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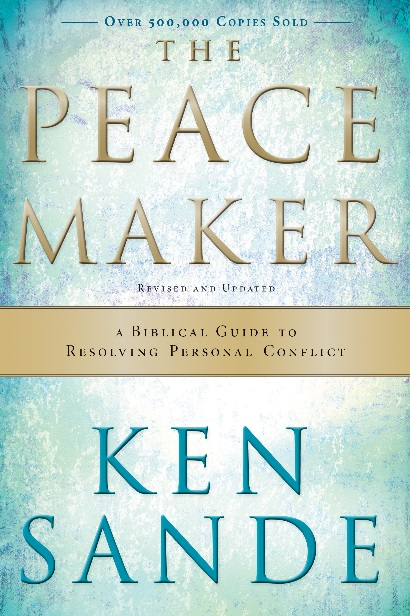
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This workbook is designed to help you resolve conflict in an effective and biblically faithful manner. In particular, it can help you to:

* Understand how a conflict began and is being prolonged
* Plan how to take responsibility for your contribution to a conflict
* Decide when and how to confront others regarding their wrongs
* Plan what you will say to others and how you will respond to their words and actions
* Negotiate just and reasonable agreements
* Overcome roadblocks to forgiveness and reconciliation
* Get help from other Christians when you cannot resolve a conflict in private
* Decide how to respond to people who refuse to deal with conflict in a reasonable manner

The principles and questions in this workbook are taken from *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* (Ken Sande, 3rd ed., Baker Books, 2004). You will find this workbook to be most helpful if you read the corresponding chapter in *The Peacemaker* before you attempt to answer the questions.

This workbook may be used in two ways. First, it can serve as a self-study guide to help you plan how to resolve a conflict personally and privately. Second, if you need assistance from others to resolve a dispute, this workbook can help you to organize and communicate your thoughts and concerns as you seek their counsel.

May the Lord use this workbook to help you discern what will please and honor Him as you respond to conflict.

Ken Sande

If you are using this workbook on a computer or tablet, the space between the lines will expand as you type your answers.

1

Conflict Provides Opportunities

1 Corinthians 10:31-11, the apostle Paul teaches that conflict provides opportunities to glorify God, to serve others, and to grow to be like Christ. This concern for faithfulness to God, compassion and mercy toward others, and righteous behavior is echoed throughout Scripture. In Micah 6:8 we are told, "He has showed you, 0 man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." In the same way, Jesus teaches us to pay attention to "the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness" (Matt. 23:23). As you live out the gospel and make the Lord's priorities your priorities, you can turn every conflict into a stepping-stone to a closer relationship with God and a more fulfilling and fruitful Christian life.

If you are using this workbook on a computer or tablet, the space between the lines will expand as you type your answers.

1. Briefly summarize your dispute as you perceive it, placing events in chronological order as much as possible. In particular, describe what you have done to resolve the dispute.
2. Which response to conflict (from the slippery slope diagram) have you been using to resolve this dispute? How has your response made the situation better or worse?
3. What have been your primary goals as you’ve tried to resolve this dispute?
4. From this point on, how could you glorify God through this conflict? Specifically, how could you please and honor God in this situation, and bring praise to Jesus by showing that he has saved you and is changing you?
5. How could you serve others through this conflict?
6. How could you grow to be more like Christ through this conflict?
7. What have you been relying on for guidance in this situation: your feelings and personal opinions about what is right, or the careful study and application of what is taught in the Bible? What will you rely on in the future?
8. What are you struggling with most at this time (e.g., your opponent’s attacks, controlling your tongue, fear of what is going to happen, a lack of support from others)?
9. How could you use the resources God has provided (the Bible, the Holy Spirit, or other Christians) to deal with these struggles.”
10. If God were to evaluate this conflict after it is over, how would you like him to complete these sentences: “I am pleased that you did not . . .”

“I am pleased that you . . .”

1. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

2

Live at Peace

The message given by Jesus and the apostles is resoundingly clear: Whether our conflicts involve minor irritations or major legal issues, God is eager to display his love and power through us as we strive to maintain peace and unity with those around us. Therefore, peacemaking is not an optional activity for a believer. If you have committed your life to Christ, he invites you to draw on his grace and commands you to seek peace with others. Token efforts will not satisfy this command; God wants you to strive earnestly, diligently, and continually to maintain harmonious relationships with those around you. Your dependence on him and obedience to this call will show the power of the gospel and enable you to enjoy the personal peace that God gives to those who faithfully follow him.

