

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

3rd - 5th Grade

Sunday Morning

Study 13

Quarreling and Strife

Quarreling and Strife

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective To show the students how God feels about division and quarreling and to remind them that God is a God of reconciliation and restoration.

Key Verses

Proverbs 10:12

Proverbs 15:1

Proverbs 17:14

Proverbs 20:3

Proverbs 26:17, 20-21

Genesis 13:5-13

Psalms 133:1

Philippians 2:1-4

2 Timothy 2:23-24a

Memory Verse - 2 Timothy 2:23-24a

"But avoid foolish and ignorant disputes, knowing that they generate strife. And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel."

Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Proverbs 11:3.

Ask the class to raise their hand if anyone has ever gotten into an argument that turned into a big fight. Ask what happened and how it ended. Then ask why people argue in the first place. Finally, ask the students what they think God thought about their argument. Was God happy that two people got into a fight? What would God have liked to see happen instead?

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

This week we are studying what Proverbs teaches us about quarreling and strife. Remember, Proverbs repeatedly shows us two kinds of people: the foolish and the wise. First and foremost, we see that it is more honorable in God's eyes to try to diffuse an argument before it gets out of control (20:3, 17:14). Some of the ways this can be done is by speaking softly to an angry person (15:1), refusing to be a gossip (26:20), and by loving our neighbor (10:12). What if we do those things, but someone still wants to fight with us? At that point, Proverbs tells us that the scoffer just needs to be removed in order for peace to be restored (22:10). If you can't remove them, remove yourself! What might that look like for you? (Not inviting a certain friend to your house, not hanging out with people who get into fights all the time, etc.)

The fool, on the other hand, does the opposite. Just like gossip, quarrels and strife need fuel to keep them going. Rather than trying to diffuse arguments, the fool loves to start arguments and keep them going by spreading gossip (26:20-21), being dishonest (16:28), or just by being angry all the time (29:22). Fools are even on the lookout to get involved in other people's quarrels, not to stop them, but to join in! Proverbs says getting involved in someone else's argument is a sure way to get yourself into trouble, like grabbing a dog by the ears (26:17).

It can be tempting to quarrel and fight, but it's important to understand how God sees strife. God's desire for us is that we would not quarrel or cause strife (2 Timothy 2:3-4a), but pursue peace by loving one another, not doing things from a selfish standpoint or looking down on those around us, but instead treating others better than ourselves, and looking out for the interests of others (Philippians 2:4). In doing so, we reflect the heart of Jesus and bring God glory. To compliment our study, we will look at what we can learn from the example of how Abraham, in wisdom, put an end to strife with his nephew Lot (Genesis 13:5-13).

LOOK

There is a part of our sinful nature that simply loves to be proven right. We have a deep desire to show that we are smarter or better than other people. One of the ways that we do that is by trying to win arguments. Scripture tells us to be very careful about not allowing ourselves to lose control when we are debating an issue and not to allow that debate to turn into a quarrel. A quarrel is a fight between two or more people or groups. It could be a fight that uses words to attack or hurt the other person, or it could grow, building to the point where people are harming each other physically, or worse. The longer we allow ourselves to argue, fight, and quarrel, the more likely we are to lose control of our emotions and sin in something that we think, say, or do.

The interpretation/
exegesis of the passage.
What does this passage
mean? How does this
passage apply to my
life?

LOOK (Continued)

The Bible tells us that we should try our very best to end disputes quickly. Instead of allowing them to continue to build to the point where everyone is yelling and screaming, or worse, saying nasty things to each other, we should try to peacefully resolve our issues. Consider Abraham's example in how he reacted to Lot. We are told that there was strife between their herdsman because there wasn't enough land to care for all their flocks. Abraham took the first step by going to Lot about the issue, and he gave Lot the choice of where he wanted to go instead of just telling him where to go as his elder. He wanted to put an end to the division as quickly as possible and didn't care about winning an argument. Instead, he desired a good relationship with his nephew and sought to honor God in how he resolved the conflict.

