

# MANAGING MARITAL DISPUTES AMONG MARRIED SPOUSES

(RESOLVING FAMILY CONFLICTS)

*Text Col. 3:17-21*

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## INTRODUCTION

We all know the family as an institution today is struggling; Husbands and wives often suffer strained relationship. Parents and children are frequently at logger head with one another. Much misery in life is due to dysfunctional family relationships between husband and wife and sometimes between parents and their siblings.

I believe that much family turmoil can be resolved when we understand the areas and reasons for potential conflict. When we are willing to take simple but profound actions with the fear of God, marital disputes are easily resolved.

**[Let's begin by reviewing some common sources of marital and family conflicts]**

## CAUSES OF FAMILY DISPUTES:

### MONEY ISSUES:

- ❖ Most couples argue over bills, debt, spending, and other financial issues.
- ❖ Parents and children argue over allowances, or the lack thereof

### CHILDREN ISSUES:

- ❖ Discipline, diet, and other parenting issues can be sources of disagreement.
- ❖ Having children can activate differences in beliefs on issues like how to discipline.
- ❖ Who is responsible for most of the child care or what educational options to choose.

### INTIMACY ISSUES:

- ❖ For spouses, frequency, quality time on bed, and infidelity are all common sources of disputes.

- ❖ Parents struggle in guiding children through serious-minds in our sex-crazed culture, where male and female are easily influenced negatively.

**CHORES:**

- ❖ Many couples argue over equitable distribution of household works, and how to do it.
- ❖ Instead of dividing household chores fairly they fight over who did or didn't do what, mostly if sibling are not of same parentage or always in disagreement.

**FRIENDS:**

- ❖ What friends will be considered acceptable for spouses and children?
- ❖ Not all friends are helpful to relationships, some of them are toxic as they create bad influence. This is the cause of some children losing focus on their tasks and target in life. Spouses could also be influenced negatively.

**ENTERTAINMENT:**

- ❖ What shall we do with our spare time? Where shall we go?
- ❖ Different interests can threaten family relationships e.g. club membership, Town meetings etc.
- ❖ To what degree do we allow them to impact the nuclear family?

**EXPECTATIONS:**

- ❖ We all go into marriage and have a family with certain expectations.
- ❖ We expect spouses to be as matured as our parents. Our standard of living equal to or better than theirs.
- ❖ Unmet high expectations are a major source of conflict in marriages and families. Especially when we compare our families with others.

**PERSONALITIES:**

- ❖ There are personality traits and personal habits that can doom marriages and families if not controlled with self-discipline in line with God. (E.g. education, social life, mode of dressing etc).
- ❖ Even adults can suffer from “childhood arrests”, and behave like selfish children if we refuse to change for the better.

This list is not exhaustive, but illustrates the challenges that families often face. Even so, I believe the solution is rather simple if we are willing to play by the rules of God.

**RESOLVING FAMILY DISPUTES:**

**RELIGION IS THE KEY.**

- ❖ Religious beliefs affect every area of potential conflict (children, money, friends, etc.)
- ❖ Agree on religion, and other problems will be easier to handle.
- ❖ With God on your side you will have His blessing and providential aid in resolving disputes.
- ❖ Ignore Him God, and you face your troubles on your own.

**ACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOURS AS CHRISTIANS IN HANDLING MARITAL DISPUTES:**

- ❖ Grow in the grace and knowledge of Christ (**2 Pet. 1:5-7**)
- ❖ Develop Christ-like qualities - (**2Pet. 1:5-8**)
- ❖ Produce the fruit of the Spirit - (**Gal. 5:22-23**)
- ❖ Treat your family like brethren (**2Pet. 1: 7-10**)
- ❖ With lowliness, gentleness, longsuffering, forbearing with love – (**Eph. 4:1-3; Phil. 2:3-5**)
  
- ❖ Just as loving brethren helps to ensure good days and answered prayers – (**1Pet 3:7-12**)
- ❖ Love your family without enemies. Refuse to retaliate; respond with good – (**Matt. 5:38-48**). Love your enemies, just as God loves you – It takes two to fight, so be the bigger person. If one person does the right thing, differences quickly diffuse – (**Prov. 15: 1-2**). Proper conduct more likely encourages the other person to do likewise.

**CONCLUSION**

With so many potential causes of family conflict, it is not surprising that many families are dysfunctional. leading many to mistakenly believe that marriage and family are outdated, but when family members are willing to heed God's Word, Potential problems rarely arise and disputes are quickly abated.

The home and family as Christ would have it, can be one of the most wonderful blessings in the world especially the Christian Home and associated Family members. ***“The highest happiness on earth is in marriage. Every man who is happily married is a successful man even if he has failed in everything else. And every man whose marriage is a failure is not a successful man even if he has succeeded in everything else”.*** (William Lyon Phelps)