



Small Group Guide: Resolved — Series Overview

The Road to Reconciliation

Introduction for Group Leaders

This guide is designed to help your group process the key themes from this five-week series on resolving conflict God's way. The central question of the entire series has been: How do followers of Jesus resolve conflict God's way? Use the questions below to encourage honest conversation, personal reflection, and practical commitment. Create a safe environment where members feel free to be honest without being pressured to share more than they are comfortable with.

Key Takeaways

- 1. Conflict is inevitable.** The question is not whether conflict will happen, but how we will respond when it does. As the pastor said, "The question is not if am I gonna be offended. We should be answering what will I do when the offense comes?"
- 2. The source of conflict begins within.** James 4 reminds us that quarrels and conflicts arise from desires at war within us, not simply from the actions of others. Before addressing another person, we must first examine our own hearts.
- 3. Good desires become dangerous when they become demands.** Wanting respect, peace, and fairness are not wrong desires. They become destructive when we begin to demand them from others as conditions for relationship.
- 4. Pride is at the root of most conflict.** Pride insists on being right, demands apology without offering one, keeps records of wrongs, and fights for the last word. Humility asks a different question: What would honor Christ in this

moment?

5. Offense is a trap. The real danger is not the original offense but what takes root afterward — bitterness, hatred, gossip, division, and unforgiveness. We cannot stop people from offending us, but we can stop the offense from living in us.

6. Anger is not inherently sinful, but unchecked anger opens doors. God gave us emotions. The problem arises when our emotions begin to control us. Unchecked anger gives the enemy a foothold — territory in our spiritual lives that belongs to God.

7. Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. Forgiveness does not excuse the offense, erase history, or require the other person to change. It is a decision to release personal vengeance and trust God with justice.

8. Forgiveness and reconciliation are related but distinct. You can choose to forgive someone even if they do not choose to reconcile. However, you cannot pursue reconciliation without first choosing forgiveness.

9. Reconciliation is the goal. As the pastor stated, "We have a ministry of reconciliation." This ministry belongs to every follower of Christ, not only to pastors or ministry leaders. When two believers choose the way of Jesus in conflict, they are living out the gospel message.

10. Reconciliation requires trust in God. At its core, forgiveness asks: Do I trust God to handle this person, this situation, and this pain? Releasing the debt is an act of faith.

Discussion Questions

Opening Question

Go around the group and answer this: On a scale of one to ten, how comfortable are you with conflict — one being you avoid it at all costs, and ten being you are completely at ease navigating it? Why did you choose that number?

Section 1: The Enemy Within

The pastor opened the series in James 4, pointing out that the source of conflict is not always the other person. It begins with the desires at war within us.

1. **When you are in conflict with someone, what is your first instinct — to**

examine yourself or to examine the other person? Why do you think that is?

2. The pastor described conflict as exposing two kingdoms: God's kingdom and my kingdom. **In your own words, what does it mean for your desires to become your king?**
3. He said, "Good desires become dangerous when they become demands." **Can you think of a desire in your own life that has crossed that line into a demand? What did that look like in practice?**
4. Pride was identified as the root of most conflict. The pastor listed several ways pride shows up: insisting on being right, keeping records of wrongs, demanding the last word, and refusing to apologize. **Which of these do you find most difficult to recognize in yourself?**
5. **What does it look like practically to "hold up a mirror" to yourself before addressing someone you are in conflict with?**

Section 2: The Power to Overlook

The pastor described **offense as a trap** — a trigger set by the enemy. The real danger is not the original offense but what takes root once we are ensnared.

1. The pastor made a distinction between ignoring and overlooking. Ignoring says it did not happen. Overlooking says it happened, but I am choosing grace. **How does that distinction change the way you think about handling minor offenses?**
2. He said, "You cannot stop people from offending you, but you can stop the offense from living in you." **What does it look like for an offense to live in someone? Have you seen that in your own life or in someone close to you?**
3. **When you encounter an offense, what is your honest first response — to assume the worst or to extend grace? What shapes that response?**
4. The pastor challenged the group with this question: **"Will this make me bitter or will it make me more like Jesus?" How do you think ongoing bitterness affects a person's ability to represent Christ to the world around them?**
5. The pastor said, "If anyone had the right to be offended, it was Jesus. **And what did he do on the cross? Father, forgive them.**" **How does the example of Jesus on the cross reframe the way you think about the offenses you have experienced?**

Section 3: Holy Heat — Handling Anger

The pastor addressed anger as one of the first emotions that surfaces when we

are offended, and he emphasized that the problem is not the emotion itself but what we do with it.

