Resolving Everyday Conflict
Biblical Answers for a Common Problem
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About the Speaker

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Facing the Flames of Conflict

Why Study Peacemaking?

- Conflict is all around us. It’s become the “air we breathe” in our society.
- Conflict affects our marriages, families, churches, neighborhoods and workplaces. It wears us down. It affects Christians as much as anyone else, bringing us low, damaging our relationships, and tarnishing our witness to the world.
- But it doesn’t have to be this way—there’s a better way within reach of all of us. Through the good news of what Jesus did on the cross, where God reconciles a sinful people to himself, we are given both a vision and a practical way for approaching conflict differently.
- Peacemaking brings the prospect of hope for broken relationships.

Two Amazing Observations

As we dig into God’s Word on peacemaking, two areas of your life are going to be touched—one “past” and one “future”:

1. **Past:** Many (most?) people are currently in some unreconciled relationship, and God wants to work with you in that relationship.

   Is that uncomfortable for you? For now, try to suspend your disbelief …

2. **Future:** We lay down a new “cultural foundation” for the way we handle all the future disagreements (normal and natural) in our families, churches and workplaces.

   From selfish and destructive to God-glorifying and constructive.
The Anatomy of Conflict

“The Spark”

“Triggers”: Where Does Conflict Come From?

- God-given diversity – Scripture celebrates unity, not uniformity (see 1 Cor. 12)
  - Diversity leads to natural differences in preferences and priorities.
- Those inevitable misunderstandings
  - How perfectly do we communicate?
- Selfish attitudes that lead to hurtful words and actions
  - This comes out as anger, jealousy, gossip, etc.
  - “Kids, be quiet! Can’t you see I’m tired?”

These are not conflicts, but they create the opportunity for conflicts.

“The Gasoline”

Why Do These Differences Become Conflicts?

The problem isn’t the differences, it’s what we do with the differences. The root problem in conflict is the desires that battle in our hearts.

What’s going on inside the heart

“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from the desires that battle within you? You want something but you don’t get it.” James 4:1

Remember

We are different by design ... God’s design!
Definitions of an out-of-control desire (craving):
- Something you want too much (even a good thing)
- Something you will sin to obtain or sin if it’s denied
- A desire that’s become a demand

What kind of fires do you start when the thing you want is somehow denied?

Worldly Culture: Fuel for the Fire
- We soak in the culture of the world (a culture that is not neutral).
- What is the world’s top priority? Self.
  
  “You deserve it”       “Because you’re worth it”
  “Stick up for yourself” “Look out for #1”
  “Have it your way”

We are constantly bombarded by the message to care only about ourselves. What does the world say about selfishness? It says that it’s just fine!

What does the Bible say?

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Phil. 2:4

Pause for Thought:
What are You Craving?

1) What are some of the things in your life that can become “out-of-control desires”?

2) Where have these sometimes led to conflict?
“The Fire”

The Destructive Effects of Conflict

- Thousands of people, including Christians, leave their jobs, neighborhoods, and friends every year due to unresolved conflict, with many people left hurting and scarred on all sides.

- Parents are estranged from children and extended family. They dread Christmas or other family gatherings because of all the unresolved conflict.

- Families are shattered and broken by divorce because of an inability or unwillingness to reconcile.

- People hate going to work and lose a huge amount of productivity because of conflict and the fear of dealing with it.

- Seemingly low-level conflict (e.g., gossip, complaining, judging, and unforgiveness) causes discouragement and drains the energy out of a workplace or family.

- People are left in despair—hurt, lonely, angry and hopeless, believing there’s nowhere to turn.

Hidden on the Inside

Who does my boss think he is? He can’t treat me like that!

I haven’t talked to my mother in 10 years. Why am I still so angry?

I don’t care what the Bible says about suing another Christian, I’ve got my rights!

Why did she have to leave? I told her that I’m trying to change.

After what he did, I can never forgive him!

Our Hypocrisy

When Christians fight with everyone around them, what does it say to a watching world?
Is There Hope?
A Radically Different Vision for Relationships

Despite these human challenges, the Bible lays out a shockingly different vision for relationships and how we address conflict.

For our Christian relationships:

“By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” John 13:35

“May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” John 17:23 (emphasis added)

For our relationships with the rest of the world:

“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’” Matt. 22:36-39 (emphasis added)

The Bible makes it abundantly clear that Jesus’ desire and plan is for Christians to live in unity, loving one another and those around them.

But how is this possible? The answer is not, “just try hard.” The power doesn’t come from knowing the commands—it comes from somewhere else.

A Taste of Things to Come

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Eph. 4:32

The key to extending love, mercy, and forgiveness to others is understanding the love, mercy, and forgiveness God extends to us.

Conflict as an opportunity (a good thing!)

- To look to the interests of others
- To honor one another above ourselves
- To show mercy and lay down our rights
- To reflect God’s love to those around us
1. Coming into this study, how did you tend to think about conflict? (Something negative? An opportunity?) As you look ahead to the rest of the study, what do you hope to get out of it?

2. What are some of the common areas of life where disagreements tend to spring up? (At work? At home? Elsewhere?) Why? Do you see a pattern in those disagreements like the one taught in this session (spark, gasoline, and fire)?

3. Think about the two video clips you just watched of the husband and wife and their conflict over vacation plans. What “hit home” for you in these videos? Why? Did the second one demonstrate a realistic way to resolve conflict? Why or why not?

Think about a recent conflict in your life. Name the spark, gasoline, and fire related to that conflict:

**The Spark** - What was the trigger?

**The Gasoline** - What made it turn into a full-fledged conflict? (Be sure to look at the “Pause for Thought” questions on page 3.)

**The Fire** - What were the destructive effects?
A New Way of Thinking

In the previous session ...

**Sparks:** Diversity, misunderstandings, selfish attitudes

**Gasoline:** “Cravings” being challenged or denied

**Fire:** Conflict, arguing, complaining, anger, bitterness

**God’s better way:** Love and forgive others as God loves and forgives you.

**Video Clip**
“Where Is Your Conflict Leading You?”

Understanding our different responses to conflict

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The Slippery Slope

Peacemaking Responses

Escape Responses

Attack Responses

**FLIGHT**

**DENIAL**

**GO HIGHER**

**GET REAL**

**GENTLY ENGAGE**

**GET TOGETHER**

**BLAME**

**ASSAULT**
Escape Responses ("Running") - The responses found on the left side of the Slippery Slope are directed at getting away from the conflict rather than resolving it. These responses are:

- **Denial**: Pretend that a conflict does not exist or refuse to do what you should do to resolve it properly. This is always a wrong response to conflict.

