

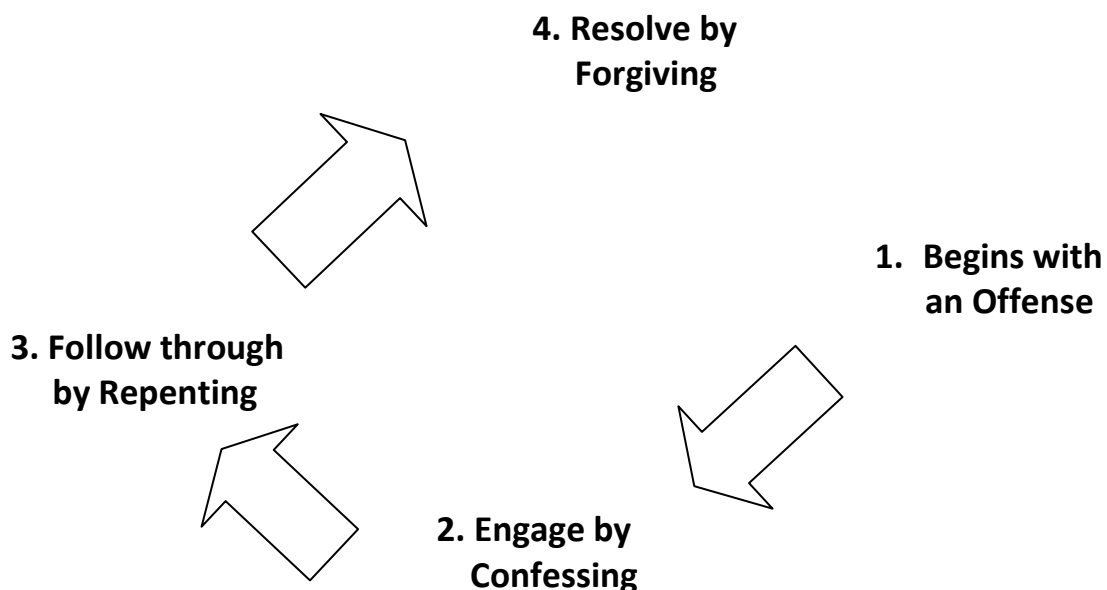
A STARTER'S STUDY GUIDE TO CONFLICT RESOLUTION (to be used with *Grace Harbor Counseling Ministries' 6-part video series*)

NOTE: As a starter's guide, this material attempts to provide a basic template to apply to many of our relational conflicts—particularly in marriage and parenting. The intent is not to be comprehensive or exhaustive; therefore, this format is self-limiting while recognizing that further care and counseling will be needed in many cases. In fact, it is our strong recommendation that if you are in conflict with someone, and neither party has a history of resolving conflicts well, that you involve other people in the process (e.g., if you're married, get another couple to go through these videos with you in order to keep the context safe, manageable, and accountable). If a couple cannot get through this process, quite often it is because they need support outside themselves to sustain their efforts. If either party in conflict resists or refuses to involve others in the process, refer to the last two pages of this study guide.

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Christian Scripture presents both sad and glad realities. For example, on the one hand, the Bible teaches the painful news that all people are sinners ("If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth" 1 John 1:8. See also Romans 3:23, etc.). Sinners sin, and since we're all sinners we should expect conflict to be a part of our interactions. On the other hand, you don't have to read God's Word very far before discovering that God has made a provision for the sins we've done and will yet do. What makes this news joyful is that while each of our sins requires a payment, God has chosen to make these payments Himself. As you will see in Session 2, God made these payments at great cost—at the expense of His only Son who agreed to pay our debts through His self-sacrifice.

Now that God has made a way for your conflict with Him to be resolved, He's directing you (provided you've accepted His offer of grace) to take the grace He has given you and extend it to those who have wronged you. Here is a simplified snapshot of the process:



SESSION ONE: The Heart of Conflict

Where do conflicts come from?

Think of your heart as a factory continuously producing:

_____, expressed as _____

_____, expressed as _____

_____, expressed as _____

These God-given impulses tend to be pushed into either an _____ or _____

ditch by a corrupting parasite in our hearts. Scripture calls this parasite _____ (Romans 7:20).

- *Relational offenses occur when the ungoverned desires, motives or ambitions of one person conflict with those of another.*

The debit card analogy:

- *Every offense (sin) produces a relational _____ (Matthew 6:12).*

When someone sins against another, the offended party is tempted to think, "You owe me!"

