

## Tenth Grade – Conflict in the Church

*We are imperfect humans in an imperfect world, and so conflict is inevitable. But for many of us, we have had very harmful experiences of conflict and so now we simply avoid it altogether. And what we fear always has power over us. And the enemy uses our fear and misunderstanding of conflict to cause division, disunity, and mistrust in God's people. So if we are going to be people who are a part of Christian community, we also have to be people committed to learning to do conflict well.*

### Introducing the Topic

- How would you describe your personal conflict style?
- Why do you think that's your style?
- What is conflict in your family like?
- What is conflict in your friendships like?
- What do you think needs to happen for conflict to go well?
- What makes conflict hard?

### Scripture Study

*As you transition to the Scripture Study portion of this session, remind students that Scripture is where we turn for truth. We want to continually reiterate that we study Scripture not just for the "Christian take" on a matter, but God's revealed word, given to us out of love for our good.*

- Read Matthew 18: 15-17 together.
  - o What situation is this passage giving direction for? *(If a fellow believer sins against you)*
  - o What does it mean to be sinned against?
  - o What are the three steps we are instructed to take when dealing with a believer who is living in sin? *(Confront them one on one, then with one or two other believers, then with the church community)*
  - o In the final portion of this verse, it says if a believer has gone through all these stages of confrontation and still doesn't listen, to treat them as a tax collector or pagan. How did Jesus treat the tax collectors and sinners?

### Practical Application

*Since this topic is largely dependent on context and guided by wisdom, while we talk about how to apply these teachings, we will still be referencing Scripture!*

- Matthew 18 applies to a very specific context of conflict, what is it? When is it our place to speak up and confront someone?
- What would make it hard for you to do that?
- What do you think is a wise way to approach that kind of conversation? (Prov. 15:1)
- The second step in listed in Matthew 18 is to bring along another believer to confront your friend, what kind of person would be best to bring along?

- In the final step, Jesus tells people to bring this unrepentant individual to “the church”, what do you think that looks like for us in the modern day with much larger church communities?
- Why do you think Jesus tells his followers to treat someone who has not listened at any stage like a tax collector? Do you see this as harsh or as gracious?
- Why do you think Jesus teaches his followers how to have conflict with each other?
- What happens if there IS no conflict in a Christian community?
- How do you think this practice of conflict would impact a church community?