- **Flight**: Run away from the person with whom you are having a conflict. Flight is more than escaping—it is avoiding facing a problem.

The Problem: You haven’t solved anything. The issue that causes the problem comes along with you when you run away.

Attack Responses ("Winning") - The responses found on the right side of the Slippery Slope are directed at placing as much pressure as possible on your opponent in order to win. These responses are:

- **Blame**: We attempt to shift responsibility for the conflict away from ourselves, by blaming the conflict on the other person. Blame often turns to *gossip* when we talk about others rather than speaking to them directly. Gossip seeks to win others to our side as we “try our case” in the court of public opinion by talking to lots of people.

- **Assault**: We use force or intimidation (e.g., physical, verbal, or financial) to try to make an opponent give in to our demands. We might try to force our opponents to give in to our demands by taking them to court.

Pause for Thought:
What’s Your History?

What response to conflict did your parents typically use as you were growing up? What response do you tend to use now?
Peacemaking Responses  - At the top of the Slope, the four principles of peacemaking focus on pursuing reconciliation as well as a seeking a just and mutually agreeable resolution to a conflict.

“The Four G’s”

- Go to Higher Ground (Glorify God - 1 Cor. 10:31): This response encourages you to clarify your highest values, applying them to how you respond to conflict and treat others when experiencing conflict. For the Christian, it means asking yourself, “How can I please and honor God in this situation?”

- Get Real About Yourself (Get the Log Out of Your Eye - Matt. 7:5): This response encourages you to examine your own attitudes and actions, understanding how you have contributed to the conflict, and giving a thorough and humble confession.

- Gently Engage Others (Gently Restore - Gal. 6:1): Taking responsibility for your own contribution is followed by respectfully and graciously helping others to see how they have contributed to the conflict.

- Get Together on Lasting Solutions (Go and Be Reconciled - Matt. 5:24): Focusing on preserving and restoring the relationship through forgiveness leads you to a lasting solution that resolves both material and personal issues.

A Great First Step: Overlook It

Ask Yourself, “Is This Worth Fighting Over?”

“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.” Proverbs 19:11

When someone has offended you, a wonderful question to ask is, “Can I overlook this?” Many conflicts can be quickly resolved if we are willing to overlook. It is an act of love to extinguish a fire before it ever starts.
Put your conflict in context. Is it a big deal in the bigger context of your life?

We are “thin-skinned” with how others treat us (i.e., we take offense easily) while we are “thick-skinned” in how we treat them (i.e., we want them to “toughen up”). A sign of maturity is to flip that around.

(Caution: Be sure not to fall into an “Escape” response on the Slippery Slope here. Think of overlooking as a form of preemptive forgiveness.)

Overlooking offenses is appropriate under three conditions.

1. The offense should not have created a wall between you and the other person or caused you to feel differently toward him or her for more than a short period of time.

2. The offense should not be causing serious harm (to God’s reputation, to others, or to the offender).

3. The offense is not part of a destructive pattern.

Need for Wisdom
You don’t need to overlook all wrongs, but ask God to help you discern and overlook minor wrongs.

Video Clip
“Where Is Your Conflict Leading You?” (Take 2)

1. Turn to page 8 and discuss the “Pause for Thought” questions.

2. What words or phrases hit you in the two “Where Is Your Conflict Leading You?” videos. Why?

3. What’s the difference between overlooking and escaping? What difference does it make in a conflict? In what sort of situations would you want others to overlook something you’ve done wrong?

Identify a recent conflict in your life. How have you been responding? (Escaping? Attacking? Peacemaking?) What would a peacemaking response look like in that situation? Is the other person’s offense something you should overlook? Why or why not?
In the previous sessions ...

- Conflict builds up walls and tears down relationships.
- The Slippery Slope: Escape Zone, Attack Zone, and Peacemaking Zone
- The important first question: Can you overlook the offense?

Introducing the First G:
Go To Higher Ground (Glorify God)

“Whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” 1 Cor. 10:31

Everyone has a set of values that they want to live by (e.g., integrity, love, respect, honesty, and truth). “Go to higher ground” simply reminds us to seek to live out those values when it really matters—like in times of conflict.

Video Clip
“The Morning Routine”

As Christians, we are called to the “high ground” of glorifying God in everything we do. But the problem we have is that we don’t tend to take what we believe in church on Sundays and live it out during the rest of the week.
What Does “Glorify God” Really Mean?

- **The Corinthian context:** “Have it your way.” Everyone was acting for self, and doing what was right for them. Sound familiar?

- **Paul’s point:** Have a “God Focus.” Ask yourself, “Where is God in this situation?” Whatever you do, seek to glorify God—not just on Sunday morning.

- **Practically speaking:** Obey him and imitate him by loving others, showing mercy, laying down “rights,” forgiving, and loving sacrificially.

The Problem of the “Horizontal Heart”

- In a conflict, what is our typical focus? It’s horizontal: we tend to look outward, not upward.

- **Blame → Hurt**

- What’s missing from this picture? Where is God in this conflict? Remember the vertical dimension.

The “Moment”

We’ve all been there—“that moment” in a conflict—the tipping point when we can pull the pin on the grenade and make it a whole lot worse.

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“Well, maybe if you cared about being a good husband, you wouldn’t leave your socks on the floor.”
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“Hang on a minute! If that’s your attitude, maybe you shouldn’t even work here anymore.”
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Instead of asking “How do I win?”, we can ask this question:

“What would please and honor God in this situation?”

Personal example: The Logbook
We always have a choice: run, attack, or seek to honor God. Even if you miss the first “moment,” remember, it’s never too late to do the right thing.

**Pause for Thought:**
“Dinner’s Served”

Jim comes home from work. He seems sullen and distracted. Susan’s had a hard day herself: she got home late from work, realized that she had forgotten to plan for dinner, and now Jim sticks his head into the kitchen wondering how much longer dinner will be.

At this pivotal moment:
A) What responses would not glorify God (and likely start a brush fire)?
B) What responses would glorify God (and be a “holy” fire extinguisher)?

**The Hope and Impact of the Gospel**

**Definition:** The gospel is the incredible news that even though we were enemies of God, alienated by our sin and deserving eternal punishment, he reached out to rescue us by sending his Son to take our punishment by dying in our place on the cross. Now through faith in Jesus, we’ve been reconciled to God, adopted into his family, and given a fresh start, a new life, and the supreme gift of enjoying him forever.

