

Conflict Resolution in Relationships (CRIR) – [Asaolu O. S.](#)

Sunday Bible Study Class @ COC UNILAG [Sept 8, 2024]

Objective: Discuss strategies for resolving disagreements constructively and maintaining harmony, including forgiveness and reconciliation in all endeavours.

Introduction: Relationships are recognized interactions and inter-connectedness of persons or entities; Conflict is opposition between interests, manifest as disagreement of opinion or action while Resolution is closure via determination. We will discuss the process by which estranged parties resolve or end a conflict amicably, the alternative is unpalatable –war unto total annihilation; eradicating the opposition.

Conflict arises from misunderstanding or from an offense suspected to be underpinned with ignorance, disrespect, affront, pride, envy, rivalry, selfishness, gossip, etc.

There are various relationships such as: Marital for spouses, parental-child, extended family, tribal, nationals, friendship, neighbours, community, master-servant, co-workers, co-travelers, business partners, brethren, ruler-subjects, officers-members in a body e.g. church or association, etc. aside self-consciousness. Such somehow relate, may have conflict which should be resolved in timely fashion. Conflicts could be within or without.

Relevant Text: Amos 3:3 *Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

Matthew 5:9; 7:12 *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God... Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*

Romans 12:18 *If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.*

Tips for CRIR:

1. Directly express your thoughts and feelings. ... don't assume the other party really knows or has full grasp of why you differ or what you expect, don't let them imagine or rely on rumour.
2. Don't Blame Your Partner. ...investigate and critique their position and action based on fair principles
3. Stick to One Argument at a Time. ... don't muddle things up, deal with issues apiece
4. Communication is Key. ... talk and also listen to ensure messages are passed and processed by each
5. Stay Open-Minded. ...be ready to adjust when necessary, not rigid that you alone is right and must have your way
6. Don't sweat the small stuff. ... let go what you can and focus on the major issues
7. Assume your partner has good intentions... desire peace and presume the other looks forward to same hence your mutual work or meeting towards addressing the matter.

Practical Steps for CRIR; *requires one to display virtues of humility, forbearance, compromise, forgiveness, not assertiveness and vindictiveness.*

1. **Acknowledge that a conflict exists** either by default (inherited/by association, gossip), an omission or commission; don't ignore and pretend it doesn't affect the relationship (Isaiah 59:1-2), pray for peace.
2. **Take the initiative to end the strife or dissention, don't let ego hinder making a move as it shows you care about the relationship, it doesn't mean that you are weak or in the wrong.** This gives one peace with God regardless of opponent's attitude to such effort –
Matthew 5:23-26 *Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother,*

and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, while thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

3. **If personal effort is not succeeding, don't give up but involve mediators;** someone the other party could listen to who has an interest in your cordial relationship.

Matthew 18:15-17 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

4. If reconciliation fails amidst brethren, suffer wrong for Christ's sake (1Cor 6:1-7), amidst spouses-separate but don't divorce (1 Cor 7:10-11), **while with others you may opt for Alternate Dispute Resolution** (Mediation/Arbitration) rather than going to Court e.g. Police mutual area DPO, Agencies in Alausa for Spouses/Landlord-Tenant Issues, Agborandun on TV, Bereketete on Radio or VDM if scammed by an online vendor or influencer-celebrity.

ADR is preferred because "*A ki ti kootu bo sore*" [It is difficult to retain cordiality or remain friendly after a legal battle that takes time, money, public exposure via claims and evidences that go into the records. Indictment is a slur with future consequences for those with electoral or other ambitions.]

5. Organizations/Nations often resort to *Persuasion, Advocacy, Mediation, Treaties, Diplomacy, Special Envoy* and even *Reciprocity* to bring others to their senses as well as *Legal suits*. See I & II Kings.

Scriptural Examples of **CRIR**

1. Family – Abram & Lot, their herdsmen quarreled on grazing area (Gen 13:1-10), Abram made concession. Jacob frankly settled with his father-in-law while Joseph's brothers used diplomacy (Gen 31; 50:15-21).
2. Master/Servant – The shrewd steward (Lk 16:1-8); Onisemus the runaway whom Paul intervened for in Philemon 1:10-19
3. Neighbours –David/Nabal with Abigail as mediator (1 Sam 25:5-35),
4. Co-workers – Pilate & Herod (Lk 23:4-12); Paul and John Mark (Acts 13:13; 15:36-41, 2 Tim 4:11); Paul mediated between two Sisters in Philippi (4:2-3)
5. Amidst brethren – see Mt 18:21-22, 2 Cor 2:4-7, 1 Cor 6:1-7

Conclusion: A Christian must emulate Christ who though God appeared in the flesh to settle with man, resolve the sin-induced conflict and foster a reconciliation. ***Most relationships will become strained at some point. It behooves those involved to restore harmony and forge ahead.*** Apologize for your action or reaction, and show via consequent behaviour that truce was achieved, without grudge or suspicion remaining.

The Bible gives ample advice on how to prevent conflict, for that is even better than trying to end or manage it!

Colossians 3:18 *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.*

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men

Hebrews 12:14-15; *13:1 Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled ...Let brotherly love continue.* [Watch video of lesson on [Facebook.com/cocunilag](https://www.facebook.com/cocunilag)]