Restoring peace and relationships in a way that honors God is so much more important than winning an argument or proving that you are right. God wants us to live together in unity and togetherness. He tells us that it is good when brothers live in harmony. This is a picture of the Garden before the fall, where Adam and Eve walked together with God. This is what heaven will be like! People will live together in perfect harmony with one another and with God, without violence or arguing, without anger or pain.

The goal of arguing is usually to try to make ourselves look better than the other person, but this is the exact opposite of what God wants us to do. Not only does He *tell* us that we should seek to honor and serve others above ourselves, but that is what He *did*. We follow Jesus' example when we take the humble place, thinking about the needs of others first. We are supposed to love our neighbor as our self, and not tear them down with our words or with our argumentative attitudes. This is the way of wisdom.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

As a class, memorize 2 Timothy 2:23-24a.

Spend some time in class talking about ways that we can prevent fights and arguments. Talk to the kids about whether or not it is more important to be loving or to be proven right.

Pray: Ask the Lord to give us wisdom to resolve quarrels and put an end to strife. Praise Him for humbling Himself and being a Servant to us, and ask Him to give you a heart like His.

Parent Question: What does the Bible say about arguing? Why is it dangerous?

FURTHER STUDY IN PROVERBS

Below is a list of verses from Proverbs for further study on the topic of quarrels and strife. Use as desired to compliment your teaching.

Proverbs 10:12—Hatred stirs up strife, But love covers all sins.

Proverbs 13:10—By pride comes nothing but strife, But with the well-advised is wisdom.

Proverbs 15:18—A wrathful man stirs up strife, But he who is slow to anger allays contention.

Proverbs 16:28—A perverse man sows strife, And a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 17:1, 14, 19—1 Better is a dry morsel with quietness, Than a house full of feasting with strife. ... 14 The beginning of strife is like releasing water; Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts. ... 19 He who loves transgression loves strife, And he who exalts his gate seeks destruction.

Proverbs 22:10—Cast out the scoffer, and contention will leave; Yes, strife and reproach will cease.

Proverbs 26:20-21—Where there is no wood, the fire goes out; And where there is no talebearer, strife ceases. 21 As charcoal is to burning coals, and wood to fire, So is a contentious man to kindle strife.

Proverbs 28:25—He who is of a proud heart stirs up strife, But he who trusts in the LORD will be prospered.

Proverbs 29:22—An angry man stirs up strife, And a furious man abounds in transgression.

Proverbs 30:33—For as the churning of milk produces butter, And wringing the nose produces blood, So the forcing of wrath produces strife.

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on select Proverbs by David Guzik

[Proverbs 10:12](#)

**Hatred stirs up strife,
But love covers all sins.**

- a. **Hatred stirs up strife:** The constant stirring up of **strife** and controversy is evidence of **hatred**.
- i. **Stirs up strife:** “Upon every slight occasion, by filling men with suspicions and surmises, whereby they imagine faults where there are none, and aggravate every small offence.” (Poole)
- b. **Love covers all sins:** Peter quoted this in [1 Peter 4:8](#). We could say this is true in two senses, in that love covers the sins of others, and that love covers the sins of the one who loves. **Hatred** brings trouble, but **love** brings healing.
 - i. There certainly is a place for the confrontation and exposure of sin. “This stress on reconciliation is balanced by other passages warning us against hushing up our own sins ([Proverbs 28:13](#)) or shirking the giving of a rebuke (e.g. [Proverbs 27:5, 6](#)).” (Kidner)
 - ii. “In this collection ‘conceal’ is not used in the bad sense of maliciously hiding something (unlike [Proverbs 10:6, 11](#)) but in a good sense of forgiving or not finding fault ([Proverbs 11:13](#); [12:16, 23](#); [17:9](#); [28:13](#); note especially [Proverbs 10:12](#)).” (Garrett)
 - iii. **Covers all sins:** “On the contrary, love conciliates; removes aggravations; puts the best construction on every thing; and pours *water*, not *oil*, upon the *flame*.” (Clarke)
 - iv. “**Love covers**, overlooks, speedily forgives, and forgets. Full of candor and inventiveness, it puts the best construction on doubtful matters and does not expose the faults of a brother. Oh, let us put on the Lord Jesus in his spirit of forbearing, sacrificial love, and let us forgive as we have been forgiven by Christ.” (Bridges)

