

Cultivating Peace: A Formation Program for Conflict Management

A comprehensive training program designed to equip individuals and communities within the Christian faith to navigate conflict biblically, redemptively, and effectively.

This detailed formation program is intended for a specialist formator in conflict management to deliver within a Christian context, such as a church, ministry organization, or seminary. It is rooted in biblical principles of peacemaking and reconciliation, while also drawing on established conflict resolution practices. The program is designed to be interactive, practical, and transformative, moving beyond mere theory to foster genuine heart change and skill development.

Program Overview

Title: The Peacemaker's Path: A Formation Program for Biblical Conflict Management

Target Audience: Church leaders (pastors, elders, deacons), ministry staff, small group leaders, and any Christian seeking to grow in their ability to handle conflict in a God-honoring way.

Total Duration: 16 hours of instruction and interactive sessions. This can be delivered in various formats:

- **Weekend Intensive:** Friday evening (4 hours) and all-day Saturday (8 hours) and Sunday afternoon (4 hours).
- **Two-Day Workshop:** Two consecutive 8-hour days.
- **Weekly Sessions:** Four 4-hour sessions or eight 2-hour sessions.

Program Goal: To equip participants with a biblical framework and practical skills for responding to conflict in a way that glorifies God, serves others, and leads to reconciliation and growth.

Program Modules

Module 1: Foundations of Biblical Peacemaking (4 Hours)

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the biblical perspective on conflict as an opportunity for growth and glorifying God.
- Identify the root causes of conflict from a biblical perspective (James 4:1-3).
- Grasp the "4 G's of Peacemaking" as a foundational framework.
- Commit to a personal posture of humility and teachability in conflict.

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Trainer's Guide:

Time	Topic	Activities & Talking Points	Materials
30 mins	Welcome & Introduction	Icebreaker: "My First Memory of Conflict." Introduce the program's goals and create a safe, confidential space for sharing.	Name tags, pens, welcome slides.
60 mins	Rethinking Conflict: A Divine Opportunity	Interactive Lecture: Contrast worldly views of conflict (avoidance, winning) with the biblical view (opportunity for God's glory, deeper relationships). Discuss key scriptures: 1 Corinthians 10:31, Romans 12:18.	Whiteboard/Flipchart, markers. Handout 1.1: Worldly vs. Biblical Views of Conflict.
75 mins	The Heart of the Matter: Uncovering the Idols of the Heart	Group Discussion & Personal Reflection: Analyze James 4:1-3. Guide participants to identify the "desires that wage war" within them (e.g., desire for control, approval, comfort).	Handout 1.2: The Idol Factory of the Heart.
60 mins	The 4 G's of Peacemaking: A Biblical Framework	Presentation & Small Group Application: Introduce the "4 G's": Glorify God, Get the Log Out of Your Own Eye, Gently Restore, Go and Be Reconciled. In small groups, participants discuss a	PowerPoint slides with the 4 G's. Handout 1.3: The 4 G's of Peacemaking.

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		minor conflict scenario using this framework.	
15 mins	Wrap-up & Personal Commitment	Conclude with a time of prayer and personal commitment to applying these principles.	Commitment cards (optional).

Participant Handouts:

- **Handout 1.1: Worldly vs. Biblical Views of Conflict:** A comparative chart.
- **Handout 1.2: The Idol Factory of the Heart:** A worksheet for personal reflection on desires and idols.
- **Handout 1.3: The 4 G's of Peacemaking:** A summary of the framework with key verses.

Module 2: The Peacemaker's Heart and Habits (4 Hours)

Learning Objectives:

- Develop the practice of self-examination and confession.
- Understand and apply the biblical principles of forgiveness.
- Cultivate active listening skills as a tool for de-escalation and understanding.
- Learn to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Trainer's Guide:

Time	Topic	Activities & Talking Points	Materials
30 mins	Review & Opening Prayer	Briefly review the 4 G's and open with a prayer for humble hearts.	
75 mins	Getting the Log Out: The Discipline of Confession	Teaching & Paired Sharing: Discuss the importance of owning one's own sin in conflict (Matthew 7:3-5). Provide a guide for a sincere confession (The Seven A's of a True Apology). Participants practice with	Handout 2.1: The Seven A's of a Sincere Apology.

