1. **On a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the best, how consistent are you at bringing your conflict and struggles to God?** (Let them answer and explain it if necessary.)

**Now, rate your consistency of actively addressing conflict between you and others, or helping others with conflict on the same scale. How close do those two numbers line up?** (Let them answer.)

**For you personally, how closely do you relate those two exercises/habits?**

One of the biggest, if not THE biggest sources of hypocrisy for those who follow Christ is to address and resolve the issues of others without dealing with our issues.

Henri Nouwen, well-known priest, professor, writer and theologian, said it this way:

“Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into the places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep with those in tears. Compassion requires us to be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human.”

If we are to truly weep with those who weep, we must understand our own brokenness, so along with what our friend/family is going through, we can mourn the reality of fallen creation that produces difficult and tragic circumstances. And then, we can guide them toward the loving forgiveness, rest, and joy that only comes from God. And we would know best because that’s where we should be bringing our own issues, conflict and brokenness first.

1. **Being honest with yourself, what do you think you tend to value more in conflict situations…stepping in to try and resolve things, or making sure you’re on the “right side?” While answering that, would you want to change your reaction to the other one if you could?**
2. **Jeff’s sermon this morning was based in James 4:1-4. Let’s turn there.** (wait for them to get there) **If this morning’s focus is about bringing our conflict and issues to God first, then it will be valuable moving forward to know what issues cause the most unrest and conflict for us. It will be good personally, and also so we can help call out and hold each other accountable moving forward.**

**Verse 1:** What are the issues or subjects that you find yourself getting the most worked-up about, both alone and to/with others? Be as specific as you can.

**Verse 2:** What do others have or do that you find yourself desiring for yourself? Could be status, intelligence, influence, ability, etc.

**Verse 3:** Is it something that you’ve asked God for and not received? Would you ask God for it? Why or why not?

**Verse 4:** What do you personally think it means “to be in the world but not of world?” Using your own answer, how well do you maintain that balance? How much better would you be able to maintain it if you consistently brought your conflict, issues, and struggles to God? Finally, how can we in this group help you with that?

1. **That friend or friends you never reconciled with…so far, we’ve asked you to identify them and why you never reconciled with them. Next step – did you ever try or start the process of reconciling with them? And in that attempt, go back to the earlier question – did you care more about resolving the conflict, or maintaining your side or you being “right?”**

**Each week, we’ll refresh our minds of order of reconciliation that helps us approach conflict resolution as ministers of reconciliation.**

**First,** we must remember that we are defined by our identity in Christ, and being reconciled with God.

**Second,** we need to be reconciled with others (for sins against us AND sins against them), but bring our own conflict to God beforehand.

**Third,** we may need the help those who are caught in sin - especially believers. Non-believers for the sake of repenting and turning to Christ. Believers for the sake of seeking forgiveness and taking refuge in His grace and mercy.

**Pray to conclude.**