

Week 5

Matters Of The Heart

This week you will note a shift in the focus of the study. Weeks 1 through 4 primarily looked at two types conflict: (1) *destructive conflict* and the biblical principles to minimize damage, and (2) *constructive conflict* and ways to help congregations remain healthy. In Weeks 5 and 6 we turn our focus to the heart of a peacemaking Christian.

If we are to recognize and address conflict God's way, we must use His methods. He always begins with the heart. As we submit to Christ's lordship over our lives and churches and surrender our agendas to advance God's Kingdom, we will experience the bond of peace and maintain the essential unity of the church. Open your heart to God's examination and mold your desires to His desires for your life and church. This is the way of the peacemaker.

You will study:

Day 1: Sweet Surrender

Day 2: Submit From The Heart

Day 3: Win The Enemy, Not The Fight

Day 4: Seek Wisdom From Above

Day 5: Trust God

At the end of this week's study you will be able to:

- Explain why our surrender to Christ's lordship is a prerequisite to having a heart committed to peace
- Assess your personal degree of surrender to Christ
- Describe the biblical mandate regarding submission to God's delegated authorities
- Distinguish between unconditional submission and conditional obedience
- Describe three ways believers are to express love to other believers
- Assess how appropriating God's wisdom helps us see conflict from His perspective
- Verify the relationship between obeying God and trusting His truth, His methods, and His timing

Key Scripture Passage

For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul. Discretion will protect you, and understanding will guard you (Proverbs 2:10-11). Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life (Proverbs 4:23).

Day 1: Sweet Surrender

Joann couldn't get over the hurt she felt as she recalled the way she had been removed as the president of the women's fellowship at Serenity Heights Church. Rather than follow the usual procedure for electing new officers at the end of the year, someone in the group had called every woman except Joann, inviting members to come to the next regularly scheduled meeting an hour early in order to conduct some urgent business. That "business" was Joann. Another woman was elected unanimously to replace Joann as president. When Joann arrived for the meeting, the new president informed her of the group's decision in a cold, matter-of-fact manner, without offering an explanation or words of appreciation.

Joann was crushed. She called several of the women in the days that followed the meeting, but no one would answer her questions. They seemed to avoid her, even on Sundays. Joann felt shunned and shamed.

She didn't know why the group had rejected her, but she knew that they had not treated her fairly. Their actions were inexcusable. How could she discover the truth about what had happened? Why were her sisters in Christ treating her so cruelly?

Jesus Is Lord!

The bold declaration "Jesus is Lord" empowered the early Christians and transformed the world. Peter concluded his Spirit-filled sermon on the day of Pentecost by saying, "*Therefore let all the house of Israel know with certainty that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah*" (Acts 2:36, HCSB). The Apostle Paul wrote, "*This is the message of faith that we proclaim: if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved*" (Romans 10:8b-9, HCSB). In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul described Christ's humility and exaltation by writing that "*at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*" (Philippians 2:10-11).

Jesus is Lord! He is Lord whether or not we acknowledge His lordship. As the second person of the Trinity and the One who triumphed over death through the power of God, Jesus stands victorious over everything in creation, including our sin and rebellion. One day every knee will bow to Him and acknowledge His lordship. He was and is and will forever be the "*Lord of lords and King of kings*" (Revelation 17:14).

Jesus' disciples watched with amazement as He demonstrated His lordship by turning water into wine (John 2:1-12), healing the sick and afflicted (Matthew 8:5-13), liberating the demon-possessed (Matthew 8:28-34), calming storms (Matthew 8:23-27; Matthew 15:21-28), forgiving sin (Matthew 9:2; Luke 7:48), and raising the dead (Luke 7:11-15; John 11:1-44).

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Every knee should bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
Philippians 2:10b-11a

Jesus also proclaimed His lordship through His preaching and teaching (Luke 4:18-19). Most significantly, Jesus displayed His lordship with power and authority through His resurrection. As doubting Thomas examined the wounds of the resurrected Savior, he confessed Jesus' lordship by exclaiming, "*My Lord and my God!*" (John 20:28)

Jesus Is Lord of Your Life

Jesus is Lord of your life. He deserves your best and all, and He calls you to be His fully devoted follower. As the Apostle Paul wrote in Colossians 2:6, "*just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him.*" There is incredible power available to believers who submit their lives to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

❖ **Assess your degree of surrender to Christ's lordship by ranking each statement "1" (resistant) to "5" (full surrender).**

- ___ Jesus is lord over my finances
- ___ Jesus is lord over my body – health and holiness
- ___ Jesus is lord over my relationships
- ___ Jesus is lord over my failures
- ___ Jesus is lord over my successes
- ___ Jesus is lord over my time and agenda
- ___ Jesus is lord over my priorities
- ___ Jesus is lord over my future
- ___ Jesus is lord over me – my heart, all that I am



"The lordship of Christ, in reality, is something that is not discovered and yielded to once, but thousands of times."⁴⁰

John Piper

Jesus Is Lord of Your Church

Reflect on the Apostle John's amazing vision of Jesus as He walked among the seven churches of the Book of Revelation (Revelation 2:1–3:22). John writes,

Among the lampstands [e.g., the seven churches] was someone "like a son of man," dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and out of his mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance (Revelation 1:13-16).

