

“Fighting is a choice. Conflict is inevitable.”



NEVER FIGHT OR ARGUE AGAIN

BIBLICAL WISDOM & PRACTICAL TOOLS
FOR BUILDING A STRONGER MARRIAGE



LARRY & ROLANDA BEACHAM

NEVER FIGHT OR ARGUE AGAIN

Free Sample: Introduction & Chapter One

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About This Sample

Thank you for downloading this preview of *Never Fight or Argue Again*.

What follows is the Introduction and Chapter 1, exactly as they appear in the full book — no edits, no shortcuts. If you've ever wondered whether two people can actually stop fighting instead of just fighting more politely, this is where Larry and Rolanda make their case, straight from Scripture.

The rest of the book walks through the complete Safety Plan and Anti-Fight Plan — how to prepare your heart before a hard conversation even starts, and exactly what to do once you're in it, so the next time conflict shows up in your marriage, you have somewhere real to take it besides a fight.

We hope this chapter is the start of something real for your marriage. Keep reading to find out how to get the rest.

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Dedication

*To Chris and Vanessa Davis, for laying a foundation
and teaching us how to resolve conflict in a Godly way.*

*And to Pastor Ralph Johnson of Grace Family Church
in Tampa, Florida, for his wisdom and guidance in
some of our toughest moments.*

Acknowledgments

This book exists because of people who showed up for us long before either of us sat down to write a word of it.

To our children — Taylor, Bryant, Lauryn, Manny, Ari, and Trey — who lived through the years we were still figuring this out. Thank you for your patience with two parents who were learning in real time, right alongside you.

To the mentors, pastors, and counselors who told us the truth we needed to hear instead of the thing we wanted to hear — this book carries your fingerprints, even in the places your names don't appear.

To the couples who let us walk with them through their own hardest conversations — you taught us as much as anything in these pages ever taught you.

And above all, to God, who never once taught us how to fight better. Only how to stop.

INTRODUCTION

Why Fighting Fair Isn't Good Enough

Pick up virtually any book, attend almost any seminar, or participate in most counseling sessions for couples looking for ways to resolve their propensity for fighting, and you'll notice a strikingly common thread woven through them all: "Fighting is normal, so all you need to do is learn how to fight fair." It's the drumbeat of modern relationship advice — well-intentioned, but tragically incomplete.

The sentiment sounds harmless, even wise. After all, every couple faces disagreements. It feels practical to acknowledge conflict as inevitable and seek to mitigate its destruction. Many experts advise spouses to stay calm, listen actively, and avoid personal attacks — certainly healthier than shouting matches or cold wars. This advice echoes Proverbs 15:1: "*A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.*"

But under the surface lies a dangerous assumption: that conflict, even when "managed well," must remain a central feature of marriage. This thinking is like telling a pilot to learn how to crash more gracefully rather than teaching them to fly higher and avoid disaster altogether. The tragic irony is that when fighting becomes normalized, even with rules and boundaries, we subtly invite adversarial patterns to settle into the marriage like termites — unseen at first, but eventually devastating.

John Gottman, the renowned marriage researcher, found in his studies that the presence of regular conflict—even “fair” conflict—predicts eventual divorce when it carries underlying tones of contempt, defensiveness, criticism, or stonewalling. Fighting fair may slow the decay, but it does not heal the underlying rot. As Gottman famously put it, *“The issue isn’t whether you fight — it’s how you repair.”* But what if the ultimate goal was not simply repair, but renewal and reformation altogether?

The idea is simple: even if you disagree, you can still respect each other, keep your voice calm, and avoid personal attacks. On the surface, this sounds noble, mature, even biblical. After all, scriptures abound about patience (James 1:19), kindness (Ephesians 4:32), and forbearance (Colossians 3:13).

But here’s the sobering truth:

Fighting fair still means you are fighting.

And fighting, no matter how well-behaved, inherently plants you and your spouse on opposite sides of a battle line. You may be using foam swords instead of steel, but the posture of opposition remains. Fighting, by definition, prioritizes winning over unity, defense over vulnerability, and survival over surrender.

