

Conflict Resolution



Herodians and Pharisees

“But let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God” (James 1:19–20).

One area of vital importance when involved in Conflict Resolution would be listening. The term swift, in the text, is to be “fleet, that is, (figuratively) prompt or ready” to hear. It is, however, more often that individual begin to formulate an answer to a question, or explanation before the individual has finished relaying their thoughts, and once the thought go in that direction, whatever the speaker is saying is often missed, therefore, before offering a Resolution, it would behoove those seeking peace to be able to say, as Solomon, “all hath been heard” (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

In this segment of Conflict Resolution the principals are Jesus, and the Herodians and Pharisees. The Herodians were a priestly party under the reign of King Herod. Herod had been appointed king of Judaea by the Roman Senate, in 40 B.C. He had a love for the Roman customs and institution, and imposed heavy taxes upon the Jews. The Pharisees, “In opposition to the usurped dominion of the Herods and the rule of the Romans, they stoutly upheld the theocracy and their country’s cause, and possessed great influence with the common people” (Thayer’s). You may have heard the phrase, “the enemy of my enemy is my friend.” Such was the case regarding the Herodians, the Pharisees, and Jesus. Many allegiances are entered into, not because the allies like one another, they just hate someone, or something more, and so it was with the Herodians and the Pharisees.

The subject of the Conflict revolved around the paying of taxes. Thus, if an individual is for paying taxes to Rome they were considered by the Pharisees disloyal to the theocracy and cause of the Jews. If an individual was opposed to the paying of taxes they were considered by the Herodians disloyal to Rome.

The Conflict: “Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might ensnare him in his talk. And they send to him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Teacher, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, and carest not for any one: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?”

The Resolution: “But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why make ye trial of me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a denarius. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. And when they heard it, they marveled, and left him, and went away” (Matthew 22:15–22).

In this Jesus showed that the perceived conflict was no conflict at all. Paying taxes to a civil government is not inconsistent with one's reverence and fear of God.

The apostle Paul put it this way, “Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God; and the powers that be are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God: and they that withstand shall receive to themselves judgment. For rulers are not a terror to the good work, but to the evil. And wouldest thou have no fear of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise from the same: for he is a minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be in subjection, not only because of the wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For this

cause ye pay tribute also; for they are ministers of God's service, attending continually upon this very thing. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:1–7).