If the debt of that offense is not paid the same day, the debt begins to _____.

Relational debt, like financial debt, does not simply _____.

Eventually, accumulating relational debt will _____ a relationship.

This means that relational debt will continue to _____ the relationship if it is not paid.

The Big Question: How can I _____ relational debt?

Relational debt will continue to _____ the relationship if not paid.

You can leave a relationship that is bankrupt, but the debt _____

because the problem is in _____.

The debt must be paid to be free of it.

General rule when beginning to work through a pile of debt: Start with the most _____
 _____ first.

➤ *Our goal should be to live _____ free daily.*

Think and Do

What are the usual reasons that people give for the conflict they experience? How do these reasons compare with the reason given in James 4:1-4?

Identify two or three differences between you and your spouse that lead to conflict. Think of them in terms of desires, motives or ambitions. How might you try to control your desires, motives or ambitions before you sin against your spouse?

We typically think of conflicts coming from sin as causing us to want something too much (the “over ditch”). What is an example in your life of a good desire that is actually too weak (the “under ditch”)?

What is the most recent relational debt that you have incurred? (If you cannot think of one, ask your spouse.) What desire, motive or ambition did sin corrupt to bring about the offense?

Describe some ways relational debt has damaged your relationships? (Consider spouse, children, parents, siblings, fellow workers, neighbors, and other Christians).

It was stated that if you do not resolve your relational debts, then eventually the relationship will go bankrupt. Describe different ways that could that look in a various relationships.

Dig deeper

What character quality is identified in James 4:5-10 as necessary to resolve conflict? How is that quality acquired? When your offense is brought to your attention, is this quality present to enable you to own your share of the debt?

Think about Ephesians 4:1-3. What virtues enable believers to maintain unity in the church? What gets in the way of this, or inhibits or prevents this unity?

SESSION 2: The Ultimate Conflict

The biggest conflict I will ever have is my conflict with _____.

My report card: the test of moral character.

The Father requires absolute _____ (James 2:10).

We know that this is _____.

*If you're not sure about ways you typically sin, then **look at the last two pages of this study guide** and consider how only one sin (in this case, pride) can corrupt your heart in multiple ways.

My Report Card:

The Test of Life	My Moral "Grade"	The Teacher's "Grade"
1: My 1 st day of life		
2: the next day of my life		
3: and the next		
4: and the next		
5: and so on...		
6:		
7:		
8:		
9:		
↓		

We have bankrupted our relationship with God with a debt of offenses that we can never pay.

"We all have sinned and _____ of the glory [i.e., the perfections] of God" (Romans 3:23).

The Teacher's offer: The credit of His perfection in exchange for the debt of my sin!

2 Corinthians 5:21 "For our sake [God the Father] made [Jesus Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in [Christ Jesus] we might become the righteousness of God."

The cost of this exchange: Jesus endured _____.

The result: God credits your account with Christ's righteousness (this is called justification).

➤ *God's restoration of our relationship with Him shows us the pathway of restoring our relationships with others.*

God's pattern of restoration is seen in Philippians 2:5-11 and is illustrated in three symbols:

- **The Cradle**—Christ's _____: He brought His moral perfection to us in our moral corruption.

First edition

Philippians 2:5-7, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."

In Christ, God communicated His infinite moral worth and our moral bankruptcy.

- **The Cross**—Christ's _____: He took my punishment and offered His perfection to me.

Philippians 2:8, "And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

In Christ, God took ownership of our debt of offenses against Him.

- **The Crown**—Christ's _____: He is King of kings and Lord of lords. His supreme worth requires my humble obedience, faith and love.

Philippians 2:9-11, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In Christ, God forgives my debt upon my repentance of sin and faith in Him.

➤ *God's restoration of my fellowship with Him also provides the resources (i.e., grace, which is the currency of Scripture) to pay the relational debts that others owe for their sin(s) against me.*

The Bible calls this resource _____ (Ephesians 2:8). I must receive this resource from God in order to _____ those who sin against me.

Think on these things

What is the condition for Jesus "taking your report card"? Look at Acts 3:19.

