

## LifeGroup Discussion Questions

2 Samuel 13 & 14

September 12, 2020

### **Overview:**

A common theme within all families is conflict. Even though family is supposed to be a place of love and safety it can often turn into a place of turmoil. Hurt feelings, careless words, and selfish actions can often lead to ongoing conflict. If you have never experienced family conflict you can stop reading this lesson and write a book about the perfect family. I am sure it will be a number one seller. For the rest of us, family conflict is just a reality we live in. Whether the conflict lasts a day or several years it still damages relationships.

Unfortunately, conflict has torn apart families. The longer a conflict exists the less likely it is going to be resolved. Days turn into weeks, turn into months which turn into years. Eventually those involved in the conflict can forget what actually caused the issue. The longer a conflict exists the more likely we are to forget the circumstances around it, but we are all wired to hold onto emotions. Our feeling about a conflict will last longer than our memories. Two people can be fighting years after an event and not even remember what started the argument. They just remember the hurt and anger surrounding it. Have you ever been in a situation like this or are currently in this situation?

One major cause of conflict is self-centeredness. We become so focused on our own interests or getting our own way that we don't take into consideration the feelings of people around us. This is described in James 4:1-2 which states, "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this; that your passions are at war within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel." All of us think we are right whenever conflict exists. If you take an extremely self-centered person who always thinks they are right you have a recipe for conflict. So are we all doomed to live in a constant state of family fighting? No. Jesus has given us the perfect example of love and grace. Our ability to love others needs to exceed our desires for fulfilling our self-interest. 1 Corinthians 13:13 states: "So now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

Luke 10:27 states: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." This was Jesus' response when a lawyer asked about the greatest commandment. After giving this response Jesus went on to illustrate it by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. One point we can glean from this verse is that we are to love one another which means offering forgiveness even when we don't want to. Love means looking past your own wants and to the wants of those

around you. Think about how many arguments you could have avoided if you entered the situation leading with love. It takes love to be able to see a conflict from the perspective of the opposing person.

For resolution to occur one person in the conflict needs to take action. This requires making yourself vulnerable to being hurt again. Often times our pride keeps us from doing this. The opposite of pride is humility. It takes humility to seek resolution. It takes an extreme amount of humility to seek resolution if you were the one hurt in the conflict. Jesus gave us this example as He was crucified. In the midst of all the pain and humility on the cross Jesus asked for God to forgive those crucifying Him. Instead of calling out for vengeance, legions of angels, or fire and brimstone; Jesus forgave. In Philippians 2 we see Jesus described as being equal to God, but humbling Himself for our sake. He took on the nature of a servant, made Himself in human likeness, and humbled Himself in obedience even to death. This is the perfect example of humility. Most of us are not humble enough to admit we are wrong in an argument. How would conflicts you are involved with get resolved if you approached them with humility?

In 2 Samuel 13 & 14 we read about the conflict between King David and Absalom. There was good reason behind this conflict. Absalom had killed his brother Amnon. After killing his brother Absalom fled. King David banned Absalom from returning to Jerusalem for three years. It took years and outside intervention for this conflict to come to an end. Most of the conflicts we are involved with were not instigated by murder, but are layered in hurt and self-centeredness. The best way to see past your own needs is to keep your focus on Jesus. Look at His example of humility and love. Allow Him to transform and soften your heart toward whomever you are in conflict with. It takes two people for conflict to exist. Be the one who seeks resolution. If needed, get outside help.

Let's make the commitment to approach our families with love and humility. This can greatly reduce conflict. Love is greater than being right. Humility is greater than seeking vengeance. A.W. Tozer once said, "We are right when and only when we stand in a right position relative to God, and we are wrong so far and so long as we stand in any other position." Keeping our focus on Jesus will keep us in the right position to resolve conflict.

**Bible Study:**

1. What are some ways you seek to resolve conflict?
2. What are the challenges you face when trying to resolve family conflict?
3. How does the feeling of the need to be right cause conflict to continue?
4. How can seeking love and humility help you resolve current conflicts you are in?
5. Why is it sometimes necessary to get outside help to resolve conflict?