



What Are The Chances—We Could All Get Along
Romans 12:18; Proverbs 15:1; Colossians 3:12-13

December 11, 2022

DAILY DEVOTION

Find a rhythm in God's word this week! Follow this 4 day plan on your own or with your group!

<https://www.bible.com/reading-plans/17128-dealing-with-conflict>

INSPIRATION

"Everybody thinks of changing humanity, and nobody thinks of changing himself."
—Leo Tolstoy, from *Three Methods of Reform*

ICE BREAKER

1. When it comes to conflicts in our relationships, we often see the failures or the blame in others. Based on the quote above from Leo Tolstoy, where should our focus be to promote peaceful relationships?
 2. Why is it so easy to see the speck in our brother's eye, but not to consider the plank in our own (Matt. 7:3)?
-

DEEP DIVE

Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

"If it is possible – because it might not be. Sometimes people don't want peace, they come into the house already fired up about something or someone, and one little word or raising of the eyebrows sends them over the edge.

You are on the way over and the conversation is like, "If she brings up my ex one more time, I am going to just lose it." "If he asks me about why I am not married, I will...." "If they start talking about Trump, I promise you...."

So, as far as it is up to you. This is for you, not for your brother-in-law, not for your brother. We are responsible for our actions, not theirs. Decide this year, "I am not going to be the problem."



Try this – don't react. Sometimes people just want to get a reaction. You don't have to react. "But they made me so mad." Perhaps. And there may be a time and a place to address things, but not when you react. It just escalates things."

Read Romans 12:18 and then answer the following questions:

3. When it comes to living in peace with others, where does Romans 12:18 place the responsibility? Explain. What effect does blaming others have in our relationships?
4. Based on this verse, it is not always possible to live in peace with others. Explain what Paul means by "as far as it depends on you." Is Paul giving us an excuse to blame others, or an important responsibility? Explain.
5. As described in the sermon excerpt above, sometimes a person's statements or attitudes create an opportunity for conflict. Explain how the nature of your reaction determines whether they control the circumstances, or you control the circumstances. When these circumstances arise, what if you chose to simply not take the bait?

Read this out loud

An excerpt from the message this week:

"That last line is a zinger, "forgive as the Lord forgave you." Sometimes I wish that was not in the Bible. It is so hard. I certainly want Jesus to be amazingly gracious towards me when it comes to stuff I have done. I don't want him to be stingy with forgiveness. I don't want him to hold it over my head. I don't want him to remind me. I want him to forget about it, I want him to treat me as if I had never done anything wrong, I want him to be gracious. It is when I forget that he is so gracious with me, that I become less gracious with others.

Now certainly this doesn't mean that I put myself in a place where I could be hurt, where I am going to be attacked physically or emotionally. Trust is something that takes time. I have had to distance myself from some people because I am just not sure if I can trust them, but forgiveness and grace allows for me to live again and somehow have a chance at a relationship."

Read Proverbs 15:1 and Colossians 3:12-13 and then answer the following questions:

6. When it comes to opportunities for conflict or for peace in relationships, explain the two possible reactions in Proverbs 15:1 and the outcome of each.
7. Explain how God's grace that is shown to us can motivate us to treat others with grace.
8. There are instances in which people will say or do offensive or hurtful things. Can we show grace, yet still hold people responsible for intentionally offensive or hurtful actions? Explain what is meant by "speaking the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).

Additional Study

If you have time during your Small Group or you want to study more about the message topic, read and consider the following passages:

- Psalm 141:3



- James 1:19
- Matthew 1:16-25

NEXT STEPS

9. Explain how the approach “agree to disagree” may help promote peace, avoid conflict and avoid “taking the bait” for an argument. How can complimenting a person’s strong points, even when you disagree with their statements or attitudes, promote peace?
10. The quote from Leo Tolstoy above states that change starts with each of us. What concrete steps can you take in your family and work relationships to promote peace this Christmas season? Are there friends or family members who struggle with relationships this season that you can come alongside and support?

PRAYER

1. Lord, holidays and gatherings with family and friends can create stress and the potential for conflicts. Help me to exercise self-control and exhibit your love and grace.
2. Help me to show, by my words and actions, the true meaning of the Christmas season. Help me come alongside and support family and friends who struggle with their relationships this season.

SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY

Establish a regular rhythm of serving together! Below are some service opportunities.

- BENSON - Serve with us at ABIDE every 2nd Saturday.
- MILLARD - Serve with us at Heartland Hope every 4th Saturday.
- FREMONT - Serve with us at LifeHouse every 3rd Saturday.
- OMAHA - Serve with us at Open Door Mission every 4th Saturday.
- Or get to know your community, are there any needs/volunteer opportunities?