[Proverbs 15:1](#)

**A soft answer turns away wrath,
But a harsh word stirs up anger.**

- a. **A soft answer turns away wrath:** When people come to us in **wrath**, we are often tempted to be harsh in response. Wisdom shows us the value of a **soft answer**, one without sharp edges or points. That kind of answer can actually turn **away wrath**.
- i. “Soft speech is like oil on bruised skin to soften and heal it (cf. [Judges 8:1-3](#)); painful speech has the effect of

oil poured on fire (cf. [1 Kings 12:1-16](#)).” (Waltke)

ii. “Pride and passion on both sides strike together like two flints. We indulge in sarcasm as if we would rather lose a friend than miss scoring a point in the argument. All this the world excuses. But the Gospel sets before us our Savior’s example and imbues us with his spirit; so we should be careful not to provoke a chafed or wounded spirit.” (Bridges)

b. **A harsh word stirs up anger:** A **harsh** response to **wrath** will often only **stirs up** more **anger**. It may feel good at the moment, but ends up making the situation worse, not better.

i. “Many conflicts arise not because the issues separating the parties are so great but because of the temperaments people bring to a confrontation.” (Garrett)

ii. “How was Saul enkindled by Doeg, and David by Nabal’s curishness! Rehoboam, with one churlish breath, lost ten tribes.” (Trapp)

iii. “Gideon in [Judges 8:1-3](#) is a classic example of the soft answer that brings peace, whereas Jephthah illustrates the harsh answer that leads to war ([Judges 12:1-6](#)).” (Ross)

[Proverbs 17:14](#)

**The beginning of strife is like releasing water;
Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts.**

a. **The beginning of strife is like releasing water:** The nature of liquid **water** makes it difficult to restrain. Once it is released it will go in unexpected and uncontrolled ways. This is like **the beginning of strife**. Once an argument or battle has begun, it is difficult to control its course, and like uncontrolled water, it can cause great damage.

i. “The verse likens the beginning of a bitter conflict involving the pent up arrogance and anger of a fool to a person who digs a hole in a dam or opens a sluice. The seepage starts from a small aperture, but under built up pressure it quickly bursts open and the small leak turns into a raging, uncontrolled cataclysm that gets out of hand and does irreparable damage.” (Waltke)

ii. “Opening such a sluice lets loose more than one can predict, control or retrieve.” (Kidner)

b. **Therefore stop contention before a quarrel starts:** Because **strife** and **contention** are difficult to control and cause great damage, wisdom sees that it is much better to **stop contention before** it ever starts.

i. “Do therefore here as the Dutchmen do by their banks; they keep them with little cost and trouble, because they look narrowly to them, and make them up in time. If there be but the least breach, they stop it presently, otherwise the sea would soon flood them.” (Trapp)

[Proverbs 20:3](#)

**It is honorable for a man to stop striving,
Since any fool can start a quarrel.**

a. **It is honorable for a man to stop striving:** Many men feel that *honor* drives them to dispute and fight with others. This proverb reminds us that often times it is even more **honorable for a man to stop striving**.

i. “To stint it rather than to stir it; to be first in promoting peace and seeking reconciliation, as Abraham did in the controversy with Lot.” (Trapp)

b. **Since any fool can start a quarrel:** In many circumstances it takes a man of honor to **stop** the fight, but **any fool can start** the **quarrel** and continue it.

i. “The wise are more concerned to bring peace than a desire to be right, but the fool cannot restrain himself and at the first opportunity explodes and shows his teeth.” (Waltke)

1. ([Pro 26:17](#)) The wisdom of not interfering in the disputes of others.

