



# Fall 2025 Marriage Study | Week 7

## Conflict in Marriage

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### Opening Icebreaker (5 minutes)

#### Prompt:

"What's the pettiest argument you and your spouse (or a close friend) can now laugh about?"

#### Leader Notes:

- Encourage lighthearted sharing (socks on the floor, thermostat wars, pizza toppings).
- Transition: *"If small desires can spark conflict, how much more the deeper ones? James 4 shows us that fights reveal what's happening in our hearts."*
- If singles are present: invite them to think about silly fights with roommates, siblings, or coworkers.

### 2. Scripture Reflection (15 minutes)

**Read James 4:1-10 aloud.**

#### Discussion Questions:

1. What stands out most to you in this passage? Why do you think James ties conflict to "passions at war within you"?
2. How have you seen a good desire (respect, comfort, affection, control, efficiency) turn into a demand that escalated a disagreement?
3. James 4:6-7 says humility and submission to God are the turning points. What might it look like to submit to God in the middle of an argument?
4. Why do you think James uses such strong language ("adulterous people," v. 4) about selfish conflict? What idols might fights in marriage expose?

5. Where do you tend to go first in conflict—self-protection (defensiveness, withdrawal) or attack (sharp words, scorekeeping)? How has that pattern affected peace at home?
6. What specific encouragement do you find in the promise: *“Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you”* (v. 8), especially after a blow-up?

### **Optional Activity:**

Quietly map a recent conflict with three words: **Desire** → **Demand** → **Disappointment**. Circle the point where it escalated. Share insights (not details) with the group.

### **Leader Notes:**

- Watch out for oversharing or venting; keep the focus on heart patterns, not specific fights.
- Emphasize grace: *“James exposes our pride not to shame us, but to draw us closer to God.”*

## **3. Purposeful Conflict (15 minutes)**

**From the teaching manuscript:** Biblical conflict serves three purposes:

- **Work Well Through Conflict** – reflect God’s character with gentle, truthful words (Prov. 15:1).
- **Grow in Wisdom** – learn patterns, repent, mature.
- **Pursue Peace** – marriage represents the God of peace (1 Cor. 14:33).

### **Breakout Discussion Prompts:**

- Which of these three feels most natural in your marriage? Which is most challenging, and why?
- Where in your weekly rhythm does conflict usually flare up (bedtime, budgeting, logistics, in-laws)? What do those moments reveal about your desires?
- What would it look like to prepare for recurring “hotspots” (better timing, gentler tone, prayer before talking, pausing mid-conversation)?

- Each person: Share one area of growth you want to pursue this week in how you enter or navigate conflict.

#### **Leader Notes:**

- If conversation gets heavy, remind the group: *"Conflict isn't failure. It's an opportunity to reflect God's wisdom and grace."*

### **4. Practicing the Gospel in Conflict (10 minutes)**

#### **Think → Pair → Share**

**Teaching Recap:** Gospel-shaped conflict requires:

- **Spirit-enabled restraint** – pause, pray, don't repay insult for insult.
- **Gospel-shaped confession (ABCD):**
  - **Action & Attitude:** "I spoke harshly; I was impatient."
  - **Biblical Language:** Call it what God calls it (anger, selfishness).
  - **Cost:** "I embarrassed you / made you feel small."
  - **Do:** "Here's my repentance step this week..."

#### **In Pairs:**

- How do you usually respond when corrected – minimize, deflect, defend, or receive? Why?
- How could you build in a *wise pause* (time limit, prayer, cooling-off) without using it as punishment or avoidance?
- Practice the **ABCD of confession** with a small, real-life example (not a major fight).

#### **Come Back to the Group:**

- Share one small step you'll take this week to pursue peace faster (e.g., a 20-minute pause rule, praying James 4:10 before finishing, scheduling hard talks at a calmer time, inviting accountability).

**Leader Notes:**

- Encourage real practice, not just theory.
- Keep the tone hopeful: *"The gospel gives us tools for real change, not just good intentions."*

**5. Closing Scripture & Prayer (3-5 minutes)****Read James 4:10 aloud**

*"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."*

**Prayer Points:**

- For humility to submit to God quickly in conflict.
- For Spirit-given restraint in words and tone.
- For wisdom to pursue peace and display God's character at home.

**Leader Notes:**

- Suggest a moment of silent confession before group prayer.
- Close by thanking God for drawing near when we humble ourselves.

**Optional Homework**

Encourage couples (or friends if single) to spend 15 minutes this week:

1. Share one point of gratitude for how the other handled a recent disagreement.
2. Offer one confession using the **ABCD framework** (keep it short and sincere).
3. Agree on one peacemaking practice for the next conflict (pause plan, prayer first, better timing).
4. Close by praying James 4:6-8 together.