



Why Are You *MAD?*

PREVIEW

Today's topic is how to deal with conflict in a healthy and biblical way.

PRAISE

Listen to Chris Tomlin's "Our God Is Greater."

PARABLE

Tell me what you would think or do if you found yourself in these two situations:

1. In the school cafeteria, you return to your plate to find that someone has poured milk on your pizza. There are at least two other students nearby.
2. Walking through the hallway, you meet up with your best friend. He/she begins to tell you that another person is spreading rumors about you. This person bumps into you in the hallway.

PRESENT

Everyone encounters conflict at some point. Whether you have fifty friends or two, whether you have two thousand followers on Instagram or twenty, conflict will find you. There is no way to completely avoid conflict all your life—unless you buy a bunker in the mountains and stay there all by yourself for your entire life eating canned vegetables and Spam. Anybody in? Didn't think so!

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PRESENT *(continued)*

Now that we've established conflict is inevitable, we need to find out how to deal with it as Jesus would want us to. What do we do? What do we say? How do we say it? Following is an outline of how I believe Jesus would want us to handle conflict.

First, hang in there. When conflict bumps into you, the hardest thing to do sometimes is just to keep a cool head. It's very easy to react angrily, but when you do, it puts you in a dangerous situation. You will be called many things during your lifetime. Some things are good (student, man, woman, doctor, lawyer). Some might or might not be good (smart, not so smart, tall, short, fat, skinny). But the one thing you don't want to be called in life is a fool. Read Proverbs 29:11. If you let conflict trigger an explosion of anger often enough, the Bible says you become a fool.

So you are angry in the middle of a conflict. How do you control your anger? First, admit that you're angry. Don't lie about being upset in a difficult situation. Sometimes that's the hardest part of all. It's OK to be angry, but you have to admit it openly and not pretend it doesn't exist.

Second, don't sin by letting anger control you. Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry. Read Ephesians 4:26. It's very important in the middle of conflict that you don't let the conflict control you. When you lose control, it leads to doing something you will regret. Instead, take control of the situation. Handling conflict always comes down to control.

Third, after admitting you're angry in the conflict, listen. As they say, there's a very good reason you have two ears and only one mouth. To have easier conflict resolution in your life, it will help if you will simply listen more.

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PRACTICE

Let's break this down into two areas.

1. Listen to those around you—even to the person you're upset with. Handling conflict becomes difficult when you don't want to hear anything the other side is saying. Believe it or not, what they have to say may change your mind about the whole situation. But you'll never know unless you listen to what they have to say. Don't become so consumed with your side of the conflict that it becomes a monologue and not a two-way conversation.
2. Listen to God. The Holy Ghost is the greatest gift ever given to mankind. One of the coolest aspects of that gift is that He will lead you safely through some of the most difficult circumstances if you will trust in Him. Part of trusting in Him is listening to Him. Although it's not what we are taught to do in today's culture, listening for God's voice in conflict is something we should do often. In fact, the best thing to do is just take a step back, breathe, tell Jesus that you love Him, and then ask Him what you should do.

PRAY

God, I want to thank You for the opportunity You have given us today to gather and talk about Your Word and how it applies in our lives. I want to thank You for our friends, family, and classmates. We know that conflict will sometimes come our way. Help us to show the same grace that You have shown to us. Give us the confidence to live with that grace in the forefront of our minds, and help it to flow out into our actions. Help us to do our best today in class as we live for You. In Jesus' name, amen.

PLUS

Next time conflict hits and you feel your anger blowing up like the Hulk, remember the three action points we talked about today. If you do that, I believe you can "be angry and sin not."