

How Strife Starts, Spreads, and Stops

Bulletin Outline

1. Stop strife before it begins.

- A) Don't justify a sinful reaction to sin. (*Proverbs 15:1, 24:29, 20:22, Matt. 5:38-42, Matt. 5:43-45*)
- B) Consider that you might be the one causing the strife. (*Proverbs 12:15, 21:29, 16:18, James 4:1-2*)
- C) Don't hold onto minor offenses. (*Proverbs 12:16, 19:11*)

2. Reject the paths that give a false sense of resolution.

- A) Fighting (*Proverbs 20:3*)
- B) Avoiding (*Matthew 5:23-24*)
- C) Gossiping (*Proverbs 16:28, 20:19, 26:20, 26:22, 20:19*)

3. Embrace wise solutions for turning strife into peace.

- 1) Initiate the conversation.
- 2) Be approachable.
- 3) Listen and consider their perspective. (*Proverbs 18:13*)
- 4) Speak wisely. (*Proverbs 15:4, 15:28*)
- 5) Find a path forward together.

Find courage and humility in the gospel. (*Colossians 1:19-20*)

Small Group Discussion Questions:

- What's something that seems pretty simple in theory but takes a lot of practice to actually get good at?
- Read Proverbs 20:3 and 17:14. Conflict usually starts small before it becomes large. Why do you think Proverbs puts so much emphasis on stopping a dispute before it grows? What tends to happen when small problems are allowed to sit?
- Read Proverbs 15:1 and 24:29. Pastor Josh talked about not justifying a sinful reaction to sin. What are some common ways we can respond wrongly even when the other person really did do something wrong?
- Read Proverbs 12:16 and 19:11. Proverbs says there are times when wisdom simply overlooks an offense. What kinds of things are usually better to let go rather than turn into a conflict? How can you tell the difference between overlooking something and merely avoiding it?
- Pastor Josh described fighting and avoiding as two paths that can give us a false sense of resolution. Why can each one feel satisfying or easier in the moment? Which one describes your tendency?
- Read Proverbs 16:28 and 26:20. Pastor Josh said gossip can give us "emotional relief without the actual resolving conflict with someone." Why does talking about someone sometimes feel easier than talking to them? (Or, how can a friend help someone gain perspective without simply feeding the conflict?)
- Pastor Josh gave the first two practical steps in seeking peace with someone: "Initiate the conversation" and "Be approachable." Which one would you like to grow in the most?

- Read Proverbs 18:13 and Proverbs 15:4. Pastor Josh said to “listen and consider their perspective” and “speak wisely.” What could good listening actually look or sound like during a disagreement? (Or, how can we say something true in a way that moves toward healing rather than simply proving our point?)
- The final step from the sermon was “Find a path forward together.” Rather than simply feeling the relief of having talked about it, what are better ways to move forward in a concrete way with someone?
- How can we ask the Lord to help you grow in particular as you work on being a peacemaker?