



# CONFLICT

TOM BENTON

SOUTHPEAKE MEN'S MIDWEEK

9/13/22

# RECOGNIZING CONFLICT

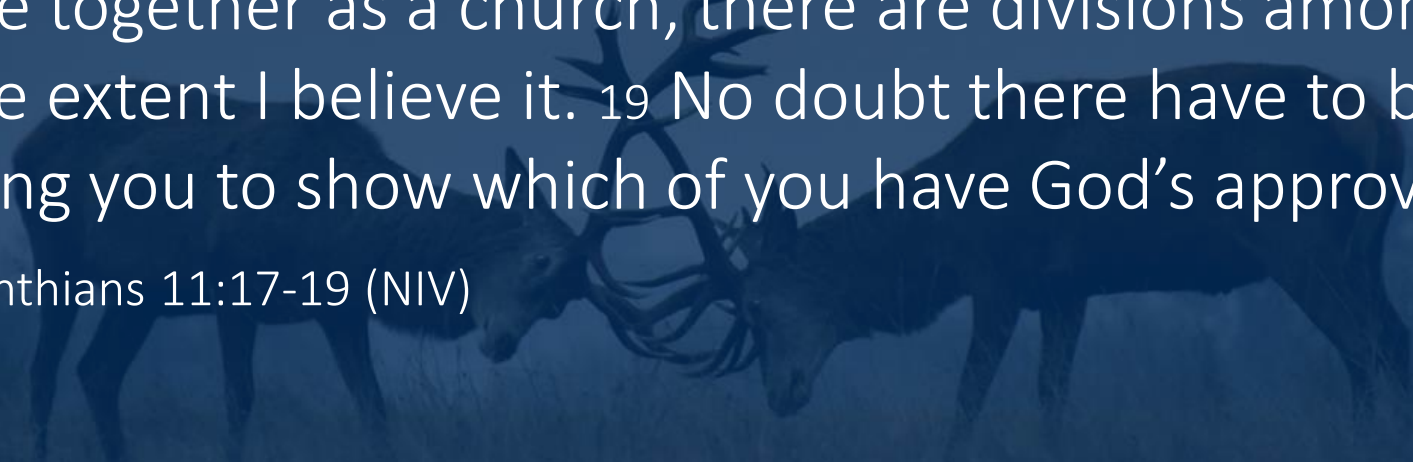
Is Conflict Good or Bad?

