

Eight Dates Date 2: Agree to Disagree

Faith Integration Addendum

“How Do We Stay Connected When We Do Not Agree?”

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This faith integration addendum is designed to be used alongside **Eight Dates Date 2: Agree to Disagree: Addressing Conflict**. Date 2 invites couples to slow down and ask an important question:

How do we stay connected when we do not agree?

Conflict is not a sign that a marriage is failing. In every close relationship, two different people bring different personalities, family histories, wounds, preferences, values, and emotional needs into the marriage. The goal is not to remove every disagreement. The goal is to handle disagreement in a way that protects love, respect, safety, and connection.

For Christian couples, conflict is also a spiritual formation opportunity. Disagreement can reveal where we need more humility, patience, gentleness, confession, forgiveness, self-control, and grace. The issue is not simply, “Who is right?” The deeper question is often, “Can we honor Christ and one another in the way we handle what is hard?”

This section is written from a Christian perspective using the English Standard Version. Couples from other faith traditions may adapt these reflections in ways that honor their own beliefs, values, and spiritual practices.

Spiritual Purpose of Date 2

The purpose of this date is not to win the argument.
It is not to prove who remembers the facts correctly.
It is not to force agreement before either person feels heard.

The purpose is to create a sacred space where both spouses can ask:

- Can we disagree without dishonoring one another?
- Can we speak truth without cruelty?
- Can we listen before defending?
- Can we repair when we hurt each other?
- Can we remain emotionally connected even when we do not fully agree?

For Christian couples, conflict is not only a communication issue. It is also a heart issue. Scripture repeatedly calls believers to be slow to anger, quick to listen, gentle in speech, humble



in spirit, and eager to pursue peace. This does not mean avoiding hard conversations. It means having hard conversations in a way that reflects Christ.

Healthy conflict is not the absence of disagreement. Healthy conflict is disagreement handled with love, truth, humility, and care.

Scripture Foundation for Date 2

1. Listening Before Speaking

“Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.”

James 1:19, ESV

Conflict often escalates when both spouses are trying to be understood before either spouse has truly listened. James gives a simple but difficult pattern: quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.

This does not come naturally in painful moments. When we feel criticized, dismissed, blamed, or misunderstood, we often want to defend, correct, explain, or withdraw. Yet Christian love invites us to slow down enough to listen to the heart underneath the words.

Date 2 Connection:

When your spouse shares how conflict feels to them, listen without correcting their feelings. You do not have to agree with every detail in order to honor their experience.

Reflection question:

Where do I need God’s help to become quicker to listen and slower to react?

2. Speaking Truth with Love

“Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.”

Ephesians 4:15, ESV

Some couples speak truth without love. Their honesty becomes harsh, sharp, or punishing. Other couples try to keep love without truth. They avoid difficult topics, hide resentment, or pretend everything is fine.

Christian marriage needs both truth and love. Truth without love can wound. Love without truth can become avoidance. Speaking the truth in love means bringing concerns honestly while still protecting the dignity of the other person.



Date 2 Connection:

The worksheet encourages gentle start-ups, “I” statements, and respectful repair. These practices help couples tell the truth without attacking the person they love.

Reflection question:

Do I tend to avoid truth, speak truth harshly, or speak truth with love?

3. Gentleness in Conflict

“A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”

Proverbs 15:1, ESV

The way something is said often shapes how it is received. A concern brought with gentleness is more likely to create openness. A concern brought with harshness often creates defensiveness, shutdown, or counterattack.

Gentleness is not weakness. Gentleness is strength under control. It is the ability to speak honestly without trying to crush the other person.

Date 2 Connection:

Before discussing a difficult issue, couples are encouraged to begin gently. A soft start-up can change the direction of the entire conversation.

Reflection question:

How does my tone affect the emotional safety of our conversations?

4. Anger Without Sin

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.”

Ephesians 4:26, ESV

Scripture does not say that anger itself is always sinful. Anger can signal that something matters. It can reveal hurt, fear, injustice, disappointment, or unmet longing. However, anger becomes destructive when it turns into contempt, cruelty, bitterness, revenge, or refusal to repair.

Christian couples do not need to pretend they are never angry. They need to learn how to bring anger under the care of Christ.

Date 2 Connection:

The Date 2 worksheet helps couples identify destructive conflict patterns such as criticism, defensiveness, contempt, and stonewalling. The goal is not emotional perfection. The goal is growing awareness, responsibility, and repair.

Reflection question:

When I am angry, what do I need to take responsibility for in how I respond?

5. Humility and Honor

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Philippians 2:3, ESV

Many marital conflicts become stuck because each person is trying to protect their own position. Humility does not mean pretending your needs do not matter. It means refusing to treat your spouse as the enemy.

Humility allows a spouse to say:

“I may not be seeing this clearly.”

“I can understand why that hurt you.”

“I need to own my part.”

“Your feelings matter to me even when I see it differently.”

Date 2 Connection:

Accepting influence means being willing to understand and respect part of your spouse’s perspective, even when you do not fully agree.

Reflection question:

What would humility look like in the way I respond to my spouse during conflict?

6. Pursuing Peace

“So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.”

Romans 14:19, ESV

Peace is not the same as silence. Peace is not pretending. Peace is not one spouse always giving in. Biblical peace is active. It must be pursued.

To pursue peace means to move toward understanding, repair, gentleness, responsibility, and care. It means asking, “What would build us up instead of tearing us down?”

Date 2 Connection:

Agreeing to disagree without disconnection means learning to hold differences without losing tenderness and respect.

Reflection question:

In our marriage, what helps us pursue peace instead of simply proving a point?

