Resolving Everyday Conflict
Session 1: A New Way of Thinking

Video Clip: “Where Is Your Conflict Leading You?”

Understanding our different responses to conflict

**Escape Responses** ("Running") – The responses found on the left side of the Slippery Slope are directed at getting away from the conflict rather than resolving it. These responses are:

- **Denial**: Pretend that a conflict does not exist or refuse to do what you should do to resolve it properly. This is always a wrong response to conflict.
- **Flight**: Run away from the person with whom you are having a conflict. Flight is more than escaping – it is avoiding facing the problem.

**The Problem**: You haven’t solved anything. The issue that causes the problem comes along with you when you run away.

**Attack Responses** ("Winning") – The responses found on the right side of the Slippery Slope are directed at placing as much pressure as possible on your opponent in order to win. These responses are:

- **Blame**: We attempt to shift responsibility for the conflict away from ourselves, by blaming the conflict on the other person. Blame often turns to gossip when we talk about others rather than speaking to them directly. Gossip seeks to win others to our side as we “try our case” in the court of public opinion by talking to lots of people.
- **Assault**: We use force or intimidation (e.g., physical, verbal, or financial) to try to make an opponent give in to our demands. We might try to force our opponents to give in to our demands by taking them to court.
Peacemaking Responses – At the top of the Slope, the four principles of peacemaking focus on pursuing reconciliation as well as seeking a just and mutually agreeable resolution to a conflict.

“The Four G’s”

- Go to Higher Ground (Glorify God – 1 Cor. 10:31): This response encourages you to clarify your highest values, applying them to how you respond to conflict and treat others when experiencing conflict. For the Christian, it means asking yourself, “How can I please and honor God in this situation?”

- Get Real About Yourself (Get the Log Out of Your Eye – Matt. 7:5): This response encourages you to examine your own attitudes and actions, understanding how you have contributed to the conflict, and giving a thorough and humble confession.

- Gently Engage Others (Gently Restore – Gal. 6:1): Taking responsibility for your own contribution is followed by respectfully and graciously helping others to see how they have contributed to the conflict.

- Get Together on Lasting Solutions (Go and Be Reconciled – Matt. 5:24): Focusing on preserving and restoring the relationship through forgiveness leads you to a lasting solution that resolves both material and personal issues.

A Great First Step: Overlook It

Ask Yourself, “Is this worth fighting over?”

“A man’s wisdom gives him patience; it is to his glory to overlook an offense.” Proverbs 19:11

When someone has offended you, a wonderful question to ask is, “Can I overlook this?” Many conflicts can be quickly resolved if we are willing to overlook. It is an act of love to extinguish a fire before it ever starts.

Put you conflict in context. Is it a big deal in the bigger context of your life?

We are “thin-skinned” with how others treat us (i.e., we take offense easily) while we are “thick-skinned” in how we treat them (i.e., we want them to “toughen up”). A sign of maturity is to flip that around.

(Caution: Be sure not to fall into an “Escape” response on the Slippery Slope here. Think of overlooking as a form of preemptive forgiveness.)
Overlooking offenses is appropriate under three conditions.
1. The offense should not have created a wall between you and the other person or caused you to feel differently toward him or her for more than a short period of time.
2. The offense should not be causing serious harm (to God’s reputation, to others, or to the offender).
3. The offense is not part of a destructive pattern.

**Video Clip:** “Where Is Your Conflict Leading You? (Take 2)

**Group Discussion Questions**

1. What insights in this video did you find particularly helpful?

2. What response to conflict did your parents typically use as you were growing up? What response do you tend to use now?

3. What words or phrases hit you in the two “Where Is Your Conflict Leading You?” videos? Why?

4. What’s the difference between overlooking and escaping? What difference does it make in a conflict? In what sort of situations would you want others to overlook something you’ve done wrong?

**Apply It To Yourself** (for your own reflection at a later time)

Identify a recent conflict in your life. How have you been responding? (Escaping? Attacking? Peacemaking?) What would a peacemaking response look like in that situation? Is the other person’s offense something you should overlook? Why or why not?