1. Have you made peace with God by accepting Jesus Christ as your Savior, Lord, and King? If not, you can do so right now by sincerely praying this prayer:

*Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I realize that my good deeds could never make up for my wrongs. I need your forgiveness. I believe that you died for my sins, and I want to turn away from them. I trust you now to be my Savior, and with your help I will follow you as my Lord and King, in the fellowship of your church.*

If you have prayed this prayer, it is essential that you find fellowship with other Christians in a church where the Bible is faithfully taught and applied. This fellowship will help you to learn more about God and to be strengthened in your faith.

1. Are you at peace with other people? If not, from whom are you estranged? Why?
2. Are you experiencing the kind of internal peace that you desire? If not, why?
3. Has the peace and unity of the Christian community been disrupted by your dispute? How?
4. What effect might this conflict be having on the reputation of Christ?
5. Is there someone who might have something against you? What have you done to be reconciled? Do you believe that you are free to worship God, or do you need to make another effort to restore unity with that person?
6. Why and how might Satan be aggravating this dispute?
7. Have you been striving earnestly to resolve this dispute or giving only partial efforts to make peace?
8. Have you remembered the forgiveness you have in Christ and drawn on his grace to resolve this dispute, or have you been working in your own wisdom and strength? Who will you depend on from this point on?
9. Read Ephesians 4:29–32. Are you thinking, speaking, or acting in a way that might grieve the Holy Spirit?
10. Are you involved in a lawsuit? If so, what have you done to follow 1 Corinthians 6:1–8?
11. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

3

Trust in the Lord and Do Good

When you are involved in a conflict, you must decide whether or not you will trust God. Trusting God does not mean believing that he will do all that you want, but rather believing that he will do everything he knows is good. If you do not trust God, you will inevitably place your trust in yourself or another person, which ultimately leads to grief. On the other hand, if you believe that God is sovereign and that he will never allow anything into your life unless it can be used for good, you will see conflicts not as *accidents,* but as *opportunities.* This kind of trust glorifies God and inspires the faithfulness needed for effective peacemaking.

1. Have you been looking at this dispute as something that happened by chance, as something done to you by someone else, or as something that God allowed in your life for a specific purpose?
2. What questions, doubts, or fears do you have because of this dispute?
3. Read Psalms 37 and 73. What do these psalms warn you not to do? What do they instruct you to do? List the comforting promises they provide.
4. How would your feelings, attitude, and behavior change if you started seeing this dispute as an assignment from a perfectly loving and all-powerful God?
5. What good might God bring about if you respond to this conflict in a biblical manner?
6. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

4

Is This Really Worth Fighting Over?

Some conflicts can be properly resolved only through confession, confrontation, forgiveness, and negotiation. But there are many more that can be properly resolved simply by overlooking minor offenses or relinquishing rights for the sake of God's kingdom. Therefore, before focusing on your rights, take a careful look at your responsibilities. Before you go to remove the speck from your brother's eye, ask yourself, "Is this really worth fighting over?”

1. Define the material issues in this conflict.
2. Define the personal issues in this conflict.
3. Which personal issues are having the greatest influence on you? On your opponent?
4. What has the other person done that has offended you?
5. Check your attitude:
   1. What can you “rejoice in the Lord” about in this situation?
   2. Have you been gentle or irritable and rude towards others? From this point on, how could you make the gentleness of Christ more “evident” to others?
   3. What have you been worried or anxious about? How has God shown himself to be loving, powerful, and faithful to you in previous conflicts or difficulties? What would you like him to do for you or accomplish through this conflict?
   4. What is good about the person with whom you are in conflict? What is right about his or her concerns? Do you have any good memories of your relationship? How has God helped you through that person?
   5. What principles taught in Scripture are most difficult for you to put into practice in this situation? Will you apply those principles? How?
6. What effect is this dispute having or likely to have on:
   1. Your witness for Christ?
   2. Your family life?
   3. Your occupation?
   4. Your finances or property?
   5. Your friendships?
   6. Your relationship with God?
   7. Your service to your church and community?
7. Consider your rights:
   1. What legal rights could you exercise in this situation? Would it be morally right to do so?
   2. What other rights could you exercise? How might *exercising* these rights glorify God, advance his kingdom, benefit others, and benefit you? How might *laying* *down* these rights glorify God, advance his kingdom, benefit others, and benefit you?
8. Which of the offenses described in answer to question 4 can you simply overlook? How might overlooking them please and honor God?
9. Which of the material issues described in answer to question 1 can you simply give in on?
10. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

5

Conflict Starts in the Heart

James 4:1-3 provides a key principle for understanding and resolving conflict. Whenever we have a serious dispute with others, we should look carefully at our own hearts to see whether we are being controlled by unmet desires that we have turned into idols. These desires often disguise themselves as things we need or deserve, or as things that would advance God's kingdom. But no matter how good or legitimate a desire may look on the surface, if we have gotten to the point where we cannot be content, fulfilled, or secure unless we have it, that desire has evolved into an idol that diverts our love and trust from God. Fortunately, God delights in delivering us from our slavery to idols and enabling us to find true freedom, fulfillment, and security in his love and provision. And as we break free from the desires that have fueled our conflicts, we can resolve seemingly hopeless disputes and become more effective peacemakers.

