

Conflict is defined by Merriam Webster's Dictionary as...

1. fight, battle, war an armed conflict.
2. a: competitive or opposing action of incompatibles: antagonistic state or action (as of divergent ideas, interests, or persons) a conflict of principles b: mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands. His conscience was in conflict with his duty.
3. the opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction. The conflict in the play is between the king and the archbishop.

conflictfulplay \ 'kän- ,flikt-fəl\ adjective

conflictualplay \kän- 'flik-chə-wəl, kən-, -chəl, -shwəl, -chü-əl\ adjective

But, the question is Why Does Conflict Exist? What is the cause, or source of conflict? There are basically five reasons.

**1. Change.** Change is inevitable. In fact, we live in a time that change happens so rapidly, it is impossible to keep up. To mention change within the church setting sends people all up in arms. The fear of change, taking the slippery slope to liberalism, has hindered the growth and development of the church. Change may not be the number one reason for conflict, but it definitely ranks high on the list of the challenges that exist.

**2. We live in a complex and diverse world.** The multi-ethnic nature of our culture increases on a daily basis. The complexity of numerous cultures, coupled with the diversity of opinion, education, religion, political views, medical advances, technology, and the list goes on, creates conflict on several fronts. When we consider the influence of social media as it relates to the complexity and diversity of our world, matters only worsen.

**3. We interact with people.** It has been said that leadership would be easy if it weren't for dealing with people. Perhaps this is true, but our business is people. Obviously, when we interact with people we face much of the diversity previously mentioned. People come from all sorts of backgrounds, cultures, values, belief systems, influences, etc. and the result is a difference in the way we all see the world we live in today. When these differences are identified, we will often experience conflict.

**4. Lack of communication.** For all the advances in technology, it is amazing to consider how poorly we communicate. Apart from Facebook, LinkedIn, SnapChat, and multiple other forms of social media, the use of texting, PM, and email has not improved our ability to communicate effectively. The lack of effective communication is also a top ranking reason for the conflict in our world. Barriers in language, semantics, culture, and form can complicate matters further, but we have the ability to communicate more effectively when we choose to do so. It is possible that our assuming others understand is a key factor in our poor ability to communicate.

**5. We cannot control all situations.** Doesn't this sound interesting. As Christians, we quickly say that God is in control of all things. Yet, we spend so much of our time and energy attempting to control every aspect of our lives and often the lives of others. Somehow, we have convinced ourselves that if we are in control we will be happy. When this happens, we need to prepare for conflict because the majority of others feel the same way. They want control also and when two people strive for control, conflict will follow.

Think about these reasons and share if you have other ideas related to the source or cause of conflict. Do you agree with these reasons or disagree? If so, why? If not, why not? In future weeks we will discuss how to overcome these challenges and provide a solution for the conflict that exists.