2 Corinthians 8:9 says, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."

This verse is a great summary of the Gospel of Christ. Jesus humbled Himself for you. He did not have to do that. This is a gift of grace—the gift of Himself to you. He could have opened His mouth in accusations against you; instead, He kept His mouth closed for your benefit. Jesus did that so by His sacrifice you might grow rich in His grace (which would magnify Him while benefitting you and others). One author writes, "The impression of Jesus which the gospels give is not that He was wholly bereft of divine knowledge and power, but that He drew on both intermittently, while being content for much of the time not to do so. The impression, in other words, is not so much one of deity reduced as of divine capacities restrained" (J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, InterVarsity, 1973, p. 54).

How willing are you to withhold your "rights" for the benefit of those you are in conflict with? How well can you restrain yourself in conflict like Jesus did? Only His active life in you can do this.

Evaluate your application of grace in extending it to others who have sinned against you. How generous are you in dispensing grace? Do you have much grace to give away? How can you grow in the grace of Christ?

Dig Deeper

Consider taking in some Christ-centered books, such as, *The Prodigal God* (Timothy Keller), *Living the Cross-Centered Life* (C.J. Mahaney), or *The Gospel for Real Life* (Jerry Bridges).

SESSION THREE: Owing the Offense (the first step in conflict resolution)

“Owning it” means taking _____ for the offense.

The heart issue that is most likely to cause me to abort the resolution process is my own _____.

“Owning it” is the communication, or talking, part of paying the relational debt.

➤ For effective communication to occur, _____ and _____ are required.

Safety is lost when one or both parties in the conflict begin talking or behaving in a threatening way.

Communication becomes unsafe when one of us _____ (avoiding, withdrawing, walking away, turning on TV, etc.), or when one of us _____ (getting defensive, loud, threatening, physical, etc).

Understanding is lost when one of us makes counteraccusations instead of _____

to the other person’s account of his or her _____ of the offense.

Understanding happens only by asking questions of each other, not by making statements to each other. Making statements to each other shuts down communication because you’re only stating your own thoughts, and that comes across as prideful. Asking questions of each other requires a degree of humility, interest, and curiosity about the other person, and that comes across as genuine care.

In our flesh we cannot do this, so we must rehearse Philippians 2, “Let this mind be in you...” Think of Jesus before He went to the Cross (His greatest conflict). He went into the Garden to

_____.

If the communication begins to escalate, stagnate, or shut down, call a timeout.

Using a timeout productively

The timeout is not merely to cool down emotionally. I need to think to myself, “The reason our talking is falling apart is that my heart is running low on grace and my pride is growing stronger.” I must take responsibility for what is happening in my own heart. I should do that by getting alone

and taking myself back to the _____.

How to gain the internal resources (grace) I need:

- pray
- humble myself by asking the Lord to reveal my own sin(s) to me (Where am I wrong in this?)

- get rich in _____, so I can deal with the indebtedness being discussed.
- I must _____ what is in the heart of the other person regarding my share of the offense (Proverbs 20:5).

This is *not* done by _____.

The best way to try to understand the other person is to _____

This takes _____. People who are sinned against will not make it easy.

This also takes _____.

Agree on a time when we will try again. Remember, the goal is to live debt free daily.

After both of us have been to the Cross, try again.

If several attempts yield no breakthrough, _____. (See Philippians 1:27; 4: 2-3)

Talking about the offense is necessary, but it is not enough; it is just the first step in the process.

Think and do

Would others think of you as being humble? When your offense has been brought to your attention, how have you responded to owning your share of the debt? What actions are necessary to cultivate humility? (See James 4:5-10)

What does James 5:16 tell you to do in “owning your share”? What are one or two desires, motives or ambitions that commonly make you resistant to “owning your share”?

Do you tend to go passive or become aggressive in a conflict? In either case, what does your behavior communicate to the other person? What steps should you take to improve communication, both in listening to the details of an offense and in giving your account of an offense?

What does “going to the Cross” mean? Other than at an impasse, when else would it be wise to “go to the Cross?” Select two or three other Scriptures on listening, humility and forgiveness that would be helpful for meditation during this time.

Together with your spouse, identify two or three individuals or couples whom you would trust to help you complete this step if you reached an impasse. What would their role be?

Dig Deeper

In the process of listening to your share of the offense, it is tempting to feel justified in resisting because of feeling falsely accused. Meditate on I Peter 2:20-25. How does Christ’s example help you to resist that temptation?

SESSION FOUR: Making a Plan (the second step in conflict resolution)

This is the action, or _____, part of paying a relational debt.