John was overwhelmed by the Lord of lords: “*When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead*” (Revelation 1:17a). The same Lord walks among the members of your church, bringing words of encouragement and righteous judgment. As Jesus knew the seven churches of Revelation, so He knows your church (Revelation 2:2; 2:9; 2:13; 2:19; 3:1; 3:8; 3:15). His eyes see everything, and you can trust Him to judge, cleanse and correct that which is sinful in your church. As the Head of His Church (Ephesians 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:18; 2:19), Christ is vitally interested in the health and welfare of His Body.

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I know your deeds...
Revelation 2:2

❖ **Think of times you’ve observed or experienced conflict in your church.**

Did you feel frustrated you couldn’t do more to “fix it?”

yes no

Did you truly believe that the situation was under control because Jesus is Lord over all things?

yes no

Did you spend sufficient time in prayer about the situation?

yes no

Did you intervene or become involved when you had an underlying feeling you should not?

yes no

Did you do everything commanded in scripture to minimize the conflict and handle it biblically?

yes no

No matter how difficult circumstances might be in your church, trust the Lord of the Church, Jesus, to take care of His Bride. Relinquish the desire to take matters into your own hands. Hear His words to your congregation by reading, believing and praying scripture. Then declare His Word lovingly yet boldly, so that He can work miracles in your congregation.

The ladies in the women’s fellowship never explained the reasons behind their decision to Joann. She struggled with her feelings for two months, at times almost frantic for an answer, for resolution.

One day while crying out to the Lord in anguish, she felt a push of conviction from the Holy Spirit. She knew she had to give up the need to control the situation. She knew she had to trust God for the outcome, patiently waiting for love to win them over. Through her tears she whispered, “God I just give this up to you. Don’t let me take it back. Deal with their hearts and deal with mine. Make me holy and I’ll leave them up to you.”



Relinquish the desire to take matters into your own hands.

Jesus is Lord of your life and church. He is Lord of everything, including your hurt, questions, worries, and failures. Instead of harboring these



Instead of harboring destructive forces in your heart, surrender them to the Lord.

destructive forces in your heart, surrender them to the Lord. Give them up, relinquishing control of them and asking Jesus to address your concerns.

Henry Blackaby offers powerful insight on letting God uphold our integrity when we have been wronged or misunderstood by others.

At times, God will be the only witness to your righteous behavior.... When no one seems to understand why you have done something or when others question whether you have done all you should have done, your confidence should not be in the hope of vindication in the eyes of others. It should be in the knowledge that God keeps you in His sight. If you have this confidence, it will be enough to sustain you.⁴¹

Jesus Is Lord Over Those Who Have Wronged You

In surrendering her hurt and need for vindication, Joann surrendered her heart to the lordship of Christ. She could have spent years asking “why” and longing for her integrity to be restored in the eyes of those who wronged her. Instead her release brought freedom. She could move on to serve the Lord wherever He called her next. Although the ladies who wronged Joann never asked for her forgiveness, Joann could forgive them in her heart. In doing so, she filled her heart with Christ’s compassion. She could genuinely pray for those who had failed her.

Take comfort in the truth that Jesus is Lord over those who have wronged you. If they are believers, pray that He will work in their hearts and bring them to repentance, which is essential for restoring their broken relationship with you. And as you pray, remember that they have become ensnared by the “*Devil’s trap, having been captured to do his will*” (2 Timothy 2:26b, HCSB). They have allowed Satan to influence their sin nature for ungodly purposes and are accountable for their actions.



Remember that your testimony is more important than your personal vindication, reputation or comfort.

If those who wronged you are not believers, pray for their salvation and follow the example of our patient and loving God, who does not want “*anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance*” (2 Peter 3:9b). Remember that your testimony and their salvation are more important than your personal vindication, reputation or comfort. Jesus is Lord over all, including those who neither know nor care about Him. In Day 3 of this week we’ll explore in greater detail how to respond to those who hurt you.