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		a partner in a safe, guided exercise.	
75 mins	The Freedom of Forgiveness	Interactive Lecture & Testimony: Explore the biblical mandate and model of forgiveness (Colossians 3:13, Matthew 18:21-35). Differentiate between forgiveness and condoning sin or immediate trust. Share a powerful testimony of forgiveness.	Whiteboard/Flipchart. Handout 2.2: Forgiveness: A Biblical Perspective.
45 mins	The Art of Listening	Skill Practice: Introduce active listening techniques (summarizing, reflecting feelings, asking clarifying questions). Conduct a role-playing exercise where one person shares a frustration and the other practices active listening.	Handout 2.3: Active Listening Skills.
15 mins	Wrap-up & Reflection	Participants journal about one key takeaway and how they will apply it in the coming week.	Journals, pens.

Participant Handouts:

- **Handout 2.1: The Seven A's of a Sincere Apology:** A guide to a comprehensive and heartfelt apology.
- **Handout 2.2: Forgiveness: A Biblical Perspective:** A summary of what forgiveness is and is not, with key scriptures.
- **Handout 2.3: Active Listening Skills:** A tip sheet with practical examples.

Module 3: Navigating Difficult Conversations (4 Hours)

Learning Objectives:

- Learn and practice a biblical model for gentle restoration and confrontation (Galatians 6:1).
- Understand different conflict styles and their impact.

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- Develop strategies for navigating conversations with difficult or defensive people.

Trainer's Guide:

Time	Topic	Activities & Talking Points	Materials
30 mins	Review & Case Study Introduction	Review key concepts from Module 2. Introduce a relatable case study of a conflict within a church setting that will be revisited throughout the module.	Written case study.
60 mins	Gently Restore: A Step-by-Step Approach	Teaching & Group Work: Present a practical model for initiating a difficult conversation (e.g., The "PAUSE" Principle). In groups, participants plan how to approach the person in the case study using this model.	Handout 3.1: The PAUSE Principle for Difficult Conversations.
60 mins	Understanding Conflict Styles	Self-Assessment & Discussion: Participants complete a simple conflict styles inventory (e.g., adapted from Thomas-Kilmann). Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each style in a Christian context.	Conflict Styles Inventory. Handout 3.2: Understanding Your Conflict Style.
75 mins	Role-Playing Difficult Conversations	Live Practice: In triads (two role-players, one observer), participants practice the conversation from the case study. The observer provides feedback based on the principles learned.	Role-playing scenarios.

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15 mins	Debrief & Encouragement	Debrief the role-playing experience. Encourage participants that these skills take practice and grace.	
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Participant Handouts:

- **Handout 3.1: The PAUSE Principle for Difficult Conversations:** (Prepare, Affirm, Understand, Seek, Evaluate) - a step-by-step guide.
- **Handout 3.2: Understanding Your Conflict Style:** A summary of different conflict styles and their biblical application.

Module 4: Reconciliation and Building a Culture of Peace (4 Hours)

Learning Objectives:

- Understand the biblical process of reconciliation, including mediation.
- Develop a plan for fostering a culture of peace in their own church or ministry.
- Commit to being an "ambassador of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Trainer's Guide:

Time	Topic	Activities & Talking Points	Materials
30 mins	Review & Opening Worship	Review the journey of the program. Begin with a time of worship focused on God's reconciling work.	Worship music.
60 mins	The Path to Reconciliation: Matthew 18	In-depth Bible Study: Walk through Matthew 18:15-20, explaining each step of the process (private conversation, taking one or two others, telling it to the church). Discuss the role and qualifications of a mediator in a Christian context.	Handout 4.1: The Matthew 18 Process for Reconciliation.

