

QUICK TO LISTEN

This devotional exercise gives you, as a parent, the opportunity to evaluate how you handle conflict in your home and gives you time and space to reflect on Scripture and build some new thoughts and practices as you navigate the family conflict that will inevitably come your way. Plan to set aside some uninterrupted and undistracted time to go through the questions and Scripture readings.

Part 1: Identifying Your "Default Setting"

When conflict erupts, whether it's a toddler's tantrum or a teenager's slammed door, we all have a "flight, fight, or freeze" response. Think of a conflict that happened in the last week. In the heat of that moment, which of these "Conflict Personas" did you most resemble?

- **THE FIXER:** You jump in immediately to solve it, often dismissing the emotions involved just to get back to "normal."
- **THE RUNNER:** You withdraw, go silent, or leave the room because the tension feels unbearable.
- **THE JUDGE:** You focus heavily on who is "right" and ensuring the other person knows exactly why they are "wrong."
- **THE EXPLODER:** Your frustration leaks out as raised voices or sharp words before you can catch them.

Take a few minutes to reflect on and maybe journal about these questions:

How does your specific approach impact the "climate" of your home for the next few hours?

Does it bring resolution, or does it just create a temporary, fragile truce?

Part 2: The Heart of the Matter: Acknowledging Your Part

In a spiritual sense, we cannot control our child's heart, but we are entirely responsible for our own. Even if you are 90% "right" in a situation, we are called to look at the other 10% we need to own. Reflect on this concept: "You can be 'right' and not have to act on it or convince anyone." Sometimes, proving you are right to a child is a win for your ego, but it's a big loss for the relationship.

Take a few minutes to reflect on and maybe journal about these questions:

In your recent conflicts, have you been more interested in winning the argument or winning the heart of your child?

What would it feel like to simply let go of the need to have the last word?

Part 3: The Scriptural Anchor

Slowly read **James 1:19 ESV** three times: *Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.*

Close your eyes and sync your breathing with these three phrases:

INHALE: "Quick to hear..." Ask God to open your ears to the 'why' behind your child's behavior.

EXHALE: "Slow to speak..." Release the need to lecture or defend yourself.

INHALE/EXHALE: "Slow to become angry..." Invite the Holy Spirit to calm you down.

Additional Scripture for Meditation:

- **Proverbs 15:1 ESV:** *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a hard word stirs up anger.*
- **Colossians 3:21 ESV:** *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

Part 4: Closing Prayer: Turning Reflection into Action

Before you step back into the "battleground" of daily parenting, offer this prayer to the Lord:

Heavenly Father, I acknowledge that my home is Your home first. I confess that I often prioritize my own comfort and 'rightness' over the peace You offer. Help me to see my child through Your eyes, as a soul in progress, not a problem to be solved. When the next conflict arises, give me the grace to be 'slow to speak.' Remind me that my part is to plant seeds of gentleness. I trust You with the hearts and minds of my kids, and I thank You for the grace and mercy You offer to my family and me. Amen.