Jesus' work in me by taking responsibility for my contribution to this conflict?
3. *Gently restore*: How can I lovingly serve others by helping them take responsibility for their contribution to this conflict?
4. *Go and be reconciled*: How can I demonstrate forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution to this conflict?

The following checklist summarizing the principles presented in this book is designed to help you answer the four questions.

1. Glorify God

With God's help, I will seek to glorify him by:

- Depending on and drawing attention to his grace—that is, his undeserved love, mercy, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom that he gives to us through Jesus Christ
- Doing everything in my power to live at peace with those around me
- Remembering that Jesus' reputation is affected by the way I get along with others
- Asking God to help me to trust him, obey him, imitate him, and acknowledge him in the midst of conflict
- Guarding against Satan's schemes and false teachings, which are designed to promote selfishness and incite conflict
- Using conflict as an opportunity to serve others
- Cooperating with God as he prunes me of sinful attitudes and habits and helps me grow to be more like Christ
- Seeing myself as a steward and managing myself, my resources, and my situation in such a way that God would say, "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

2. Get the Log Out of Your Eye

To decide whether something is really worth fighting over, with God's help I will:

- Define the issues (personal and material), decide how they are related, deal only with issues that are too important to be overlooked, and begin usually with personal issues
- Overlook minor offenses
- Change my attitude by rejoicing in the Lord and remembering how much he has forgiven me, being gentle toward others, replacing anxiety with prayer and trust, deliberately thinking about what is good and right in others, and putting into practice what God has taught me through the Bible
- Carefully consider how much it will cost (emotionally, spiritually, and financially) to continue a conflict instead of simply settling it
- Use my rights only to advance God's kingdom, to serve others, and to enhance my ability to serve and grow to be like Christ

To identify desires that may have turned into idols and contributed to this conflict, I will examine my heart by asking myself the following X-ray questions:

- What am I preoccupied with? (What is the first thing on my mind in the morning and/or the last thing at night?)
- How would I fill in this blank? "If only _____, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure."
- What do I want to preserve or avoid at any cost?
- Where do I put my trust?
- What do I fear?
- When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger, or depression?
- Is there something I desire so much that I am willing to disappoint or hurt others in order to have it?

Before talking to others about their wrongs, with God's help I will examine myself by asking:

- Am I guilty of reckless words, falsehoods, gossip, slander, or any other worthless talk?
- Have I tried to control others?
- Have I kept my word and fulfilled all of my responsibilities?
- Have I abused my authority?
- Have I respected those in authority over me?
- Have I treated others as I would want to be treated?
- Am I being motivated by lusts of the flesh, pride, love of money, fear of others, or wanting good things too much?

When I see that I have sinned, I will ask for God to help me:

- Repent—that is, change the way I have been thinking so that I turn away from my sin and turn toward God
- Confess my sins by using the Seven A's:
 1. Addressing everyone I have affected
 2. Avoiding *if*, *but*, and *maybe*
 3. Admitting specifically what I did wrong
 4. Acknowledging how I have hurt others
 5. Accepting the consequences of my actions
 6. Explaining how I will alter my attitudes and behavior in the future
 7. Asking for forgiveness
- Change my attitudes and behaviors by praying for God's help, delighting myself in the Lord so that I can overcome my personal idols, studying the Bible, and practicing godly character

3. Gently Restore

- When I am estranged from someone else, I will ask God to help me discern the most effective way to approach them to confess my sins or show them their fault
- Even if I work through other people at first, I will do all I can to talk face-to-face eventually so we can both express and confirm repentance, confession, and forgiveness
- When I learn that someone has something against me, I will go to that person to talk about it, even if I don't believe I have done anything wrong

I will consider a sin too serious to overlook if it:

- Is dishonoring to God
- Has damaged our relationship
- Is hurting or might hurt other people
- Is hurting the offender and diminishing his or her usefulness to God

When I need to show others their fault, with God's help I will:

- Draw on God's grace so I can breathe that grace to others
- Do everything I can to bring hope through the gospel by focusing on what God has done and is doing for us through Christ
- Listen responsibly by waiting patiently while others speak, concentrating on what they say, clarifying their comments through appropriate questions, reflecting their feelings and concerns with paraphrased responses, and agreeing with them whenever possible
- Make charitable judgments by believing the best about others until I have facts to prove otherwise
- Speak the truth in love
- Talk from beside people, not from above them, as a fellow sinner who needs forgiveness and grace as much as they do
- Help others examine the desires that may be ruling their hearts
- Choose a time and place that will be conducive to a productive conversation
- Talk in person whenever possible
- Engage others by using stories, analogies, and metaphors that touch their hearts
- Communicate so clearly that I cannot be misunderstood
- Plan my words in advance and try to anticipate how others will respond to me
- Use "I" statements when appropriate
- State objective facts rather than personal opinions
- Use the Bible carefully and tactfully
- Ask for feedback
- Offer solutions and preferences
- Recognize my limits and stop talking once I have said what is reasonable and appropriate

If I cannot resolve a dispute with someone in private and the matter is too serious to overlook, with God's help I will:

- Suggest that we seek help from one or more spiritually mature advisors who can help both of us see things more objectively
- If necessary, ask one or two others to talk with us
- If necessary, seek help from our respective churches and respect their authority
- Go to court only if I have exhausted my church remedies, if the rights I am seeking to enforce are biblically legitimate, and if my action has a righteous purpose

4. Go and Be Reconciled

When someone has wronged me, I will ask God to change my heart so that I want to forgive them.

When I forgive someone, with God's help I will take these steps:

- I will not dwell on this incident.
- I will not bring up this incident again and use it against you.
- I will not talk to others about this incident.
- I will not allow this incident to stand between us or to hinder our personal relationship.

When I am having a difficult time forgiving someone, with God's help I will:

- Renounce the desire to punish the other person, to make that person earn my forgiveness, or to demand guarantees that I will never be wronged again
- Assess my contribution to the problem
- If necessary, talk with that person to address any unresolved issues and to confirm repentance
- Recognize the ways that God is using this situation for good
- Remember how much God has forgiven me, not only in this situation but also in the past
- Draw on God's strength through prayer, Bible study, and, if necessary, Christian counseling

With God's help I will demonstrate forgiveness and practice the replacement principle by:

- Replacing painful thoughts and memories with positive thoughts and memories
- Saying positive things to and about the person whom I have forgiven
- Doing loving and constructive things to and for the person whom I have forgiven

When I need to negotiate on agreement on material issues, with God's help I will PAUSE:

- Prepare thoroughly for our discussions
- Affirm my respect and concern for my opponent
- Understand my opponent's interests
- Search for creative solutions that will satisfy as many of our interests as possible
- Evaluate various options objectively and reasonably

When others continue to mistreat or oppose me, with God's help I will:

- Control my tongue and continue to say only what is helpful and beneficial to others
- Seek counsel, support, and encouragement from spiritually mature advisors
- Keep doing what is right no matter what others do to me
- Recognize my limits by resisting the temptation to take revenge and by remembering that being successful in God's eyes depends on faithfulness, not results
- Continue to love my enemy by striving to discern and address his or her spiritual, emotional, and material needs