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75 mins	Building a Culture of Peace	Brainstorming & Action Planning: In small groups, participants brainstorm practical ways to cultivate a culture of peace in their specific contexts (e.g., preaching series, small group curriculum, clear communication protocols). Each group develops a simple action plan.	Flipchart paper, markers for each group. Handout 4.2: Action Plan for a Culture of Peace.
60 mins	Commissioning: Ambassadors of Reconciliation	Charge & Commissioning Prayer: Deliver a final charge based on 2 Corinthians 5, encouraging participants to be proactive peacemakers. Close with a time of commissioning prayer for each participant.	Commissioning certificates (optional).
15 mins	Final Q&A and Program Evaluation	Address any remaining questions and ask participants to complete a program evaluation form.	Evaluation forms.

Participant Handouts:

- **Handout 4.1: The Matthew 18 Process for Reconciliation:** A flowchart and explanation of the biblical model.
- **Handout 4.2: Action Plan for a Culture of Peace:** A template for developing a personalized plan for their church or ministry.

This formation program provides a robust and biblically-grounded framework for transforming how Christians view and handle conflict. By combining theological depth with practical skills, it empowers participants to move from conflict avoidance or escalation to becoming instruments of God's peace and reconciliation in their communities.

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Handout 1.1: Worldly vs. Biblical Views of Conflict

A Shift in Perspective: Seeing Conflict Through God's Eyes

Conflict is an inevitable part of life in a fallen world. However, how we view and respond to it can either lead to destruction and division or become a profound opportunity for God's glory and our spiritual growth. This chart contrasts the world's typical approach to conflict with the Bible's transformative perspective.

Worldly View of Conflict	Biblical View of Conflict
A Battle to be Won >The goal is to prove you are right and the other person is wrong. It's a competition with winners and losers.	An Opportunity to Glorify God >The primary goal is to please and honor God in our response, regardless of the outcome (1 Corinthians 10:31).
A Disturbance to be Avoided >Conflict is seen as negative and uncomfortable, so it should be ignored, suppressed, or run from at all costs ("peace-faking").	An Opportunity for Growth >Conflict is a chance to grow in Christ-likeness, strengthen relationships through reconciliation, and serve others (James 1:2-4).
About My Rights and My Needs >The focus is on what I deserve, what I am owed, and how I have been wronged. It is self-centered.	About God's Glory and Others' Good >The focus is on how I can love my neighbor, bear the fruit of the Spirit, and reflect God's character to others (Philippians 2:3-4).
Someone Else's Fault >The tendency is to blame others, focus on their wrongdoing, and minimize our own contribution to the problem.	An Opportunity for Self-Examination >The first step is to look in the mirror, examining our own hearts and contributions to the conflict (Matthew 7:3-5).
Leads to Broken Relationships >If not "won," conflict often results in grudges, bitterness, gossip, and ultimately, severed relationships.	Leads to Reconciliation and Deeper Unity >When handled biblically, conflict can lead to forgiveness, restored fellowship, and a stronger, more authentic relationship (Ephesians 4:1-3).
Resolved Through Power or Compromise >Resolution comes from one side overpowering the other or both sides giving up something they want, often without addressing the heart issue.	Resolved Through Repentance and Forgiveness >True resolution is found at the foot of the cross, through genuine repentance for our sin and extending grace-filled forgiveness based on Christ's forgiveness of us.

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Reflection Question: Which side of this chart more accurately describes your typical response to conflict? Pray and ask God to help you see future conflicts as opportunities to glorify Him.