> “Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now he has reconciled you by Christ’s physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.” Col. 1:21-22

> “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” John 3:16

**Our Problem**

We tend to think of the gospel only as the key to eternal life and fail to understand how completely the gospel can transform every area of our daily lives.
Throughout the New Testament, the gospel is not just the means for salvation, but it is also applied to everyday life:

“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Col. 3:12-13

“[Jesus] died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” 2 Cor. 5:15,17

The Gospel Changes Everything!

Everything from Fear to Forgiveness:
The Transforming Power of the Gospel in Everyday Life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When ...</th>
<th>In Myself ...</th>
<th>But in Christ ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I’m fearful of the future</td>
<td>Consumed by worry, I assume the worst and lose hope.</td>
<td>Because God did not spare his son, I can trust that he walks with me and cares for me. (Rom. 8:32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’ve fallen into sin</td>
<td>I cover it up, hide it, minimize it, or find someone to blame.</td>
<td>Because God delights to forgive, I can freely confess my sins to him and others. (Prov. 28:13)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things are going well</td>
<td>I take pride in my achievements (and look down on lesser mortals).</td>
<td>Because in Christ, all good gifts are from God, I humbly thank him and gladly share the blessing. (1 Cor. 4:7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Someone wrongs me</td>
<td>I’m bitter or angry. I fight for my rights. Estrangement. Payback.</td>
<td>Because I’ve been forgiven, I can forgive and show mercy and compassion to others. (Eph. 4:32)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changed on the Inside:

It’s not simply “I should.” Instead, it’s “I can” and eventually, “I want to.”
How Does the Gospel Affect Difficult Relationships?

Consider the story Jesus told when asked about difficult relationships:

**The Unmerciful Servant:** Matthew 18:21-33

*Context:* Peter asks Jesus, “How many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me?”

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**Scene 1: verses 24-26**
- 10,000 talents owed
- Mercy asked for by servant
- Mercy granted by king

**Scene 2: verses 28-30**
- 100 denarii owed
- Mercy asked for by second man
- Mercy denied by servant

**Scene 3: verses 32-33**
- Jesus’ conclusion
- King exercises justice on servant
- “Should you not have had mercy?”

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**Jesus’ Point**

The gospel—understood, appreciated and embedded—overflows all and transforms all. Because I’ve been forgiven, I can love and forgive.

The woman in Luke 7:39-50 was so transformed by mercy that it overflowed in her life—she couldn’t contain it.

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**Pause for Thought**

“Relationships get easy in your life when the gospel gets big in your heart.”

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Go to Higher Ground (Glorify God) 15
Has the Gospel Changed You in this Way?

If not, ask Jesus to dwell in you and change your mind and heart to be like his. You can’t do it, but he can. God is the one who changes hearts.

“I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.” Ezek. 36:25-26

If you are struggling with conflict, remember that change doesn’t come by just trying hard. It comes by asking God to let the gospel change you from the inside out.

1. Were you surprised that the family getting ready (in the opening video) was going to church? What were your other impressions during the video? Why is it so easy to act one way in front of people but another way when we are at home?

2. Discuss the “Pause for Thought” questions found on page 13 and 15.

3. Tim made the statement, “We fail to understand how completely the gospel can transform every area of our daily lives.” What does this statement mean to you? What other statements stand out for you from this session?

Look again at the table on page 14. How does the gospel change all areas of your life? Write out statements of “In Myself ...” and “But in Christ ...” for these situations:

When my spouse criticizes me

When my children disappoint me

When my boss mistreats me

When I think about my most difficult relationship
Get Real About Yourself
(Get the Log Out of Your Eye)

In the previous sessions ...

The First G: Go to Higher Ground / Glorify God

- Don’t leave God out of your conflicts, even when your heart wants to “go horizontal”
- “Whatever you do,” seek to glorify God (especially in “the moment”)
- The transforming power of the gospel

Video Clip
“The Blame Game: Office Version”

In a conflict, our hearts tend to go right to blaming the other person. Scripture teaches that we need to take a different approach.

Introducing the Second G: Get Real About Yourself (Get the Log Out of Your Eye)

“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” Matt. 7:3-5
Jesus knows we are often blind to our own faults or intentionally minimize our contribution to a conflict.

- The deadly “All I said was ...”
- Jesus doesn’t forbid helping others who have a speck in their eye, but this is not where you start.
- Instead, he wants you to do something you wouldn’t naturally do: focus first on your own contribution to the conflict.

A Rule to Live By

Even if you are only responsible for 2% of a conflict, you’re 100% responsible for your 2%.

The “Golden Response”

One helpful thing about “getting the log out” is that the first admission tends to trigger an admission from the other direction. People tend to treat you the way you treat them.

The “blame game” only escalates the situation—someone needs to break the cycle.

Getting to the Heart of Conflict

How do we get good at understanding our own contribution to a conflict? We must remember that cravings underlie conflicts. When we understand our hearts, we will see the cravings that are underneath conflict.

What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you? You want something but don’t get it. You kill and covet, but you cannot have what you want. You quarrel and fight.” James 4:1-2

It is important to get beyond the surface and get to the heart—the “why” behind the thing you did. (You may have yelled in anger, but what caused you to yell?) When you get down to why you did something, you’ll see that...
you wanted something so much that it led to conflict.

Cravings are “idols” or “mini-gods”—things other than God that we:

- Set our hearts on (Luke 12:29)
- Let rule us (Ephesians 5:5)
- Trust, fear, or serve (Isaiah 42:17)

What Is an Idol?

An idol is:

_Anthing other than God that we trust to make us happy or secure._

Anger is a signal that an idol is being poked. Some common idols include: peace and quiet, obedient children, respectful co-workers, financial security, a good reputation, etc.

How Does an Idol Work?

- **Desire:** “I really would like to have a ...” (Psalm 37:4)
  
  All idols begin with a desire. This desire can be for anything—even something good and healthy!

- **Demand:** “I must have ...” (James 4:1)
  
  A desire can quickly change into a demand (“I need”). I now view the thing I want as absolutely essential.

- **Disappointment:** “You did not give me my desires ...” (Gen. 4:6-7)
  
  Demand leads to disappointment (“You didn’t!”). Much of our disappointment in relationships is not because people have actually wronged us, but because they have failed to give us what we want.

- **Judgment:** “Because you did not give me my desires, you are ...” (Rom. 14:10)
  
  Frustrated at not receiving my desire, I judge, condemn, and reject those who haven’t given me what I want.

- **Punishment:** “Because you didn’t, I will ...” (Rom. 12:19)
  
  I am hurt and angry and strike back. Examples: Angry words, gossip, “giving the cold shoulder,” etc.
How are you training people to give you what you want (because if they don’t, you’ll punish them)?

How Do I Look for Idols in My Life?

