

PAUSE Principle

Even when you manage to resolve personal offenses through confession and forgiveness, you may still need to deal with *substantive issues*, which may involve money, property, or the exercise of certain rights. These issues should not be swept under the carpet or automatically passed to a higher authority. Instead, they should be negotiated in a biblically faithful manner.

As a general rule, you should try to negotiate substantive issues in a cooperative manner rather than a competitive manner. In other words, instead of aggressively pursuing your own interests and letting others look out for themselves, you should deliberately look for solutions that are beneficial to everyone involved.

As the Apostle Paul put it, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others" (Phil. 2:3-4; see Matt. 22:39; 1 Cor. 13:5; Matt. 7:12).

A biblical approach to negotiation may be summarized in five basic steps, which we refer to as the PAUSE Principle:

- **P**repare (pray, get the facts, seek godly counsel, develop options)
- **A**ffirm relationships (show genuine concern and respect for others)
- **U**nderstand interests (identify others' concerns, desires, needs, limitations, or fears)
- **S**earch for creative solutions (prayerful brainstorming)
- **E**valuate options objectively and reasonably (evaluate, don't argue)

If you have never used this approach to negotiation before, it will take time and practice (and sometimes advice from others) to become proficient at it. But it is well worth the effort, because learning the PAUSE principle will help you not only to resolve your present dispute but also to negotiate more effectively in all areas of your life.