Uncovering the Root of Conflict

The Bible teaches that our conflicts often stem not from external circumstances, but from the internal desires of our hearts. James 4:1-3 provides a powerful diagnosis: *"What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel."*

These "passions" or "desires" are often for good things (respect, comfort, success, control, appreciation). However, when a good desire becomes an ultimate demand—something you believe you *must* have to be happy, secure, or fulfilled—it has become an "idol of the heart." Conflict erupts when that idol is threatened.

Use this worksheet to prayerfully examine your own heart.

Step 1: Identify a Recent Conflict Think of a recent, specific disagreement or conflict you experienced. It could be with a family member, a friend, a coworker, or someone at church. Briefly describe it:

Step 2: Uncover the Underlying Desires In that situation, what did you want so badly? What ruling desires were "at war" within you? Circle any that apply, and add others if needed.

- **Comfort / Ease:** I wanted an easy, hassle-free life.
- **Approval / Appreciation:** I wanted others to think well of me, respect me, or praise me.
- **Control:** I wanted to be in charge of the situation, the outcome, or the other person.
- **Security:** I wanted to feel safe and secure (financially, relationally, emotionally).
- **Vindication / Justice:** I wanted to be proven right; I wanted fairness for myself.
- **Respect:** I wanted to be treated with a certain level of deference or honor.
- **Success / Achievement:** I wanted to accomplish a goal or maintain a certain image of success.
- **Pleasure / Happiness:** I wanted to feel good and have my own way.
- Other: _____

Step 3: See the Idol Review the desires you circled. Which one was the most powerful? Which desire was so strong that when it was blocked, you reacted with sinful anger, fear, impatience, or bitterness? This is likely a ruling idol in your heart.

My ruling desire (idol) in this conflict was: _____

Step 4: Repent and Replace How did you sinfully act (in word, thought, or deed) when you didn't get what you wanted? _____

Confess this idol and your sinful response to God. Now, consider what truth from God's Word can replace this idol. What does God promise you that is infinitely better than what your idol promised? (e.g., If you craved approval, replace it with the truth of your acceptance in Christ - Ephesians 1:6).

True peace comes not when we get our way, but when we surrender our desires to God and find our satisfaction in Him alone.

A Biblical Framework for Navigating Conflict

The "4 G's of Peacemaking" provide a simple, memorable, and deeply biblical pathway for responding to conflict in a way that honors God.

1. Glorify God

How can I please and honor God in this situation? This is the foundational principle. Our ultimate goal is not to win, to be proven right, or even to find a solution, but to bring glory to God through our words, actions, and attitudes. This question lifts our eyes from the problem to the Person of God.

"So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31)

2. Get the Log Out of Your Own Eye

How can I own my part of this conflict? Instead of focusing on what the other person has done wrong, we must first humbly examine our own hearts and actions. Jesus calls us to take responsibility for our own sin before we address the faults of another. This requires honest self-assessment and repentance.

"Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? ... You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:3, 5)

3. Gently Restore

How can I lovingly and humbly help others own their part? After we have taken responsibility for our own sin, we may be called to gently and lovingly approach another person to talk about how they have wronged us or sinned against God. The goal is not to condemn or punish, but to help restore them to fellowship with God and others. This must be done with humility and grace.

"Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted." (Galatians 6:1)

4. Go and Be Reconciled

How can I demonstrate the forgiveness of God and encourage a reasonable solution? The final step is to actively pursue reconciliation. This involves forgiving others as God has forgiven us, and working together to find a solution that is just and honors God. The focus is on rebuilding the relationship and demonstrating the power of the gospel.

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (Romans 12:18) "Be reconciled to your brother." (Matthew 5:24)

Handout 2.1: The Seven A's of a Sincere Apology

A true, heartfelt apology is one of the most powerful tools for reconciliation. It goes far beyond a simple "I'm sorry." A good confession specifically owns your sin and shows you understand the impact it had. Use this guide to craft an apology that reflects genuine repentance.

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1. **Address Everyone Involved: Recognize** everyone you have affected by your actions or words.

Example: "Tom and Susan, I need to apologize to both of you for what I said."

