

**To Resolve
Wk 5 Outline
*The Benefits of Resolving Conflict***

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**To Resolve
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Over the last few weeks we've spent our time talking about resolving conflict. If you were to breakdown the series into sections, you'd see that at this point we've broken down resolving conflict into two main sections. The first section was only one week. We talked about the root of conflict, how the root of conflict is in our will. What do we value more, our own way or the other person involved? So the first section really dealt with the "why" of conflict. Why it is exist, why it happens, and a little bit about what it takes to resolve the conflict. We've spent the last three weeks now going over the "how". How do we communicate through conflict? How God worked in the lives of Jacob and Esau to bring them to resolving their conflict? And lastly, we talked about how to have the proper perspective in resolving conflict? These next two weeks we're going to spend in our third and final section, the "what" of resolving conflict. What happens when we resolve conflict, what happens when we don't? What are the benefits of resolving conflict, what are the consequences?

It's only when we open our eyes to see the big picture, the lasting results of our choice of whether or not to resolve conflict that the desire to resolve births in us. Let me give you this as an illustration, anyone of use a microscope? A microscope is used to see something very small very closely. Scientist use microscopes to examine cells, and sometimes you'll hear the phrase "under the microscope", as it results to a person's work ethic or particular situation. It means that someone is taking a good look at something. It's important to do that, but we're still only looking at a small part of something. When a scientist looks at a small part of a cell or germ under a microscope, they do so with an *understanding* of the entire cell. In a similar sense, we've been looking at conflict under the microscope. But now we're going to back off the microscope and see the picture as a whole. IF you were watching a football game and all you saw was the quarterback throwing the ball, but never saw the receiver. You would really miss out on what the game was all about. When we don't see the other side of the resolution to the conflict, we really miss out on what resolving issues and conflict is all about.

I want you to think for a second on the last time you were in a conflict and it wasn't your fault? Now everyone think of a time, good, it's not hard is it? Think about your responses in those situations. What did you say, how did you feel? I would guess that some of use yelled and I would bet that even a few of us cried, maybe not in the moment but possibly after. Some of us shut down and decided we weren't going to deal with that person again until we absolutely had to. There probably was even a few of us who let it go, maybe blamed it on a "bad day" or just forgave the person and thought it wasn't worth fighting for. What about what we said, phrases like; "It's not my fault", "Why are you blaming me?", "I didn't do anything wrong", "get off by back", "leave me alone". I mean list goes on and on doesn't it? Now we're going to change perspective. Remember we said that the only way to resolve conflict is to see something from the other person's perspective, to see something from God's perspective. To stand in somebody else's shoes, despite the awkwardness, the discomfort, and the weight of it all, is to value the person over your own will.

I want to look at a passage in scripture that show's us a little bit of what Jesus went through.

^{Isa 53:2} He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground. He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. ^{Isa 53:3} He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ^{Isa 53:4} Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. ^{Isa 53:5} But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. ^{Isa 53:6} We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. ^{Isa 53:7} He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth. ^{Isa 53:8} By oppression and judgment he was taken away.

And who can speak of his descendants? For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people he was stricken. ^{Isa 53:9} He was assigned a grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death, though he had done no violence, nor was any deceit in his mouth.

This passage is describing the things that many things that Jesus went through on the cross for each of us. Real quick let's look at the list of things that Jesus experiences; "nothing in appearance to be desired" (he wasn't great looking), "despised and rejected", "man of sorrows, familiar with suffering" (he was sad and had good reason to be, he had seen a lot of pain). He was despised and people didn't think too highly of him (it says he was the type of person that people had a hard time looking at). The people (like us) who he helped, the people who he carried thought that God was against him. Even though he didn't deserve it, even though God wasn't against Him, his skin was still pierced (it was cut open), his heart was still crushed and it wasn't his fault (for *our* sin/transgressions). In fact all that pain he felt, all those things that weren't his fault. They were actually our fault and the fault of others like us, but because of the suffering he endured on our behalf we can have peace and be healed. He didn't say anything, like a sheep going to be slaughtered, he didn't cry out or defend himself, and he just took it for our sake, because he valued us for than his own desires.

Now if this doesn't really make sense to you, you're pretty normal. In fact it really shouldn't make sense to any of us. If we were to go back to your scenario, where you got in trouble for something you didn't do and you did what Jesus did your scenario would change dramatically. It would probably look something like this. (Quiet) No matter what happened you wouldn't say anything, you would be sad, you'd be hurt, because a person you care about is hurting you. Let's face it, that's really hard. It's really hard not to defend yourself, it's really hard to love and care for someone that's treating you like garbage.

(Please put the above sentence(s) in the proper context, we don't want kids getting beat by their parents and/or in abusive situations then decide to stay in them to "Be like Jesus".)

