



High Noon

The Heart of Conflict

#nphighnoon

Week 1
1 of 5

April 28, 2019

Bottom Line: Conflict provides opportunity.

Icebreaker: Answer one or two of these questions: Would you rather be attacked by a human or a large animal? Why? Who is the best defender? Spiderman or Superman? Why? If you had amnesia, would you rather forget who you are or who everyone else is? Why?

Key Verse: *What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?* James 4:1

Conflict is a normal, even healthy, part of relationships. Learning to deal with it in a healthy way is crucial. When conflict is mismanaged, it damages the relationship. When it is handled in a respectful and positive way, conflict provides an opportunity for growth, ultimately strengthening the bonds. Unfortunately, Christians often do not handle conflict any more healthily than others.

James says that the cause of arguments is conflicting desires. We have three basic desires, all God-given, which are the source of our conflicts: the desire to HAVE, the desire to FEEL, and the desire to BE. It is easy to let things become more important than people. Though it is normal to want to feel good and happy, the pursuit of pleasure over what is needful can easily become priority. The desire to be first and best becomes divisive.

The division happens in a very predictable manner: I DESIRE, but there are obstacles in my way. I DEMAND that my desires be satisfied. I JUDGE, pick apart, and criticize those who fail to meet my expectations. Then I find a way to actively PUNISH those who let me down, and the relationship suffers harm, sometimes irreparable. It all starts with a desire that might have been legitimate and good, but we elevated the desire above the relationship.

James instructs us that the reason our desires go bad is because we look to people instead of to God to meet our needs. We usually don't pray. When we DO pray, we pray with wrong and selfish motives. God who knows us best says that's the reason for destructive conflict, and He has the way out.

THINK IT OVER >>>

What impacted you most from the message?

"I believe the reason the church is irrelevant and ineffective, and the reason believers don't experience abundant life, can be traced directly back to ineffective management of desires and conflict." Agree/Disagree? Why?

It is difficult to work through annoyances with annoying people, but the way we work through it has much to do with our witness and testimony to the world. "They will know you are my disciples by the way you love one another," says Jesus. Where do you find the annoyances greatest? at home, at work, or in the community at large?

"People who love one another work through issues in a way that says, 'Our relationship matters to me, and I'm not going to just blow you off the first time it gets a little bit difficult. I will not slide away in isolation or come at you in intimidation to teach you not to do what is annoying me.'" What's your go to? isolation or intimidation?

LOOK IT OVER <<<

When God's holiness, righteousness, and justice were offended by our rebellion, sin, and breaking of the relationship, what did God do? How are we to imitate Him?

"The world fakes peace or breaks peace." How do you see and experience this?

Which desire seems to cause the most conflict in your relationships? the desire to HAVE, FEEL, or to BE?

The Gallup Poll says that 56% of marriages that end in divorce are there because of money problems. How do you think these issues start?

I Timothy 6:17 says God made all things for our enjoyment. So, how do I apply this accurately to my desire to feel good and experience pleasure?

"Pride causes arguments." How so?

How can you healthily head desire-conflict off at the start?

NEXT STEPS

This week consider taking some next steps together as a group:

- 1) Read James 4 several times and ask God to show you where you are contributing to conflict.
- 2) Do what Jesus said. Take some time to identify the “log in your own eye,” and begin to deal with it.
- 3) Commit to attend and apply the entire series.

EVALUATION/ACTION

Realizing and reaching your full potential in Christ

Bottom Line: Conflict provides opportunity.

Rate yourself from 1 to 10 1 (never), 10 (always)	1	2	3	4		6	7	8	9	10
Why did you give yourself this rating?										
What benefits will you obtain by raising your rating?										
Do you know someone who demonstrates this bottom line well? What do you admire about that person?										
What specific action can you put into practice to raise your rating?										
At the end of this week, reflect - where did you see the bottom line show up in your actions throughout the week?										

PRAYER

List group members and their prayer requests for this week:

DAILY STUDY

Want to dig deeper? Check out **The Daily** this week at newpointe.org/daily:

Monday: Ephesians 5:1-2

Tuesday: Ephesians 4:1-3

Wednesday: Matthew 5:9

Thursday: Romans 12:17-19

Friday: James 3:17-18

Don't let the conversation stop here; keep talking it over with others throughout the week.

(Don't forget to bring this paper to your next small group meeting.)