



Small Group Discussion Guide

Relationship Science Series: Week 3

How to Deal with Conflict

Conflict is an inevitable aspect of human relationships, but it doesn't have to damage them. Understanding the roots of conflict and applying biblical principles can lead to stronger, more resilient connections. This discussion guide is designed to help small groups explore the causes of conflict and practical, Scripture-based strategies for resolution.

Understanding the Causes of Conflict

1. Differences

- Reflect on a time when differing opinions or backgrounds led to a misunderstanding. How did you navigate that situation?

2. Perceptions

- Share an experience where a misperception caused conflict. What steps did you take to clarify and resolve the misunderstanding?

3. Selfishness

- **Scripture Reference:** James 4:1-2 (TPT) highlights that conflicts often stem from personal desires and selfish motives.
- Consider a situation where selfishness led to a dispute. How did recognizing this influence your approach to resolving the conflict?

Biblical Steps to Resolve Conflict

1. Take the Initiative

- **Scripture References:**
 - **Matthew 5:9** emphasizes the blessing of being a peacemaker.
 - **Matthew 5:23-24** instructs believers to seek reconciliation proactively.
 - **Romans 12:18** encourages living at peace with everyone, as much as it depends on us.
- Why is it important to address conflicts promptly?
- Share an example where taking the first step led to a positive outcome.

2. Own What You Can

- **Scripture Reference: Matthew 7:3-5** urges self-examination before pointing out others' faults.
- Discuss the challenges of acknowledging personal responsibility in conflicts. How can this humility transform the resolution process?

3. Speak the Truth Gently

- **Scripture References:**
 - **Galatians 6:1-2 (TPT)** advises restoring others with gentle words.
 - **Proverbs 12:18** contrasts reckless words with the healing power of wise speech.
- How can gentle communication de-escalate tensions? Share strategies for speaking truth lovingly during disagreements.

4. Listen to Understand Rather Than to Defend

- **Scripture Reference: James 1:19-20 (TPT)** encourages being quick to listen and slow to speak or become angry.
- Reflect on a time when active listening led to resolving a conflict. What practices help you listen more effectively?

5. Focus on Reconciliation, Not Resolution

- **Scripture Reference: 2 Corinthians 5:18** speaks of our ministry of reconciliation through Christ.
- **Discussion Prompt:** Why is restoring relationships more crucial than agreeing on every issue? How can this perspective shift our approach to conflicts?

6. Extend Grace and Forgiveness

- **Scripture References:**
 - **Colossians 3:13** calls us to forgive others as the Lord forgave us.
 - **James 3:18** highlights that peacemakers sow in peace and reap righteousness.
- Discuss the role of grace and forgiveness in healing relationships. How can embracing these principles lead to lasting peace?

Practical Application

- Identify a current or past conflict in your life. Consider how the steps outlined above could be or could have been applied to improve the situation.

By embracing these biblical guidelines, we can transform conflicts into opportunities for growth, understanding, and strengthened relationships.