

The Cure for the Conflict

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I. Introduction.

- A. Text: Ephesians 5:21.
- B. The most common charge levied against the Christian church today is that it is irrelevant.
- C. Wherever this is true, it is due to a departure from Scripture.

II. Paul's solution to conflict: be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ.

- A. The solution must start at the level of the individual, not the state or society—there is an absence of appeal to corporate action.
- B. The simple act is to be subject to one another out of reverence to Christ.
- C. People generally approach challenges by asking what they can get out of the situation—inevitably, this results in a collision course with someone else who has similar desires. This results in conflict.
- D. Paul's principles.

1. He introduces a third party: Christ.

- a. There is always someone else present in a matter.
- b. The great question for the Christian is not what I want but what Christ wants for me.
- c. The problem is that our pride often gets in the way.
- d. Whatever we have yielded ourselves to obey is our god.

2. He introduces the means to fulfillment.

- a. It is only when one forgets oneself and his own fulfillment that he can find his own satisfaction.
- b. The man who gives himself to making money suffers from destination sickness.
- c. We only have our rights by insisting to give them to others.

Application questions:

1. When have you had a conflict with someone where you thought that your rights should come first? What did you learn from the situation?

2. Why is it important to remember Christ when a conflict with another person comes up? Explain.

3. What does it mean that we only have our rights when we insist on the rights of others first? Explain.