1. Work backwards through the progression of an idol to identify the desires that are controlling your heart. Ask yourself these questions:
   1. How am I punishing others?
   2. How am I judging others?
   3. What am I demanding to have?
   4. What is the root desire of that demand?
2. What makes you think that you need or deserve to have any of these desires satisfied?
3. In order to more clearly identify your idols (desires turned into demands), ask yourself these questions:
   1. What am I preoccupied with? (What is the first thing on my mind in the morning and/or the last thing at night?)
   2. How would I fill in this blank-? “If only \_\_\_\_\_\_, then I would be happy, fulfilled, and secure.”
   3. What do I want to preserve or avoid at any cost?
   4. Where do I put my trust?
   5. What do I fear?
   6. When a certain desire is not met, do I feel frustration, anxiety, resentment, bitterness, anger, or depression?
   7. Is there something I desire so much that I am willing to disappoint or hurt others in order to have it?
4. How are your expectations of others magnifying your demands on them and your disappointment in their failure to meet your desires?
5. How are you judging those who do not meet your desires? Are you feeling indignation, condemnation, bitterness, resentment, or anger?
6. How are you punishing those who do not meet your desires?
7. What has God done to deliver you from your idols? What can you do to receive this deliverance?
8. How can you cultivate a more passionate love for and worship of God?
9. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

6

Confession Brings Freedom

To be an effective peacemaker, you need to deal honestly with your contribution to a conflict. As Paul told Timothy, "If a man cleanses himself from [sin], he will be an instrument for noble purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work" (2 Tim. 2:21). This cleansing process is inspired by Jesus' promise that he has forgiven our sins and wants to purify us from the idols and habits that cause conflict (1 John 1:9). He calls us to cooperate in this process of repentance, self-examination, confession, and personal change. The more faithfully you draw on his grace and pursue these steps, the more useful you will be to him in making peace. At the same time, after you get the log out of your own eye, you will he better prepared to gently restore others.

1. As you look back at the way you have handled this conflict, do you see a need for repentance and confession? Why?
2. As you have talked to and about others in this situation, have you used your tongue as weapon in any of the following kinds of speech? If so, describe what you said.

* Reckless words
* Grumbling and complaining
* Falsehood
* Gossip
* Slander
* Worthless talk that does not benefit or build others up

1. Have you tried to control others in this situation? Why and how?
2. Are you guilty of any of the following sins in this situation? If so, describe what you did or failed to do.

* Uncontrolled anger
* Bitterness
* Vengeance
* Evil or malicious thoughts
* Sexual immorality
* Substance abuse
* Laziness
* Defensiveness
* Self-justification
* Stubbornness
* Resistance to godly advice
* Greed
* Deficient work
* Withholding mercy and forgiveness
* Improper concessions
* Compulsive behavior
* Breaking your word
* Misusing authority
* Rebelling against authority
* Failing to treat others as you want to be treated

1. Have any of the following idols desires influenced your behavior in this situation? How?

* Lusts of the flesh
* Pride
* Love of money
* Fear of others (or excessive concern about what others think of you)
* Good things you want too much (desires elevated to demands)

1. How have your sins contributed to this conflict?
2. Write an outline for your confession.
   1. Address everyone involved. To whom do you need to confess?
   2. Avoid if, but, and maybe. What excuses or blaming do you need to avoid?
   3. Admit specifically. What desires have you allowed to rule you and what sins have you committed? What biblical principles have you violated?
   4. Acknowledge the hurt. How might others feel as a result of your sin?
   5. Accept the consequences. What consequences do you need to accept? How can you reverse the damage you have caused?
   6. Alter your behavior. What changes do you intend to make, with God’s help, in the way you think, speak, and behave in the future?
   7. Ask for forgiveness. What might make the person whom you have wronged reluctant to forgive you? What can you do to make it easier for that person to forgive you?
3. How do you want to change as a result of this conflict? Pick one character quality you wish to change. Specifically, what steps can you take to practice that quality?
4. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

7

Just Between the Two of You

Although it is often best simply to overlook the sins of others, there will be times when doing so only prolongs alienation and encourages them to continue acting in a hurtful manner. If you know that someone has something against you, go to that person and talk about it as soon as possible. Similarly, if someone's sins are dishonoring God, damaging your relationship, hurting others, or hurting that person, one of the most loving and helpful things you can do is go and help him or her see the need for change. With God's grace and the right words (including your own confession), such a conversation will often lead to restored peace and stronger relationships.