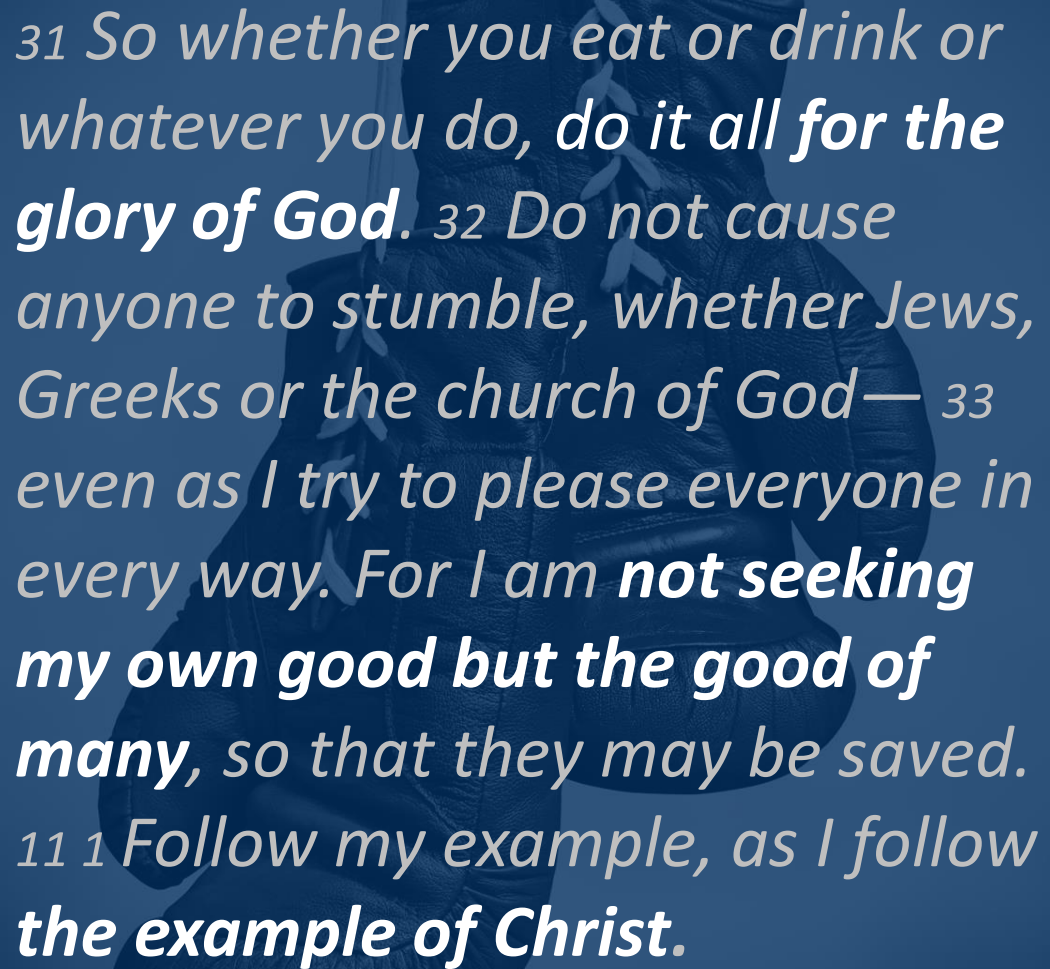


# BAD... BUT ALSO GOOD

17 In the following directives I have no praise for you, for your meetings do more harm than good. 18 In the first place, I hear that when you come together as a church, there are divisions among you, and to some extent I believe it. 19 No doubt there have to be differences among you to show which of you have God's approval.

1 Corinthians 11:17-19 (NIV)





*31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the **glory of God**. 32 Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— 33 even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am **not seeking my own good but the good of many**, so that they may be saved. 11 1 Follow my example, as I follow **the example of Christ**.*

1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1 (NIV)

# GOOD CONFLICT

Benefits of Conflict:

- God is glorified when we resolve conflict and become more unified
- Needs are served when we resolve issues by “seeking... the good of many”
- The church grows to be more Christ-like by correctly teaching the truth and following Christ’s example

# REFRAINING FROM CONFLICT

When should you avoid  
conflict?



# AVOID CONFLICT

## Overlook it

Fools show their annoyance at once, but the prudent overlook an insult.

Proverbs 12:16 (NIV)

A person's wisdom yields patience; it is to one's glory to overlook an offense

Proverbs 19:11 (NIV)

## Ignore it

Don't have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels.

2 Timothy 2:23 (NIV)

## Discuss it

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires.

James 1:19-20 (NIV)



# WHEN YOU CAN'T AVOID CONFLICT

A blue-tinted photograph of two horses in a body of water. The horse on the left is rearing up on its hind legs, splashing water. The horse on the right is standing upright, looking towards the rearing horse. The background shows a fence and trees in the distance.

## Address it

Some issues are worth addressing even if it will lead to conflict:

- Issues that threaten someone's faith
- Issues that damage their relationships
- Issues of health and safety (substance abuse, etc.)

# RESOLVING CONFLICT

15 “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.  
16 But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’  
17 If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector.”

