

The background of the entire page is a scenic landscape photograph. It depicts a sunset or sunrise over a calm body of water, likely a lake. The sky is filled with dramatic, colorful clouds in shades of purple, pink, orange, and yellow. In the distance, a range of dark, jagged mountains is silhouetted against the bright sky. The foreground shows the dark, silhouetted outlines of evergreen trees along the shoreline, with their reflections visible in the water.

QUARRELS

Proverbs 18:19

**A brother offended is harder to be won
than a strong city: and their contentions are
like the bars of a castle.**

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

A Teaching Outline

Quarrels

Psalm 140:2

Who devise evil things in their hearts; they continually stir up wars.

To whom can the poor turn when they are persecuted? They lack the money to get professional help and so are usually unable to defend themselves. But there is always someone on their side—the Lord will stand by them and ultimately bring about justice. This should be a comfort for us all.

No matter what our situation may be, the Lord is with us. But this truth should also call us to live responsibly with others. As God's people, we are required to defend the rights of the powerless.

When slow to anger it calms a dispute.

Proverbs 15:18

A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger calms a dispute.

At times it seems that God has let evil run rampant in the world and we wonder if he even notices it. But God sees everything clearly—both the evil actions and the evil intentions lying behind them (15:11). He is not an indifferent observer.

He cares and is active in our world. Right now, his work may be unseen and unfelt, but don't give up. One day he will wipe out evil and punish the evildoers, just as he will establish the good and reward those who do his will.

Contention is like the bars of a citadel.

Proverbs 18:19

A brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a citadel.

These concise statements give three basic principles for making sound decisions:

- (1) Get the facts before answering;
- (2) Be open to new ideas;
- (3) make sure you hear both sides of a story before judging.

All three principles center on seeking additional information. This is difficult work, but the only alternative is prejudice—judging before getting the facts.

A foolish son is destruction to his father.

Proverbs 19:13

A foolish son is destruction to his father, and the contentions of a wife are a constant dripping.

Is it good to love yourself? Yes, when your soul is at stake! This proverb does not condone the self-centered person who loves and protects his or her selfish interests and will do anything to serve them. Instead, it encourages those who really care about themselves to seek wisdom.

The source of pleasure wage wars in your members.

James 4:1-2

What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask.

Quarrels and fights among believers are always harmful. James explains that these conflicts result from evil desires battling within us: We want more possessions, more money, higher status, more recognition.

When we don't get what we want, we fight in order to have it. Instead of aggressively grabbing what we want, we should submit ourselves to God, ask God to help us get rid of our selfish desires, and trust him to give us what we really need.

Herod felt contention toward John the Baptist.

Mark 6:18-19

For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death and could not do so;

Christians today face a world of moral compromise. Secular power sets standards that correspond to majority vote; Christian standards, however, begin and end with God's Word.

To be faithful to God's Word, we must stand up against what is morally wrong. Responsible Christians must choose their battles.

Start with prayers for wisdom, then prayers for courage. Once your battle is chosen, speak and act as a faithful follower of the living God.

Witness with strength; move mountains by faith; overcome in love. Show the compromised world a little of John's stubbornness, fortitude, and faith.

Paul refused to take Mark on a missionary journey.

Acts 15:37-40

Barnabas wanted to take John, called Mark, along with them also. But Paul kept insisting that they should not take him along who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work. And there occurred such a sharp disagreement that they separated from one another, and Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. ..

Paul and Barnabas disagreed sharply over Mark. Paul didn't want to take him along because he had left them earlier (13:13). This disagreement caused the two great preachers to form two teams, opening up two missionary endeavors instead of one.

God works even through conflict and disagreements. Later, Mark became vital to Paul's ministry (Colossians 4:10). Christians do not always agree, but problems can be solved by agreeing to disagree and letting God work his will.

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome

2 Timothy 2:24-26

The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.

As the Lord forgave you, you must forgive others.

Colossians 3:13

Bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

The key to forgiving others is remembering how much God has forgiven you. Is it difficult for you to forgive someone who has wronged you a little when God has forgiven you so much? Realizing God's infinite love and forgiveness can help you love and forgive others. Let God worry about the wrongs you've suffered. Don't quench your life in bitter feuding; live renewed in love and joy.

Regard one another as more important than yourselves.

Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Selfishness can ruin a church, but genuine humility can build it. Being humble involves having a true perspective about ourselves (see [Romans 12:3](#)). It does not mean that we should put ourselves down. Before God, we are sinners, saved only by God's grace, but we *are* saved and therefore have great worth in God's Kingdom. We are to lay aside selfishness and treat others with respect and common courtesy. Considering others' interests as more important than our own links us with Christ, who was a true example of humility.

Love covers all transgressions.

Proverbs 10:12

Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all transgressions.

Proverbs often describes God's care for "the godly." Being "godly" does not mean being "like God" in the sense of being perfect. Obviously that is impossible for human beings. Godly people are those who love the Lord and are seeking to follow him ([Psalm 4:3](#)). As Christians, we have been given the power of the Holy Spirit to help us live godly lives ([2 Peter 1:3](#)).

Through insolence come strife.

Proverbs 13:10

Through insolence comes nothing but strife, But wisdom is with those who receive counsel.

A fool will quarrel.

Proverbs 20:3

Keeping away from strife is an honor for a man, but any fool will quarrel.

A person who is truly confident of his or her strength does not need to parade it. A truly brave person does not look for chances to prove it. A resourceful person can find a way out of a fight and avoid retaliating. Foolish people find it impossible to avoid strife.

Drive out the scoffer and contention will go out.

Proverbs 22:10

Drive out the scoffer, and contention will go out, even strife and dishonor will cease.

The unfaithful may seem to have an easier time of it, but in the long run their plans fail and their lives amount to nothing. Don't resist God and expect lasting success.

Where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down.

Proverbs 26:20-21

For lack of wood the fire goes out, and where there is no whisperer, contention quiets down. Like charcoal to hot embers and wood to fire, so is a contentious man to kindle strife.

Talking about every little irritation and piece of gossip only keeps the fires of anger going. Refusing to discuss those cuts the fuel line and makes the fires die out. Does someone continually irritate you? Decide not to complain about the person, and see if your irritation dies from lack of fuel.

Refuse foolish and ignorant speculations.

2 Timothy 2:23

But refuse foolish and ignorant speculations, knowing that they produce quarrels.

As a teacher, Timothy helped those who were confused about the truth. Paul's advice to Timothy, and to all who teach God's truth, is to be kind and gentle, patiently and courteously explaining the truth. Good teaching never promotes quarrels or foolish arguments. Whether you are teaching Sunday school, leading a Bible study, or preaching in church, remember to listen to people's questions and treat them respectfully, while avoiding foolish debates. If you do this, those who oppose you will be more willing to hear what you have to say and perhaps turn from their error.

When there is not jealousy and strife among you, you are as men.

1 Corinthians 3:3

For you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?

Paul called the Corinthians infants in the Christian life because they were not yet spiritually healthy and mature. The proof was that they quarreled like children, allowing divisions to distract them.

Immature Christians are "worldly," controlled by their own desires; mature believers are in tune with God's desires. How much influence do your desires have on your life? Your goal should be to let God's desires be yours. Being controlled by your own desires will stunt your growth.

An overseer must be above reproach.

1 Timothy 3:2-3

An overseer, then, must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not addicted to wine or pugnacious, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money.

Paul's statement that each elder should be faithful to his wife prohibits both polygamy and promiscuity. This does not prohibit an unmarried person from becoming an elder or a widowed elder from remarrying.

He who loves transgression loves strife.

Proverbs 17:19

He who loves transgression loves strife; He who raises his door seeks destruction.

There is a vast difference between knowing someone well and being a true friend. The greatest evidence of genuine friendship is loyalty being available to help in times of distress or personal struggle. Too many people are fair-weather friends. They stick around when the friendship helps them and leave when they're not getting anything out of the relationship.

You fast for contention and strife.

Isaiah 58:4

"Behold, you fast for contention and strife and to strike with a wicked fist you do not fast like you do today to make your voice heard on high.

We cannot be saved without faith in Christ, but our faith lacks sincerity if it doesn't reach out to others. Fasting can be beneficial spiritually and physically, but at its best fasting helps only the person doing it. God says he wants our fasting to go beyond our own personal growth to acts of kindness, charity, justice, and generosity. This truly is pleasing to God.

Lay aside the deeds of darkness.

Romans 13:12-14

The night is almost gone, and the day is near Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. Let us behave properly as in the day, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual promiscuity and sensuality, not in strife and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.

The "night" refers to the present evil time. The "day" refers to the time of Christ's return. Some people are surprised that Paul lists fighting and jealousy with the gross and obvious sins of drunkenness and immorality. Like Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount ([Matthew 5-7](#)), Paul considers attitudes as important as actions. Just as hatred leads to murder, so jealousy leads to strife and lust to adultery. When Christ returns, he wants to find his people clean on the inside as well as on the outside.

A conceited on has no understanding.

1 Timothy 6:3-5

If anyone advocates a different doctrine and does not agree with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine conforming to godliness, he is conceited and understands nothing; but he has a morbid interest in controversial questions and disputes

about words, out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.

Paul told Timothy to stay away from those who just wanted to make money from preaching and from those who strayed from the sound teachings of the Good News into quarrels that caused strife in the church. A person's understanding of the finer points of theology should not become the basis for lording it over others or for making money. Stay away from people who just want to argue.

Do not wrangle with useless words.

2 Timothy 2:14

Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.

Paul urged Timothy to remind the believers not to argue over unimportant details ("fighting over words") or have foolish discussions because such arguments are confusing, useless, and even harmful. False teachers loved to cause strife and divisions by their meaningless quibbling over unimportant details.

Let there be no divisions among you.

1 Corinthians 1:10-12

Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's people, that there are quarrels among you. Now I mean this, that each one of

you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

By saying "brothers and sisters," Paul is emphasizing that all Christians are part of God's family. Believers share a unity that runs even deeper than that of blood brothers and sisters.

Like a frustrated coach watching his team bicker on the court, Paul called for a time-out. He saw the danger of divisions and arguments. The Corinthian believers' lack of unity was obvious.

They may have been playing in the same "uniform," but they were doing as much as the opposition to bring about their own defeat. The problems weren't so much differences of opinion as divided allegiances. They were arguing over which position on the team was most important in a way that made them ineffective as a unit. They were on the field, but out of the game.

Divisions between Christians work like brick walls and barbed-wire fences to undermine the effectiveness of the message that believers are to proclaim. Focus on your coach, Jesus Christ, and the purpose he has for you. Strive for harmony. Keep arguments about allegiances off the team.

In this large and diverse Corinthian church, the believers favored different preachers. Because there was as yet no written New Testament, the believers depended heavily on preaching and teaching for spiritual insight into the meaning of the Old Testament.

Some followed Paul, who had founded their church; some who had heard Peter in Jerusalem followed him; others listened only to Apollos, an eloquent and popular preacher who had had a dynamic ministry in Corinth ([Acts 18:24](#); [19:1](#)). Although these three preachers were united in their message, their personalities attracted different people. At this time the church was in danger of dividing. By mentioning Jesus Christ 10 times in the first 10 verses, Paul makes it clear who it is all preachers and teachers should emphasize. God's message is much more important than any human messenger.

Paul wondered whether the Corinthians' quarrels had "divided" Christ into factions. This is a graphic picture of what happens when the church (the body of Christ) is divided. With the many churches and styles of worship available today, we could get caught up in the same game of "my preacher is better than yours!" To do so would divide Christ again.

But Christ is not divided, and his true followers should not allow anything to divide them. Don't let your appreciation for any teacher, preacher, or author leads you into pride. Our allegiance must be to Christ and to the unity that he desires.

There was strife between the herdsmen.

Genesis 13:7-8

And there was strife between the herdsmen of Abram's livestock and the herdsmen of Lot's livestock Now the Canaanite and the Perizzite were dwelling then in the land. So Abram said to Lot, "Please let there be no strife between you and me, nor between my herdsmen and your herdsmen, for we are brothers.

Surrounded by hostile neighbors, the herdsmen of Abram and Lot should have pulled together. Instead, they let petty jealousy tear them apart. Similar situations exist today. Christians often bicker while Satan is at work all around them.

Rivalries, arguments, and disagreements among believers can be destructive in three ways:

- (1) They damage goodwill, trust, and peace—the foundations of good human relations;
- (2) They hamper progress toward important goals;
- (3) They make us self-centered rather than love-centered. Jesus understood how destructive arguments among brothers could be.

In his final prayer before being betrayed and arrested, Jesus asked God that his followers be "one" (John 17:21).

Do not quarrel concerning your greatness.

Luke 22:24

And there arose also a dispute among them as to which one of them was regarded to be greatest.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

1 New American Standard Bible

2

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print