2. **Avoid "If," "But," and "Maybe"** These words shift blame and invalidate the apology. Don't say, "I'm sorry *if* I hurt you," or "I'm sorry, *but* you were being difficult." Own your actions without qualification.

Wrong: "I'm sorry if my words came across as harsh." Right: "I am sorry for my harsh words."

3. **Admit Specifically** Vague apologies feel insincere. Be specific about what you did wrong. This shows you have thought about your actions and are not just trying to smooth things over.

Wrong: "I'm sorry for what happened." Right: "I was wrong to raise my voice and interrupt you during the meeting. That was disrespectful."

4. **Acknowledge the Hurt** Show that you understand how your actions impacted the other person. Empathize with their feelings. This communicates that you "get it."

Example: "I know that when I shared your private prayer request with the group, it must have felt like a huge betrayal of your trust and left you feeling exposed and hurt."

5. **Accept the Consequences** A sincere apology means you are willing to accept the consequences of your actions, whether that involves restitution, loss of trust, or other repercussions. Do not try to bargain your way out of them.

Example: "I understand that I broke your trust, and I know it will take time to earn it back. I am willing to be patient and work to rebuild it."

6. **Alter Your Behavior** A true apology includes repentance, which means turning away from your sinful behavior. Explain what you plan to do differently in the future.

Example: "I am committing to you and before God that I will not gossip about you again. I will bring my concerns to you directly."

7. **Ask for Forgiveness** Humbly ask the other person to forgive you. Don't demand it. This places the power in their hands and respects their journey.

Example: "I was wrong. Will you please forgive me?"

Handout 2.2: Forgiveness: A Biblical Perspective

Forgiveness is at the very heart of the Christian faith. It is not an optional extra for the spiritually mature; it is a command for all believers. Understanding what forgiveness is—and what it is not—is crucial for resolving conflict in a God-honoring way.

The Foundation of Forgiveness: We forgive because we have been forgiven. The immense, undeserved grace God has shown us in Christ is the motivation and model for how we are to treat others.

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you." (Ephesians 4:32)

"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." (Colossians 3:13)

What Forgiveness IS:

- **A Promise:** It is a choice and a commitment to release a person from the penalty of their sin against you. It involves four promises:
 1. "I will not dwell on this incident."
 2. "I will not bring this incident up again and use it against you."
 3. "I will not talk to others about this incident."
 4. "I will not let this incident stand between us or hinder our personal relationship."
- **A Reflection of God's Grace:** It is canceling a debt you are owed because of the greater debt Christ cancelled for you.
- **A Path to Freedom:** It releases *you* from the prison of bitterness, resentment, and anger.

What Forgiveness is NOT:

- **Forgetting:** Forgiveness is not a form of amnesia. We may never forget a deep hurt, but we can choose not to dwell on it or hold it against the person.
- **Condoning or Excusing Sin:** Forgiveness does not mean saying, "What you did was okay." It acknowledges that what was done was wrong, but still chooses to release the offender from the debt.
- **Immediate Trust:** Forgiveness and trust are not the same. Forgiveness can be granted immediately and unilaterally. Trust, however, must be rebuilt over time through demonstrated repentance and changed behavior. You can forgive someone fully while still taking wise steps to protect yourself from being hurt in the same way again.
- **A Feeling:** Forgiveness is a decision of the will, motivated by obedience to God. The feelings of forgiveness may not come right away, but they often follow the act of obedience.

The Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35) This parable is Jesus' most powerful teaching on forgiveness. A king forgives a servant an impossibly large debt (like God's forgiveness of our sin). That same servant then refuses to forgive a fellow servant a tiny debt and has him thrown in prison. The king, hearing of this, is enraged and hands the unforgiving servant over to be tortured.

The Message: If we truly grasp the magnitude of God's forgiveness toward us, it should compel us to extend forgiveness to others. An unforgiving heart reveals we have forgotten the grace we ourselves have received.

