

To Resolve  
*Dealing with and Resolving Conflict*  
Wk. 1

Conflict, it's one of those things that we all have to deal with, but choose to deal with it in many different ways. Many times war is deemed a conflict, all of us will, at least one time or another argue with each other, a friend, parent, or even God. Think back for a second to last fight or argument you had.

There was an argument I got into many years ago over something really stupid, but it cost me quite a bit. I was in H.S. and walking down the hall with a girlfriend I had, as we were walking we were pushing each other, having fun, etc and one of the times she pushed me I bumped into the captain of the wrestling team. And this conflict started with one of the stupidest phrases I have ever heard. The captain said to me, "you're a freshmen, I'm a sophomore I'm going have to beat you up". I was thinking to myself, what did he just say? Not only did it sound stupid to me, it was stupid. So I was "dude, listen I'm sorry I didn't mean nothing by it we were fooling around and I got bumped, my bad sorry it won't happen again". Then he says it again, "no you don't understand you're a freshmen, I'm a sophomore I'm gonna have to beat you up". By then I was like whatever, so I walked away. As I'm walking away he pushes me into a locker I turn around and barely ducked the first punch. We'll, my pride got in the way a fight ensued, a conflict. But it cost me, a broken hand, a two day suspension, the remaining football season suspension, and everyone thought it best if I didn't wrestle that year.

Think back to your last conflict, what was it about, how did it start, why did it happen, was it resolved, if so what did it take to make it resolved. If not, why, what prevented the conflict from being resolved. After you think through all that, ask yourself, was it worth it? Was the conflict really worth the price, whenever there's a conflict there's always a price to be paid. Divorce is a result of multiple conflicts isn't it? That's a high price. Even the conflict or the fight for us between Christ and the enemy, it cost Christ his life, that's a high price to be paid as well. Some conflicts are worth the price, others aren't though, and most aren't worth it. The cost is too high.

The fight I was in wasn't worth the cost. Think for a second, what was the real reason I actually got in the fight... some of us would make the argument that the fight ensued because that kid was stupid. Others of us would say the fight started because he threw the first punch, but the reality is I threw a punch back because of my pride. I was thinking more about what my girlfriend thought than the cost, I was thinking more about what the crowd thought than the cost. I was thinking more about myself and my reputation than the lasting implications. That's what pride does, pride tells you that what people think of you, how others see you is more important than anything else. Some of us are ok with that, but most of us if, if we actually thought about it would acknowledge that we're not real thrilled about being told we're prideful. It's almost like a slam on our integrity and who we are as people. In the same way most of us aren't thrilled about getting into arguments with each other, our friends, and our family. So what we can do about this? For the next six weeks or so we're going to look at some keys to resolving conflict and dealing with pride. If we truly come to the place where we want resolve and work through the many conflicts that we deal with throughout life, then we'll have to get our pride out of the way.

Just like there are always two parties involved in every conflict, there are two major elements at the root of every conflict, selfishness and pride. Thankfully Jesus gives us an example on how to deal with those issues. Although Jesus never fell into either one of those traps he was tempted too. Jesus dealt with a lot of conflict. There was a number of times that the Pharisee's attempted to trap Jesus and he called them on it (Mt. 22:15-22). Other times Jesus had conflicts with his own disciples (Mt. 16:21-23). But one of the most intriguing conflicts that Jesus had was with God the Father. Did you realize that, that we aren't the only ones that have to work through and resolve family conflicts? Let's look at this passage...

*Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground. When he rose from prayer and went back to the disciples, he found them asleep, exhausted from sorrow. **Luke 22:39-45***

The conflict which Jesus had with God the Father was about His will. It's our will that allows our pride and selfishness to overrule the implications of the situation. Have you ever been in a situation where you understand that you're supposed to do something, but you don't really want to because it's going to be hard? If we always only did the things that we wanted to, only did our will, many people could get hurt or miss out. Sometimes practice for a sport can be like this, you know you need to go to practice but you're kind of like, I really don't want to. If you don't go, not only do you miss out, but so do your teammates which could really affect the upcoming game or event. Going to see relatives can be like this too, I went to my grandmothers funeral the other day. I wasn't real close to my grandma, Josiah is seven and she never meant him or Hope. She had opportunity but never really cared enough to. So I'm going to the funeral because she's my grandma and I really should. But the majority of me is like, yea I really don't want to go even though it's the right thing to do. If I don't go, than maybe relatives our hurt cause I didn't care enough to show, what type of example am I setting for those around me, my kids even. You see our conflicts affect more people than just us. There's the other party involved, those who are looking on maybe following your example. The conflict between what I want and the right thing grows and people are influence, people.

Don't get me wrong here, the hard thing isn't always what God's will is, but many times it ends up that way. Jesus said himself in Luke 14 that...

"Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' "Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." **Luke 14:28-33**

The reason I bring this up, is because in order to resolve conflict, whether it's with family, friends, God or whomever. It's hard, it's going to cost. Jesus was able to deal with the conflict he faced concerning the cross and God's will because he valued the person more than the issue. In order for us to deal with pride and selfishness, the things that keep us from resolving conflict; we have to value the person more than the issue (that we win the conflict). That guy that I fought that day I really could care less about him. I wasn't concerned about why he was like that, all I cared about was myself, my reputation and winning. What would have happened that night that Jesus was talking to God and Jesus was more concerned with his will than that of the father, what would have happened that night if Jesus was more concerned with his reputation than you and I? Where would be today?

There's really four questions you need to ask yourself today;

Who are you in conflict with or who have you been in conflict with recently?

What specific pride or selfish issue is keeping you from resolving the conflict?

Do you want to?

What holds more value for you, the person whom you have the conflict with or your side of the issue at hand?

Sample Questions for Small Groups:

What was the last conflict you were involved in, what happened, why?

Has it been resolved?, what are some ways that

Did Joseph live out these principals in Gen. 39,

- Yes in the fact that he was more concerned with God's will than his own or that of Potiphar's wife
- No in the fact that he wasn't as concerned with Potiphar's wife (the person) than God's will