1. The pastor said that the problem comes when what you feel begins to control you. **Can you describe a time when your emotions controlled your response in a conflict? What was the result?**
2. He offered three practical choices when anger arises: turn away from destructive reactions, turn your emotions toward God, and allow God to change your perception of the other person. **Which of these three is most difficult for you personally? Why?**
3. The pastor drew a distinction between righteous anger and self-righteous anger. Righteous anger is concerned with God's glory and genuine injustice. Self-righteous anger is concerned with pride, ego, comfort, and preference. **How do you personally discern the difference in the moment?**
4. He referenced Ephesians 4, which calls believers to be angry without sinning and to not let the sun go down on their anger. **What are some practical boundaries you could set in your own life to keep anger from becoming a foothold for the enemy?**
5. The pastor said, "I think God would rather you take it out on him than a brother or sister in Christ who had nothing to do with the situation." **How does it change your prayer life to think of bringing raw, honest emotion to God rather than filtering it first?**

Section 4: Learning to Forgive

The pastor described forgiveness as the most difficult step in the process and the one most central to reconciliation.

1. The pastor said forgiveness is not a feeling, not forgetting, and not excusing the behavior. **In your own words, how would you define what forgiveness actually is?**
2. He said, "We don't forgive because the offender deserves grace. We forgive because we received grace when we didn't deserve it." **How does keeping that truth in view affect your willingness to forgive someone who has genuinely hurt you?**
3. The pastor said that at its root, forgiveness is really a question of trust: **Do I trust God to handle this person? Do I trust God with the justice? Do I trust him to heal me? Which of those trust questions is hardest for you to say yes to, and why?**
4. He made this important distinction: "Forgiveness does not require reconciliation, but reconciliation requires forgiveness." **How does that distinction bring clarity or freedom to a situation you may be navigating**

right now?

5. The pastor challenged the group with this: "If we are spirit-filled people, we should not be the hardest people in the world to reconcile with. We ought to be the quickest to humble ourselves, quickest to repent, quickest to apologize, quickest to extend grace." **Is that an accurate description of the church you have experienced? Is it an accurate description of yourself?**

Closing Discussion

1. Looking back across all five themes — surrendering the heart, releasing the offense, controlling anger, choosing forgiveness, and pursuing reconciliation — **which one do you sense God is most specifically calling you to work on right now?**
2. The pastor said, "A divided church cannot win a divided world." **What is one thing your small group could commit to together to model reconciliation within your own relationships?**

Practical Applications

The following are specific, actionable steps group members can take this week.

1. **Examine your heart before addressing a conflict.** Before your next difficult conversation, spend time in prayer asking God to search your heart. Ask whether you are more concerned with being right or with being reconciled.
2. **Identify one offense you have been carrying.** Name it honestly before God. Decide whether it is something you can overlook in grace or something that needs to be addressed directly. If it needs to be addressed, commit to doing so with a posture of reconciliation rather than retaliation.
3. **Practice taking your emotions to God first.** The next time you feel anger rising in a conflict, resist the impulse to send a message, make a post, or vent to a friend. Instead, bring those raw emotions to God in prayer before responding to anyone else.
4. **Write out a forgiveness declaration.** If there is someone you have been withholding forgiveness from, write out a simple statement before God releasing that debt. This is not a letter to send them. It is an act of trust between you and God, acknowledging that you are placing that person and that situation in his hands.
5. **Take one step toward reconciliation.** If you are in unresolved conflict with

another believer, identify one concrete step you can take this week — not waiting for the other person to go first. That step might be a phone call, a text asking to meet, or simply a prayer committing to pursue peace.

6. Read and reflect. The pastor recommended the book "Resolve Conflict, God's Way" by Dr. Bill Graybill as a resource for going deeper into these principles. Consider reading it individually or as a group.

Closing Prayer

Close your group time by praying together. Ask God to search each person's heart, to bring to mind any unresolved conflict that needs attention, and to give each member the humility, courage, and trust in God needed to pursue reconciliation. You may also invite any group member who feels comfortable to pray specifically for a situation they are walking through.

Memory Verse for the Week

Colossians 3 calls believers to bear with one another and forgive each other — whoever has a complaint against anyone — just as the Lord forgave them. Meditate on that passage this week and allow it to shape how you respond to the people around you.