

## SERMON STUDY



One of the greatest models of mediating a conflict well was Abigail. By her strength and wisdom, she saved her foolish husband's life. On the flipside, some bad examples of handling a conflict were Euodia and Syntyche. While we don't know what they were fighting about, we do know that it was significant enough to land their names in Scripture. Their foolishness becomes an opportunity for us to gain wisdom.

### REFLECT

1. Did you ever have a nickname? How did you get the nickname? Who gave it to you? Did you like it?

“Sometimes nicknames reveal more about the attitude of the giver than they do about the receiver. However, all nicknames share one common feature: they often become a part of the person's identity. When you think about the person, the nickname and its significance always come to your mind” (Newman, 29-30).

### ENCOUNTER

2. Read Philippians 4:1–3. List the ways Paul described the believers at Philippi.

‘To interact with others in a manner that pleases the Lord, we must view others as God views them. As a result, Paul reminded the Philippians of their relationship to each other in God's sight... In the midst of conflict we often make statements that evaluate another person. ‘She is always so stubborn.’ ‘He never listens.’ ‘They are so ignorant.’ ‘She's not the brightest crayon in the box.’ Sometimes the statements are so heinous that they remain only in our thoughts. But at times, those heinous thoughts come out in hurtful words” (Newman, 30).

3. What words of evaluation influenced your thoughts and responses toward others involved in a recent conflict?

“Our own evaluations often replace God's evaluation of the person. Paul reminded the Philippians of their shared identity in Christ—His work in them and their past work for Him.”

4. Read the passages below. Note Paul's use of the term “brother.” Why do you think Paul chose to address his readers as brothers? What can you learn from this designation as you face the conflicts in your life?
  - Galatians 6:1, 2
  - Philippians 1:12-18
  - 2 Thessalonians 3:11-16
  - Philemon 10-21

### TRANSFORM

5. Evaluate yourself. In recent conflicts, did your words and actions demonstrate that you saw other believers as brothers and sisters in Christ?
6. Did your words and actions demonstrate that you saw other believers as beloved?
7. How might your words and actions have differed from if you had viewed the other person from these perspectives?
8. Do you need to confess any sin to God? From whom do you need to seek forgiveness? What new commitments of obedience should you make?

### PRAYER REQUESTS

The content and questions of this study have been reproduced from Jeff Newman's book *Conflict Under Control* with the permission of the author. Jeff Newman, *Conflict Under Control: Responding with the Mind of Christ*. Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 2007, pages 29-37.