

Community Groups are the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering. It is through the interaction that takes place in each of these groups that will enable people to begin moving from being drawn to God to a life that is being deepened by God. Use it as a resource to lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

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## Consider...

Use the summary and discussion to review and apply this week's message:

### Message Summary

Nobody likes conflict, and many of us have been led to believe that if we love Jesus enough, we'll never have it. But as we found in Acts 15, believers can and will experience conflict, and sometimes it won't end like we'd hoped even if we handle it Biblically. The early believers went through 2 conflicts – one spiritual and one practical – and came out of them with different outcomes and yet with the Gospel being stronger through each of them. Paul shared 4 metaphors for how we typically handle conflicts:

1. **Boxing gloves:** When we go through "hand to hand" combat, there can only be one winner and that's usually the strongest person. This approach leads to a lot of pain and is motivated by confrontation.
2. **Megaphones:** Megaphones represent the screaming approach to conflict resolution and this approach usually has only one winner (or sometimes no winners). The winner is usually the loudest person. This approach leads to a lot of shouting and is motivated by proliferation (the use of a lot of words).
3. **Guns:** Guns can solve conflicts from a distance and obviously leads to only one winner (because the other person is usually dead!). The winner in this scenario is usually the fastest (because they got their bullet off first). This approach leads to a lot of blood and is motivated by retaliation.
4. **The cross:** The cross is the way God handled his conflict with sinful man and how he wants us to handle conflicts with each other. This approach can have many winners and each winner is usually the meekest (most humble and willing to admit their need). This approach requires a lot of grace and is motivated by reconciliation. **When conflict is handled Biblically, the Gospel wins even if we don't.**

### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What was one helpful, eye-opening, or troubling insight or principle from this week's message?
- How does conflict make you feel? Do you address it or avoid it?
- Have you ever experienced agreeing to disagree with another believer? How did you handle that situation?
- Which of the metaphor that Paul used to describe conflict resolution is most common in your life? Boxing gloves, megaphones, guns or the cross?
- Discuss the power of reconciliation in our lives, first as children of God and second as brothers and sisters to one another. In Matthew 5:23-24, why do you think God makes the case that horizontal conflict can destroy our vertical relationship with him?
- What would the typical church service look like if people took those verses seriously and lived them out?
- Discuss the statement that Paul made: Isolation leads to rationalization and conversation leads to reconciliation. Have you ever experienced this in your own life?