

## Small Group Study Guide

### Peacemaking in Conflict – March 11, 2026

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**Purpose:** *This guide is designed to help you prayerfully reflect on a relevant topic and study God’s Word independently or with others throughout the week. Take your time. Read Scripture slowly. Invite the Holy Spirit to speak.*

Every healthy church must learn to handle conflict well. Conflict is not a sign that something is wrong. Simply, it is a sign that people are involved.

The question is not whether we will experience conflict. The question is how we will respond when we do. Jesus says in Matthew 5:9, “Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.”

Notice — not peacekeepers. Not peace-fakers. And certainly not peace-breakers.

#### **Peacemakers.**

James 4:1 asks: “What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you?”

James answers: desires at war within us.

Conflict reveals what we love, what we fear, what we expect. It can either become a temptation to sin — or an opportunity to glorify God.

Here is a framework for becoming a peacemaking church.

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#### **Part I — Three Ways We Tend to Respond to Conflict**

There are three general responses most people have to conflict:

##### **1** Escape

We avoid. We withdraw. We pretend nothing happened.

But Proverbs 27:6 says, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”

Avoidance may feel peaceful, but it leaves wounds untreated.

##### **2** Attack

We blame. We vent. We recruit others. We rehearse grievances.

Ephesians 4:29 says: “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up.”

Attack escalates conflict. Repairing the breach becomes more difficult.

### 3 Peacemaking

Peacemaking is not weakness. It is **courage** guided by Scripture.

Romans 12:18 says: “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

*Peacemaking sits in the middle. It refuses both avoidance and aggression.*

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## Part II — The Four G’s of Biblical Peacemaking

### 1 Glorify God

Before asking: “Who is right?” **Ask: “How can Christ be honored here?”**

1 Corinthians 10:31 says: “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

Conflict becomes holy when we ask, “*What response would reflect Christ?*”

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### 2 Get the Log Out of Your Own Eye

Jesus says in Matthew 7:3–5: Remove the log from your own eye first.

Before addressing someone else, ask:

- What is happening in my heart?
- Has a *\*desire\** of mine now become a *\*demand\**?

James 4 reminds us that conflict often reveals what we want too much — even good things.

Unity is good.

Respect is good.

Being heard is good.

But when good desires become demands (“I must have”), they produce conflict.

***Humility*** disarms escalation.

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### 3 Gently Restore

Galatians 6:1 says:

“If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness.”

You are in conflict, so obviously there has been some sort of harm or misunderstanding. Sin always requires correction. Sometimes in conflict we simply make poor choices.

Correction, whenever it is necessary, must be:

- Direct in nature (Galatians 2:11, **Matthew 18:15**)
- Private first, then with witnesses (Matthew 18:16-17)
- Gentle in posture (Proverbs 15:1), but never accepting of sin (1 Timothy 5:20; Titus 3:10)
- Aimed at restoration, not condemnation

Truth without gentleness is *control*.

Gentleness without truth is *compromise*.

We need both truth and gentleness. Further, firmer correction becomes appropriate when harm to the body continues or spreads.

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### 4 Go and Be Reconciled

**Matthew 5:23–24** says:

If you remember your brother has something against you, go.

Not wait.

Not recruit.

Go.

And when forgiveness is needed, it looks like this:

- I will not dwell on this.
- I will not bring it up to use against you.
- I will not talk about it unnecessarily.
- I will not let it stand between us.

That is gospel-shaped forgiveness.

**Matthew 18:21–35** reminds us: We forgive because we have been forgiven much.

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### **Part III — How We Handle Conflict Here**

As a church family, commit to these standards of care in conflict:

1. **If you have an issue with someone — go to them.** (Matthew 18:15; Matthew 5:23-24)
2. **If someone comes to you about another person — send them back.** (Proverbs 26:20; Proverbs 17:9)
3. **Do not recruit allies.** (James 4:11; Galatians 5:15)
4. **Protect unity with intention.** (Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:13-14; Romans 12:18)
5. **Involve leadership only after direct efforts fail.** (Matthew 18:16-17; Hebrews 13:17)

We will not be a whispering church. We will be a reconciling church.

Ephesians 4:3 says: “Be eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

Unity is not automatic. It is intentionally maintained.

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### **Part IV — Personal Application**

Ask yourself:

- Is there someone I need to forgive?
- Is there someone I need to go to?
- Is there a conversation I have avoided?

Peacemaking is discipleship.

The world divides. The church reconciles.

Let us be known as people who close loops, not create whispers.

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### **Group Discussion Questions**

1. When you face conflict, do you tend toward avoidance or confrontation?
2. Why do you think God allows conflict in churches?
3. What makes direct conversation difficult?
4. What fears keep us from going to someone privately?
5. How does gossip damage unity?

6. What would it look like for this church to model reconciliation visibly?
  7. How does remembering God's forgiveness shape how we forgive others?
  8. What practical steps can we take to maintain unity during this season?
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### **Closing Reflection**

"Is there someone I need to go to this week?"

*Let us Pray*

Lord, make us gentle and courageous.

Guard our tongues.

Expose our pride.

Teach us to forgive as we have been forgiven.

Make this church a place where conflicts end in grace.

Amen.