If I haven't humbled myself to learn the _____ of the offense, then I'm going to have a hard time doing the opposite.

Repenting in the details builds _____ in the offended party.

- "Making a plan" requires me to do the opposite of the offense.

The Bible calls this _____.

A Question: How do we know when a thief is no longer a thief (has truly repented to evidence a change of heart)?

The Biblical test: Ephesians 4:28

25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. **26** Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, **27** and give no opportunity to the devil. **28** Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need. **29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. **30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **31** Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. **32** Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

The thief who has merely stopped stealing may have done so because of external pressure, but does that necessarily mean his heart has changed? He could still be coveting even though he's not acting on it.

The Biblical Answer: the former thief has not only stopped stealing (a 90 degree turn), but he is going beyond the stopping by starting to work productively in order to give away what he has made (a 180 degree turn). Only then can we have some confidence that his heart has changed.

- True repentance requires a change of _____ that is demonstrated by stopping the sin and then positive obedience in the opposite direction.

The example of marital adultery:

This sinful relationship occurs only after a long period of sinful _____.

Therefore, repenting must go beyond simply stopping the adultery to include:

- 1) reversing the process of sinful thinking that led to the sinful behavior.
- 2) _____ for your spouse all that you did for the other person (i.e., make your spouse feel just as special as the other person).

➤ Repenting is a _____, not a one-time action.

Repenting on a _____ basis builds trust in the offended party.

Repenting may require restitution:

Is restitution an obsolete Old Testament requirement? Not according to Jesus.

Luke 19: 1-9

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** And there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. **3** And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small of stature. **4** So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. **5** And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." **6** So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. **7** And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." **8** And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." **9** And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house".

Remember: not all restitution corresponds exactly to the offense.

Think and do

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10. Notice the contrast between Godly sorrow and worldly sorrow. What is the worldly definition of repentance? For an example of worldly sorrow, see Hebrews 12: 16-17. Tears alone are not enough to evidence heart change.

How has this session changed the way you think of repentance?

Why is the action in Ephesians 5:21 essential to "making a plan"?

Recall an offense you committed against someone recently. How well did you learn the details of your offense? What actions did you take or should you have taken to visibly demonstrate that you had repented in your heart? If you're not sure, ask the offended person what would mean the most to her if you did it.

Other than stealing tangible goods, what are some offenses that would require restitution? What is the underlying purpose of restitution?

Dig Deeper

Read Jesus' parable of the forgiving Father in Luke 15, giving special attention to verses 17-21.

Who initiates the process? What steps does the son take to repent? If this were an actual event, what might the son need to do to complete the process of "the plan"?

SESSION FIVE: Paying it Off (the third step in conflict resolution)

“Paying it off” occurs after the offender has taken responsibility and shown evidence of heart change.

Completing the pay-off requires both parties to have the internal resource of _____.

With that grace, the offender asks the offended, “_____?”

Definition of forgiveness: *“taking the debt that someone owes you and paying it yourself without penalizing him for it.”*

- Some sins are easier to forgive than others.
This fact requires a new analogy.

Turn the debit cards into mortgages. Each card now has its own value.

Implication: Some smaller relational debts can be paid in one payment. Others are larger mortgages that have longer terms and require more work to pay off completely. We can illustrate the different values of five different offenses (relational sin debts) this way:

1 2 3 4 5

Does this violate the meaning of forgiveness? Doesn't the Bible teach that forgiving is forgetting?

“For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more” (Jeremiah 31:34). “He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west” (Psalm 103:12).

The Bible does not say that God will forget (erase from His memory) our sins. If He is infinite and eternal, can he “forget” anything?

The opposite of remembering in Hebrew language is not forgetting. In reality, the opposite of re-remembering is _____ (taking apart).

- God's promise is that He will never re-member (uncover the blood of Christ and gather together the sins He has scattered) in order to use those sins against us in judgment.

So dealing with a “high mortgage” offense repeatedly is necessary in order that the cost can be paid down fully.

Forgiveness requires you to absorb the cost for someone else's debt. This is unjust. The only rationale for paying someone else's debt at an expense to yourself is the cross of Christ. This is what Jesus did for you!

To be able to forgive with any regularity, you must have the growing currency of _____. And that comes only in a growing relationship with the Banker, Jesus Christ (“And from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”, John 1:16-17).

A deep injury will require _____ over time.

➤ Different people place different _____ on an offense.

