

Conflict

15 "If another believer sins against you, go privately and point out the offense. If the other person listens and confesses it, you have won that person back. 16 But if you are unsuccessful, take one or two others with you and go back again, so that everything you say may be confirmed by two or three witnesses. 17 If the person still refuses to listen, take your case to the church. Then if he or she won't accept the church's decision, treat that person as a pagan or a corrupt tax collector.

18 "I tell you the truth, whatever you forbid on earth will be forbidden in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven.

19 "I also tell you this: If two of you agree here on earth concerning anything you ask, my Father in heaven will do it for you. 20 For where two or three gather together as my followers, I am there among them."

Matthew 18:15-20 (NLT)

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- How did your parents settle fights between you and your siblings?
- O: What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

V15-20

- O: Jesus addresses this teaching to whom (vv.1,15,20)? What is it about? And what is the desired result?
- O: Discuss the overarching attitude believers should have in conflict (see context, esp. Matt 18:4), and what are the steps to conflict resolution as laid out in the passage (v.15-17)?
- O: What increases the likelihood that God will answer prayer (v. 19-20)? What does this tell us about our walk with God, and our relationships with each other (hint: they are both interdependent).
- I: How is the conflict resolution process as laid out in this passage different than the way(s) conflict resolution is typically gone about to people?
Note: Discuss the differences in attitudes (ex. aggressive vs. humble), approaches (ex. gossip vs. private 1-on-1), and desired outcomes (winning argument vs. restoring relationships).
- I: What obstacles frustrate/derail the conflict resolution process that is laid out in the passage?
- I: Discuss how v. 18-20 go along with v. 15-17.
Note: The key is looking at the desired outcome of conflict (restoring relationships in v.15-17) and the impact the church can have when we are unified (v.18-20)!
- A: Have you ever followed this 4-step reconciliation process? What happened?
- A: When you get the courage to confront someone, how do you avoid being vindictive or hurtful in return (hint: see the verses that follow this passage, v.21-35).
- A: Without naming names, are there certain folks/situations you need to engage in step one with? Also, confess and pray with the group if you have been operating outside of this biblical process (ex. gossip).

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily on a few different study guides; including the Serendipity NT for Groups by the Young Life ministry (ISBN is N/A).