

### Getting Started

As you are comfortable, describe a particularly difficult relationship you have been in. Where did it end up on Pastor’s suggested scale: 1) the relationship ended and I was happy to be out of it, 2) I was able to forgive the other person, but that person and I still have difficulty between us, 3) we came to full reconciliation?

What feelings accompany each stage?

### Into the Bible

To set the table, read Colossians 1:21-22 and describe how God has reconciled the world to Himself and what the results of that reconciliation are.

Consider Mark 10:17-22. What did the man want from his relationship with Jesus?

What conflict of values stood between him and a right relationship with Jesus?

Thinking back to your answer above, what conflict of values lay at the heart of the problem?

How can identifying the underlying conflict of values help us understand conflict?

Jacob’s misdeeds against his brother Esau are well-documented (Genesis 25:29-34 and 27:1-41, if you want to re-read the story). Read the story of their reunion in Genesis 32:3-8; 33:1-20. What was Jacob afraid of?

What did Esau do to contribute to that fear?

What was accomplished in their meeting?

Where did Jacob settle down and what does that tell you about the limits of their work?

The conflict between Joseph and his brothers is also well-documented (Genesis 37). Look at the story of their initial reunion in Genesis 42:1-24. Why do you think Joseph was so harsh? Do you think he was justified? Why?

The story continues in Genesis 43:24-30, 44:1-2, 11-12, 30-34, and 45:3-15. (I am sorry; it's a very long story!) Why did Joseph set up the test around the silver goblet?

How do you determine whether there is genuine repentance when you are trying to reconcile with another person?

What was the result of the reconciliation?

Most conflicts have two sides. What do you think Joseph could have (should have?) confessed to his brothers?

One more: Genesis 50:15-21. Reconciliation can be messy. What was the brothers' fear?

Was that a reasonable fear? What doubts led them to that fear? How did Joseph assuage their fear?

### Digging Deeper

To live in true peace requires difficult work in a fallen world. Why is the work of clarifying underlying conflicting values so hard?

What if the values we bring to the conflict aren't totally pure, what difficulty does that add?

Humility and openness to our own repentance are also important in coming to reconciliation. Why are those things so difficult for us?

What one gift do Christians have to help them live in peace with one another?