

**Max Lucado**



“conflict is inevitable, but combat is not.”

## **Where are we going?**

1. Character and Christianity
2. Character and the image of God
3. Character and the Body of Christ
4. **Challenges that shape and show character.**
  1. Vision - direction & expectations
  2. Fear - faith
  3. Relationships - community
  4. **Conflict - differences**
  5. Change - growth
  6. Success & Failure - stress
  7. Private life - the heart

### **challenge #4**

**MANAGING**  
*Conflict*



**Godly character makes for peace.**

## **Persons of Godly character discern the difference between:**

- peacemakers, pacifism, and empathy fatigue.
- necessary & unnecessary conflict.
- conflict and combat. (next week)

## **Persons of Godly character discern the difference between:**

- peacemaking, pacifism and empathy fatigue.

### **Peacemaker**

**The Cross of Christ is supreme**

**Peace is always in the context of the Cross**



### **Pacifism**

**Physical peace is supreme**

**Jesus is a poster-boy for social harmony**



## Peacemaker

The Cross of Christ  
is supreme

Peace is always in the  
context of the Cross



Pacifists  
strive to  
avoid all  
physical  
conflict.

*Luke 3:14*

“Some soldiers were questioning him, saying, “And what about us, what shall we do?” And he said to them, “***Do not take money from anyone by force, or accuse anyone falsely, and be content with your wages.***””

- **Note: Jesus does not ask the soldier to become a pacifist in order to follow him.**

*Matthew 11:12*

“From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and ***violent men take it by force.***”

- Israel had an appetite for the kingdom but not with Jesus as the King.
- Those who seek peace more than or apart from Christ do violence to the kingdom and the King.
- **Do we come to Jesus only insofar as he gives us an “abundant life” here and now?**

## Peacemaker Empathy fatigue

The Cross of Christ  
is supreme

Feeling good  
is supreme

Peace is always in the  
context of the Cross

Love means never  
hurting anyone's  
feelings



## Peacemaker

The Cross of Christ  
is supreme

Peace is always in the  
context of the Cross



Strive to  
avoid all  
personal,  
emotional  
conflicts.

*2 Corinthians 7*

“<sup>8</sup> For though ***I caused you sorrow by my letter***, I do not regret it; though I did regret — for I see that that letter caused you sorrow, though only for a while — <sup>9</sup> I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made ***sorrowful according to the will of God***, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. <sup>10</sup> For ***the sorrow that is according to the will of God*** produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”

- In a culture of radical pluralism, passion and power define morality.
- **Are we willing to help others even when we know it will initially hurt their feelings?**

## Persons of Godly character discern the difference between:

- **necessary and unnecessary conflict.**

## When should I make peace and when must I disturb it?

celebration contentment confusion conflict combat

How much should I sacrifice for unity?

Is unity more important than making the right decision?



Should I oppose everything that is evil?

When should I disturb the peace?

### Three kinds of conflict in the church

*necessary*

*unnecessary*

**Loving Discipline**

Respecting God-given boundaries

1 Cor.5

**Healthy Debate**

Respecting corporate discernment

Acts 15

**Destructive Combat**

Disrespecting God-given diversity

1 Cor.12

### 1 Corinthians 1

“<sup>2</sup> to the church of God which is sanctified in Christ Jesus, **saints by calling**, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours: <sup>3</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

<sup>4</sup> I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, <sup>5</sup> that **in everything you were enriched in Him**, in all speech and all knowledge, <sup>6</sup> even as **the testimony concerning Christ was confirmed in you**, <sup>7</sup> so that you are not lacking in any gift, **awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ**, <sup>8</sup> who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>9</sup> God is faithful, through whom you were **called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.**”

**In but not of the World?**



**All Christians are called and equipped to be the Body of Christ in this world**

1. **united in Christian faith, hope, & love**
2. **alien ambassadors in an evil age.**

### 1 Corinthians 3

“<sup>1</sup> And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. <sup>2</sup> I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, <sup>3</sup> 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?**”

- **Are we cultural thermostats or thermometers?**

**Character  
flaws in the  
Corinthian  
church**



**Character  
flaws in the  
Corinthian  
church**

**At the root of all  
this was their  
declaration of  
independence  
from Christ or  
any external  
authority.**



**Control Wars!**



**Sign #1 of a  
combat culture  
- dysfunctional  
church style.**

**Avoid toxic environments.**



**Rigid Control -  
invites overt or  
covert dissension.**



**Refusal to submit to Christ -  
or anything outside the sacred SELF.**



**Radical Chaos -  
creates insecurity  
& disorder.**

**Ephesians 1**

**“<sup>22</sup> And He put all things in subjection  
under His feet, and gave Him as **head**  
**over all things to the church,** <sup>23</sup>  
**which is His body,”****

- The Body of Christ is not headless nor does it have numerous heads.
- The essence of worldliness is willful, functional, independence from God.
- **Is Jesus mine or am I his?**

**1 Corinthians 12**

**“<sup>1</sup> Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware. <sup>2</sup> You know that when you were pagans, you were led astray to the dumb idols, however you were led. <sup>3</sup> Therefore I make known to you, that **no one speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus is accursed;” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit.**”**

**Is our main thing  
to keep the main thing  
the main thing?**

**1 Corinthians 6**

**“<sup>1</sup> Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints? <sup>2</sup> Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, **are you not competent to constitute the smallest law courts?** <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that we shall judge angels? **How much more, matters of this life?**”**

- The church is competent to judge matters of conflict and should do so.
- **Are we willing to enter conflicted situations when it may be messy?**

**When does a peacemaker  
become a disturber of the  
peace?**

**When the King is displaced  
by the kingdom or anything  
else!**

**When the Body of Christ is  
being disrespected or  
damaged!**

*1 Corinthians 12*

"<sup>4</sup> Now there are **varieties** of gifts, but the **same** Spirit. <sup>5</sup> And there are **varieties** of ministries, and the **same** Lord. <sup>6</sup> And there are **varieties** of effects, but the **same** God who works all things in all persons. <sup>7</sup> But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. . . <sup>11</sup> But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills.

- **Many of our differences are not earned or owned but given.**

*1 Corinthians 12*

"<sup>14</sup> For the body is not one member, but many. <sup>15</sup> If the foot should say, "***Because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body,***" it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. <sup>16</sup> And if the ear should say, "***Because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body,***" it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body."

- **We shouldn't feel inferior because we do not have a "lead" or "dramatic" role.**

*1 Corinthians 12*

"<sup>21</sup> And the eye cannot say to the hand, "***I have no need of you***"; or again the head to the feet, "***I have no need of you.***" <sup>22</sup> On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; <sup>23</sup> and those members of the body, which we deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor, and our unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness, <sup>24</sup> whereas our seemly members have no need of it."

- **We shouldn't feel superior because we have a power role.**

**Our spiritual maturity is  
measured not by our gift or  
role but by your character.**

**We willingly make peace  
through self sacrifice.**

**We fearlessly disturb the  
peace when necessary.**

*What can I do?*

- ✓ *Lone ranger Christians disturb the peace and have a hard time as peacemakers.*
- ✓ *Don't confuse peacemaking with the worship of pacifism or empathy fatigue.*
- ✓ *Peacemakers have a heart for the big picture and resist the temptation to empathize with solitary examples.*
- ✓ *Be willing to disturb the peace, but only when necessary.*