

? OPENING QUESTIONS:

- What's your first reaction when you face conflict with someone?
- As a leader, what's your role in resolving conflict amongst your team members or people you are leading?

📖 BIBLE BACKGROUND:

"You know you're involved in this church when you have a list of people you don't really like." These are not the kind of words you expect to hear from a pastor at the lunch-for-new-people event. But they are often true. When you are really committed, passionately involved, deeply invested, there will be tension. Some people will drive you nuts, and you'll probably drive them nuts, too. And that's good. It means you care, you're passionate, and you have a goal or a mission in sight. The problem is, we are all so different. Some people value relationships more than the task. Other people only see the end goal and run over everyone to get there. Some are thinkers; others are doers. The good news is, God made everyone different. The bad news is, God made everyone different. So if you're working with people toward a goal you actually care about, you're going to run into some conflict.

Think of all the different types of teams you are on throughout the week. Your family is a team, your friends, your church youth group, your group project for class, your student leadership team—and there are probably others. Now look at the words below and circle any that describe actions that have taken place in one of your teams.

Deserting	Dominating	Frustration	Gossiping	Bullying	Lobbying
Excluding	Holding grudges	Keeping records of wrongs	Unforgiving	Giving the cold shoulder	Anger
Argument	Quitting	Blaming	Avoidance	Judgment	Isolation

Each of these words is a sign of conflict that can either fester and sabotage your team and mission, or conflict that be resolved and actually make your team stronger than it was before.

Personal Conflict Resolution

What if you are the cause of a conflict with someone?

Read Matthew 5:23–24.

- Stop what you're doing.
- Go to the person immediately.
- Ask for forgiveness.
- Serve God.

What if someone else causes conflict with you?

Read Matthew 18:15–17.

- Go alone to the person and discuss the matter.
- If the person agrees, reconcile.
- If not, come back with two or three others (fair and neutral people).
- If the person agrees, reconcile.
- If not, bring the matter to someone older and wiser in the church (like a small group leader or youth pastor).
- If the person refuses to reconcile, have nothing more to do with the individual.

As a leader, you have twice the responsibility for conflict resolution. If it's personal (involving you and someone else), God laid out a clear plan for you to follow (check out the box above). If it's on your team or within your sightlines, as a leader you're supposed to facilitate a resolution. Leaders are peacemakers, team builders, and unifiers. Take a look at what the Bible says about this.

As you read the verses below, make a list (in your own words) of the things these verses say to do in order to deal with conflict. Write your answers in the "Do This" and "Not That" columns. *For example: "Answer gently or patiently. Don't be short or harsh with people."*

Proverbs 15:1, "A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

James 1:19, "Know this, my beloved brothers: let every person be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger."

Romans 12:16–18, "Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

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

Do This

Not That

Titus 3:9–11, “But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him.”

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

Hebrews 12:15, “See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.”

Ephesians 4:29–5, “Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”

Luke 10:27, “He answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind,’ and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

Isaiah 1:17, “Learn to do right! Seek justice, encourage the oppressed. Defend the cause of the fatherless, plead the case of the widow.”

Discuss:

- What difference would it make if the things on this list described you whenever you face conflict?
- What items in the “Do This” column are hardest for you to do in the midst of conflict? Why?
- As a leader, when do you face the most conflict in your team?
- How will you make sure to live out of the “Do This” column during those times?

<u>Do This</u>	<u>Not That</u>



APPLY IT:

Based on your answers and what you've learned from this study, how can you lead from the "Do This" column this week?

Be specific:

What are you going to do?

When are you going to do it?

Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



PARTING THOUGHTS:

"Don't be afraid of opposition. Remember, a kite rises against; not with; the wind." —Hamilton Mabie

"Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude." —William James

THIS WEEK I WILL...