

Recap of 11/27/22 message by Steve Plank (“Dealing with Conflict in Marriage”)

- *Because marriage involves two sinners, conflict is inevitable. The way we deal with conflict has a direct impact on the quality of testimony our marriages are to the relationship between Christ and the church. Handling conflict well is also directly related to having a God-honoring, happy, fulfilling, and enjoyable marriage.*
- *We want to both minimize conflict and resolve conflict. We minimize conflict by walking with humility, gentleness, patience, and tolerance for each other in love (Ep 4:1-3). Resolving conflict means that the issue in question is no longer a source of conflict in the marriage. If that issue causes conflict again, the conflict was not resolved; instead, it was settled by compromise, swept under the rug, or one person just gave up.*
- *Handling conflict well is not natural, it requires each of us to be submitted to and filled with the Holy Spirit.*
- *Five Biblical Keys for Handling Conflict in Marriage*
 1. **Love the LORD your God with all that is in you** (Mt 22:37-38): *Build your marriage on the rock that is Christ not on the sand of culture. Improving your relationship with God is the best thing you can do to improve your marriage and minimize conflict. Lay aside your old self and put on the new self which God created in righteousness and holiness of the truth (Ep 4:17-24).*
 2. **Love your spouse as yourself** (Ga 5:13-16): *Meditate on, ponder the implications of, understand, and practice the one-flesh concept. Serve one another and know that what hurts your spouse hurts you.*
 3. **Respond to conflict in the Spirit, not in the flesh** (Ga 5:16-25): *Every conflict in marriage is the result of one or both people giving in to the flesh, which is at its core, selfish. As Christ followers, we must always endeavor to display the fruit of the Spirit. Responding in the Spirit will minimize and help resolve conflict.*
 4. **Be quick to seek and grant forgiveness** (Ep 4:31-32): *Because we sometimes give in to the flesh, we need to be quick to ask for and give forgiveness. When we forgive, we must really forgive as God forgave us (He 8:12, Ps 103:12). If in the future we bring up a forgiven offense, we didn't really forgive. When thinking about Biblical forgiveness, ask yourself the question, "is this the manner in which God forgives me?"*
 5. **Realize you can't change your spouse so stop trying**: *Only God can change your spouse. It is not your responsibility. Pray for your spouse and allow God to use you as a change agent by being the best husband/wife you can be. Follow God's direction for you no matter what your spouse does. While waiting for God to change your spouse, practice using only edifying, uplifting words; allow no space for bitterness or anger; be kind and tender-hearted (Ep 4:29-32).*