

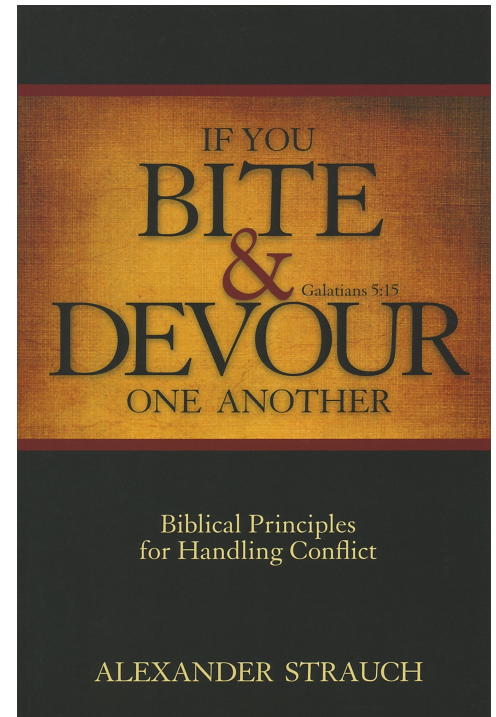
book of the month | April 2025

If You Bite & Devour One Another: Biblical Principles for Handling Conflict

Alexander Strauch

April's book of the month is one of the most personally impactful books I have ever read. In a season where it feels that conflict and disagreement have been ever-present in multiple arenas of my life, this short book that I first read more than a decade ago has been an incredible aid to me, revealing sin and guarding me from it. For your elders over the last several months, I regularly hear quotes and allusions to the timely, practical, and incredibly biblical counsel that Strauch has offered us.

Strauch explains his purpose in writing the book, "My intent through this book is to explore God's way of handling conflict so that other congregations may also experience peace and unity.... My aim for this book is to provide a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about conflict and to help believers learn how to respond to conflict according to biblical principles. In order not to present an overwhelming amount of information, the book focuses strictly on the presentation and exposition of scriptural passages that address conflict in the New Testament churches."



Suggested One-Month Reading Plan **Avg 5-6 pages per day**

Week 1: Monday 3/31-Sunday 4/6

1. Act in the Spirit, 16 pages
2. Act in Love, 15 pages

Week 2: Monday 4/7-Sunday 4/13

3. Act in Humility, 12 pages
4. Control the Anger, 12 pages
5. Control the Tongue, 14 pages

Week 3: Monday 4/14-Sunday 4/20

6. Control the Criticism, 13 pages
7. Pursue Reconciliation, 16 pages
8. Pursue Peace, 13 pages

Week 4: Monday 4/21-Sunday 4/27

9. Face False Teachers, 15 pages
 10. Face Controversy, 17 pages
- Appendix: Understanding *Flesh*

He accomplished his aim well.

Expositionally applying the teaching of the New Testament for the very churches (where conflict was a constant threat), we find clear and practical biblical wisdom for our life in the church where conflict continues to threaten our love and relationships. He works through all of the major New Testament teachings on the topic.

A bit more from Strauch explaining his book, "Servanthood, forgiveness, and love, and he promised to send a helper to enable his disciples to live by his teaching. So at Pentecost, following Jesus' death, resurrection, and ascension, God sent the Holy Spirit down from heaven to indwell all believers. By the enabling power of the Holy Spirit and obedience to Jesus' teachings, his disciples were able to work together in harmony as the first Christian leadership body... There is nothing wrong with Christians disagreeing with one another or passionately defending our beliefs. This is how we learn, how we sharpen and correct our thinking, and how we help others to improve. The Holy Spirit often uses the emotional upheaval that accompanies disagreement and conflict to get our attention and drive us to make necessary changes in our families, churches, and personal lives. Conflict can help us to discover our character weaknesses, correct mistaken theological ideas, sharpen our beliefs, refine our plans, grow in wisdom and life experience, learn to trust God during difficult times, and deepen our prayer lives. What is wrong is for believers to behave in an ungodly, unbiblical manner in the midst of their

disagreements. Sadly, such behavior is not uncommon."

I am excited that the GBC might read this book together, particularly in this season. God intends conflict as a test of our faith to demonstrate the reality of His Spirit's presence in us and the remarkable love that He has put in our hearts. The time you spend slowly, prayerfully reading this book with your Bible open and your heart softened will bear incredible fruit in your life and our church, producing fruit that will redound to God's glory on into eternity.

Your pastor-elder,

Jacob Hantla