

## Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides

Feb 25th, 2024

### Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)

1. What is a story of a stupid conflict that you once had. How was it resolved?

### Bible Study Questions

1. What conflicts have you experienced in the church? What do you think most often dries those conflicts?
2. Read John 17:20-23
  - What does Jesus pray for?
  - Why is Jesus so passionate about unity?
  - Why do you think that Christian unity looks like?
  - Christians have all different backgrounds and preferences. How do we get past that to be “one”?
3. Pastor Michael talked about six different weapons that we use in conflict: Accusations, explosions, trading cards, spring cleaning, silence, and false guilt.
  - What weapons do you most often gravitate toward?
  - What steps can you take to disarm that weapon and submit it to God?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: What do you notice in these verses about love?
  - What descriptions of love do you find here that are most difficult in conflict?
  - How can you better put on love?
5. Is there a current conflict in your life that you need to resolve with love? If so, what steps do you need to take to do that?
6. Imagine for a moment that the church took this seriously. What would that look like?

**Feb 18th**  
**What If We Handle Conflict**  
**Well?**

Anytime that two different people are together, conflict is bound to happen. Often the conflicts are easily laughed off, but other times it can be deeply wounding. Churches are known for splitting over conflict. Yet, the Bible gives us guidance on how to deal with conflict.

- I. **God envisions a community of differing people united around Christ:** In Philippians 4:2-3, Paul addresses two women in the church who are in conflict. He pleads with them to look beyond their differences to be of one mind in Christ. This echoes Jesus prayer in John 17:20-21 that the church would be one, just as he and the Father were one. This all presents a vision that the Bible has for the church to be made up of people from different backgrounds who unify around their love for Jesus.
- II. **When in conflict, we sin be embracing weapons:** Ephesians 4:26 tells us “in your anger do not sin”. This prompts a question about when anger becomes sin. I would suggest that it becomes sin when we start using ungodly weapons.
  - **Accusations:** These often include statements that begin with “you always...” or “you never...”. The goal of these statements is to condemn the other person. When we do this, we are rejecting Christ’s mission to restore, and joining Satan in condemnation.
  - **Explosions:** Losing one’s temper in an explosion of anger. Proverbs teaches us that “a fool gives vent to his anger”.
  - **Trading Cards:** Publicly ignoring offenses but keeping a private account. Then once a certain number has been reached, make the opposing person pay for all that has been done. This rejects 1 Corinthians 13:5 which tells us to “keep no record of wrong.”
  - **Spring Cleaning:** When every past sin is routinely brought out in order to condemn the opposing person.
  - **Silence:** There are appropriate times to withdraw in conflict in order to ease the tension. But silence is when one deliberately withholds resolution from the other person.
  - **False Guilt:** When one becomes a martyr, taking responsibility for things that they shouldn’t. The purpose is to manipulate and condemn the other person.
- III. **Healthy conflict surrenders weapons and chooses love:** We all gravitate toward one of those weapons. As Christians, we need to surrender those weapons before God and repent. Then, the power of the Holy Spirit, put on love. The best description of the kind of love that should characterize God’s people is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

Conclusion

God cares deeply about the health of our relationships. Jesus taught

in Matthew 5:23-24 that conflicts should be resolved before we enter into worship. God cares deeply that his people live in unity. Because of that, we need to be people who resolve conflict well. This prompts the question, “what if we took this seriously?”. We live in a culture that is full of conflict. Looking ahead, we have an election season that will crank up the polarization. What if the church showed the rest of the culture how to come together?