Ask “X-ray questions” to examine your heart:

- What do you fear? What do you tend to worry about? What do you believe would bring you the greatest pain or misery?
- What do you want? What do you believe would bring you the greatest pleasure, happiness, and delight?
- What would you sin to obtain or sin if it’s denied?
- Have you ever “stretched” the truth in arguing for your desire (or against someone else’s)?

Why is it so important to identify the idols in your life? We have the same fights over and over again because we tend to deal with our actions only at the surface level. We have to get to the root cause in order to find real change. One thing is guaranteed: you will keep having the same conflicts if you don’t uncover the idols in your heart.

How Do I Deal with an Idol in My Heart?

The cure for an idolatrous heart is to:

- Repent and confess the sin of idolatry and trust in God for everything you need (Acts 3:19).
- Replace idol worship with worship of the true God (Ps. 37:4).

This is easier said than done. Our hearts are idol factories. They are always finding new things to love, have, and worship. Just trying harder isn’t the answer.

“The expulsive power of a new affection ...” Thomas Chalmers

The idea here is that we drive out a “little love” with a “big love”—i.e., a growing love for God will force out the idols in our hearts. As God fills our hearts with a love for himself, we will no longer need to look to our idols for happiness or security.
Closing Thoughts

When you are addressing a conflict, always start with a “log hunt.” Don’t underestimate your contribution to the conflict—after all, Jesus says you’ve got a log (as opposed to a speck) to deal with. Honestly reflect on feedback you’ve received from the other person. Put yourself in their shoes. Could there be some truth to what they say?

- Read and think about God’s Word related to the matter.
- Listen to the counsel of a trusted friend or pastor who will tell you the truth about yourself.
- Pray and ask God to open your eyes to any way (however seemingly small) that you may have contributed.

In a conflict, what we need is a mirror (to examine ourselves), but we tend to grab a microscope (to examine others).

1. Think back to the first “Blame Game” video. Who was more wrong? Who would each of the characters have said was more wrong? Why are we so blind to our own faults? Or even if we see them, why do we tend to minimize them?

2. How often do you see situations in which people’s fingers are pointed at the other person rather than at themselves? Why is it so hard to own up to our own contribution to a conflict?

3. Tim made the statement, “One thing is guaranteed: you will keep having the same conflicts if you don’t uncover the idols in your heart.” How have you seen this to be true in your own life and in the lives of those around you?
1. What things in your life tend to show up as idols? (Use the X-ray questions on page 20 to help you.) What actions/words do these heart idols often result in?

2. Think about a recent conflict in your life. Did you elevate a desire? How far did you elevate it? To a demand? All the way to punishment?

3. OK, so you’ve identified an idol; what are you going to do now? How does the information on page 20 help you?
In the previous sessions ...

- The power of the gospel: What Jesus did changes everything.
- The First G: Go to Higher Ground / Glorify God
  - The Second G: Get Real About Yourself / Get the Log Out of Your Eye
    - Don’t focus on the other person—start with what you did.
    - Look for your idols and remove with “the expulsive power of a new affection.”

So you realize you need to apologize in obedience to Jesus’ command in Matthew 7:5. But what does that look like?

It’s amazing how hard it is to make a good apology. Bad apologies are what naturally come out of our mouths.

“Look, I’m sorry, OK?”

“I’m sorry, I didn’t realize you were so sensitive.”

Instead of helping, a bad apology will make the conflict worse.

Video Clip
“The Bad Apology Hall of Fame”

An apology or confession is not about escaping the consequences or “moving on.” Instead, it’s about healing a hurt or restoring the wounded.
Making a Good Confession: The “7 A’s”

“He who conceals his sins does not prosper; but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy.” Prov. 28:13

Address everyone involved (Ps. 41:4; Luke 19:8). The confession should go as far as the offense.

Avoid ifs and buts (Ps. 51). These words ruin your confession. “If” means “I really don’t think I did anything wrong.” “But” blames it on someone else and cancels out everything you just confessed!

Admit specifically. We love to be vague about ourselves (but amazingly specific about others)! Confess both your specific actions and underlying attitude.

Acknowledge the hurt. Express understanding and genuine sorrow for the way you affected that person. (Do not assume you understand the pain—always check.)

Accept the consequences (Luke 19:8). A willingness to accept the consequences is often the mark of a genuine confession.

Alter (change) your behavior (Eph. 4:22-32). Explain how, with God’s help, you plan to change.

- An apology is like a promise—words are tied to future actions.
- This helps you go beyond, “I’m sorry I got caught.”

Ask for forgiveness (Gen. 50:17). This gives the offended person the opportunity to respond and express forgiveness.
Three Final Reflections

**Remember to allow time.** When we confess, the other person may sometimes forgive us immediately. But other times, they may not be ready to grant forgiveness on the spot. You may need to allow additional time for someone to process your confession. (And if you are the offended one, don’t withhold forgiveness as a form of punishment.)

**Don’t use your confession to point out sin in others.** Even if the other person has a contribution, this is not the time to deal with it. Stay focused on yourself and your own contribution.

**Are you really sorry?** It’s quite possible to do the 7A’s and not be sorry at all. The 7A’s are not sorrow themselves, but are merely an expression of sorrow. Ask God to change your heart to be genuinely sorrowful for the hurt you’ve caused others and for your offense against God.
1. What’s wrong with each of these apologies from the “Bad Apology Hall of Fame?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Apology</th>
<th>The Offense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“The comment was not meant to be a regional slur. To the extent that it was misinterpreted to be one, I apologize.”</td>
<td>An attorney, apologizing for referring to potential jurors as “illiterate cave dwellers”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I did not pay enough attention to detail or to the way some of my actions could have been perceived and my personal style could have been perceived by certain people.”</td>
<td>A nonprofit executive, apologizing for the outrageously lavish “perks” he received</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If anything I have said has hurt Billy or his family, I apologize. But I don’t apologize for my opinion.”</td>
<td>A country music singer, after he criticized another singer’s popular song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It was an unfortunate remark that once it’s in print it looks a lot worse than it actually is.”</td>
<td>A politician, apologizing for calling his rival “an unusually good liar”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I want everyone to know how sorry I am for what happened. I’m not as bad as everyone has made me out to be. Yes, I was wrong, but I didn’t kill anybody.”</td>
<td>A professional athlete, apologizing after attacking his coach during a team practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Why do you think a “good” apology is so important? (And why is a “bad” apology so destructive?)

3. Which of the “7 A’s” are the most difficult for you? For others? Why?

Think back to a recent conflict and your contribution to it (see questions on page 22). Use the “7 A’s” to help you write out an apology.
In the previous sessions ...