**He who passes by *and* meddles in a quarrel not his own
Is like one who takes a dog by the ears.**

a. **He who passes by and meddles in a quarrel not his own:** Some find it irresistible to get involved in the disputes of other people. The **quarrel** doesn't really belong to them, but he makes it **his own**. Jesus knew when to not get involved in another's dispute ([Luke 12:14](#)).

i. **Meddles:** “The Hebrew verb literally means ‘become excited’...the Hebrew could fit the line—someone who gets angry over the fight of another.” (Ross)

b. **Is like one who takes a dog by the ears:** It is a foolish and dangerous thing to take **a dog by the ears**. Once one does, it's hard to let go without getting bit, and the dog never appreciates it.

i. “Exposeth himself to great and needless hazards, as a man that causelessly provoketh a mastiff dog against himself.” (Poole)

ii. “Not even Samson grabbed the foxes by their ears ([Judges 15:4](#)).” (Waltke)

iii. “There is a world of difference between suffering as a Christian and suffering as a busybody. Even with Christian intentions, many of us are too fond of meddling in other peoples' affairs.” (Bridges)

iv. “This proverb stands true *ninety-nine* times out of a *hundred*, where people meddle with *domestic broils*, or differences between *men* and their *wives*.” (Clarke)

3. ([Pro 26:20-22](#)) The dangerous words of the talebearer.

**Where *there is no wood*, the fire goes out;
And where *there is no talebearer*, strife ceases.
As charcoal *is* to burning coals, and wood to fire,
So *is* a contentious man to kindle strife.
The words of a talebearer *are* like tasty trifles,
And they go down into the inmost body.**

a. **Where there is no talebearer, strife ceases:** Just as **wood** fuels a **fire**, so the **talebearer** or gossip fuels **strife**. The fire won't continue to burn without the wood, and the strife won't continue when the **talebearer** stops their work. James described the power of words to set a destructive fire ([James 3:6](#)).

i. “As long as there is an ear to receive, and a tongue to pass on, some piece of malicious slander will continue to circulate. But directly it reaches a hearer who will not whisper it forward, in that direction at least its progress is arrested.” (Meyer)

ii. “The tale-*receiver* and the tale-*bearer* are the agents of discord. If none received the slander in the *first* instance, it could not be propagated. Hence our proverb, ‘The receiver is as bad as the thief.’ And

our *laws* treat them equally; for the *receiver* of stolen goods, knowing them to be stolen, is *hanged*, as well as *he who stole them*.” (Clarke)

b. **So is a contentious man to kindle strife: Strife** doesn't create itself. It has a maker, and it is the gossip, the **talebearer**, the **contentious man**.

i. “In the absence of such a person, old hurts can be set aside, and discord can die a natural death. Even so, we often find a juicy tidbit of defamation irresistible.” (Garrett)

c. **The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles**: This proverb, repeated from 18:8, explains that the gossip and evil reports brought by the **talebearer** are almost impossible to resist. Those who should know better find it difficult to tell the **talebearer** to stop talking.

i. “The words of a gossip [**talebearer**] in an unguarded moment may inflict irreparable injury. This evil may be welcomed in certain circles that thrive on scandal. But that does not alter the real character of a gossip, who is detested by both God and man.” (Bridges)

d. **They go down into the inmost body**: When we receive the **words of a talebearer**, they normally have an effect on us. The words **go down into** us and often change the way we think and feel about people, even if what the **talebearer** says isn't true or isn't confirmed. God gave a strong word regarding the confirmation of testimony ([Deuteronomy 19:15](#), [2 Corinthians 13:1](#), [1 Timothy 5:19](#)).

i. Once we start eating these **tasty trifles**, it is hard to stop. “When such tasty bits are taken into the innermost being, they stimulate the desire for more.” (Ross)

ii. “This was delivered before, [Proverbs 18:8](#), and is here repeated, as being a point of great concernment to the peace and welfare of all societies, and fit to be oft and earnestly pressed upon the consciences of men, because of their great and general proneness to this sin.” (Poole)