So you must know the other person well enough to assess the cost of the debt that you owe.

In the process of paying off a large debt, each cycle of confession, repentance and forgiveness

_____.

Think and do

How well has your daily walk with Christ supplied you with the grace you need to both forgive and seek forgiveness? What are some reasons and remedies for a lack of grace in your life?

Does the idea of taking months or even years to pay a relational debt seem to be asking too much? Read Jesus’ parable in Matthew 18:21-35, showing how forgiveness is to work in His Kingdom. How do the respective actions of the king and servant underscore Jesus’ answer to Peter in vs. 22 and His conclusion in vs. 35?

Why is forgiveness not letting the offender “off the hook”?

Assessing the cost that the other person puts on an offense is not always simple. Some express feelings easily, others don’t. Some are easily offended, others are not. Some respond quietly and slowly, others explosively. Assess these and other differences between you and your spouse. Discuss ways to overcome these differences.

Dig Deeper

Practiced biblically, forgiveness is demanding for both the offender and offended. The basis for all forgiveness is the cross of Christ. Meditate on and pray in Ephesians 4:31-32. Ask God for the strengthening of your character in following Christ’s work of forgiveness.

SESSION SIX: Release and Resolution

A MISCONCEPTION: “ONCE AN OFFENSE IS FORGIVEN, IT SHOULD NEVER BE BROUGHT UP AGAIN.”

How God deals with our sin on the basis of 2 key Biblical doctrines:

- Justification— The objective guilt for our sin was legally and forever pardoned when we repented and believed in Christ’s finished work. He fully paid for all of our sin at His Cross. “It is finished”, was His cry.
Result: God will never again bring up our sin in order to condemn us (John 5:24).
- Sanctification— Even though we’ve been legally pardoned by God once for all, we continue to sin and must grow in practical holiness; therefore, God still wants to talk to us about our sin but not in a judgmental way.
Result: In mercy, God does bring up our continuing sin in order to mature us (Hebrews 12:5-11).

How we deal with one another’s offenses must follow God’s pattern.

- How an offense is revisited indicates whether it has been truly _____.
- We should continue to discuss a sin that’s been forgiven if there is a need to continue to better understand it in the hopes that repeating it becomes less likely.
For example, the offender might say “please repeat and explain with more details so I can do a better job of _____.”

Two Phases of Forgiveness:

● Phase 1:

Mark 11:25—“And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone, so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.”

This is done privately, just between you and God, in an _____.

The purpose is to free your _____ and create
_____ toward the one who has hurt you.

As you confess your sins to God, He gives to you His _____, which enriches your heart and creates a forgiving attitude toward the one who sinned against you.

This step is essential even if the offender is unavailable or unwilling to participate in phase two.

Example: Adult wife and mother who was abused as a child by her now-deceased father. No meeting was going to happen between the daughter and her father, yet his offenses against her were still alive in her heart. Her conscience needed to be free of the relational sin debt he had created.

To forgive means to _____ the debt.

- **Phase 2:** This occurs at the _____ level. Phase 2 happens only when there is cooperation between the offender and the offended.

Example: The Wednesday night I hurt my wife. She practiced Phase 1 while I was away, so when we saw each other later that night and the request of forgiveness was made (Phase 2), my wife was prepared to grant it. I'm sorry is _____.

In phase 2, the process of resolution culminates in a **transaction of grace** between the offended and the offender.

A COMMON MISCONCEPTION: *"I MUST LEARN TO FORGIVE MYSELF."*

Correction: The Bible never suggests or commands a person to forgive himself.

This is an impossible obligation assumed by unbelievers. A god-less man may recognize he is guilty at some level, but he has no one to pay his debt. Without a god to grant forgiveness, his only option is to replace God by forgiving himself. Sadly, many Christians have adopted and popularized this approach.

For a Christian to think that he must forgive himself is to imply that God's forgiveness is not enough. What really needs to happen is for the Christian to fully embrace God's forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice of Himself. Then we must continually grow in our understanding and valuing of Christ and His work on our behalf.

Think and do

How does God's purpose in sanctification affect your motive in revisiting an offense?

Consider the way you have dealt with past offenses. Has there been avoidance, criticism or punishment? What changes should you make to follow God's pattern of dealing with sin in your life as a believer? What have you done well that should be maintained?

Obeying Mark 11:25 makes forgiveness possible, but not always easy. How often do you confess your sins to God? What changes would make you richer in grace?