That's what Jesus did for us when He resolved our sin conflict with God. We're all born into this world with the desire to sin, the desire to do wrong. No one has to teach us how to lie or steal; we just pick it up because it's in our nature. Think about the times you've sinned, have you ever stolen something or cheated on a test, have you ever hated someone, have you disrespected your parents. According to the bible, that's sin and it separates us from God (Rom. 3:23). Because of that we're in conflict with God. God loves us; we're his creation (Gen. 1:27) and entitled to the benefits of his kingdom because of it. However he hates our sin and because our sin separates us from God (Rom. 6:23), we miss out on the benefits of having a healthy relationship with God, the relationship it was created to be. Think for a second about a close friend you have or maybe even one of your parents. You love them, they love you everything's great. But then they lie to you, the relationship has to change because of that. Maybe major, maybe be minor but it changes. You may not trust them like you used to, you may not share the same sorts of things you used to. God can heal that, when Jesus comes and dies on the cross in our place, he made it possible for you to be healed of that hurt and forgive the person. In fact he made it possible for God to heal you of the hurt you've caused him and he forgives it. So that your relationship can be what it was created to be. One of the kickers is this, when you realize that, and what a big deal it is you'll want to give everything to God. All the hurt, all the stuff, you'll want to give him everything. The more you give the more he asks to the point that it hurts, and it'll keep coming. I know it might sound crazy, but that's how God changes us to become more like Himself, more like Jesus. We're transformed into the image of God that we were created to be (Rom. 12:2). Do you want that?

You see a benefit of resolving any conflict (or doing what you can to resolve conflict) is that you grow closer to God. Just like there's a benefit for resolving conflict, there are also consequences when we don't. What if Jesus hadn't come, what if he had defended himself and took out all those guys were trying to hurt him, what if he valued himself over you? Where would we be? You can actually make that choice as well, it's not going to change what Jesus did for you but it's your choice whether or not to accept it. You can choose not to believe any of this, and live your life for you and you alone. But you miss out and then you're responsible for your sin. Someone still has to pay for it and if you don't

want to give it to Christ with everything else, or maybe you want to sort of pick and choose what's God's and what's yours, then you'll have to pay for your sin in hell. The problem with that is not only it worse than you can imagine, but you can't ever satisfy the debt of sin. Jesus can because he never sinned. He didn't have to pay for his own, so he paid for yours and mine. If you choose to reject that, you'll have to pay. Look at it this way, when someone steals from you or lies to you, something has to be done to make it right. Sometimes the person will come and apologize, other times God will give you a peace in your heart to forgive despite the lack of an apology. But something has to be done to make it right. If it's never made right the hurt only builds and deepens, never to the point where God can't do anything but possibly to the point where you won't allow God to do anything because your heart is so hard. So you have the choice of whether or not to work toward resolving conflicts and you can do what Jesus did, take the hurt and love the person through it. Trusting God to take it from you, or you can choose what most others do. Hold a grudge and let the issue get worse. Either way you'll have to eventually choose. You'll have to choose whether or not to resolve conflicts with friend and/or family or become bitter and hold grudges. You'll have to choose what to do with your sin conflict between you and God. Will you give him everything so that he takes your place and pays for your sin and will you go to hell, paying for your sin eternally?

Suggested Questions for Discussion:

1. As you stand right now, who is resolving your sin conflict with God?
 - a. How do you *know* that?
 - b. If you are attempting to resolve your own conflict with God what can you do about it?
 - i. What does that look like?
2. What are some of the benefits you can see to resolving conflict?
 - a. Have you been through any of these?
 - b. What were they like, what happened?
3. What are some of the consequences that you'll experience if you choose not resolve conflict?
 - a. Have you been through any of these?
 - b. What were they like, what happened?
4. How did Jesus resolve our conflict with God?

Isaiah 53 (The Message)

²⁻⁶The servant grew up before God—a scrawny seedling, a scrubby plant in a parched field. There was nothing attractive about him, nothing to cause us to take a second look.

He was looked down on and passed over, a man who suffered, who knew pain firsthand.

One look at him and people turned away. We looked down on him, thought he was scum.

But the fact is, it was our pains he carried— our disfigurements, all the things wrong with us.

We thought he brought it on himself, that God was punishing him for his own failures.

But it was our sins that did that to him, that ripped and tore and crushed him—our sins!

He took the punishment, and that made us whole. Through his bruises we get healed.

We're all like sheep who've wandered off and gotten lost. We've all done our own thing, gone our own way. And God has piled all our sins, everything we've done wrong, on him, on him.

⁷⁻⁹He was beaten, he was tortured, but he didn't say a word. Like a lamb taken to be slaughtered and like a sheep being sheared, he took it all in silence. Justice miscarried, and he was led off— and did anyone really know what was happening? He died without a thought for his own welfare, beaten bloody for the sins of my people. They buried him with the wicked, threw him in a grave with a rich man, Even though he'd never hurt a soul or said one word that wasn't true.