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The Christian Success  
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Pastor Bobby Keating



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Learn the principles taught by the Richest and Wisest man to have ever lived for the resolution of conflicts in marriage, business, friendships, etc.

# **A Study of Solomon's Principles for Conflict Resolution**



By

Pastor Bobby Keating

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# **Conflict Resolution**

## **What every aspiring success oriented entrepreneur needs to know**

Proverbs 18:19 (NKJV) tells us that “A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.”

This is a study of Solomon’s Principles for Successful living as it deals with one of the greatest problems that face mankind—the resolution of conflicts

No matter what the situation, conflicts will ensue. It is the nature of the physical human being to try to convince everyone that his point is the best and his way is the best. This is the cause of many contentions.

King Solomon, the richest and wisest man to ever have lived (other than Jesus Christ) has some very specific things to tell us about conflicts and conflict resolution.

These principles are essential for all of our relationships— marital, parent/child, friends, business relations, etc.

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## Section 1



If we were to put all of the problems that we might encounter in a business, a friendship or a marriage into a pot and boil them down, what do you think might remain? The biggest factor in most failed businesses or friendships or marriages is unresolved conflicts.<sup>1</sup> Marriages have been ruined and family relationships ripped apart, brother against brother, because of unresolved conflicts. This is one factor that can devastate a business. When there is an unresolved issue between partners or employer and employee, often the entire business suffers. Knowing this, you might think that people would not leave issues unresolved. Theoretically that is sound but it is extremely difficult when neither party is equipped to handle problem resolution.

In Proverbs 18:19 (NKJV) tells us that —A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.¶

Conflicts, disagreements or arguments, contentions, adversities, trials and tribulations are all part of daily life. Je-

sus told us that men would hate us because of Him. The fact is that the confusion that conflicts and adversities cause is a test of our Christian fortitude. How we handle them is determined by how well we are able to use the principles that we learn from God's Holy Book of Wisdom.

That is a bold statement but it is true. Using the principles given us by Solomon in his Proverbs can determine the success or failure of handling conflicts in business and in our homes. If you use Solomon's principles every conflict can be handled. Without the benefit of the knowledge and wisdom given us in Solomon's principles, we are headed for more difficulty than we want.

Conflicts and adversities can be handle without Solomon's principles but it is a difficult and often frustrating option to take, more than not, ending in failure. Going it on your own without the benefit of Solomon's principles will usually end in a great deal of stress and tension, both at work and at home. Often problems at home will bleed into our professional life and vice versa.

A good question for each of us to ask is "who wins?" when there is a conflict. Take a look at the conflicts that you

have had in your life. Who walked away from that conflict feeling good? I am confident is saying that no one won the battle, but there were probably many victims left injured.

This may sound strange to many but, depending on how we react, conflicts can bring opportunities. The immediate result may not seem as though it is a blessing but often, later, the resolution to that conflict may reveal an even better solution than first imagined.

Never forget that God's Word tells us that God can take a bad situation and can create something wonderful from it. He can take a situation where there seems to be no way out and show us a better way.

1 Corinthians 10:12-13 (New King James Version)

—12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. 13 No

temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.¶

There are two basic types of conflict that we need to look at. We initiate or contribute to one type of conflict and someone or something that is not in our control initiates the second. There is seldom a conflict, either under our control or not, that does not result in wounded egos and often physical wounds.

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It is human nature to defend our point of view and ourselves. Often, however, our defense goes out of control and becomes offensive. One person attacks and the other counterattacks trying to inflict as many wounds as possible. This usually spins out of the control of either party. Solomon tells us that at this point the argument becomes foolishness, which benefits no one.

It is important in any argument, whether started by us or not, to realize the point of the argument. Often we can avoid the severe exchange of hurtful accusations and epithets by simply softening our tone. Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV) —A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger. It is the perfect explanation for this. Sometimes a simple soft or gentle answer can abate an argument.



On the other hand, sometimes a heated exchange of points of view can be healthy if it is controlled and not allowed to degenerate into insult slinging. In Proverbs 27:17 (NLT) —As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.¶ Solomon is teaching us this type of exchange. Have you ever seen a chef sharpen his knife with sharpening steel? The friction of the steel against steel` or iron against iron` cause the honing of the knife to make it sharp. When we control the exchange of conflicting points of view, we can discover a better solution.

## Section 2



When things get out of our control, danger lurks in the sidelines. Each of us has had situation occur where we seemed to have been tossed into the middle of a trial of which we had no control - a trial by fire.