Handout 2.3: Active Listening Skills

Seeking to Understand Before Being Understood

In conflict, our first instinct is often to formulate our defense or counter-attack. Active listening is the spiritual discipline of setting aside our own agenda to truly hear and understand the other person. It is a powerful way to show love, de-escalate tension, and get to the heart of an issue.

Key Techniques:

1. Attend Fully (Give Your Full Attention)

- **Body Language:** Turn toward the speaker, make eye contact, and put away distractions (like your phone!).
- **Attitude:** Adopt a posture of genuine curiosity and care. Pray silently, "Lord, help me understand."

2. Paraphrase (Restate in Your Own Words) This shows you are listening and helps clarify that you understand the facts of what they are saying.

- *Starts with:* "So, if I'm hearing you correctly..." or "It sounds like you're saying..."
- *Example:*
 - **Them:** "I can't believe the project was changed without anyone telling me. I spent all week working on the old plan!"
 - **You:** "So, it sounds like you're saying you invested a lot of time based on the original plan and were surprised and frustrated to find out the plan had changed without your knowledge."

3. Reflect Feelings (Name the Emotion) This goes deeper than the facts to acknowledge the emotional impact. It shows empathy and makes the other person feel heard and validated.

- *Starts with:* "That must have felt..." or "I can imagine you might be feeling..."
- *Example:*
 - **Them:** "I've been a member here for 20 years and now my ministry is being cut from the budget without a single phone call."
 - **You:** "Wow, to hear that news after 20 years of service must have been incredibly hurtful and discouraging. I can imagine you feel overlooked and unappreciated."

4. Ask Clarifying, Open-Ended Questions These are questions that can't be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." They invite the person to share more of their story and perspective.

- **Avoid:** "So you're mad, right?"
- **Instead, ask:** "Can you tell me more about how that affected you?" or "What was the hardest part of that for you?" or "How did you see things from your perspective?"

Putting It All Together: A Listening Flow

1. **Listen** patiently without interrupting.
2. **Paraphrase** the core facts to ensure you understand.

3. **Reflect** the emotion you are hearing.
 4. **Ask** a question to invite them to share more.
 5. **Repeat** the cycle until they feel fully heard. Only then is it appropriate to share your own perspective.
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Handout 3.1: The PAUSE Principle for Difficult Conversations

A Gentle and Purposeful Way to Begin a Restorative Conversation

Initiating a difficult conversation can be intimidating. We often fear making things worse. The PAUSE Principle provides a biblically-grounded, five-step framework to help you begin in a way that is clear, gentle, and focused on the goal of reconciliation.

P - Prepare

Before you say a word, prepare your heart and your plan.

- **Prayerfully:** Pray for wisdom, humility, and love for the other person. Confess your own sin and idols related to the issue (Matthew 7:5).
- **Practically:** Think through the specific issue. What is the goal? What are the facts? What do you want to ask? Choose a good time and a private place to talk. Don't ambush the person.

A - Affirm

Begin the conversation by affirming the person and/or your relationship with them. This sets a gracious tone and helps lower defenses. Be genuine.

- *"I value our friendship so much, and that's why I need to talk about something that's on my heart."*
- *"I really respect the way you lead our team, and I want to make sure our working relationship stays strong."*
- *"Thank you for being willing to talk with me about this."*

U - Understand

State the specific issue or concern clearly and humbly, using "I" statements. Then, immediately pivot to seeking to understand their perspective. The goal is to create a two-way dialogue, not deliver a monologue.

- *"I was concerned and hurt when I heard about the decision from someone else. I'd like to understand what happened from your perspective."*
- *"I felt frustrated in the meeting yesterday when I was interrupted. Can you help me understand what you were thinking at that moment?"*
- *"I am struggling with the way we spoke to each other last night. Can we talk about it?"*

S - Seek

Seek a mutually honoring solution. The goal is not to win, but to find a path forward that honors God and restores the relationship. Be open to their ideas.

