

# Week 1: Handling Conflict

Lesson from Rev. Jimmy Towson



**Blessed are the peacemakers,  
for they will be called children of God.  
- Matthew 5:9 NIV**

## Introduction

Conflict is inevitable it seems. No relationship escapes it. It bubbles up sometimes over the tiniest of issues.

We think, “I need to hold my ground. Prove a point. Show them who’s boss. Make them cave in.” Or, when you got into trouble for fighting with your sibling, you called on the old reliable, “They started it!”

And, it seems like the same conflict happens again and again - over money, or allocation of time, doing your part, trying to control things, or just being obstinate or hard-headed.

If conflict is inevitable, is there a way to manage it that reflects who we are called to be as followers of Jesus Christ? Jesus thought so. In fact, he bestows a special honor on the **peacemakers** - “they shall be called children of God.”

In *The Peacemaker—A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict* author Ken Sande says, “Peacemakers are people who breathe grace. They draw continually on

the goodness and power of Jesus Christ, and then they bring his love, mercy, forgiveness, strength, and wisdom to the conflicts of daily life.”

A peacemaker has the ability to turn conflict into an opportunity to strengthen relationships and to witness to the love and power of Jesus Christ.



## Questions to Think About

Do you agree that conflict is inevitable? If so, why is that true?



## Read James 3:13-18 NLT

<sup>13</sup> If you are wise and understand God’s ways, prove it by living an honorable life, doing good works with the humility that comes from wisdom. <sup>14</sup> But if you are bitterly jealous and there is selfish ambition in your heart, don’t cover up the truth with boasting and lying. <sup>15</sup> For jealousy and selfishness are not God’s kind of wisdom. Such things are earthly, unspiritual, and demonic. <sup>16</sup> For wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition, there you will find disorder and evil of every kind. <sup>17</sup> But the wisdom from above is first of all pure. It is also peace loving, gentle at all times, and willing to yield to others. It is full of mercy and the fruit of good deeds. It shows no favoritism and is always sincere. <sup>18</sup> And those who are peacemakers will plant seeds of peace and reap a harvest of righteousness.



## Watch the video “Handling Conflict”



## Discussion Questions

1. Are you one who avoids conflict at all costs, enjoys a good fight, or not bothered by it at all?
2. Someone once said, “We’re all planting seeds of one kind or another.” Why is it so hard to plant seeds of peace?
3. What words from James 3 quoted above stood out to you? Why did they stand out to you?
4. In James 3, the half-brother of Jesus seems to suggest that there is a wisdom that comes “from above” that can help us. What do you think he means by that? How might we tap into that kind of wisdom?
5. What is one thing you can do starting today to handle conflict better?



## Next Steps

As you may have read in this booklet’s introduction, we are challenging you to find a way each week to put what the Lord is teaching into action.

What change will you make in the way you handle conflicts? Who are you in conflict with right now, and what one thing will you do to resolve it? Would others see you as a peacemaker or an agitator?

If you are doing this study with others, consider doing a service project of some kind together. What kind of project would your group be interested in doing?



## Closing Prayer

*Almighty God,*

*You are good, and without you we cannot do good. Work in our lives so that we can do good in your eyes, and in doing so show the rest of the world what it means to live in peace. When we are tempted to extend a conflict, deliver us from it. Help us to have wisdom from above to resolve conflict in a peaceful way. Let us be known as those who breathe grace - peacemakers and not agitators. Let your goodness shine through us today and everyday! In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.*



## Daily Prayer Plan

- |                          |       |                      |                                |
|--------------------------|-------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 1 | Read Ephesians 4:1-6 | Pray for unity in your family. |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 2 | Read 2 Timothy 2:24  | Pray for difficult people.     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 3 | Read Proverbs 15:1   | Pray for gentle answers.       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 4 | Read Psalm 34:14     | Pray to maintain peace.        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Day 5 | Read Matthew 5:23-24 | Pray for reconciliation.       |