

Lesson 12: Solving our disputes

Aims for each learner:

- a. Choose a good way to solve disputes, not bad ways.
- b. Understand and practise three steps to solving a dispute in a good way.
- c. Memorize 1 Peter 3:11.

Cultural clues:

- Disputes and how to solve them
- Does God have emotions?

Prepare: Consider if the role play will fit for your learners. Prepare a song & a cross for the prayer time.

Opening

Last week's practical task: What did you do this week to help strengthen your marriage or make your spouse happy? How did it go? Or if not married, what practical task did you do?

Lesson 11 home study review:

Question 1: All three are bad ways to solve disputes.

Question 2: emotions, talk, give, receive forgiveness.

Question 3: peace and pursue it (1 Peter 3:11)

Introduce today's topic: Is it possible for us as believers to live in perfect peace and never have disputes? *In theory it is possible, but in practice Christ's followers, like non-Christians, have disputes.*

However, as believers we should have a better way to solve disputes than non-Christians.

Discussion

Disputes among Christ's followers (Questions 1-5)

Question 5:

- From statements a) to e), which ones did you tick?
- In statement f), what example did you write from your own experience?

God longs for us to solve our disputes (Question 6)

Question 6:

- Do you think our actions can make God sad? *Islam teaches that that our actions cannot affect God, but the Bible teaches that they do. E.g. in Genesis 6:5-6, God was 'grieved' by people's sins and 'his heart was filled with pain'.*
- Why do you think our disputes make God sad? *E.g. Christ paid a heavy price to bring us peace, he longs for us to live in peace. Also when we have disputes it is a bad witness to the non-believers.*

Read 1 Peter 3:8-12:



- What good actions and attitudes help us live in peace with each other? (v. 8)
v. 8, Live in harmony, love one another, be sympathetic, compassionate, humble.
- What bad actions should we avoid? (v.9)
v. 9, Repaying evil with evil or insult with insult. Instead we should repay evil with blessing.
- Instead what should we do?
v. 10, Keep our tongues from evil and our lips from deceitful speech.
Because evil tongues and deceitful speech stir up disputes a lot.
- What else must we do, in verse 10? Why?
v. 10, Keep our tongues from evil and our lips from deceitful speech.
Because evil tongues and deceitful speech stir up disputes a lot.
- What difference will this passage make to your behaviour the next time you have a dispute with someone?
- Which part of this passage is the memory verse? All repeat from memory.

Bad ways to solve disputes (Questions 7-10)

Questions 7-10: Discuss the three bad ways to solve disputes.

- What negative impact do they have on people and relationships?
- Has anyone experienced any of these bad ways? What were the negative results?

A better way to solve disputes (Questions 11-23)

What three steps can be used to solve disputes? We will discuss each one.

Step 1: Bring your emotions to God.

Questions 11-13: Why is it best to bring our emotions to God before we go to talk with the other person?

With God's help, we can control our anger. Then can talk calmly with the other person. If we go in a state of anger, it can make things worse.

Step 2: Talk with the other person.

Question 14: Read the speech bubbles.

- What is good about their discussion?
- Why do all these things help them solve their dispute?

They are calm, listening carefully, not interrupting, describing feelings, being honest yet loving.

Question 17:

- What did you write here? Why? *When we talk about the problem with lots of people it spreads it far and wide, like seeds on the wind, increasing the hurt and making reconciliation harder.*
- Is it ever good to include a third person, as mediator?

Discuss. Solving directly between the two people is usually better. But occasionally if they cannot solve it by themselves, it is good to have a mediator whom they both respect, especially where one person in the dispute would try to enforce surrender from the other (see Question 9).

Step 3: Give and receive forgiveness.

Question 20: Read the speech bubbles.

- In this conversation, who apologizes: Ali or Karim?

Both of them! They each name the part that was their fault, and they apologize for that.

Practice Session – solving disputes in role play (5 minutes plus discussion)

 Divide the group into pairs and allocate to them role play 1 or 2. One person should be person A, one, B, and the pair should act out how they would approach solving this dispute. Afterwards, one or two pairs may volunteer to show their role play to the whole group.

1. Person A previously lent money to his friend Person B, who has not paid it back in time. So, Person A complained about Person B to someone else.
2. A husband and wife invite his relatives to a special meal. The wife (Person B) serves the food late, her husband (Person A) is angry with her in front of the guests. She thinks he humiliated her, and he thinks she humiliated him.

After seeing the plays: Did they use the three steps? What was it like? What did you learn?

Question 22-23:

- Why should we forgive? *God has forgiven us.*
- How many times should we forgive someone? Read and discuss together Matthew 18:21-22.
- Look at the picture in Q.23. Describe your emotions when you got reconciled with someone.
- What can we do if someone refuses to be reconciled? *Read the teacher's speech bubble.*

Take time for silence as each person brings to God a dispute they have or know about.

Conclusion

Obeying today's teaching:

- What have you learned today that will change how you solve disputes?
- **Read together the practical task.**
- The practical task just prepares the way to talk with that person, but you still need to actually do it. When God says it is the right time, go and talk with that person.

Pray together: Remember that we are forgiven!

1. Sing together or play a song about forgiveness in either English or your learners language, e.g. 'I'm forgiven'. You could put a cross for people to focus on. Leave a time of quiet to reflect on Christ's forgiveness for us.
2. Ask people to pray quietly asking God to help them to be reconciled with anyone they need to.
3. Pray for blessing and protection over the process of forgiveness and reconciliation for each person this week.