Imagine a couple in their living room, sitting on opposite couches like opposing generals negotiating a ceasefire — tactical smiles masking wounded hearts. The battle may be bloodless, but it’s still a battle. It’s still two hearts retreating into self-preservation rather than advancing together in reconciliation.

As the saying goes, the difference between a bad marriage and a good marriage often comes down to how conflict is handled.

Fighting “fair” reinforces an adversarial posture between you and your spouse. This focus on fighting “fair” subtly shifts the goal from resolving to winning, from reconciliation to survival. Without realizing it, even well-intentioned couples create tiny cracks in the foundation of their marriage — micro-fractures where resentment, pride, and distrust silently seep in.

Imagine your marriage like a beautiful stained glass window — vibrant and breathtaking when whole. Every “fair” fight, though seemingly harmless, hurls a tiny stone at the glass. Maybe it doesn’t shatter immediately. Maybe it even holds up for years. But over time, the cracks spread, the colors dim, and the fragile beauty gives way to a structure weakened from within.

As it's often said, you cannot have unity without humility.

Surveys of divorce attorneys and researchers consistently point to communication breakdown as one of the most commonly cited factors in divorce — more often than financial stress, and more often than infidelity. Communication — or more precisely, the breakdown of connection beneath the fights.

The highest aim in God’s design for marriage isn’t fairness in fighting — it’s unity in Christ. It’s oneness (Genesis 2:24), not opposition.

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24)

Unity in marriage mirrors the mystery of Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:32). It’s not two people negotiating a treaty — it’s two souls fusing into one mission, one love, one pursuit of God’s glory. Fighting, even fairly, keeps partners tethered to a transactional

mindset — “I gave you this, now you owe me that.” But God’s vision is covenantal, not contractual.

If oneness is the call, how can fighting — even polished and prettified — accomplish that? It’s like trying to unite two rivers by digging trenches between them. The action is furious, but the waters remain separated.

Jesus never taught His disciples to “fight fair” with one another. He taught them to forgive seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22), to love their enemies (Matthew 5:44), and to lay down their lives (John 15:13).

Marriage, in God’s design, is not a battleground. It’s a garden — meant to be tended, nurtured, and protected from the weeds of strife.

I’ll give you this concession: fighting “fair” can, at best, minimize the immediate damage. It might keep knives sheathed and bombs unlaunched. In a sense, it’s better than scorched earth warfare. It’s the difference between a tornado and a strong storm — both are dangerous, but one is simply less catastrophic.

But here’s the problem:

Damage control is not the same as divine transformation.

Fighting fair might give the illusion of stability, like patching cracks in a dam while the water pressure continues to build behind it. Sooner or later, without a new way of living, the structure gives way. God’s Word doesn’t call us to be better at managing conflict — it calls us to be transformed into peacemakers (Matthew 5:9).

God's holy Word calls us not to manage our war of words better — He calls us to build a whole new Kingdom inside our homes: the Kingdom of Peace.

Romans 14:17 says, *“For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.”*

Peace is not passive. Peace is proactive. It's the fierce decision to align our hearts with heaven rather than with our flesh. It's not about managing anger better — it's about allowing the Holy Spirit to kill the roots of anger at their source.

My goal in this book isn't just to teach you how to avoid fighting with your spouse, but how to transform your entire relationship with healthy conflict resolution skills.

And I intend to do that not by arming you with tricks, tactics, or negotiation hacks — but by calling you into spiritual maturity, courageous leadership, and relentless dependence on God at the heart of every conversation and confrontation.

The world teaches you to “fight smarter.” Christ calls you to love deeper.

The world says, “Control your words.” Christ says, “Crucify your pride.”

The world says, “Fight fair.” Christ says, “Lay down your weapons.”

I believe God wants to perform a miracle in your marriage, and completely heal it from the damage done from all of our fighting — fair or otherwise. That miracle won't come from building on the old foundation of better fighting strategies. It will come by surrendering the whole paradigm — uprooting the

very notion that opposition is acceptable — and rebuilding on the rock of Christ alone.