In Proverbs 17:3 Solomon teaches —The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.¶ This, of course is allusion to the method that a goldsmith or silversmith uses to purify gold or silver ore.

I watched a goldsmith take a small pot filled with what looked to me like dirt and small rocks. He told me that this was gold ore. To me it didn't look like the gold that I was accustomed to seeing. It was in its natural state, filled with impurities. He proceeded to put the ceramic looking pot over a small blast furnace and turned up the heat. As the mixture melted, the impurities burned away leaving only the molten gold behind.

The goldsmith told me that at this point it was critical to keep a close eye on the molten gold. If left in the extreme heat too long, the gold would also burn up. I asked him how he knew when the mixture was ready. He told me something very profound. He told me that he looks at the top of the molten gold and when he could see his reflection in it, it was finished.

From this Proverb we can see that Solomon wants us to realize that we too are like the gold ore or silver ore. In our natural state there are layers and layers of impurities. God

will allow adversities and conflicts, trial and tribulations in our lives to provide the necessary heat to burn away the impurities leaving the beautiful and very valuable character that He wants for us. He knows when we are ready to use when He can see His reflection in us.

One of the impurities that God wants to 'burn' out of us is our natural self-centered point of view. This egocentric point of view is the cause of much contention in our lives and so often the substance that fuels a heated exchange. It is our nature to want to convince our opponent that our point of view is the correct one. We feel that the only way to win an argument is to convince our opponent that we are right, for them to agree with us and to do what we want them to do. Usually, with two egocentric individuals, there is no winner. The true definition of winning is to achieve the very best possible outcome.

All of the principles or keys that Solomon gives us in his Proverbs (as well as his other writing) are essential for our path to success. You may wonder why at this point we are discussing the resolution of conflicts. You will find that, no matter what your goal is, business or personal, there will always arise an opposing opinion. Here we will abandon the idea that winning is 'getting my way' or convincing someone that I am right. The skills that we are going to discuss are key factors in our winning the situation (attaining the result that is best for all.)

We can categorize conflicts as hurtful or informative. When we are engaged in a conflict, whether we started it or are simply responding to something that someone else started. Keep your eyes and ears open. The moment that you suspect that the situation is degenerating into nothing more than attempting to injure your opponent or him injuring you, you must force yourself to control your thoughts and words. You must change the focus to achieving the best possible outcome for everyone involved.

Let's take a look at 5 situations that spawn conflicts and adversities.

1 One of the surest ways of getting into a conflict is when we meddle in the business of others. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 26:17 (NKJV) —He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own is like one who takes a dog by the ears.¶ It is natural try to help others when they are engaged in an argument. Each, however, will try to get you to agree with him. If you take sides, as Solomon points out, you are the one who will be bitten. It is good to help mediate but it is best when both parties come to you for wise counsel.

2. Most arguments are not planned affairs. They happen on impulse. Solomon gives us good advice in Proverbs 25:8 (The Amplified Bible) —Rush not forth soon to quarrel [before magistrates or elsewhere], lest you know not what to do in the end when your neighbor has put you to shame.¶ When you see this happening, take Solomon's advice and just don't do it.

3. Harsh words are generally a good way to push someone's buttons and usually the best way to start an argument or escalate one. Proverbs 15:1 (NLT) —A gentle answer deflects anger, but harsh words make tempers flare.¶

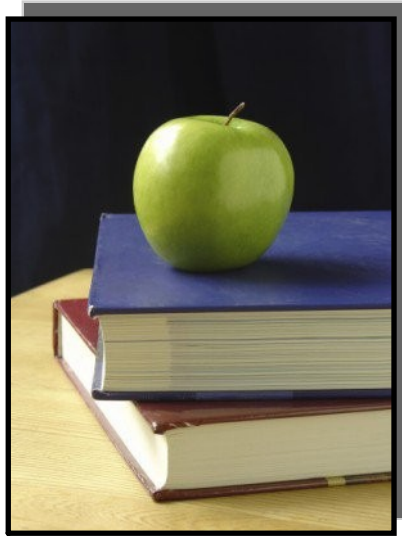
4. Anger is an excellent fuel for an argument. Often a person who is angry because of a totally unrelated issue will begin or react to an argument. Proverbs 15:18 (NKJV) —A wrathful man stirs up strife, but he who is slow to anger allays contention.¶ Too often is the case that someone who is angry with another at work will bring his temper home and begin arguing with his or her spouse or children and vice versa. I have seen the results of someone who has had an argument with his wife bring the same attitude to work. It's not a pretty site.

