

2022 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

May 15 - Community Guide

As we continue in our Five Good Fights sermon series, we turn our attention to understanding how to deal with conflict. We all face conflict in our lives and there are many ways to handle ourselves in difficult situations. Our goal is to approach conflict in a healthy, biblical way so that the ultimate resolution builds our relationships and makes them stronger.

Community Prayer:

Lord, your word tells us that we will have difficulties in this world, but we want to handle those difficulties in a way that is pleasing to you. Our desire is to honor you in the way we interact with people. Help us to learn and grow together as we seek to understand your heart toward relational conflict. In Jesus' name, Amen

Opening Questions:

1. When you were a child, how did your family handle conflict?
2. When you face conflict, what is your immediate response?

Exploration:

Conflict is all around many of us. There is conflict with friends, there is conflict with co-workers, there is conflict with family members, even spouses, there is conflict with neighbors and conflict with strangers and before long we end up asking what is wrong with all these people... what is their problem? But eventually, if we're going to grow, we have to ask not what is wrong out there, what is wrong in here? With me?

Have someone read the following scriptures out loud.

James 4:1

This verse asks us two good and important questions that we need to take seriously as we learn to handle conflict.

3. Think about a conflict you have faced, how would you answer the question, "what caused the conflict?"
4. In that same conflict, what was the unmet desire in you that fueled the conflict?

"The source of **wars and fights** among Christians is always the same. There is some root of carnality, an internal **war** within the believer regarding the lusts of the flesh. No two believers who are both walking in the Spirit of God towards each other can live with **wars and fights** among themselves."
~David Guzik



2022 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

In this passage, James seems to suggest that the real, underlying reason for these fights may be selfishness. When we only seek to get our own way but fail to understand the perspective of the other person, we are in danger of becoming bitter and resentful.

It is important that we understand the context in which James is written.

James 3:13-14

We see the following terms used here:

- Show it = give evidence of it
- Harbor = to have it in you
- Bitter = harsh or pungent
- Envy = jealousy, rivalry
- Selfish ambition = electioneering – someone who goes around and tries to convince others that their opinion is the right opinion

James 3:15-16

These are strong words! Envy and selfish ambition bring disorder and every evil practice and are considered unspiritual and demonic.

5. Where have you seen this played out in the world or even in your own life?

James 3:17-18

Living in the humility that comes from Godly wisdom looks very different than living in worldly wisdom

Humility and Godly Wisdom

- | | |
|----------------|----------------------|
| • Pure | • Full of mercy |
| • Peace-loving | • Full of good fruit |
| • Considerate | • Impartial |
| • Submissive | • Sincere |

6. Where have you seen this played out in the world or even in your own life? How was the outcome different?



2022 Community Groups

WEEKLY GUIDE

James 4:1-2

It is helpful to understand the meaning of the words used here:

- Desire = to lust, to covet (those who seek forbidden things)
- Kill = murder, slay
- Covet = to envy, to be jealous
- Quarrel = war of words, strive

We must be careful with our desires, coveting leads to conflict and anger leads to hatred. It is easy to identify big conflicts, they may erupt in yelling, screaming, hatred and even war.

What may seem like the little things are also deadly; gossip, slander and judgementalism. Although these may be quiet on the outside, inside they are doing terrible damage to our souls.

7. When have you seen a disagreement about something small turn into something much bigger and more destructive?

James 4: 2-3

We must be aware of our motives in our relationships AND in our prayers.

James 4: 6-10

So how do we fight this fight? As Christians we go to battle by submitting to God. We let God change our heart and we invite him to deal with the desires that are not fully aligned with his will and his ways.

3 Battlefields We Face

- Conflict with others
- Conflict with self
- Conflict with God

Philippians 2:3-4

Ephesians 4:2

1 Peter 3:8

8. Which of these scriptures resonates most deeply with you? Explain why.



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What Humility is: Self-forgetfulness

An attitude of the heart that impacts how and why decisions are made: self-lessness

Valuing others and their needs ahead of yourself

What Humility is Not: Self-hatred

Hiding your talent, opinion, or needs

Never taking a stand for anything

9. Who do you know that you would describe as humble? How would you describe their humility?
10. The next time you face a conflict, what will you do differently?

The Takeaway:

Facing conflict in a healthy, biblical way is a fight worth fighting.

We need God to work in us and through us to align our desires with his.