- The gospel changes everything. It gives us the power and motivation to be different.

- The First G: Go to Higher Ground / Glorify God
  - Don’t forget God when you are in a conflict. Ask yourself, “What would please and honor God in this situation?”

- The Second G: Get Real About Yourself / Get the Log Out of Your Eye
  - Start with yourself and your own contribution (idols)
  - The heart of a great confession (7 A’s)

Introducing the Third G: Gently Engage Others (Gently Restore)

“Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently.” Gal. 6:1

Many times, you don’t get here—remember that when you take responsibility for your contribution, the other person often will, too (the “Golden Response”).

As Christians, we are sometimes also called to help others see their contribution to a conflict. But the way we do that is critical.
The Big Misunderstanding

Even though the world’s best known Bible verse is “Judge not lest you be judged,” we are not prohibited from pointing out hurtful actions or attitudes in others. Instead, we must go to the other person gently in order to restore their relationship with God and with the people they’ve hurt; the purpose is redemptive.

A different perspective:

“Nothing is so cruel as the tenderness that consigns another to his sin. Nothing can be more compassionate than the severe rebuke that calls a brother back from the path of sin.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together

Correcting others is an act of love—pulling someone away from the cliff—but it must be done in the right way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Third G is NOT:</th>
<th>The Third G IS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Just confronting someone (if you want to confront someone, it might be a bad idea)</td>
<td>• Going with a heart of love for the other person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Going in a spirit of anger or vengeance (“don’t correct sin in sin”)</td>
<td>• Going with the goal of a restored relationship between the two of you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Going to “ding” them in a self-righteous spirit</td>
<td>• Going to lead them away from the cliff edge of sin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Going gently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The governing dynamic is love. A rule of thumb should be to go in love or don’t go at all.

Remember the Golden Rule: Treat others the way you would like to be treated yourself (see Luke 6:31).
How do I go?

In Matthew 18, Jesus gives us practical steps to follow to gently restore a brother or sister.

**Important Rule:**

Keep it as private as possible as long as possible.

**Step One: Go Talk to Them**

Go when there’s a problem … and go in private.

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.” Matt. 18:15

**Things to remember as you go:**

- Sooner or later you need to talk face-to-face. Use phone calls, letters, and (especially!) e-mails sparingly.
- Be quick to listen. Draw the other person out. Remember, you do not know their heart. You may see “what” but you don’t see “why.” Ask more questions (and make fewer statements).
- Bring hope through the gospel. Don’t just leave someone feeling condemned; show them the hope we all have in the gospel to receive forgiveness and to change.

**Step Two: Get Help**

“But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.” Matt. 18:16

If you are having trouble resolving the conflict just between the two of you, Jesus says it is appropriate to involve others so that they can help you both. It’s not to gang up on the other person, though.
(Obviously it’s best if both of you agree to ask someone else to help you, but if necessary, you may need to take the initiative to involve others in the process.)

**The Benefits of Getting Help with Your Conflict**

- In an emotional situation, having an outsider present helps everyone to be more loving and careful in their communication.

- While the third party is not there to “judge” who is right or wrong, they can ask questions and actually help you both to understand facts and feelings better.

- They may apply gentle pressure to help someone caught in sin move to repentance (again, with the purpose being restoration).

- A godly person can help open your eyes to what God’s Word says about your conflict.

**Don’t Forget Your Church!**

When you are looking for help, one of the first places you should look is in your church. It’s easy to feel alone when you are in a serious conflict, but that’s the time when a wise and godly church leader can step in and offer help. It may be tough to get past your pride, but make the effort to reach out for help from your church (particularly if you are struggling in your marriage, but even for conflicts at work).

Many churches have developed “peacemaking teams” that are specifically created to help when their members are struggling with all types of conflict. For information on these teams and how to get one started in your church, please visit [www.peacemaker.net/teams](http://www.peacemaker.net/teams).
Having That Difficult Conversation

Two settings for using this tool:

1. When you are going to point out a sin in others (or other hard conversations)
2. When resolving the material issue in a conflict (e.g., where to go on vacation, how much money is owed, or who gets Grandma’s piano)

The “PAUSE Principle” is a great tool to use to help us have God-glorifying conversations in both situations.

The PAUSE Principle
Gently engaging to deal with the material issue

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” Phil. 2:3-4

PREPARE. (See Prov. 14:8) Think ahead about this conversation and what you can do in advance to make it go well.

- Pray
- Seek godly counsel
- Study Scripture
- Develop options, plan an alternative
- Plan your remarks
- Anticipate reactions

AFFIRM relationships. Every conflict involves both people and a problem. Focusing on the problem and not the people makes things worse. So make sure that the other person knows that you value the relationship.
**UNDERSTAND interests.** Take time to understand what the other person really wants and cares about. (See Phil. 2:1-4)

- **Interest:** What really motivates people and gives rise to their position. An *interest* may be a concern, desire, need, limitation, or something a person values or fears. It’s the underlying thing they are trying to accomplish.

**SEARCH for creative solutions.** Don’t get stuck on only two choices. (See Prov. 14:8)

**EVALUATE options objectively and reasonably.** Include a specific step in the process that checks how the solution is working. (See Dan. 1:11-16)

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1. “Go Talk to Them” and “Get Help” are simple principles, so why are they so hard to carry out? Why is it easier to talk about people than talk to them? And why do we tend to shy away from getting help, even when we need it?

2. Look again at the chart on page 28. When you see people confronting others at home or work, which side does it look more like? What can you do to make it look more like the right side?

3. What if someone you know (e.g., a friend or co-worker) was consistently gossiping? Reflecting on what you learned in this session (3rd G and PAUSE Principle), discuss how would you “gently restore” this person.

---

Think of a relationship where someone has offended you (or you observe them hurting someone else). How can you go to that person and do what was taught in the “3rd G”?
In the previous sessions ...

- The First G: Go to Higher Ground / Glorify God
- The Second G: Get Real About Yourself / Get the Log Out of Your Eye
- The Third G: Gently Engage Others / Gently Restore
  - Go talk to them (in private); Get help
  - The PAUSE Principle (having those difficult conversations)

Introducing the Fourth G: Get Together on Lasting Solutions (Go and Be Reconciled)

It is important to remember that a lasting solution will always be a combination of the resolution of the issue and the reconciliation of the relationship. If you only resolve the issue, the solution will never last.

