



Conflict and Gossip Our Scriptural Response

The opportunity to lead is a gift from God that we are responsible to manage wisely. As Andy Stanley says, “Leadership is a stewardship. It is temporary, and we’re accountable.”

Leaders set the pace and create the culture in our church. Healthy leaders create a healthy church that God can use to inspire people to follow Jesus. Because of that, we adhere to Scripture’s mandate on how to handle conflict and gossip.

How Leaders Handle Conflict

How leaders handle conflict determines the unity of our church and sets the example for others to follow. Because of that, gossip is not allowed or tolerated within our leadership or church family.

In most cases, we provide one warning for a first offense. A second offense will result in removal from leadership. Below is a definition of gossip and a plan for how to handle potential gossip situations.

Gossip is when a negative is discussed with anyone who can’t fix the problem. Gossip is taken seriously because it’s consequences are severe. Scripture teaches it is offensive to God, disrespectful to others, cancerous to the hearer, destructive to the church, and damaging to relationships.

So how do you deal with gossip? Based on Matthew 18:15-17, we do three things.

- 1) When someone shares it with you, refuse to listen.**
Stop the person immediately and say, “This sounds like gossip. Have you spoken to the person you’re talking about directly? You need to go speak with them.”
- 2) When you’re upset with someone, go directly to the person and discuss it with them.**
Do not speak with anyone about the problem who can’t fix it.
- 3) When you hear someone may be upset with you, kindly confront them about it immediately.**
Do not wait for them to approach you. Go to the person and ask about what you heard.

Conflict, in general, is a part of life. It cannot and should not be avoided. However, Scripture teaches we can address conflict in a way that strengthens relationships rather than weakening them. We’re committed to resolving conflict this way and expect all leaders to practice and model this plan.

- 1) Ask God to show you where you are at fault.**
You may have only played a small role in the conflict, but you probably bear some responsibility. Own that and ask God to show you where you need to change.
- 2) Address everyone involved as soon as possible.**
Don’t procrastinate. If it’s a minor offense done to you that you can overlook, then let it go. But if it’s bothering you, then it’s more than minor to you. Also, if you think you hurt someone, it shouldn’t be ignored. Address it with the people involved as soon as you can.
- 3) Avoid excuses.**

When you address it with people, don't make excuses. Be specific about the attitudes and actions that you believe were wrong and those that hurt you.

4) Apologize and ask for forgiveness.

It is important that you express your sorrow and regret for the role you played in the conflict. Always start with apologizing for your part before explaining how someone hurt you.

5) Accept the consequences.

You must be willing to deal with the results of your actions. If possible, make restitution for the harm you did to someone.

6) Alter your behavior.

Don't cause hurt again. Change the way you treat the person. Refrain from the hurtful behavior in the future. Over time, this will win back the trust you lost in the relationship.

Scriptural Basis

- Matthew 5:23-24
- Matthew 18:15-17
- Proverbs 16:28
- Proverbs 11:13
- Proverbs 20:19
- Proverbs 18:21
- Proverbs 12:18
- Proverbs 10:19
- Proverbs 26:20
- Proverbs 17:9
- Proverbs 13:3
- Proverbs 6:16-19
- Leviticus 19:16
- Psalm 101:5
- Psalm 34:13
- James 3:1-12
- James 4:11
- James 5:9
- Romans 1:29-30
- 2 Corinthians 12:20
- Matthew 12:36
- Colossians 3:8-9,13
- Ephesians 4:29
- Titus 3:2
- 1 Timothy 5:13
- Ephesians 4:15
- Galatians 5:13-26
- Romans 12:18