5 When you are confronted with a situation that could be construed as an argument or conflict, ask yourself what is the instigating factor. More often than not the situation will usually arise because of pride or arrogance. Is your involvement in the argument motivated by your pride or an attack on your ego?

If it is, and Solomon says that it's the Number 1 cause (Pride), you need to talk it over with someone before you engage your opponent. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 13:10 (The Amplified Bible) —By pride and insolence comes only contention, but with the well-advised is skillful and godly Wisdom.¶

Conflicts and arguments have very few good results. When we see that Solomon considers this to be foolishness, we can understand that these situations can be avoided and should be. There is nothing wrong with a lively discussion or debate. You usually take time to prepare for these. In that preparation it is always wise to seek wise counsel.

It is also very important for the successful Christian (diligent student of God's Word) to be adept at mediating. Preventing arguments and conflicts from escalating into an all out war is a necessary skill for anyone who is seeking success. You'll find that this skill will be very handy in helping you on the road to success. Becoming a conflict resolver build trust in others and elevates your position in the eyes and hearts of others.



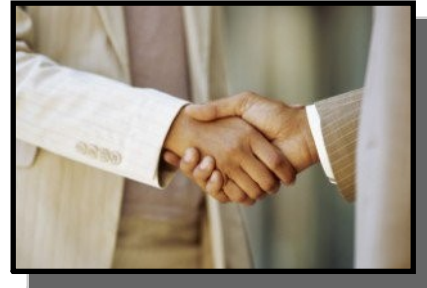
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## Section 3



Understanding why something takes place is only part of the solution. Knowing how to deal with, resolve or avoid a conflict is the key to a successful resolution. Solomon has some very specific actions that need to be taken in order to deal with adversities, conflicts or arguments.

Listed below are eight insights that Solomon provides for dealing with or engaging in conflicts in order to bring about the best possible resolution for everyone concerned.

Insight #1 – Our true purpose for engaging in conflict is a positive purpose – to ensure that the best possible resolution is found that will benefit everyone concerned. If the purpose were to simply hurt the other individual, the best thing is to stop the conflict immediately, just walk away.

Insight #2 – —Every purposed is established by counsell  
Proverbs 20:18. Solomon wants us to know that it is very difficult to establish our purpose for a conflict or confrontation without first seeking wise counsel. If we are truly concerned with finding an equitable resolution to a conflict or

confrontation, get a second and third opinion before proceeding. Often you'll find that there is no equitable resolution. Just walk away.

Insight #3 – In Proverbs 18:19 Solomon tells us that an offended brother is harder to win over than a strong city. It is natural for our self-defense shield to surround us when we are hurt or offended. It is also a natural inclination to forever avoid the offending party. We must first of all take the time to weigh the consequences of our action. This is why we are constantly reminded to seek wise counsel in everything that we do. Others, wiser and more objective, may be able to point out the consequences that we do not at first realize until it is too late.

It is always best to plan what you have to say and consider the consequences. Weigh your perceived consequences and the opinions of your wise counsel to determine whether the confrontation is worth the time and trouble. Will there be a good resolution for everyone concerned? Often I have seen feuding family members avoid each other for years. Sometimes, after several years, they do not remember what started the whole situation. Before engaging, seek wise counsel.



Insight #4 – Often, out of the blue we can be bushwhacked attacked verbally because of something perceived by another as unfair or unfounded. Usually these attacked are immature and foolish. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 26:4 (NKJV) —Do not answer a fool according to his folly, lest you also be like him.¶ When we react, without consideration of the consequences, to the angry words of an opponent, we lower ourselves to his childish level. Solomon continues by giving us something to think about in Proverbs 26:5 (NKJV) —Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own eyes.¶ When we take a moment to consider what the attacker said and we answer his accusation and not him personally, we take away the possibility of him assuming that what he said was wise.

Proverbs 18:12 (NKJV) —Before destruction the heart of a man is haughty, and before honor is humility.¶ When we take the opportunity to consider the consequences of our answer to a verbal attack, we can often take a position of humility, which is a more honorable position to assume.

Insight #5 - It takes a strong character to quiet his emotional reaction to the verbal assault of another. It requires self-control and patience. Our first impulse is to retaliate or counterattack using whatever we have to offend our offender. Some may even resort to revealing something secret that might be hurtful to the other.

