

Bible Study: The Ministry of Reconciliation

Topic: Biblical Conflict Resolution

Focus: Moving from "Peacekeeping" to "Peacemaking"

The Challenge

When conflict happens, human nature usually chooses **Fight** (attack, retaliate) or **Flight** (withdraw, hold a grudge). Jesus calls us to a third option: **Pursue**. We are called to move *toward* the mess to heal it.

- **Peacekeeping:** Avoids conflict to keep things quiet (sweeping it under the rug).
- **Peacemaking:** Addresses conflict to create true restoration (lifting the rug and cleaning the dirt).

Part 1: The Motivation (Why bother?)

We resolve conflict because God resolved His conflict with us.

2 Corinthians 5:18-20 “All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people’s sins against them... We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors...”

Key Thought: An **Ambassador** does not represent their own feelings; they represent the King. If we claim to be Christians, we lose the right to hold grudges because we represent a God who did not hold our sins against us.

Discussion:

1. Why is it easier to hold a silent grudge than to initiate a hard conversation?
2. Verse 19 says God was "not counting people's sins against them." How does keeping a mental "scorecard" of past hurts damage a relationship?
3. If you viewed yourself as an "Ambassador" in your next argument, how would that change your tone of voice?

Notes:

Part 2: The Method (How do I do it?)

The Biblical process for handling offense.

Matthew 18:15 “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.”

Key Thought: Jesus commands us to go **Directly** and **Privately**.

- **Don't** go to social media.
- **Don't** go to a friend to "vent" (gossip).
- **Don't** wait for them to come to you.

Discussion:

1. The text says keep it *"just between the two of you."* Why is privacy essential for someone to lower their defenses and listen?
2. Jesus says the goal is to *"win them over."* How is that different from trying to *"win the argument"?*
3. Have you ever had someone come to you privately and lovingly to resolve an issue? How did you react?

Notes:

Part 3: The Limits (What if it doesn't work?)

Releasing the burden of fixing everyone.

Romans 12:18 “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”

Key Thought: Reconciliation requires two people, but **Forgiveness** only requires one. You can release the debt (forgive) even if they never apologize, but you cannot have a restored relationship until they own their part. God asks you to do *what depends on you*.

Discussion:

1. What does "as far as it depends on you" look like practically? When can you say, "I have done my part"?
2. How do we handle the pain when we try to reconcile, but the other person refuses?
3. Is there a difference between forgiving someone and trusting them again immediately?

Notes:

Summary: The 3 Rules of Biblical Conflict

1. **The Goal is Restoration.** (Win the person, not the fight).
2. **The Circle is Small.** (Keep it private. Gossip kills reconciliation).
3. **The Initiative is Yours.** (Don't wait for an apology. God didn't wait for us).

Personal Reflection: *Is there a relationship in my life where I need to make the first move this week?*