

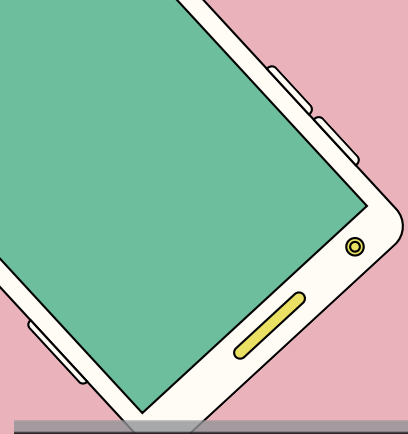
STRAIGHT TALK

biblical communication

**How to Handle
Conflict**



Week 5
11/5/23



WELCOME



Welcome to the Fall 2023 Life Group Series! For the next three weeks, we will be learning about Biblical communication principles.

Why are we learning how to communicate? Haven't we been communicating for as long as we can remember? Yes! But things have changed. Technology has had a huge impact on how we communicate with one another. Twenty years ago, we had an easier time getting along with friends, family, and coworkers because most of our communication was verbal. We talked in person or called people on the phone.

When we disagreed with someone in conversation before smartphones, we tried to do it gently. Saying something nasty to someone in person might get you punched in the face. Say it on Facebook, or over a text, and you'll just get unfriended or blocked. COVID, the culture war, and smartphones have drastically altered how we communicate - even with our own family and loved ones. A lot has changed, but the principles of Biblical communication have not changed. They are...

1. Listen before speaking.
2. Be open to correction.
3. Tell the truth.
4. Hold one another accountable.
5. Handle conflict in a way that leads to peace.
6. Use speech that edifies.
7. Forgive one another.

We hope you enjoy this time COMMUNICATING with your Life Group as we teach one another how to honor God and one another in our speech.



THINGS TO DO BEFORE LIFE GROUP

- If you're bringing a new person to the study, we recommend getting them study materials ahead of time so they can feel prepared.
- Pray that the LORD will open your eyes and heart to receive the lessons he has to teach you in the study.
- Read the scripture focus for the study.
- Go through the questions and think about how you might answer them. We've provided space in the study for you to write down your answers if you'd like.





INTRO

Do you love stories? One indispensable element of storytelling is conflict. Nobody wants to read a book or go to a movie where the lead character is just happily living the good life. We love stories because they present us with conflicts in which the hero of the story overcomes the conflict and is victorious, and we put ourselves in the hero's shoes.


We love the story of Jesus. We love that he endured the greatest conflict we can imagine - a conflict in which the mob, the state, and the religious institutions were aligned against him to bring about his brutal death. Jesus resolved our conflict with God due to our sins by giving himself. If Jesus could die on the cross to resolve our conflict with God, then maybe we can take the time to resolve our conflicts with others lovingly, without violence. In our text, Jesus tells us how.



HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

Our text takes place during Jesus' earthly ministry. It was a time of conflict. The Jews were in conflict with the Romans who ruled over Israel - especially the Jews who collected taxes for the Romans. The Pharisees and Sadducees were in constant conflict with each other over their various interpretations of God's revelation, whether or not the soul was eternal, and the bodily resurrection of the dead. They even disagreed with one another over which books of the Bible should actually be in the Bible. Jesus came during a time of conflict in the midst of humanity to remove the conflict between God and his people and the conflicts within society.

COMMUNICATION TIPS



The tips for handling conflict build upon what we've already learned in this Life Group series, so these may sound a bit familiar.

1. Make Jesus the focus - how would Jesus want you to resolve this conflict?
2. Humble yourself. Most conflicts do not involve angels and demons. Rather, most conflicts involve two or more sinful people, both in need of God's grace.
3. Go towards conflict, not away. Feelings of anger and hurt may dissipate over time but will not resolve until the parties involved are heard, forgiven, and apologize.
4. Be quick to listen, slow to speak. If we're being accused of something, listen to your accuser. Maybe she has a point. If we're accusing someone, ensure you have your facts straight before hurling a baseless accusation.
5. If you messed up, apologize. Take responsibility, and make restitution if necessary.
6. Speak the truth in love.
7. Get help if you need it. If the person you're in conflict with won't listen to you, find a third party to arbitrate the disagreement.
8. If you forgive, then forgive. Shaming or guilt-tripping someone over a "forgiven" offense means we haven't actually forgiven them.

LET'S

TALK

ABOUT IT

Notes

What We Believe

1. Read Matthew 18:15-20. What should Christians do if another Christian sins against us?
2. What should we do if another Christian sins against us and won't listen to our complaint?
3. What should we do if another Christian sins against us, won't listen to us, and won't take correction from the church?
4. What does Jesus mean in verse 17 when he says, "And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

God Speaks to Us

1. Have you ever approached a Christian because you felt they sinned against you, only to discover that you were the one at fault? Describe your experience.
2. What prevents us from following Jesus' instructions on how to handle conflict? What can we do before conflict occurs to ensure we'll handle conflict according to Jesus' commands?

God Speaks to Our Family

1. Social media appears to be engineered to produce conflict. Have you ever had a conflict with someone on social media? How does your family manage social media use for both parents and children?
2. How can conflict be an opportunity to glorify God in your household?

LET'S

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God Speaks in Our Worship

1. Has the church managed to handle conflict differently than the world? If yes, explain how. If not, explain why not.
2. Read 1 Corinthians 11:27-29. Paul says that we are to “discern the body” before taking the Lord’s Supper. That is, we should see Christ in our fellow believers and treat them as we would Jesus himself. What does the church do to ensure we’re taking Paul’s words seriously and discerning the body before we take the Lord’s Supper?

The Gospel Call

1. The church is, and forever will be, in conflict with the world. Can we make an application of our text to our dealings with the world? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. Do church splits caused by doctrinal differences help or hinder our call to make disciples of all nations? Explain your answer.



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