

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

MESSAGE NEXT STEPS

HEALTHY CONFLICT

MAY 1

Every close relationship has conflict and relational breaks. The difference between healthy, lasting loving relationships and those that don't last or do well is not how often they have conflict (or relational breaks) it's how quickly they can repair those breaks and get back to growing their enjoyment of life together.

Work through the following questions and scriptures on your own, and get together with your running partner, life group, or friends and family to talk through what you are learning.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On a scale of 1-10, how well do you engage in conflict? (1 being I avoid it at all costs, 10 being I seek out conflict - it's fun!) Why did you choose that number?

2. What stood out to you from the message?

3. Read **James 1:19-27**.

a.) Make some observations about this passage (What does the text say):

- Who is talking? What is the circumstance?
- Any repeated phrases?
- What surprised you?
- What stood out to you?

b.) Make some interpretations (What does the passage mean)

- What questions do you have?
- Summarize the passage in 1-3 sentences - what are the main points?
- What do you learn about the nature and character of God as you read this?
- What do you learn about yourself or the world around you?

c.) Now make some applications (what's my response)

- How do you respond to what you are reading?
- How could this apply to your life today?
- What is the central truth that you could put into practice from this?
- Who could you share this with for the sake of encouragement?

4. What kind of conflict environment did you grow up in (I Win You Lose, We Both Lose, I Lose You Win, We Both Win)? What did that look like? What did you learn from that?

5. Read **Proverbs 13:10**. In conflict, our pride will get in the way and make the conversation about us, our rights, our worth. This leads to us ignoring the other person and what they might think or feel and ignoring the relationship. In conflict do you practice listening to understand the other person? If yes, what does that look like? If no, why do you think that is?

6. Read Proverbs 18:2. Seeking to understand is important in relationships. In the message you heard the

strategy of giving each person in a conflict 5 min to speak (uninterrupted except to ask questions that clarify what they mean) until they feel heard. ***If you applied this principle to relationships in your life what difference do you think it might make?***

7. It is important to speak up, so that you can be heard and understood, but remember since none of us are God, we need to speak up with humility. In the message there were 3 parts to speaking up: 1. Speak in “I” statements not “You” statements, 2. Affirm the relationship, and 3. Be willing to compromise. In which of these areas do you already do well in conflict and in which area do you most need to grow?

KEY SCRIPTURE

James 1:19-27 My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do. Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless. Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Proverbs 13:10 Where there is strife, there is pride, but wisdom is found in those who take advice.

Proverbs 18:2 Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions.

DIGGING DEEPER

Steps to We Both Win conflict:

1. Humble yourself before God - (see 1 Peter 5:5-6) Recognize that you are human and therefore not perfect. Ask God for wisdom and humility as you step into conflict.
2. Listen to understand - (see James 1:19) Don't set out first to be heard. Seek to listen and understand the other person (their thoughts, perspective, feelings). You can do this by using the 5 min listening strategy.
 - a. Give the other person 5 min to share where they are coming from.
 - I. You can't interrupt.
 - II. Only ask questions to clarify what they are saying
 - b. Once they feel heard and you think you understand, repeat to them a summary of what you heard to make sure you understand.
 - c. Move on to your turn (repeat A & B above)
3. Speak the truth in love
 - a. Use “I” statements, not “You” statements.
 - I. Example: “You’re always late,” – this is a broad sweeping, untrue judgment—no one is always anything, we’re never that consistent. Instead say, “I feel like I’m not important to you when you come late.”
 - b. Affirm the person and a positive outcome.
 - I. Affirming things about the person, your friendship, and the positive outcome you desire from resolving this conflict. (example: “I need to tell you, I feel disrespected when you interrupt me--like you don't want to hear my ideas.” (how I perceive the truth) “I know that’s probably not true” (benefit of the doubt). “But I’m starting to resent it, and I don’t want it to drive a wedge in our partnership.
 - II. Give them the benefit of the doubt.
4. Be willing to compromise
 - a. Be willing to hold the relationship as more important than doing things your way.
 - b. Find a middle ground you can both agree on or try out.