As the prophet Isaiah promised:

“See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland.” (Isaiah 43:19)

God is not interested in just patching up the old, war-torn ruins. He wants to lay a new foundation of peace, unity, humility, and holy love.

Out with the old. In with the new. Welcome to the Kingdom of Peace.

One more thing before we start: this book is written in my voice, but it was not lived, or learned, by me alone. Here and there throughout these pages, you’ll come across a passage set in *italics* like this. That’s Ro. Her voice, her memory, her side of something we walked through together. We didn’t think every page needed a label to prove this was written together — we just wanted you to know, so that when you see the italics, you’ll know whose it is.

CHAPTER 1

Never? Really?

Every time I tell someone the premise of this book, I watch the same thing happen on their face. It usually takes about three seconds. First there's polite interest. Then there's a small pause. Then, almost without fail, some version of the same question comes out of their mouth: Never? Come on. Really?

I don't blame them. I'd have asked the same thing.

So let's not tiptoe around it. If you picked up a book with the words "never fight or argue again" on the cover, you are allowed to be skeptical. You'd be a little foolish not to be. Every married person reading this has either fought with their spouse this month or is close enough to it that the idea of never sounds less like a promise and more like a marketing headline. So before we go any further, I want to deal with the objection directly instead of hoping you'll set it aside on faith.

Here's the honest version of what most people are actually thinking when they hear this title.

The Case Against This Book

"Conflict is just part of being human." Two people are never going to agree about everything, so something is bound to come up eventually that turns into an argument. That's not pessimism. That's just what happens when you put two different people in one house.

"Even the Bible is full of conflict." People who know their Bibles well enough will point out that Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement so sharp they split up and went separate ways (Acts 15:39). Paul confronted Peter to his face over hypocrisy (Galatians 2:11). If two of the most spiritually mature men in the New Testament couldn't avoid sharp disagreement, what makes anyone think an ordinary marriage can?

“Nobody's that disciplined.” Even people who genuinely want peace lose their temper sometimes. You can read every book on communication, memorize every principle, and still snap at your spouse on a bad enough day. Expecting perfect self-control from imperfect people sounds less like faith and more like denial.

“It takes two people to keep peace, and I can't control the other one.” You can do everything right and still end up in a fight, because your spouse gets to choose their own response too. No book can guarantee what someone else will do.

“Some things are worth fighting for.” Not every disagreement should be smoothed over. Sometimes standing your ground is the right thing to do, and telling people to “never fight” can sound like telling them to never stand up for anything.

I take all five of these seriously, because I've thought every one of them myself. And here's what I've come to believe after years of studying this, failing at it, and slowly getting better at it: every one of those objections is built on a definition of “fighting” that Scripture never actually uses.

What Scripture Actually Distinguishes

Go looking in the Bible for verses that teach believers how to fight better, and you will come up empty. That's not an exaggeration — I went looking. What you find instead, over and over, in different language, is a consistent distinction between two things people usually treat as one: conflict and fighting.

James asks it about as plainly as Scripture ever asks anything: “What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?” (James 4:1). Notice what that verse

assumes. It doesn't ask why disagreement exists. It asks where the fighting comes from — and the answer isn't the disagreement itself. It's what's happening inside the people having it.

That's the whole case this book is built on. Conflict is two people encountering a real difference. Fighting is what happens when that difference gets run through pride, fear, or an unwillingness to yield. Conflict is inevitable. Scripture never promises otherwise, and neither does this book. Fighting is a choice — one Scripture consistently calls believers away from, not because disagreement is sinful, but because of what fighting reveals and does to the people inside it.

That distinction is the answer to the first objection. It's also where the other four start to come apart.

