

## Conflict

### Part 1 – The Theology of Conflict

#### I. Introduction – What is *Vision for Life* and how does it relate to conflict?

Our hope: To see a gospel movement that fills Denver with Disciples of Jesus.

Two things:

##### 1. Preserve our witness

Matt. 5:13 “You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.

Matt. 5:14 “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

Matt. 5:15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house.

Matt. 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

##### 2. Experience joy in being peacemakers

Matt. 5:3 “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Matt. 5:4 “Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Matt. 5:5 “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Matt. 5:6 “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Matt. 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

Matt. 5:8 “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

**Matt. 5:9 “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.**

Three Examples:

Marriage – genuine forgiveness

Work – refusal to participate in office gossip

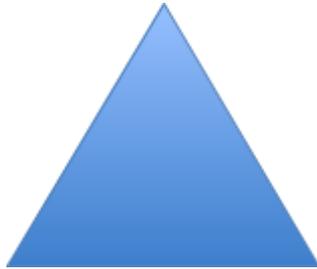
Fellowship Group – an ability to “bear with” people

*Group question: Have you seen conflict handled well? If so, describe some the elements that caused it to go well.*

## II. Conflict and Culture

### 1. Avoidance

Gossip and the effects of “triangling”



### 2. Manipulation

The effects of oversimplifying an issue

“Conflict is not Abuse”

How our politics model manipulation in conflict

Effects of emerging “victimhood culture” and conflict

Victim culture + No conflict skills + instant social media = ?

*Group question: how do you see culture impacting how we do conflict today?*

## III. Causes of Conflict

### 1. Not all conflict is caused by sin

Bad communication/misunderstanding

Genuine diversity (Rom 14)

Difference in priorities/goals (Acts 15:39 but also see Col 4:10 and 2 Tim 4:11)

## 2. Root of destructive conflict

Sin and the self

“Self-absorption is the root of destructive conflict”

The role individualism

*James 4:1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?*

*James 4:2 You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask.*

*James 4:3 You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.*

*James 4:4 You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.*

What cause “fights” According to the James passage above? When personal sin conspires with currents of the culture.

Two negative effects of sin in conflict:

Blinds us to get what we want regardless of the personal damage.

We may know what to do BUT don't possess the power to do it.

*Group question: where are you seeing conflict in your life right now and what role does selfishness play in it?*

## IV. Jesus and Conflict

Good News! Jesus gives a clear and compelling vision for how disciples ought to engage in conflict AND shows us to the power we need to actually do it.

Three Elements of Conflict According to Jesus:

1. Disciples take responsibly for **both** sides of conflict.

Matt. 18:15 ¶ “If your ***brother sins against you***, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

Matt. 18:16 But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses.

Matt. 18:17 If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

Matt. 5:23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your ***brother has something against you***,

Matt. 5:24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

*Group question: does anyone have anything against you right now? What would it look like for you to go an “be reconciled” to that person?*

2. Disciples receive direct power from God to make peace with others.

Two ways we receive power:

a. Vertical impacts our horizontal

Matt. 6:9 Pray then like this:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name.

Matt. 6:10 Your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.

Matt. 6:11 Give us this day our daily bread,

Matt. 6:12 and forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

Matt. 6:13 And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.\*

Matt. 18:21 Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?”

Matt. 18:22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven.

Matt. 18:23 “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants.

Matt. 18:24 When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents.

Matt. 18:25 And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made.

Matt. 18:26 So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’

Matt. 18:27 And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt.

Matt. 18:28 But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, 'Pay what you owe.'

Matt. 18:29 So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.'

Matt. 18:30 He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt.

Matt. 18:31 When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place.

Matt. 18:32 Then his master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me.

Matt. 18:33 And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?'

Matt. 18:34 And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers,\* until he should pay all his debt.

**Matt. 18:35 So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."**

b. We receive power through Jesus' personal presence!

Matt. 18:20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."

3. Disciples look first to themselves as a potential cause of the conflict

Matt. 7:3 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?

Matt. 7:4 Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?

Matt. 7:5 You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.

Psa. 139:23 Search me, O God, and know my heart!

Try me and know my thoughts!

Psa. 139:24 And see if there be any grievous way in me,  
and lead me in the way everlasting!

- Power of Self-justification

“Even if I’m only 2% responsible for a conflict, I am 100% responsible for my 2%.”

7 “A’s” of a good confession.

Bad confessions don’t work – toxic! Do more harm than good!

1. Address everyone involved (heart sin v. social sin). Confession should reach as far as the offense....if you were unkind to your wife and your kids heard you...you need to confess to your wife AND your kids!

2. Avoid “if”, “but” or “maybe” I’m sorry *if* I did something to make you upset. I was wrong *but* I was tired. I know I was wrong *but* so were you. A confession using *but* rarely leads to reconciliation.

But...communicates you believe in what comes after *but* than what came before it....

3. Admit specifically..... “I know I hurt you when I talked behind your back” is better than “I blew it as a friend”

4. Acknowledge the hurt....if you don’t know how you hurt someone...ask! Ask, have I understood how I hurt you?

5. Accept the consequences of the action

6. Alter your behavior – plan

7. Ask for forgiveness and give time.....

“I want us to be OK.....” Is there is anything else I can do?”

## V. Five Step Process of Biblical of Conflict: