



## Session 7 - Facing and Dealing with Conflict

(Matthew 18:15-19; James 3:1–4:12)

Before we study these Scripture passages, we need to confess that life is full of conflicts. In Part 1, you discovered that Joseph, Moses, Gideon, David and Daniel (and others) had interpersonal conflict in their lives. Certainly, every church leader will experience conflict, whether it is with another person or in the counseling of others who are in the midst of their personal conflicts. Conflict can rear its ugly head and destroy people, or it can be seen as a stepping stone to forgiveness and reconciliation as truth becomes clear. Conflict needs to be faced and dealt with if the local church is to grow in grace and truth of the Lord Jesus.

### How do you define conflict?

It is clear that some interpersonal conflicts arise out of holding on to different ideas. One person has an opinion. Another has a different one. Both are good, just different, and neither idea is sinful.



**In the large group, share examples of this type of conflict. What are some possible ways to handle differences of ideas or opinions that create conflict in the church or in relationships?**

Then, there are sinful actions done against another that lead to conflict and broken relationships. Someone sins against another, fellowship is damaged, and the Lord's name is dishonored. **Give examples of this type of sinful conflict in the church? What are other common conflicts in ministry relationships?**

It is important to distinguish between disagreements and sinful actions. As a result, one must identify the root of the conflict to see how to move forward according to God's Word. **Give some thought to the following questions as a large group:**

*Give some examples of how Nehemiah dealt with conflict?*

*How did Jesus respond to the conflict that he faced?*

*Watch this YouTube Introduction for further study* <https://youtu.be/ZKulGfQ7ogE>

*In this Session, we will study Matthew chapter 18 and James chapters 3 & 4 identifying the issues that conflict brings and consider steps to restore broken relationships and structures.*

### ***Dealing with Sin and Interpersonal Conflict Among God's People***

Chapter 18 is one of five major teaching sections found in Matthew's Gospel. In addition to the Sermon on the Mount (5-7), the Sending of the Twelve (10), the Parables of Jesus (13) and End-time descriptions (24-25), this chapter deals with the destructive nature of sin and the need for forgiveness to be a primary force among God's people.

- Why are there conflicts among the believers?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How does the church, where you worship, deal with and resolve sin resulting in conflicts between believers?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How should conflicts be managed in ministry? Matt.18:15 – 19?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- If a brother **listens**,  
What happens?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- If a brother **does not listen**,  
What happens?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- If he **refuses to listen**,  
What happens?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- If he **refuses to listen despite the different interventions**,  
What does this mean to the church?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- What lessons have you learned on managing sinful conflicts in your relationships?



### *James 3 and 4 offers Insights into Conflict Resolution*

**Background to these chapters** – James is one of the early first century church leaders and the brother of the Lord Jesus. This letter is written to the church at large and often is seen as a reflection of Jesus’ teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. His letter speaks to the living out of one’s faith; not how one comes to faith. Compared to Romans or Galatians, the Epistle of James emphasizes the believer’s sanctification not their justification. It makes sense that James identifies authentic faith that displays grace and truth by following Jesus every day.

***Small Group Assignment*** - *Our study of James 3 and 4 will help us understand and address certain causes of conflict and offer practical leadership solutions for the church. Read your assigned passage as a small group and be prepared to illustrate the content in a short dramatic presentation. Make sure your skit 1) identifies the conflict producing activity and attitudes described in the Scripture passage and 2) identify several principles and solutions that leaders must understand and implement to address destructive conflict and self-centered attitudes in the church.*

*The tongue and its fire – James 3:1-12*

*Two types of wisdom – James 3:13-18*

*Causes of fights and quarrels – James 4:1-3*

*Friendship with the world – James 4:4-6*

*Restoration is needed– James 4:7-12*

*Confronting boasting – James 4:13-17*

***Some Study Hints*** – Ask the following questions of the Scripture you study.

- What do we learn about God in these chapters?
- What do these passages tell us about ourselves?
- What do we need to do to restore our relationships with God and others?