

# Survival – Conflict (Acts 15)

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While the early followers were doing God's work they were often separated, and this led to conflict. However, they tackled the conflict head-on, and in the open, in order to restore peace to their communities.

Read Acts 15

How do you approach conflict? Most of us are inclined to:

- Protect ourselves (ex. run away, or pretend there is no conflict)
- Win (find a "bigger club")

Neither of these strengthens the relationship.

Mel described how separation is a slippery slope to conflicts, especially when we reach a point where we think our differences are more important than our likenesses.

- Have you reached that point in any of your relationships? How did you get there?

Mel explained how we all desire intimacy, and yet intimacy inevitably involves conflict. For some of us, the conflict overwhelms us and we detach from the conflict. But we want to restore the intimacy while avoiding any conflict, and it's just not possible. In order to achieve intimacy or unity we need to work through our conflicts. So Mel shared a pathway through conflict, which included these ideas:

- What part of the problem can you take responsibility for? Acknowledge it.
- How can you make your beliefs and feelings clear for the other to see? ("Clear is kind. Unclear is unkind" – Brene Brown)
- Walk through your conflict with the goal of achieving unity / reconciliation (rather than winning)
- Find the right forum for resolving it (e.g. Social media is rarely the right forum)
- If you're struggling to find peace and reconciliation, welcome others (e.g. leaders, counselors) who can help you see the problems clearly and find a pathway through in a way that honors the relationship, as well as the dignity and respect of the individuals involved.

Discuss this pathway. What step(s) could you begin doing to help strengthen your relationships by resolving conflict?