

GENESIS: THE BEGINNING IS NOT THE END

One Church, Serving One God, on One Mission

TEXT: Genesis 3, John 17, Ephesians 4

INTRODUCTION: Chad, thank you for leading us in worship, and thank you for being a part of DNow with our teens. They are important to us as a church, and DNow is an important time in their lives.

I do not think I have ever met a person who liked to have strife in their own life.

I have met people who liked to cause strife in the lives of other people, but they did not want it in their life.

Most of us hate strife, conflict, division, discord, and disunity. Yet the truth of the matter is that we often have to deal with those things in the various areas of our lives.

Where do we encounter strife and conflict?

- Some in their **marriages**
- Some in other **family relationships**
- Some with **extended family**
- Some at **school**
- Others at **work**
- Some with **friends**
- Sometimes even in **church**

Some dislike strife and conflict so much that they will do almost anything to avoid it.

- **Silence** even when silence is not golden but yellow
- **Compromise** with something they know is wrong
- **Yielding** to evil they would never do just on their own
- **Avoiding** certain people they otherwise would interact with

What if I could show you from God's Word the CURE for conflict, strife, division, and disharmony in any and all of the relationships where it occurs? Would you be interested? Would you use it?

Before I tell you the cure, we have to look at the cause. Because if we don't understand the cause, we are unlikely to adopt the cure.

I having been going to physical therapy to restore a full range of motion to my shoulder. I somehow injured it, I think just by handling luggage sometime last year. It just kept getting worse, and I could not lift it beyond right here

Finally, in January, I went to an orthopedist, who took X-rays and ordered an MRI. He said, "You just have some bone spurs and a lot of inflammation, but nothing is torn or needs surgery. You probably have some scar tissue that has to be broken down, but I think you can get this thing fixed with physical therapy."

I said, "Great," having no idea what that was going to mean. So in physical therapy, this quiet, sweet little lady several times a week takes my shoulder and moves it where it absolutely does not want to go.

- Look, I'm a preacher, so cussing is just not an option.
- I'm a man, and I really don't want to cry.
- So I grit my teeth and just kind of make a noise between a growl and a groan.
- But it's loud enough, she has moved me to the back room when she is doing this so the other patients won't hear!

Now, here's the point. If I did not have the diagnosis, there is no way I would continue with this cure. In fact, I would think this sweet little lady was ripping my shoulder muscles to pieces, because that's how it feels. But in reality, she is just breaking up the scar tissue, and it's working.

So, we need to see the cause of discord, division, and disunity that leads to conflict and strife with people so that we will understand the cure well enough to use it!

I. What Is THE CAUSE Of Division and Conflict?

For the answer to this question we come back to Genesis. God made man and woman on the sixth day of creation week, put them in a beautiful garden, and told them they could eat of all the food produced by the various plants, with the exception of a single tree. If they ate the fruit of the forbidden tree, they would begin to die.

Now, while we do not know how long Adam and Eve lived obediently within the Garden of Eden, whether 3 days, 3 weeks, or 3 years, we do know there was a period of time. And during that time, they had

- **No division**
- **No discord**
- **No conflict**
- **No strife**
- **Either between themselves**
- **Nor with God**

But then we read

Genesis 3:1–6 1 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall

not eat of every tree of the garden’?” 2 And the woman said to the serpent, “We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden; 3 but of the fruit of the tree which *is* in the midst of the garden, God has said, ‘You shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die.’ ” 4 Then the serpent said to the woman, “You will not surely die. 5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” 6 So when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree desirable to make *one* wise, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave to her husband with her, and he ate.

And immediately,

- There was discord, and they hid from God.
- There was blame: the man blamed the woman and God and the woman blamed the serpent.
- They were expelled from the Garden.
- And they began to die.

The thing that caused the conflict, the disharmony, the division, the strife in the Primevil Garden of Eden is the same thing that causes it in your life, in your marriage, in your family, at work, at school, with friends, and even strangers.

THE CAUSE OF DIVISION AND CONFLICT - EACH SEEKING HIS OWN WAY

As long as Adam and Eve were submissive to the command of God, they lived in perfect peace and harmony with God and with each other.

But as soon as they turned from God’s way to their own way, division, discord, and conflict began.

THE CAUSE OF DIVISION AND CONFLICT - EACH SEEKING HIS OWN WAY

II. So, What Is THE CURE For Division and Conflict?

John 17:17–23 17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. 18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world. 19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth. 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. 22 And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: 23 I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

Jesus prayed that we believers might be one with each other in the same way that He was one with the Father.

Even while living on this earth as a man, experiencing temptation in every way you and I do, Jesus remained fully yielded to God. He spoke what God told Him to speak. He did what God told Him to do.

THE CURE FOR DIVISION AND CONFLICT - YIELDING TO GOD'S WAY

Even while living on this earth as a man, experiencing temptation in every way you and I do, Jesus remained fully yielded to God. He spoke what God told Him to speak. He did what God told Him to do.

Whenever conflict arises in a church, it is because some or all of those in the conflict are seeking their way rather than God's way.

Wherever conflict and discord and strife arise, it is because one or more of those in the conflict are seeking their way rather than God's way.

- in our **marriages**
- in other **family relationships**
- with **extended family**
- at **school**
- at **work**
- with **friends**
- in **church**

When there is conflict, we do not need to try to bring our thinking together, we need to bring everybody's thinking to be like God's way of thinking.

This is the reason for Jesus' methodology for dealing with conflict – Mt. 18

Matthew 18:15 “Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother.

The goal is not to make your brother or sister agree with you, but to give opportunity for you both to agree with God.

Why?

Because of what happens when we yield to God.

Ephesians 4:1–6 1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 *There is* one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith,

one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all.

III. What Are THE CONSEQUENCES Of Yielding To God's Way?

Eph. 4:1-6 shows us. When we are yielded to God and to His ways, we are walking with the Lord, walking worthy of His calling in humility and meekness, living with patient endurance, and love.

And the result in our lives, and when others do this with us, in our relationships is

- **unity**
- **peace**
- **Spirit control (through all)**
- **Spirit empowerment (in all)**

THE CONSEQUENCES OF YIELDING TO GOD'S WAY ARE UNITY, PEACE, AND THE CONTROL OF THE SPIRIT.

- in our **marriages**
- in other **family relationships**
- with **extended family**
- at **school**
- at **work**
- with **friends**
- in **church**

So, does this mean if I yield my way fully to God I will never have discord or strife in any of my relationships?

No. Jesus was fully yielded, yet He had strife with others who refused to yield.

But, if you will fully yield, God will make you meek and humble, and that will encourage others to yield to God.

When a husband and a wife fully yield their ways to God's ways,

there is an end to discord and strife in their marriage.

When members of a family will each fully yield to God's way over their own way,

there will be peace and harmony within that family.

As church members fully yield to following the ways of the Lord rather than their own ways,

the unity, peace, and love in the church grows and grows.

My friend, that is how we at SABC can be One Church, Serving One God together, on One Mission.