

# “Let There Be No Strife”

**Introduction.** In Genesis 13:8, Abram made a statement to his nephew Lot: “Please let there be no strife between you and me.”

That statement should be true of husbands, wives, and immediate and extended families. And it should especially describe the “household of faith” (Galatians 6:10).

But that’s not the way it is sometimes. Some families have broken apart at the seams. Some are nothing more than open warfare — they are enduring the marriage and home, not enjoying it. In some churches, some members will not talk to another member — they go to great lengths not to meet with one another and have nothing good to say of them.

## ***I. Exhortations To Be At Peace***

- A. This is the opposite of strife (Romans 12:18). As much as possible, we should be at peace with all men — anybody and everybody.
  - 1. Your family (Proverbs 17:1; 1 Peter 3:7).
  - 2. Your brethren (Psalm 133:1; 1 Timothy 2:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:13).
    - a) Unity is good and pleasant for us.
    - b) Some things are good for us but not pleasant; some things are pleasant, but not good for us.
- B. The source of peace is the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22; cp. Proverbs 19:23).

## ***II. The Source Of Strife And Division***

- A. They come from what’s earthly, sensual, and demonic (James 3:13-18).
- B. They come from people walking after the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).
- C. They come as a result of members being carnally minded (1 Corinthians 3:1, 3).

## ***III. Steps To Remove Strife***

- A. Make yourself a person of peace.
  - 1. If you desire peace, develop the characteristics mentioned in the first part of this reading (1 Peter 3:8-11; cp. Ephesians 4:1-3; Colossians 3:12-15).
  - 2. A lot of people need to get the drama out of their lives and personalities. Once this is done, they can experience peace in their relationships.
- B. Get rid of sin.
  - 1. One of the issues that causes strife in a church is when one party is in sin and refuses to change.
  - 2. Someone has to be humble, put aside pride and stubbornness, and then repent (Hosea 6:1; 14:2).
- C. Settle your differences.
  - 1. If someone has wronged you, then go and try to settle the matter (Matthew 18:15). In Matthew 5:22-23 someone has something against you. Whether it’s real or imagined, you go.
  - 2. Judging from how few follow these instructions, this is one of the hardest commands for us to follow, and it’s a big reason we have so much strife.

Things are allowed to fester. We talk and tell our side of the story to influence others, but it's always best to resolve it between each other.

- D. Practice "second mile" religion.
  - 1. Don't do the minimum required; do more than required (Matthew 5:40-41).
  - 2. Why did Abraham give Lot the choice in Genesis 13? He wanted to remove the strife in his family (Romans 14:19).
- E. Be forgiving.
  - 1. In Matthew 18:23-34, forgiveness is illustrated as a debt that is cancelled. What does that mean? The debt is wiped clean. No more pressing the person for money. No more sending out statements to remind him.
  - 2. It's not "burying the hatchet blade but not the handle" so you can reach back and pull it out when you want to. Even if you don't technically have to forgive someone, you still can't become bitter (Ephesians 4:31-32).
- F. Don't avenge yourself.
  - 1. Christians let God avenge (1 Samuel 24:12; Romans 12:18-21).
  - 2. Your job is not to make sure the offender is punished. God will take care of the judging and the punishing.
- G. Be a person of love.
  - 1. Love means we seek to good of the one we love (1 Peter 4:8). This love is more than words.
  - 2. This is not "Hollywood love" — fall in or out of love and have no control of our emotion. This is Bible love. We control our love. If not, how could God command we love Him? We would just love or not; we would have no control. How could God command that we love our enemies?
  - 3. This is not "Hollywood love" — never having to say we're sorry. This is Bible love which springs from godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10). You should be sorry for those you hurt.

**Conclusion.** I don't want a husband saying to himself, "I hope she's listening." I don't want a wife to say to herself, "I hope he's listening." I want a husband to say, "What can I do to rid our marriage of strife?" I want a wife to say, "What can I do to rid our marriage of strife?"

I don't want a brother or sister to say to themselves, "I hope that brother or sister I'm cross with is listening." I want every brother or sister to say, "What can I do to rid this church of strife?"

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