1. Do you have any reason to believe that someone else has something against you? If so, why?
2. How has the other person sinned in this situation?
3. Would it be better to overlook the offense against you or to go and talk with the other person about it? What would be the probable benefits and drawbacks of each course of action?
4. Is the other person’s sin too serious to overlook? More specifically:

Is it dishonoring God? If so, how?

Is it damaging your relationship? If so, how?

Is it hurting others? If so, how?

Is it hurting that person? If so, how?

Is it making that person less useful to the Lord?

1. Which of the other person’s sins need to be discussed?
2. Would it be better to go in person or to involve others right away? Why?
3. Would it be best to raise the issue directly, or might this person respond better to an indirect approach? How could you use a story, an analogy, or a point of common interest to open your discussion?
4. Do you need to confess any of your sins before you talk about with the other person had done wrong? If so, what will you do if the other person does not confess his or her sins?
5. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

8

Speak the Truth in Love

Ron Kraybill, a respected Christian mediator, has noted that "effective confrontation is like a graceful dance from supportiveness to assertiveness and back again." This dance may feel awkward at first for those who are just learning it, but perseverance pays off. With God's help you can learn to speak the truth in love by saying only what will build others up, by listening carefully to what others say, and by using principles of wisdom. As you practice these skills and make them a normal part of your everyday conversations, you will be well prepared to use them when conflict breaks out. In developing the skills of loving confrontation, you can see for yourself that "the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

1. When you talk to or about your opponent, what might you be tempted to say that would be harmful or worthless?
2. How can you offer hope to the other person by focusing on what God has done and is doing?
3. Which listening skills do you have a hard time with: waiting, attending, clarifying, reflecting, or agreeing? Write down some things you will do or say to overcome these weaknesses.
4. Are you trying to believe the best about the other person (i.e., making charitable judgments)? How could you demonstrate that you are doing this?
5. What can you say that would clearly communicate your love and concern for your opponent?
6. What is the best time and place to talk with your opponent?
7. Would it be wiser to communicate in person, on the phone, or by means of a letter? Why?
8. Write a brief summary of what you need to say and avoid saying, including:

* The issues that you believe should be addressed.
* Words and topics to avoid.
* Stories or comparisons that the other person will understand and value.
* Words that describe your feelings.
* A description of the effect the dispute is having on you and others.
* Your suggestions and preferences for a solution.
* The benefits that will be produced by cooperating to find a solution.

1. How could you improve what you intend to communicate so that you cannot be misunderstood?
2. Plan your opening statement. What are three ways that your opponent may react to this statement? How could you respond constructively to each of these reactions?
3. Write some of the “I” statements you could use.
4. How can you show that you are trying to be objective?
5. How can you refer to Scripture in a helpful manner?
6. How will you ask for feedback?
7. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

9

Take One or Two Others Along

By God's grace, most conflicts between Christians can be resolved by talking personally and privately with someone who has offended you. When personal efforts do not succeed, Jesus has given us a simple yet effective process for involving other people who can promote understanding and agreement. When this involvement is carried out with prayer, wisdom, and reliance on the power of the gospel, God is pleased to use our efforts to promote just settlements and preserve relationships that would otherwise have been lost.

1. Are the personal or material issues in this conflict too serious to overlook or walk away from? Why?
2. Why do you think your efforts to resolve this dispute in private have failed? Is there anything you could still do to resolve it in private?
3. If you must seek outside help to resolve this dispute, are there any persons who are likely to be trusted and respected by both you and your opponent?
4. What will you say to your opponent to encourage him or her to allow other people to meet with the two of you to help resolve this dispute? In particular, how would you describe the advantages of getting outside assistance?
5. If your opponent refuses to work voluntarily with others, would it be better to drop the matter or to ask the church to get involved? Why?
6. If all other avenues have failed to resolve this matter and you are considering filing a lawsuit, have you satisfied the conditions set forth in Appendix D?

Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

10

Forgive as God Forgave You

God commands us to forgive others in exactly the same way he has forgiven us through Christ (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13). Biblical forgiveness is not a matter of feeling, forgetting, or excusing. True forgiveness is a choice to make four promises that model the commitments God makes to us whenever we seek his forgiveness. Then those promises must be followed up by thoughts, words, and deeds that demonstrate the reality of our forgiveness and promote true reconciliation.

If your opponent has refused to confess sins that are too serious to overlook, you can continue to apply the principles in chapters 7-9. Sins that have been confessed may be forgiven as follows:

1. How has your opponent sinned against you?
2. Which of these sins has your opponent confessed?
3. Which of the unconfessed sins can you overlook and forgive at this time? (Those that cannot be overlooked will have to be dealt with by applying the principles taught in Chapters 7 through 9.)
4. Make the first decision of forgiveness: Admit that you cannot forgive on your own, and ask God to change your heart.
5. Now write out the four promises that you will make to your opponent at this time to indicate your forgiveness.
6. What consequences of your opponent’s sin will you take on yourself? What consequences will you expect your opponent to bear?
7. If you are having a hard time forgiving your opponent:
   1. Is it because you are not sure he or she has repented? If so, how could you encourage confirmation of repentance?
   2. Do you think your opponent must somehow earn or deserve your forgiveness? Are you trying to punish by withholding forgiveness? Are you expecting a guarantee that the offense will not happen again? If you have any of these attitudes or expectations, what do you need to do?
   3. How did your sins contribute to this problem? Which of these sins will God refuse to forgive if you repent? How can you imitate his forgiveness?
   4. Read Matthew 18:21–35. What is the point of this passage? How does it apply to you? How might God be working for good in this situation?
   5. What has God forgiven you for in the past? How serious are your opponent’s sins against you when compared with your sins against God? How can you show God that you appreciate his forgiveness?
8. How can you demonstrate forgiveness or promote reconciliation:
   1. In thought?
   2. In word?
   3. In deed?
9. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

11

Look Also to the Interests of Others

Reconciliation often involves two dimensions. Personal issues may be dealt with through confession, correction, and forgiveness. Material issues may be resolved through negotiation. In most cases it is best to use a cooperative approach to negotiation, which seeks to find mutually beneficial solutions to common problems. In many cases, all it takes is a willingness to "look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4). This process may be summarized as the "PAUSE Principle:”

**P**repare

**A**ffirm relationships

**U**nderstand interests

**S**earch for creative solutions

**E**valuate options objectively and reasonable

1. Which style of negotiation is most appropriate in your situation: competitive or cooperative? Why?
2. How can you prepare to negotiate a reasonable agreement in this situation?
3. How can you affirm your concern and respect for your opponent?
4. Understand the interests by answering these questions:
   1. Which material *issues* need to be resolved in order to settle this conflict?
   2. What *positions* have you and your opponent already taken on these issues?
   3. What are your interests in this situation?
   4. What are your opponent’s interests in this situation?
5. What are some creative solutions or options that would satisfy as many interests as possible?
6. What are some ways that these options can be evaluated objectively and reasonably?
7. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

12

Overcome Evil with Good

Most conflicts can be successfully resolved through sincere confession, correction, forgiveness, and negotiation. Although many people will readily make peace, others will be stubborn and defensive and resist our efforts to be reconciled. Sometimes they will become even more antagonistic and find new ways to frustrate or mistreat us. Our natural reaction is to strike back at such people, or at least to stop doing anything good to them. We will also be tempted to think that biblical principles just won't work in this situation. But a true Christian never closes the Bible. Instead, we hold on even tighter to Scripture and dig deeper to find the encouragement and guidance we need to do what will please and honor God. Romans 12:14-21 is an excellent passage to look to at such time.

1. Who are you relying on to guide your responses to this conflict?
2. Which worldly weapons have you been using, or are you tempted to use, in this situation?
3. How can the gospel of Jesus Christ guide, motivate, and empower you from this point forward?
4. Have you been using your tongue to bless your opponents—or to speak critically of them? How could you breathe grace to them in the days ahead?
5. To whom can you turn for godly advice and encouragement?
6. What can you keep on doing in this situation that is right?
7. Have you done everything in your power to live at peace with your opponent? Is it appropriate to turn to church or civil authorities to seek assistance in resolving this dispute?
8. What needs does your opponent have that God may want you to try to meet? In other words, how can you love your opponent in a deliberate and focused way?
9. Go on record with the Lord by writing a prayer based on the principles taught in this chapter.

*Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. —1 Corinthians 15:58*

**Additional Resources**

Additional resources and training courses may be found at [www.rw360.org](http://www.rw360.org) and [www.rw-academy.org](http://www.rw-academy.org).