

'...WATCH OUT OR YOU WILL BE DESTROYED BY EACH OTHER: GALATIANS 5:15 NIV

Healthy relationships aren't conflict free; they're conflict resolving.

The problem is: we fight for victories instead of fighting for solutions.

The result is: one wins, one loses, and the relationship suffers!

Here are some practical insights for fighting so that the relationship wins:

1) *Differences are inevitable, normal, and potentially beneficial.* They're inevitable, because relationships bring together very different people. They're normal, because all relationships, including great ones, experience them. They're potentially beneficial, because handled effectively, relationships grow through them.

2) Here are three conflicting handling styles:

a) *The avoid style.* These are the 'don't want to rock the boat' and 'let sleeping dogs lie' people. They fear confrontation, so they bury their feelings, not realising they're buried alive and will rise again down the road. They go from clam-up, to build-up, to blow-up, inviting physical and emotional illness. Meanwhile offences accumulate, unaddressed issues multiply, and unfinished business erodes the relationship

b) *The attack style.* These are the 'get them before they get you' people; ruthless fighters who refuse to give in, they inflict terminal wounds on each other. The Bible says, 'If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.' Attack begets counterattack, both sides 'dig in' and nothing gets resolved

c) *The approach-assert style.* These are the 'no price is too high for a good relationship' people. They're sensitive to the feelings of others, yet insist on dealing directly with important issues. They avoid blaming, confront the issue, not the individual, and invite others to partner with them in solving the problem and saving the relationship!

From the Word for Today UCB PO Box 255, Stoke on Trent ST4 8YY. Free issues are available in the UK.