This will serve only one purpose. It will destroy the hope of a good resolution or your good reputation. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 25:9-10 (NLT) — When arguing with your neighbor, don't betray another person's secret. Others may accuse you of gossip, and you will never regain your good reputation. If you are privy to confidential information, keep that confidence, even if you feel that it might strengthen your argument.

We should seriously consider what Solomon tells us in Proverbs 15:26 (NKJV) —The heart of the righteous studies how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours forth evil. As successful people, diligent students of God's Wisdom, we need to take time to study all aspects of the situation before we answer. If we give in to our worldly nature, we will do nothing but harm to ourselves and to others.

Insight #6 Do not feed the fury. Arguments, conflicts and adversities escalate when each party involved adds fuel to the fire. We learn in Proverbs 26:20 (NKJV) —Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. Often an argument or conflict can be resolved, without bloodshed, by simply answering softly, without anger or malice. Remember Proverbs 15:1 (NKJV) —A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Insight #7 – There is an absolutely excellent way to sooth an angry person. Often an apology is the greatest gift that anyone can expect. If you know you are wrong, be the better person, save the friendship or partnership or marriage by simply apologizing. If you know that you are right, apologize anyway. The opponent will know that you are simply offering a way out. This is a great way to defuse a situation and offers you the opportunity, at a later time and after diligent study of the situation, to approach the issue in a calmer atmosphere. Solomon tells us in Proverbs 21:14 (NKJV) —A gift in secret pacifies anger, and a bribe behind the back, strong wrath.¶

Insight #8 – Forgive

We are well aware of the most magnificent gift that has ever been given. That gift is the sacrifice that Christ made for us in order to forgive us for our sin debt. He went where he didn't deserve to go and did what he did not have to do, and all for our sakes. If we could simply take His example in our own affairs, we could accelerate our journey to success.

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It doesn't matter what we have done in our lives, how horrible our offenses against God and humanity; Christ is willing to forgive us, totally. Can we say that the offenses that we have suffered at the hands of others are worse than those suffered by Christ? Do our feelings matter more than Christ's? Can we pick and choose who we will forgive and who we will judge? Are we to put ourselves above Christ?

Solomon tells us in Proverbs 10:12 (NKJV) —Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins. If we would simply let that love in our hearts, which is Christ, rule our hearts, minds and souls, we would never open ourselves to argument. We would be able to forgive every offense. Understand that, no matter what has been done to you, when you forgive that person, you are not condoning their action; you are releasing yourself from the bondage of their actions.

## Section 4



There is not a human who has ever lived on this planet that has not encountered adversity in some form or fashion. Adversity is a given. Christ told us that we would suffer adversity. It is up to us as to how we react to what life throws at us. Solomon has some very specific advice for resolving adversity.

We each react differently when adversities confront us. Some run and hide, others hum and whistle and, trying to ignore the situation, others pretend that it's not really there. The fact is that adversity is real and it can adversely affect our lives and the lives of others around us. Solomon tells us to stand up and face the problem head on.

Proverbs 28:1 (NKJV) "The wicked flee when no one pursues, but the righteous are bold as a lion." Solomon uses the term 'wicked' to describe anyone who does not prescribe to seeking wise counsel or the belief in and worship of Almighty God. He is telling us that the 'wicked' always attempt to run away from adversity. They run away even though no one is pursuing them. The 'righteous', those who are in 'right' standing with the Creator, fortified by their beliefs and worshipful practices, face their problems with the courage and determination of the king of the jungle, a lion.

In Proverbs 24:10 (NKJV) Solomon tells us "If you faint in the day of adversity, your strength is small." When adversity rears its head it is not the time to cower or flee. It is the time to be bold. To be bold and persevere is the key to lasting success in life. Read

Proverbs 24:16 (NKJV) "For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity." We

need not concentrate on falling down but on getting up. To 'rise again' is an extremely important concept, especially for the successful Christian.

When we concentrate on the positive aspects of adversity, we see that there are two very important benefits that we gain through adversity. As a matter of fact, through the school of adversity, we learn these lessons well. The first benefit that we need to consider is that through adversity we learn patience, we develop our strength and our courage to face subsequent adversities, we develop our sense of compassion and kindness towards others, and our love, our humility and our faith grow by leaps and bounds.

The second important benefit of adversity is that it helps us to become much more valuable to others. Everyone is going to encounter adversity at some point and the first person that they seek is someone who has already experienced adversities and overcome them. You become the wise counsel that others seek.