The only hope for ongoing peace after a conflict is to seek a reconciled relationship, which comes through the incredible act of forgiveness.
The Tricky Topic of Forgiveness

“Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother then come and offer your gift.” Matt. 5:23-24

- “Being reconciled” is the giving and receiving of true heart forgiveness.
- It should be the hallmark of the Christian. Why? Because we are the most forgiven people in the world, we can and should be the most forgiving.
- However, forgiveness is hard. Many people, including Christians, still struggle with bitterness and unforgiveness.
- Forgiveness raises some interesting (and complicated) questions like, “What does ‘I forgive you’ really mean?” or “Do I forgive someone who has not repented?” or “What about the consequences?”

Video Clip
“Yeah, we’re cool.”

Unpacking Forgiveness

What forgiveness is not:
Forgiveness is neither a feeling, nor forgetting, nor is it excusing.

What forgiveness is:
Forgiveness is a decision modeled after God’s forgiveness of us—a decision not to hold an offense against the offender.

“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” Eph. 4:32
Forgiveness Defined: A Two-Stage Process

How does it work?

The Heart Component of Forgiveness

The heart component is the releasing of the offense to God. It is between you and God, and it is not conditional on the repentance of the other person. It is a “disposition.” This component is wonderfully expressed in the following quote:

“When we strive against all thoughts of revenge; when we will not do our enemies mischief, but wish well to them, grieve at their calamities, pray for them, seek reconciliation with them, and show ourselves ready on all occasions to relieve them. This is gospel forgiving.”

Thomas Watson

This heart component will help to protect you from developing a root of bitterness that can poison your heart. It’s a readiness to extend forgiveness and enjoy reconciliation when the other person is ready to repent.
The Transactional Component of Forgiveness

Granting forgiveness to the offender is conditional on the repentance of the offender. When the other person confesses, you can extend forgiveness, releasing them from the offense and enjoying a fully restored relationship.

**But what if the offender is not repentant?** Do you still need to forgive them? That’s where these heart and transactional components come into play: regardless whether the offender has repented, we can always release the offense and maintain a readiness to forgive—the heart component.

Is Heart Forgiveness Real?

Yes! Heart forgiveness is real forgiveness. It is not “partial forgiveness,” or “forgiveness lite.” It is complete for you. As you’ve obeyed Christ’s command to “forgive from the heart” (Matt. 18:35), your burden is lifted and your disposition has changed.

What is not complete is reconciliation. While forgiveness rests on you, reconciliation is also conditional on the repentance of the offender.

**But beware of one danger:** Don’t just settle for heart forgiveness so you can “move on.” God’s heart is always for that full reconciliation, so “as far as it depends on you” (Rom. 12:18), keep reaching out towards that goal.

What Does “I Forgive You” Really Mean?

Forgiveness is Four Promises:

With God’s help:

- “I promise I will not dwell on this incident.” (H)
- “I promise I will not bring up this incident and use it against you.” (T)
- “I promise I will not talk to others about this incident.” (T)
- “I promise I will not allow this incident to stand between us or hinder our personal relationship.” (T)

**NOTE**

The Heart (H) and Transactional (T) components of forgiveness are also connected to the Four Promises.
What about the consequences?

True heart forgiveness does not necessarily release us from the worldly consequences of our sin.

If someone has wronged you, it takes wisdom to determine whether or not to enforce a set of consequences:

- Sometimes it is best to show mercy
- Sometimes it is best to allow a person to experience consequences that will teach a needed lesson

It all depends on what will most effectively serve the other person and glorify God.

Examples:

- A man confesses to embezzling from a neighborhood organization
- A teen breaks a household rule for use of the cell phone

Can they be forgiven? Yes. Are there still consequences? Yes.

Remember, the essence of the fourth promise is that you should never let the consequence be relational.

Reconciliation Takes Work

Is Forgiveness Hard?

- Yes. In forgiving, we lay down our rights to justice, to money, or to something else valuable. Forgiveness costs us something. The debt is real. In this sense, forgiveness is suffering in a real way. However, ask this: “Where has the punishment already been paid?” On the cross of Christ.

- Reflect again on how much you have been forgiven (remember the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matt. 18).

- Realize that you can’t ultimately forgive in your own strength. Only God can give us the desire and ability to truly forgive others’ sins (see Phil. 2:13).
Consider the following testimony from Corrie Ten Boom:

It was at a church service in Munich that I saw him, the former S.S. man who had stood guard at the shower room door in the processing center at Ravensbruck. He was the first of our actual jailers that I had seen since that time. And suddenly it was all there—the roomful of mocking men, the heaps of clothing, Betsie’s pain-blanched face.

He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. “How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein,” he said. “To think that, as you say, he has washed my sins away!”

His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people in Bloemendall about the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side.

Even as the angry, vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Jesus Christ had died for this man; was I going to ask for more?

“Lord Jesus,” I prayed, “forgive me and help me to forgive him.”

I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. “Jesus, I cannot forgive him. Give me your forgiveness.”

As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me.

So I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world’s healing hinges, but on him. When he tells us to love our enemies, he gives, along with the command, the love itself.

**Pause for Thought**

Who do you need to forgive?

1. Think back on the video, “Yeah, we’re cool.” Which of the Four Promises did Phil fail to keep? What would happen to the work environment if that broken relationship continued to spiral downward? If you worked with Phil or Alan, what advice would you give them based on the material from this study?

2. What’s the difference between reconciliation and forgiveness?

Think about a situation where someone wronged you. How do the “Four Promises of Forgiveness” help you understand what it means to forgive? What actions would indicate that you have (or have not) really forgiven him/her? What do you need to do next?
Overcome Evil with Good

In the previous sessions...

- Where conflict comes from (Spark/Gasoline/Fire)
- We often want things too much (desires become demands), and so we fight and quarrel (James 4).
- The Slippery Slope—our natural tendencies to escape and attack
- The Gospel: It changes everything!
- The First G: Go to Higher Ground / Glorify God
  - What would please and honor God in this situation?
- The Second G: Get Real About Yourself / Get the Log Out of Your Eye
  - Start with your own contribution to a conflict
  - Rooting out idols (going beyond the superficial and getting to the heart)
  - A good confession (The 7 A’s)
- The Third G: Gently Engage Others / Gently Restore
  - Go talk to them (privately); Get help
- The Fourth G: Get Together on Lasting Solutions / Go and Be Reconciled
  - Giving and receiving of forgiveness
  - Heart vs. Transactional forgiveness
  - The Four Promises of Forgiveness
Overcome Evil with Good

So, I did everything and it didn’t work. What do I do now?

“Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Romans 12:21

It Doesn’t Completely Depend on You

Sometimes we strive for peace without “success.” We do all the things that God calls us to, but our opponent continues to treat us unkindly, angrily, unfairly, or harshly.

Scripture makes it clear that it truly takes two to make peace. Romans 12:18 says, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” It depends on the other person also, and sometimes they may not be ready or willing to do the right thing. And they may never get there.