- *"How can we work together to make sure this doesn't happen again?"*
- *"What can I do to help rebuild our trust?"*
- *"Can we agree on a better way to handle disagreements in the future?"*

E - Evaluate

End the conversation by summarizing any agreement and affirming your commitment to reconciliation. Set a time to follow up if necessary.

- *"So, we've agreed that next time a decision like this is made, you will call me directly. I really appreciate that. Thank you for working this through with me."*
 - *"This has been a hard conversation, but I'm so glad we had it. Our relationship is important to me."*
 - *"Let's check in with each other next week to see how we're doing."*
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Handout 3.2: Understanding Your Conflict Style

How Do You Typically Respond?

We all have a default approach to conflict. Understanding your natural tendency—and its strengths and weaknesses—can help you respond more intentionally and biblically. This model describes five common styles based on two dimensions: **Assertiveness** (concern for your goals) and **Cooperativeness** (concern for the relationship).

Conflict Style	Description & Animal Analogy	Biblical Pros & Cons
Avoiding >(Low Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness)> THE TURTLE	You withdraw from the conflict, ignore it, or delay addressing it. You dislike tension and hope the problem will just go away.	Pro: Can be wise when the issue is trivial, when emotions are too high, or when you have no power to change the situation.> Con: Often a form of "peace-faking." It can lead to bitterness, unresolved issues festering, and disobedience to biblical commands to go to your brother (Matthew 18:15).
Accommodating >(Low Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness)> THE TEDDY BEAR	You yield to the other person's goals at the expense of your own. You want to preserve the relationship at all costs and will quickly give in to keep the peace.	Pro: Can reflect humility and love when you are wrong, or when the issue is far more important to the other person. Models putting others first (Philippians 2:3).> Con: Can enable sin or abuse if you never address wrongdoing. Can lead to personal frustration and a failure to speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

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Competing>(High Assertiveness, Low Cooperativeness)>**THE SHARK**

You pursue your own goals aggressively, often at the expense of the other person. You see conflict as a win/lose situation and are determined to win.

Pro: Can be necessary when standing up for biblical truth or protecting the vulnerable from harm or injustice.>**Con:** Often driven by pride and a desire to control. Damages relationships, provokes anger, and ignores the command to live at peace (Romans 12:18). This is the opposite of a gentle spirit.

Compromising>(Moderate Assertiveness, Moderate Cooperativeness)>**THE FOX**

You look for a quick, middle-ground solution where both parties give up something. The goal is a pragmatic fix that works for both.

Pro: Can be efficient and practical for resolving non-moral issues. It shows a willingness to be flexible.>**Con:** By focusing on a quick fix, it often fails to address the underlying heart issues (the "idols" from James 4). It can lead to a solution where no one is truly satisfied.

Collaborating>(High Assertiveness, High Cooperativeness)>**THE OWL**

You work with the other person to find a solution that fully satisfies both of your concerns. It is a win/win approach that values both the goal and the relationship. This is the goal of biblical peacemaking.

Pro: Best reflects the biblical ideal. It honors the relationship and seeks a righteous solution. It addresses underlying issues and leads to genuine reconciliation.>**Con:** It takes the most time, energy, and spiritual maturity. It requires both parties to be willing to participate in good faith.

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Reflection:

1. Which style is your default response?
2. In what situations might another style be more appropriate and God-honoring?
3. How can you grow toward a more **Collaborative** approach in your conflicts?

Handout 4.1: The Matthew 18 Process for Reconciliation

A God-Given Pathway for Dealing with Sin in the Church

In Matthew 18:15-20, Jesus provides a clear, step-by-step process for handling conflict when a fellow Christian has sinned against you. The goal is not to punish, but to lovingly, patiently, and winsomely win your brother or sister back to fellowship with God and with you.