This would be a good place to review several very important points in our study of the effective resolution of conflicts. I have broken these down into a quick list of do's and don'ts.

First let's list the don'ts.

1.) Do not ignore or avoid facing a conflict. Denial is not the answer, although it is the most used temporary remedy. Conflicts or adversities and the hurt that they cause will grow inside of you. They will fester and canker and do more deadly harm to your spirit and body than you can ever imagine. You could say that conflicts that have been internalized and not face head on are the causes of the majority of 'psychological' problems among human beings. Look at the word 'psychological'. It is the combination of two Greek root words - 'psyche' which is translated 'soul' and 'logia' which means the 'study of.' It is safe to say that

psychological problems are 'soul' problems. Don't bury your problems or the pain that they cause.

2.) Don't let a conflict turn into a personal attack. Focus on the problem causing the conflict instead of diverting the attention to the shortcoming or character weaknesses of the other party. If your intent is to solve the problem, you must concentrate on the causes of that problem.

3.) Keeping within the spirit of the previous statement, do not resort to calling each other names or making seriously inflammatory remarks simply to get a negative reaction. When these tactics are used in an argument, the root problem becomes obscured and the focus is placed on defending one's honor.

4.) Nobody likes an arrogant know-it-all. When you enter a conflict with that attitude, a wall of resentment and negativity has been constructed and nothing good will happen. When engaged in a conflict, approach it as though there is a great lesson for you to learn. Approach the conflict with a humble spirit. For one thing, this will definitely confuse your opponent because he will not expect that at all. This is very difficult to do for a person of 'position', such as a boss or manager.

5.) In an argument you will be tempted to bring up other issues. Do not let this happen. Keep the focus on the problem at hand and the best way to resolve it.

6.) Never try to back your opponent into a corner. Remember this is not a 'prize fight' and the only good thing that can come out of this is the equitable resolution to the problem. Do not use threats and ultimatums.

7.) Try to refrain from demeaning gestures or body language. It is tempting to roll your eyes or use an exasperated

sigh or slap you forehead with the palm of your hand. This will only add fuel to the fire.

8.) It is human nature to interrupt an opponent when he is saying something with which you disagree. Do not interrupt him. Let him have his say and then you can also demand to have your time to speak.

9.) No matter how tempting it is just to turn and walk away, do not. As Solomon tells us, face your adversity. This can also be the same as hanging up when you are called on the phone with an argument.

It is best to finish this study on a positive note. Lets look at the list of positives that should be considered when you are faced with a conflict.

1.) Whenever you are faced with what you perceive to be a confrontation, take a few minutes to calm your emotional state. It is best to cool off before engaging in a conflict.

2.) When you know that you are headed for a confrontation, you need to decide what outcome you expect. If your motivation is to correct someone, plan for the best possible outcome. Consider the reactions of the other person and how you can best resolve the problem at hand. Go into the conflict armed with a good solid plan devoid of emotional stress.

3.) Your goal should never be to tear down the character of another person. If that is your goal, you need to do some soul



searching to discover why you think that would ever be an option. Use as many positive statements as possible; even praise the other person's abilities. Find positives to counteract the negatives.

4.) If you expect the problem to be resolved immediately and easily, that is great. However, that is not the usual case. Be willing to accept a progressive plan of resolution. Be willing to work with the problem for as long as it takes to find the most equitable solution.

5.) Seek wise counsel. When you know that there is a conflict ensuing, seek out the advice of others who have gone through similar situations and be willing to consider their advice.

6.) Often we are blindsided by an attack. If this is the case, listen to what your attacker is saying. Instead of retaliation, ask him if there is any other cause for his anger or concern. Let him tell you everything that is on his mind. No matter what is said, remain calm. You just may learn something.

7.) Whenever possible reassure the person that you are willing to discuss whatever is on his mind. Show that you are committed to the relationship and want to find a way to resolve whatever seems to be the problem in order to enhance the relationship.

8.) Forgive. No matter what the other person says, forgive him immediately. Christ was slandered, spat upon, hit, beaten, verbally abused whipped and hung on a cross. He immediately forgave those responsible.

If we consider that conflicts can be used as a tool to strengthen us, we will find it easier to look for an effective resolution. This takes a great deal of self-control (patience). Self-control or patience is not a natural state of being for humans. It is however one of the traits that is listed as the fruit of the Spirit.

Galatians 5:22 (NASB) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,"

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