Does success mean reconciliation? Not necessarily. Success may just be faithfulness, obedience, and keeping on doing the right thing.

The Big Temptation: Taking matters into your own hands

“God’s way didn’t work ... it must be time to try a new approach.”

This approach inevitably leads us back to escaping or attacking (the very sinful responses from which we’ve worked so hard to be free).

God never wants us to “close our Bible” on any problem and fight the world’s way. Second Corinthians 10:3-4 says, “For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.” This means that we are to wage war (a spiritual war), but we are not to use the world’s weapons. Instead, we are to use the spiritual weapons God gives us.

So, how do we proceed? Scripture provides valuable advice:

1) Pray

“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.” Matt. 5:44

Scripture makes it clear that God grants the gift of repentance (see 2 Timothy 2:25). Pray for your enemy’s heart: only God can change it.
Remember to recognize your own limits:

**Your Job:** To honor God by doing the right thing

**God’s Job:** To change people

2) **Guard Your Heart**

“All bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse.” Rom. 12:14

Our temptation is to “curse” those who mistreat us. Remember “heart forgiveness” was a disposition to love your enemy even before you are reconciled. When you “bless and do not curse,” you strive to maintain this heart disposition.

As we leave it with God, it leaves the door open for reconciliation, and is a constant protection for you against bitterness.

3) **Stay Close to Godly Counsel**

“He who walks with the wise grows wise but a companion of fools suffers harm.” Prov. 13:20

All Christians are surrounded by worldly advice, telling us to fight back, stand up for our rights, or take them to court. It is tempting to seek out this advice in times of conflict. (It is often seen in difficult marriages heading towards divorce.)

Seek out those people who will give you the advice you need to hear (not just what you want to hear), encouraging you to stay the course, endure under trial, and prioritize obeying God over all else.

4) **Keep On Doing What Is Right**

“Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody.” Rom. 12:17

We will have opportunities to attack our opponents in many different ways. David twice had the opportunity to kill Saul when Saul was pursuing him, but he would not “lift his hand against God’s anointed” (see 1 Sam. 24:1-7; 26:5-11). We keep on doing what is right to try to win over our opponent and to obey God, who calls us to love our enemies.
5) The Ultimate Weapon: Deliberate Focused Love

“On the contrary: ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Rom. 12:20-21

We can use the same weapon God used to win us over: love.

Here we simply do something the world cannot understand and would never consider. We love our enemy. If he is hungry ... if he is thirsty ... We seek to meet our enemy’s real-life, day-to-day needs.

We don’t just resist evil with good, we can overcome evil with good. Unexpected, undeserved love can break down even the most stubborn heart.

Full Circle: It all comes back to the gospel

At this moment our story ends where it began.

How can I keep on loving, praying for, and caring for someone who continues to mistreat me? I can, because that is exactly what Jesus did for me.

Jesus suffered more there than we will ever suffer. We can endure all things because of the gospel.

Closing Thought

When I see Jesus, “who as a sheep before its shearer is silent” (Isa. 53:7), taking my punishment without fighting back, I find the source of the power I need to lay down my “rights” and love beyond hope or reason to the amazement of a watching world.

The gospel ultimately changes our perspective on conflict.

Video Clip

“Perspectives”
1. Was it a surprise that you’d even need this session? Why shouldn’t the Four G’s be sufficient?

2. Why is it a temptation to give up on doing the right thing (especially when someone is continuing to mistreat you)? What excuses might you make to give up?

3. Let’s say you have a difficult boss or neighbor who makes your life just plain hard. What are some practical ways you can love this “enemy”? (Bake cookies? Wash his car? Brainstorm as a group how you might use the “Ultimate Weapon” of love in this situation.)

4. Were you surprised by the final video? In your own words, how does the gospel (and this entire study) change your perspective on conflict? Have everyone in the group share what they gained from this study.

Which of the teaching points from the entire study most impacted you (which items did you mark during Tim’s review at the beginning of this session)? What can you do to keep growing and applying these teachings to your own life? Who can you ask to help hold you accountable?
**Next Steps... Where do you go from here?**

“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says!” James 1:22

Thank you so much for being a part of this group studying *Resolving Everyday Conflict*. We trust that you found it a valuable use of your time, and that, in addition to teaching helpful principles, it has changed your perspective on conflict in a way that will impact your life forever.

But we hope that this isn’t the end.

Remember, as Tim mentioned, you are going to forget 83% of this within 30 days! (And eventually, you’ll forget all of it, and you don’t want that, right?) So here are four specific steps you can take to maximize the impact of your investment:

1. **Keep applying what you learned.**

   A few simple ways to do that:
   
   - Pull this study guide out periodically and read it again.
   - Complete the “Digging Deeper” section.
   - List a couple of the areas discussed in this study that you would like to improve in your own life. (These might be those areas you marked at the beginning of Session 8.) Then share those areas with a friend who can pray for you and hold you accountable.
   - If God has been working on your heart regarding a certain relationship that is broken, don’t just let that drop. Reach out to that person and apply the principles from this study to seek true and full reconciliation. Get help if you need it. Remember, reconciliation is close to God’s heart!

2. **Study peacemaking in other ways.**

   Peacemaker Ministries has many other materials that will help you learn and grow in the area of peacemaking. The “For Further Study” section on page 51 describes just a few of these materials. In particular, if you already haven’t done so, read
The Peacemaker, by Ken Sande. This book is the foundational resource on biblical peacemaking, and any additional study on peacemaking should include it.

3. Teach the principles to others.

The best way to make sure you understand the material is to teach it to someone else. Here are a few simple ways:

- Invite one or two friends out for coffee or lunch and walk them through the basic principles of peacemaking (as summarized in this guide).
- Use The Young Peacemaker materials to teach peacemaking to your children and/or other children in your church or neighborhood.
- Volunteer to lead another group through this study in your church, neighborhood, or workplace.

4. Get to know Peacemaker Ministries better.

Again, Peacemaker Ministries is here to walk beside you as you deepen your understanding of biblical peacemaking. For instance, you can:

- Visit www.Peacemaker.net and look at all the free online resources that are available. While you are there, subscribe to PeaceMeal (a weekly e-devotional) and Reconciled (the Peacemaker Ministries newsletter).
- Pursue more formal training in peacemaking (e.g., Conflict Coaching / Mediation or Certification as a Christian conciliator). This training would be particularly helpful if you frequently find yourself helping others to resolve their conflicts. (See page 52 for details.)
- Attend a Peacemaker Conference. This conference happens every year in the fall, and if you want to gather with like-minded people, come to a Peacemaker Conference! See www.peacemakerconference.net for details.
- Become a financial partner. Peacemaker Ministries is largely funded by donations from its financial partners. You may not be in position to give right now, and that’s OK. But if you’ve read this far, you obviously have an interest in the ministry of reconciliation, and we want to be up-front about the need. See www.peacemaker.net/donate for details.