Why is simply saying, "I'm sorry", or apologizing, not enough when seeking resolution of a relational debt? What attitude usually causes this response? What step in the resolution process is needed instead?

Perhaps you have felt that you did something for which you could not forgive yourself. Meditate on I John 1:7-9. According to verse 9, on what does your forgiveness depend? If you have met God's condition for forgiveness (i.e., confession and repentance), then accept His gracious promise of forgiveness to yourself.

APPENDIX ON THE WEALTH AND POVERTY OF PRIDE

“Therefore it says, ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble’” (James 4:6).

When the resolution process fails to start or begins to break down, quite often it’s due to some form of pride. When talking, arguing, or debating, we tend to formulate reasons in our minds to justify our position, and that lessens the likelihood we will be good listeners. The more a person rehearses these reasons within himself, the more self-justified he becomes in his thinking. In other words, the more certain a person becomes for why he is right (and the other person is wrong), the “wealthier” he becomes as he stacks reason upon reason for feeling this way. But the wealth of pride on either side of the conflict prevents the conversation from going any further. It’s the great value of self-justifications we hold for feeling the way we do that actually leave us impoverished and unable to respond in humble service to the one we’re in conflict with.

Since pride has many faces, we should not limit ourselves to the lone figure of an arrogant person. Listed here are a few of the varied ways that pride can manifest itself when working through a conflict. As you look over this list, ask yourself, “Do I ever remember feeling or doing that?” If unsure, ask your spouse or someone close to you to give you honest feedback on the ways you may do some of these:

1. I can **become defensive**. This comes from being insecure (in other words, if you were humble you would have nothing to defend; if you are proud, you are compelled to protect yourself for fear of looking or feeling or losing _____).
2. I can **feel self-righteous**. At the point of conflict, you can clearly see where the other person is wrong. And even if you can see your own share of the wrong, it is certainly a smaller share than theirs.
3. I am often **self-sufficient**. I don’t ask others for help (including God) because I’m resourceful and either know what to do or can figure it out. Asking for help is a sign of weakness, and I have a hard time respecting weakness.
4. The **fear of man** kicks in. I tend to care too much what other people think of me, so I will alter my conduct to fit the situation. This could manifest itself in various ways (e.g., forms of appeasing so as to avoid rejection or more conflict—even if I know this tactic isn’t going to change anything).
5. I can **fall into self-pity**. When a person’s pride is satisfied, that person’s nose tends to go up and we call that arrogance; when a person’s pride is wounded, when that person doesn’t get what they want, that person’s nose tends to go down and we call that pouting.
6. I **tend to be a poor loser**. The Bible calls this selfish ambition. I can be sinfully competitive, evidenced by my intensity and inability to gear down, as well as by my anger (which is not always seen by others).

7. I **interrupt when others are talking**. I am not a patient person. I either don't care what the other person is saying, or I'm pretty sure I know what they're going to say anyway. There's no point in wasting time as they try to get it out. I want to get it over with so I can move on to more important things.
8. I **can be argumentative**. Rather than being able to receive someone's thoughts or observations, rather than being able to absorb someone's critique and accept parts of it as true, I pick up their thoughts and throw it back.
9. I am a **private person**. I think that just between the Lord and me, we should be able to work it out on our own. I cannot see any good reasons for getting others involved in this conflict. But remember, the word "private" does not occur in the Bible; "private" is just a euphemism for pride, the desire for not wanting to be known or exposed at a deep level.
10. I am a **passive person**. Rather than take any action, I can pull back or shut down because either a) I have the quiet audacity to think that things will either stay the same or improve on their own over time, or b) I am too easily hurt and deal with it in conflict by withdrawing.

Now what? First, review and meditate on Lesson 2 in this video series. Next, read and study Luke 7: 36-50, then begin asking yourself, "Am I thinking and acting more like Simon or like the sinful lady right now?" (Notice how the wealth of Simon's self-righteousness kept him from loving someone "less" than him—he could only judge and criticize the both the lady and Jesus, while the poverty of the lady came from her self-awareness of her own sin while the receiving of Jesus' forgiveness enriched her to love everyone!). Then read and pray over Philippians 2:3-11 and ask yourself, "Can I honestly say that I am thinking, acting, and talking with the attitude of Christ right now?" Consider that your pride has created blind spots that are keeping you from seeing reality as God sees it.

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