The Goal: To "Gain Your Brother" (v. 15)

(Note: A visual flowchart would be ideal here, showing the progression from Step 1 to Step 4)

Step 1: Go Privately (Just the Two of You)

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother." (v. 15)

- **Who:** You and the person who sinned.
 - **What:** Go in humility and gentleness (Galatians 6:1). Use the skills you have learned: PAUSE Principle, "I" statements, and active listening.
 - **Why:** This protects the person's reputation and provides the simplest, most direct path to reconciliation. The vast majority of conflicts should be resolved here.
 - **If they listen...** you have gained your brother! Forgive, rejoice, and move forward.
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Step 2: Take One or Two Others Along

"But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses." (v. 16)

- **Who:** You, the person who sinned, and one or two objective, respected, spiritually mature believers.
 - **What:** The goal of the witnesses is not to "gang up" on the person, but to help clarify the facts, encourage repentance, and act as observers of the process. They bring wisdom and accountability.
 - **Why:** This confirms the seriousness of the issue and that you are not simply misinterpreting things. It adds the weight of community concern.
 - **If they listen...** rejoice! Reconciliation has been achieved.
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Step 3: Tell it to the Church

"If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church." (v. 17a)

- **Who:** This step is carried out by the established leadership of the church (pastors/elders), who represent the church body. This is a serious and rare step.
 - **What:** The leaders, having carefully investigated the situation, would present the issue to the congregation, explaining the unrepentant sin and calling the person to repentance.
 - **Why:** This brings the full weight of the community's love and authority to bear, pleading with the person to turn from their sin.
-

Step 4: Treat as an Outsider

"And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." (v. 17b)

- **What:** This is a formal step of church discipline where the person is removed from the membership and fellowship of the church. This is not a spiteful shunning, but a sad recognition of their unrepentant heart.
- **Why:** The goal is still redemptive. It is a loving, last-resort action to awaken the person to the seriousness of their sin, with the hope that it will lead them to repentance (1 Corinthians 5:5). We are still called to show them the love of Christ, just as we would to any unbeliever, praying for their restoration.

Handout 4.2: Action Plan for a Culture of Peace

Proactively Cultivating Peacemaking in Your Community

A culture of peace doesn't happen by accident. It is built through intentional teaching, modeling, and system-building. Use this worksheet to brainstorm and plan how you can be an "ambassador of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:20) in your specific context (your church, ministry, small group, or family).

My Context: _____

1. Brainstorming: What are some practical ways to foster a culture of biblical peacemaking here? (*Think about teaching, systems, communication, leadership modeling, etc.*)

- *Example: Preach a sermon series on conflict and reconciliation.*
- *Example: Develop a clear process for how staff members should handle disagreements.*
- *Example: Go through a book on biblical peacemaking in our small group.*
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

2. Choosing One Specific, Actionable Goal From your list above, choose ONE goal that you can realistically work on. Make it specific and measurable.

- *Example: "I will propose to my fellow elders that we read a book on peacemaking together over the next three months."*

My Goal:

3. Identifying the First Steps & Necessary Resources What are the very next steps you need to take to move this goal forward? Who do you need to talk to? What resources do you need?

First Steps (What I will do)	People to Involve	Resources Needed
<i>Example: Draft an email to the other elders.</i>	<i>John and Mary (elders)</i>	<i>Link to the book; a suggested reading schedule.</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		

Export to Sheets

4. Setting a Timeline & Accountability A goal without a timeline is just a dream. When will you take your first step? Who can you ask to hold you accountable to follow through?

I will take my first step by (date): _____

I will ask (person's name) to check in with me about my progress: _____

Conflict Management Basic Formation

Prayer of Commitment: *Lord, thank you for being the God of peace. Thank you for reconciling me to yourself through Jesus. Help me to be a faithful peacemaker in the community you have placed me. Give me the courage, wisdom, and humility to take this next step for Your glory and for the good of others. Amen.*