

## STUDY 1. NOTES FOR LEADERS

1. How do you feel after you have had an argument?
  - a. Hurt?
  - b. Angry?
  - c. Relieved?
  - d. Miserable?
  - e. Something else?
  
2. **Read Mark 2:6-11, 15-17, 23-24, 3:1-4**
  - a. How did Jesus cause conflict?
  - b. How did he handle it?
  - c. What do you think the root causes of the following conflicts were?

*Most of the “conflict “stories are from Mark’s Gospel and most commentators would see that Mark, the editor, has put them together for a reason...to show that Jesus was involved in conflict, and in some cases caused it. In each case the reaction of the Pharisees is an opportunity for Jesus to declare something of the nature of his mission. He uses the controversy to make a point.*

*(For another cycle of controversy stories see Mark 11:27-12.37.)*

3.
  - a. Is conflict necessarily bad?
  - b. Can you think of historical times or events in your own life when conflict created some good? (Your marriage, your family, your church, your work?)

*Some may refer to marriage conflict that has strengthened relationships or arguments with families that have created reasonable boundaries. New conditions at work may have been created through conflict. The historians in the group may refer to the Eureka Stockade, the Montgomery Bus Boycott, etc.*

4. **Are you a clean or dirty fighter? Do you:**
  - a. Store up a few resentments before letting fly?
  - b. Take the opportunity to verbally attack the other person as well as deal with the conflict issue?
  - c. Frequently use the phrase, “You remind me of your mother”?
  - d. Include such phrases as “You always do that” or “I remember when...”?
  - e. Throw things?
  - f. Play ‘no speaks” for an extended time?
  - g. Use phrases like, “Typical male!” or “Typical female!”?

*Answering Yes to more than examples may indicate that you are a dirty fighter.*

**HOW TO FIGHT CLEAN.**

5. **Read Gal. 5:22-26, Col. 3:12-14**

Paul presents the following qualities as evidence of God’s spirit growing in our lives:  
*Love Joy Peace Patience Kindness Goodness Faithfulness*  
*Gentleness Self Control*

  - a. How would any of these help us to be a cleaner fighter?
  - b. How would these qualities reduce conflict?
  - c. How do we develop these qualities?

*The sermon deals with these points and will give the group leader some helpful hints.*

**6. Read Matthew 5:21-24, 38-42, 43-48, 7:1-5**

How do these passages relate to the way that we are involved in conflict?

- a. How do these passages relate to the way that we are involved in conflict?
- b. Do they raise unrealistic expectations?

*These verses seem to indicate that Jesus expects a high standard.*

**7. Which of the following verses from Proverbs (NRSV) have a message for you or for somebody you know? Why?**

a. *Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all offenses. On the lips of one who has understanding wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of one who lacks sense. The wise lay up knowledge, but the babbling of a fool brings ruin near.* Proverbs 10:12-14

b. *Whoever heeds instruction is on the path to life, but one who rejects a rebuke goes astray. Lying lips conceal hatred, and whoever utters slander is a fool.* Proverbs 10:17-18

c. *The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse.* Proverbs 10:32

d. *A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.* Pro. 15:1

e. *The mind of the righteous ponders how to answer, but the mouth of the wicked pours out evil.* Proverbs 15:28

*It may be helpful to get the verses read from different translations.*

**8. In your experience is most conflict caused by:**

- a. Misunderstandings?
- b. Gender differences?
- c. Age differences?
- d. Selfishness?
- e. Stress?
- f. Ethnic differences?
- g. Jealousy?
- h. Personality clashes?
- i. Control problems?
- j. Injustice?
- k. Something else?

**9. How do these factors inspire us to pray?**