Again, thank you for your commitment to this study and to the principles you’ve learned. May God richly bless you as you continue to seek to respond to everyday conflict in a radically different way.
Session 1
Look up the following verses. What does each passage teach you about relationships and conflict?

- 1 Corinthians 12
- James 4:1-3
- John 17:20-23
- Matthew 5:13-16

Session 2
Read the following passages and note what sort of responses these biblical characters used (escaping, attacking, or peacemaking). Were they wise or foolish? What else can you glean from these passages about resolving conflict?

- Jonah (Jonah 1:1-3)
- Joseph and his brothers (Gen. 37:17-28; 45:1-7; 50:15-21)
- King Saul and David (1 Sam. 18:1-11; 19:9-12)
- Daniel (Dan. 1:1-16)
- Paul (1 Cor. 5:1-5; 2 Cor. 2:5-11; see Matt. 18:15-20)
**Session 3**

One of the key themes from this session was understanding how the gospel applies to all facets of life. To help you recognize in Scripture how the truth of what God has done for you affects what you are then to do, look up the following verses. Next, note what God has already done, and then as a result, what you are called to do.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verse</th>
<th>What God has already done</th>
<th>What you are called to do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eph. 5:1-2</td>
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<td>Titus 2:11-14</td>
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<td>Col. 3:1-5</td>
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<td>Col. 3:12-14</td>
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**Session 4**

This session listed several verses that applied to the concept of idolatry. Read each verse and write down what it teaches.

- How does an idol work? (Psalm 37:4, James 4:1, Genesis 4:6-7, Romans 14:10, Romans 12:19)
Session 5
Read each of these verses associated with the 7 A’s. What else do you learn about confession from these verses?

- Psalm 41:4
- Luke 19:8
- Psalm 51
- Eph. 4:22-32
- Gen. 50:17

Session 6
Read all of Matthew 18. Note the story of the lost sheep and the parable of the unmerciful servant—these stories help create the context of the passage (verses 15-18) on how to go to our brother when he wrongs us. What do these “loving bookends” tell us about how to go about engaging others during a conflict?
Session 7

In Colossians 3:13, we are told to forgive one another “as the Lord forgave you.” How would you describe the way that “the Lord forgave you”? Look up the following verses. How do these help you to think about forgiveness in a more biblical way?

- Ephesians 2:8-9
- Luke 23:34
- 1 John 4:10
- Psalm 103:11-12
- Romans 8:1
- Micah 7:18

Session 8

Read and think about Romans 12, Psalm 37 and Psalm 73. How do these passages help you when you think about someone who is doing wrong to you (and getting away with it)?
For Further Study

Books

The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict - In this foundational book on peacemaking, Ken Sande presents practical biblical guidance for conflict resolution that takes you beyond resolving conflicts to true, life-changing reconciliation with family, coworkers, and fellow believers.

Peacemaking Women: Biblical Hope for Resolving Conflict - Is there really hope for living at peace? Yes! With personal stories and advice that is firmly rooted in Scripture, Tara Barthel and Judy Dabler guide you to peace with God, peaceful relationships with others, and genuine peace within.

The Peacemaking Pastor: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Church Conflict - Every pastor faces conflict in the church, and Alfred Poirier shows how Scripture clearly calls his servant-pastors to be ministers of reconciliation.

Small Group Studies

The Peacemaking Church Small Group Study - An eight-week video-based small group study featuring Ken Sande teaching the biblical principles of personal peacemaking. (Four additional sessions are included as an option for groups that want to dig deeper.)

The Peacemaking Church Women’s Study: Living the Gospel in Relationships - In this eight-week video series, Tara Barthel brings the hope of the gospel to issues of the heart—helping women to remember anew God’s grace, and from that place of abundant love, learn how to give that same grace to others.

The Leadership Opportunity - Conflict is a common issue for church leaders, but many find themselves ill-equipped to face it. This practical study applies the principles of peacemaking directly to those areas where conflict and church leadership most often intersect.

For Youth

The Peacemaker Student Edition - Today’s teens face many conflicts, but instead of responding with anger or giving up on the relationships, they can be peacemakers! Writing to teens, parents, and youth workers, Ken Sande and Kevin Johnson show how applying biblical principles to contentious situations can bring about forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Young Peacemaker - Designed for grades 3-7, this dynamic curriculum teaches children to prevent and resolve conflicts in a wise, constructive, and biblically faithful manner. The teacher’s manual provides detailed plans while children love the activity booklets—each is power-packed with vibrantly illustrated stories and engaging activities that teach kids to become peacemakers.

For more information or to order these and other resources, please visit www.peacemaker.net/bookstore or call us at 800-711-7118.
Training in Peacemaking

Are you interested in helping others work through their conflicts? Has God given you a passion to dig deeper as a peacemaker? If so, we invite you to go through further training with Peacemaker Ministries.

Peacemaker Ministries’ training is designed to supplement and build upon the basic principles of peacemaking given to us in Scripture. There are two basic levels of training available: Foundational Skills and Advanced Training. This training is an integral part of embedding peace into your church, your vocation, and every aspect of your life.

**Foundational Skills Training**

This level of training provides the tools you will need to effectively help people with most conflicts. The core of this training is the Conflict Coaching and Mediation event, three days of live instruction that will provide you with the opportunity to observe, practice, and discuss the process of biblical peacemaking.

**Advanced Training**

This training builds upon the tools acquired in the Foundational Skills Training while increasing your ability to assist others involved in more complex and difficult conflicts (such as marriage and divorce, multiple parties/multiple issues, formal arbitration and reconciling church conflict). Through these courses, you will also have the opportunity to apply to our Certification Program to attain the distinction of Certified Christian Conciliator™.

For more information or to find training near you, visit www.peacemaker.net/training.

**Peacemaker Conference**

Each fall, people from around the globe with an interest in peacemaking gather at our Peacemaker Conference. Over the span of a few days, they listen to notable plenary speakers, attend workshops, worship, rest, and experience deep fellowship with others who are of the same mind and heart. Bringing a group from your church or organization to the conference is a great way to gain a common vision for peacemaking within your organization.

For more information, see www.peacemakerconference.net.

Keep up-to-date with the latest in peacemaking by signing up for the many free publications (print and electronic) available at www.peacemaker.net!