



RISE UP

**Challenging men to live up to God's
calling!**

Rise up and make peace!

Romans 12:18

Men's Breakfast

Sermon given on December 16, 2023



Pastor Rick Lancaster

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Opening Comments

- Today we continue our Men's Ministry series: **RISE UP: Challenging men to live up to God's calling!**
- Let's begin with a word of prayer. **Pray!**
- Maybe it is just me, but I have found in my life that there are times when people disagree with me. Has that ever happened to you?
- Of course, it has; it happens to everyone.
- Even when we are perfectly right, there are going to be people who disagree with us, right? We accept that as reality, right?
- There are tons of reasons why someone will disagree with us.
- Differing opinions and worldviews lead to disagreements.
- Conflicting desires or goals, and of course sin will lead to disagreements.
- My goal with you this morning is discuss a pitfall that many men are falling into, and it is affecting the quality of life they are living and hindering their relationships with others and with God.
- Our topic for today is Conflict.
- Until you are perfect, and everyone and everything around you are perfect, conflict is going to be a reality of life.
- And most people react to conflict, and I want to talk to about not reacting to conflict but responding to it – there is a difference.
- What we should be doing is responding to conflict – I'll explain that as we go.
- Turn in your Bible to **1 Samuel 17**.
- I want to look at what happened after David killed Goliath.
- David had just done, through the power of God, what no one else in the nation of Israel was able or even willing to attempt to do – He defeated the giant Goliath.
- **1 Samuel 17:54-18:5**
- David is very young, probably in his late teens.
- And God uses him to win this great victory for the people of God.

- Instantly he becomes the hero of Israel.
- You would think it would be smooth sailing for David, and then...
- **1 Samuel 18:6-12**
- Saul is jealous of David's success and afraid of him because he knows that God is with David, and not with him.
- This begins about twenty years of conflict between King Saul and David.
- This morning, I would like to share with you three aspects of responding to conflict.
- The first one – **Take responsibility for your part.**
- One of the ways that you can tell you have fallen into the dangerous pitfall of conflict is that you do not pause to examine your part in the conflict.
- We need to ask ourselves, "Did I cause this? Did I do something that led to this? Or did I neglect to do something that led to this?"
- David did that.
- **1 Samuel 20:1**
- David hadn't done anything to create the conflict he was having with King Saul.
- Conflict comes into every life, but we don't have to fall into the pitfall of reacting to conflicts.
- If I can examine myself and see that I have contributed to the conflict, rather than reacting to the conflict, I need to choose to respond by humbling myself and confessing my part in the conflict.
- Even if your part is small, even if the other person's reaction is unreasonable or irrational.
- David hadn't done anything to cause this conflict.
- And there have been times that I, like David, found myself in conflict with someone through no fault of my own.
- And I have, on some occasions, asked someone to forgive me for what they perceive I have done.
- If we want to avoid the pitfall of reacting to conflict, we must first take responsibility for our part.
- The second aspect of responding to conflict is **Don't take revenge.**

- There is something that happens when a man is attacked or feels that he is being attacked.
- Turn to **Galatians 5**
- Usually, he reacts by lashing out at the attacker.
- That is natural because God made men to be warriors, to fight.
- Fighting is a part of the male nature – to deny that is to ignore reality.
- Our natural reaction to conflict is to fight, and there are times when it is the right reaction.
- But just because it is our natural reaction, it doesn't mean it is always the right response.
- The Apostle Paul tells us about this reaction versus response reality.
- **Galatians 5:16-23**
- If we are yielding to the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, chances are we will choose to respond rather than react to conflict.
- Turn to **1 Samuel 24**
- Just because someone attacks us, doesn't mean we should react by lashing out at them.
- Jesus is our great example of that.
- God the Son was attacked repeatedly and chose not to react.
- David had a couple of chances to lash out at King Saul, to react to the conflict between the king and himself.
- **1 Samuel 24:1-7**
- David, and Jesus, trusted God the Father to be their defenders
- Jesus even taught about how we should respond **Matthew 5:38-42**.
You have heard that it was said, '*An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.*' But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have *your* cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.
- In the OT **Leviticus 19:18**.
You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I *am* the LORD.
- Elsewhere we are told to leave vengeance to God because He is the only One capable of doing it correctly, because only He is perfectly just.
- First, take responsibility for your part, and confess my part.

- Second, exercise self-control through the Holy Spirit and choose not to react, instead look for the right response.
- Third aspect of avoiding the pitfall of conflict is **Seek to reconcile the conflict.**
- Reconcile = to cease to cause hostility or opposition, or to harmonize or settle (quarrel/conflict).
- Now we can't always do that.
- In the case of David, King Saul wouldn't reconcile with him.
- King Saul's conflict with David existed throughout the rest of Saul's life – about twenty years.
- As Christians, reconciliation is part of our calling **2 Corinthians 5:18-19.**

Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

- But, as men of God it is on us to seek reconciliation first.
- We don't wait for someone to come to us to reconcile, we initiate.
- And we should be willing to go to whatever lengths are necessary to see that happen **Romans 12:18.**

If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

- Paul is saying we ought to do our part, whatever that is.
- Not only that but Jesus tells us to go the extra mile to reconcile.
- The reality is that we will not be able to live peaceably with all men or women.
- There will be some who will refuse to be reconciled to us.
- But we are to seek to reconcile as long as there are opportunities to do so.
- Only God can tell when it is time to stop trying to reconcile.
- And one last thing before we close.
- There is one overarching principle that must never be forgotten as we move through the aspects of responding to conflict and that is Jesus' command for us to love others **Matthew 22:34-40.**

But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and

with all your mind. This is ***the*** first and great commandment. And ***the*** second is like it: ***'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

- Throughout the whole process we must continually be asking ourselves, 'How can I love God by loving this person that is in conflict with me?'"
- Before you do or say anything, ask yourself, "Does this communicate love, or something else?"
- Because if it doesn't communicate love, that means it is not Spirit-led, and is a work of the flesh.
- Guys conflict will come into all our lives.
- In my own life, I have come to understand that is not always bad.
- Sometimes conflict comes because there is a problem that I can fix in me or in the relationship.
- Conflict is always an opportunity for God to be glorified, for others to be blessed, and for our own faith to grow.
- As men, let's make the decision, right here, right now, to choose to respond to conflict in such a way that we are moving toward reconciliation, by taking responsibility for our own part, and by choosing to exercise self-control and not reacting to the conflict.
- Let us choose to let the Holy Spirit help us to follow the example of our Lord Jesus as He so powerfully displayed how to do this, all for the glory of God.
- If you take these principles to heart, I promise you, it will change your relationships, and will probably make your life better than it is today.
- Let's choose our battles wisely – when it comes time to fight, let's fight in the strength and power of God, but most of the time God would call us resist the temptation to fight, and instead work for reconciliation.
- Take responsibility for your part.
- Don't lash out or take revenge.
- Take the initiative and seek to reconcile.
- Make love the underlying motivation for it all.
- And then trust God to work miracles in your life and relationships.
- **Let's pray!**