



## **Eight (8) Steps to Resolving Conflict**

**Conflict is inevitable in business, marriage, families, churches and communities.** Below are eight (8) rules to follow if you want to have a productive disagreement and actually solve the problem.

1. Define the problem or conflict to be discussed and stick to the issue. Many disagreements get nowhere or deteriorate into brawls because the issue that started the conflict has gotten lost in the midst of ugly words or past issues that are thrown into the discussion.
2. When possible, plan the time. Preparing for fights isn't always possible, sometimes they just erupt, but if you know there is a touchy issue that needs to be addressed, make a time to discuss it when both are rested and ready. It's difficult to fight fairly and constructively when you're tired, stressed out and distracted with other obligations.
3. Listen carefully to the other person's perspective. Show attentiveness and respect with both your body language and words. (James 1:19; Proverbs 18:2)
4. Aim for a win-win solution that works. The integrity and well-being of our relationships are more important than the issue. Fighting to get your way or to prove you're right is not godly. (Philippians 2:2-3 James 4:1-3)
5. Commit to do no harm. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Romans 13:10) We are to love our neighbor as ourselves. Remember, our spouse is our very closest neighbor. Be gentle.
6. Tame your tongue – words can heal and can wound. (Proverbs 12:18) Do not use your tongue as a weapon to murder someone else. (Matthew 5:22) Watch your voice tone and body language. Do they communicate caring and openness or defensiveness and hostility? (Proverbs 29:11, Proverbs 25:20; 1 Peter 2:17)
7. If you are unable to fight fairly, take a time out until you can, but make a plan to return to the issue. Don't just ignore it hoping it will go away. (Ephesians 4:25,26; Matthew 5:23-24)
8. If the other person breaks these rules, don't react in kind. (Proverbs 15:1) Remember, we overcome evil with good, not more evil. (Romans 12:17-21) Things deteriorate pretty rapidly when two sinners sin against each other at the same time. (Galatians 5:13-15)