7. Forgiveness and Repair

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.”
Ephesians 4:32, ESV

Repair is one of the most important parts of healthy conflict. Christian repair is not about pretending the hurt did not happen. It is about returning to one another with honesty, tenderness, and grace.

A repair attempt may sound like:

“I said that too harshly.”

“I am sorry for shutting down.”

“I can see how that hurt you.”

“Can we start over?”

“I want to understand, not just defend myself.”

“You are not my enemy.”

Date 2 Connection:

The worksheet reminds couples that healthy couples are not couples who never misstep. They are couples who learn to repair.

Reflection question:

What repair statement do I need to practice more often?

Faith-Based Date 2 Conversation Prompts

Use these prompts after completing the main worksheet or as an added spiritual reflection at the end of the date.

Conflict and the Heart

1. When conflict begins, what usually happens inside my heart?
2. Do I tend to move toward you, defend myself, criticize, shut down, or try to fix things too quickly?
3. What do I think God may be showing me about myself through the way I handle disagreement?
4. What fear, wound, or longing often sits underneath my reaction during conflict?

Listening and Understanding

5. What helps me feel truly heard by you during disagreement?
6. Where do I need to become quicker to listen and slower to speak?
7. What is one thing I want to understand better about your experience in conflict?
8. How can I show you that I care about your heart even when I do not fully agree with your viewpoint?

Truth and Gentleness

9. Do I tend to speak truth with love, avoid truth, or speak truth harshly?
10. What tone, words, or body language from me may make conflict feel unsafe for you?
11. What would a softer start-up sound like for a concern I need to bring?
12. How can we be honest without becoming hurtful?

Humility and Responsibility

13. What is one conflict pattern I need to take more responsibility for?
14. Where do I tend to blame you instead of looking at my own part?
15. What would humility look like for me this week?
16. Is there one thing I need to confess or own without defending myself?

Repair and Grace

17. What kind of repair attempt helps me feel safe and connected again?
18. What kind of apology feels meaningful to me?
19. What repair statement do I need to offer more quickly?
20. Where do we need more grace, not as an excuse, but as a path toward healing?

Staying Connected While Disagreeing

21. What helps me know we are still okay even when we do not agree?
22. How can we remind each other, “You are not my enemy”?
23. What does it look like for us to pursue peace instead of simply trying to win?
24. What would it mean for our marriage to reflect Christ during conflict?

Guided Couple Exercise: “You Are Not My Enemy”

Take turns completing these sentences. The listening partner should only reflect back what they hear.

Speaker:

“When we disagree, I sometimes feel...”

“One thing that makes conflict harder for me is...”

“One thing I need from you when tension rises is...”

“One way I know you still love me during conflict is...”

“One thing I want to take responsibility for is...”

“With God’s help, I want to grow in...”

Listener:

“What I hear you saying is...”

“That makes sense to me because...”

“Thank you for helping me understand your heart.”

“I do not want to be your enemy.”

“With God’s help, I want to work on...”

Shared Peace Statement

Complete this together:

With God’s help, we want conflict in our marriage to be handled with...

Write your shared answer below:

Then complete this sentence:

This week, pursuing peace will look like...



Faith Practice for the Week

Choose one or two practices to complete before your next date:

1. **Pray before one difficult conversation.**
Keep it short and simple: “Lord, help us listen, speak gently, and honor one another.”
2. **Practice James 1:19 once this week.**
Before responding, pause and ask: “Am I being quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger?”
3. **Use one soft start-up.**
Try: “I want to talk about something important, and I want us to do it gently.”
4. **Offer one repair statement.**
Try: “I realize I became defensive when you shared that. I am sorry. Let me try again.”
5. **Speak one sentence of honor during conflict.**
Try: “I love you, and I do not want this disagreement to make us enemies.”
6. **Take a respectful break and return.**
Try: “I am getting overwhelmed. I need 20 minutes to calm down, but I will come back.”
7. **Read Ephesians 4:32 together.**
Ask: “What would kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness look like in our home this week?”
8. **Bless your spouse after a hard conversation.**
Try: “One thing I appreciate about you, even when we disagree, is...”

Closing Reading

Read aloud together:

Tonight, we chose to slow down and face conflict with honesty, humility, and care. We remembered that disagreement does not have to divide us. We do not have to agree on everything in order to love one another well.

With God’s help, we want to become safer in our words, gentler in our tone, quicker to listen, slower to anger, and more willing to repair. We want our marriage to be a place where truth and grace can live together.

We acknowledge that we will not handle every conflict perfectly. But we also believe that God can help us grow. We can learn to pause. We can learn to listen. We can learn to own our part. We can learn to come back after hard moments.

Tonight, we remember: You are not my enemy. We are on the same team. With God’s help, we will keep choosing love, peace, humility, and one another.



Closing Prayer

Lord,

Thank You for the gift of marriage and for the opportunity to grow even through difficult conversations. Help us remember that conflict does not have to destroy connection. Teach us to disagree with humility, speak with gentleness, listen with patience, and repair with sincerity.

When we feel hurt, help us not to attack.

When we feel misunderstood, help us not to shut down.

When we feel defensive, help us pause long enough to listen.

When we are wrong, give us courage to confess.

When we are wounded, give us grace to heal.

When we disagree, remind us that we are not enemies.

Lord, guard our words. Soften our hearts. Help us be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger. Teach us to pursue peace, not by avoiding truth, but by speaking truth in love.

May our marriage become a place where honesty is safe, repair is possible, forgiveness is practiced, and love continues to grow. Help us reflect Your grace in the way we speak, listen, forgive, and begin again.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.