Answering It Honestly

Take Paul and Barnabas. Acts 15:39 says their disagreement was sharp enough that they parted ways — the Greek word there is *paroxysmos*, the same root we get “paroxysm” from. This was not a polite difference of opinion. It was real. I'm not going to pretend Scripture shows us two men handling that moment perfectly, because it doesn't say either way. What it does show is two men who disagreed sharply and then went on to keep serving faithfully, apart, without the text ever accusing either one of sin. Conflict happened. The relationship didn't collapse into ongoing warfare. That's actually closer to what this book is describing than what the skeptics assume it's describing — real disagreement that doesn't metastasize into a fight that defines the relationship.

Paul confronting Peter is a better example still. Galatians 2:11 doesn't show Paul avoiding conflict. It shows Paul stepping directly into it, opposing Peter “to his face,” naming the exact behavior that was wrong.

That's not fighting. That's the opposite of what fighting usually looks like in a marriage — no sarcasm, no silent treatment, no rehearsing the argument to a third party first. Just direct truth, spoken plainly, aimed at reconciliation instead of winning. If anything, this passage is a model for how to have hard conflict without it becoming a fight, not proof that fighting is unavoidable.

On the question of discipline and self-control: nobody in this book is asking you to summon willpower you don't have. Galatians 5:22-23 lists self-control as fruit of the Spirit, not a personality trait some people are born with and others aren't. That's an important distinction, because it means the goal was never “try harder.” It's “yield more” — which is a completely different kind of effort, and one this book spends a lot of pages actually teaching, not just telling you to do.

On the idea that you're not able to control your spouse: you're right! You can't. Paul knew that too, which is exactly why he phrased it the way he did in Romans 12:18 — “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” That verse isn't naive about the fact that peace sometimes depends on someone else's cooperation. It's specific on purpose. Your responsibility is your side of it. This book cannot promise your spouse's response. It can promise that your side of the conflict stops being the thing that turns it into a fight.

And on some things being worth fighting for — I agree, with one correction. Some things are worth standing for. Ephesians 4:26 doesn't forbid anger; it says “In your anger do not sin,” which assumes anger itself isn't the problem. What turns a legitimate stand into a fight is usually not the conviction behind it. It's the pride, contempt, or need to win that gets smuggled in

alongside it. You can hold a position with total conviction and still refuse to fight about it. Those aren't opposites. This book will show you the difference.

What This Book Isn't Promising

I want to be precise here, because overpromising would undo everything this book is trying to do. This is not a promise that you and your spouse will never disagree again. You will. Probably this week. This is not a promise that every hard conversation will go smoothly, or that you'll never feel your blood pressure rise, or that conflict will start to feel comfortable. It won't, and I'd be lying if I told you otherwise.

What this book is promising is narrower and, I think, more honest: that the difference between you and your spouse doesn't have to become a fight. That the conflict itself can be handled in a way that reflects who God is instead of who your flesh wants to be in that moment. That's not a lower bar than “never fighting.” In practice, it's a much higher one — and it's the one Scripture actually sets.

Where We Go From Here

So if the question is whether it's realistic to expect two imperfect people to never disagree, the honest answer is no, and this book was never going to argue otherwise. But if the question is whether it's possible for two people to walk through real conflict, real hurt, and real difference without it turning into a fight — Scripture doesn't just say it's possible. It gives a consistent, repeatable pattern for how.

That pattern is the rest of this book. What you're about to read isn't a collection of communication tips. It's a plan — one my wife and I didn't invent so much as find, piece by piece, while trying to stop losing each other in

the middle of arguments we both technically won. We'll walk through how to prepare before a hard conversation ever starts, and what to actually do once you're in it, so that the next time conflict shows up in your marriage — and it will — you have somewhere real to take it besides a fight.

If This Chapter Hit Home...

You've just read the case for why real change is possible — not better rules for fighting, but a completely different posture toward conflict. The rest of the book walks you through exactly how: the Safety Plan, the Anti-Fight Plan, and the full framework Larry and Rolanda built after years of getting this wrong before they got it right.

**Save the Date: November 1, 2026 — Tampa,
FL**

Time and location coming soon.

Want to be the first to know the details, get early access to the book, and hear what's coming next? Join us at:

neverfightorargue.com

We'd love to see you there.