Matthew 18:15-17 (NIV)





# MATTHEW 18 PRINCIPLE

Just between the two of you

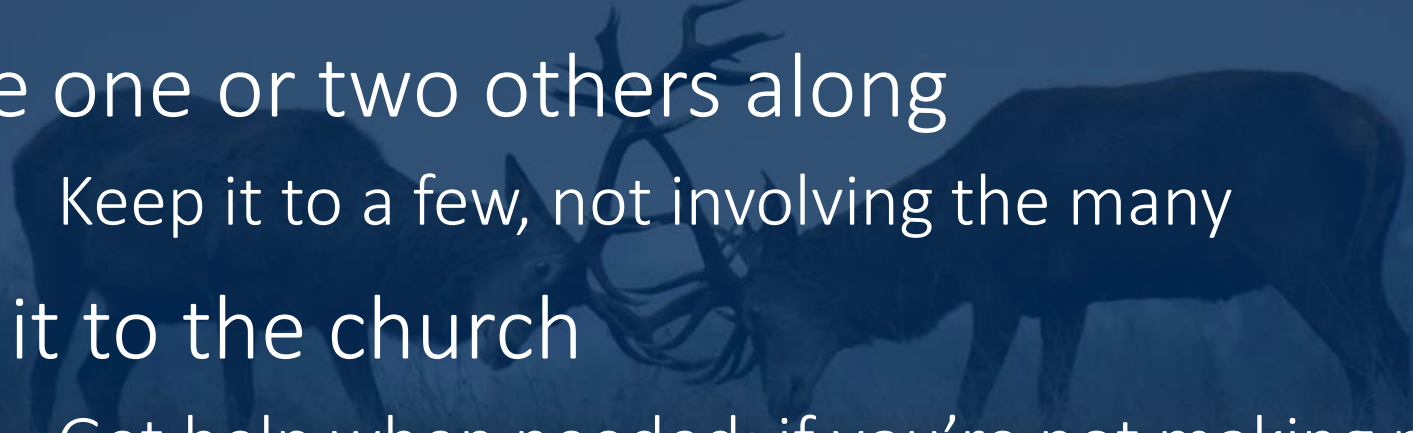
- Confront sin, and be open to being confronted

Take one or two others along

- Keep it to a few, not involving the many

Tell it to the church

- Get help when needed: if you're not making progress or need input from spiritually mature leaders



# TYPES OF CONFLICT

## Confronting Sin and Sinful Behavior

- Matthew 18: “if your brother sins...”
- Example: Galatians 2: Paul confronts Peter about sin of showing favoritism

## Relationship Issues

- Often includes poor communication or hurt feelings
- Example: Genesis 25-32: Jacob and Esau resolve differences involving birthright and their father’s blessing

## Differences in Matters of Opinion

- Arguments over good vs bad, right vs wrong, or better vs best
- Example: Acts 15: Paul and Barnabas debate with James and the apostles over conversion of Gentiles at the Council in Jerusalem

# CONFRONTING SIN

## Example: Paul confronts Peter

11 When Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. 13 The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. 14 When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

Galatians 2:11-14 (NIV)

# CONFRONTING SIN



Goal: Repentance

Process: Matthew 18

- Show them their sin – discuss how they sinned against you.
- If they do not repent, get help by bringing along one or two others who are spiritually mature.
- If they still do not repent, get leadership involved (house church leader, deacon, evangelist, elder)

Practical:

- Be approachable and open to having your sin discussed

# RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

## Example: Jacob and Esau

4 But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept. 5 Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. “Who are these with you?” he asked.

Jacob answered, “They are the children God has graciously given your servant.”

6 Then the female servants and their children approached and bowed down. 7 Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down.

8 Esau asked, “What’s the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?”

“To find favor in your eyes, my lord,” he said.

9 But Esau said, “I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself.”

Genesis 33:4-9 (NIV)



# RELATIONSHIP ISSUES

Goal: Forgiveness

Process:

- Listen to both sides
- Focus on the issues, not emotions
- Move toward having those in conflict express forgiveness to each other and ask forgiveness of God

Practicals:

- Issues are not fully resolved until they are fully forgiven
- Matthew 18 context: v. 21-22 forgive “seventy-seven times”, v. 23-35 parable of the unmerciful servant

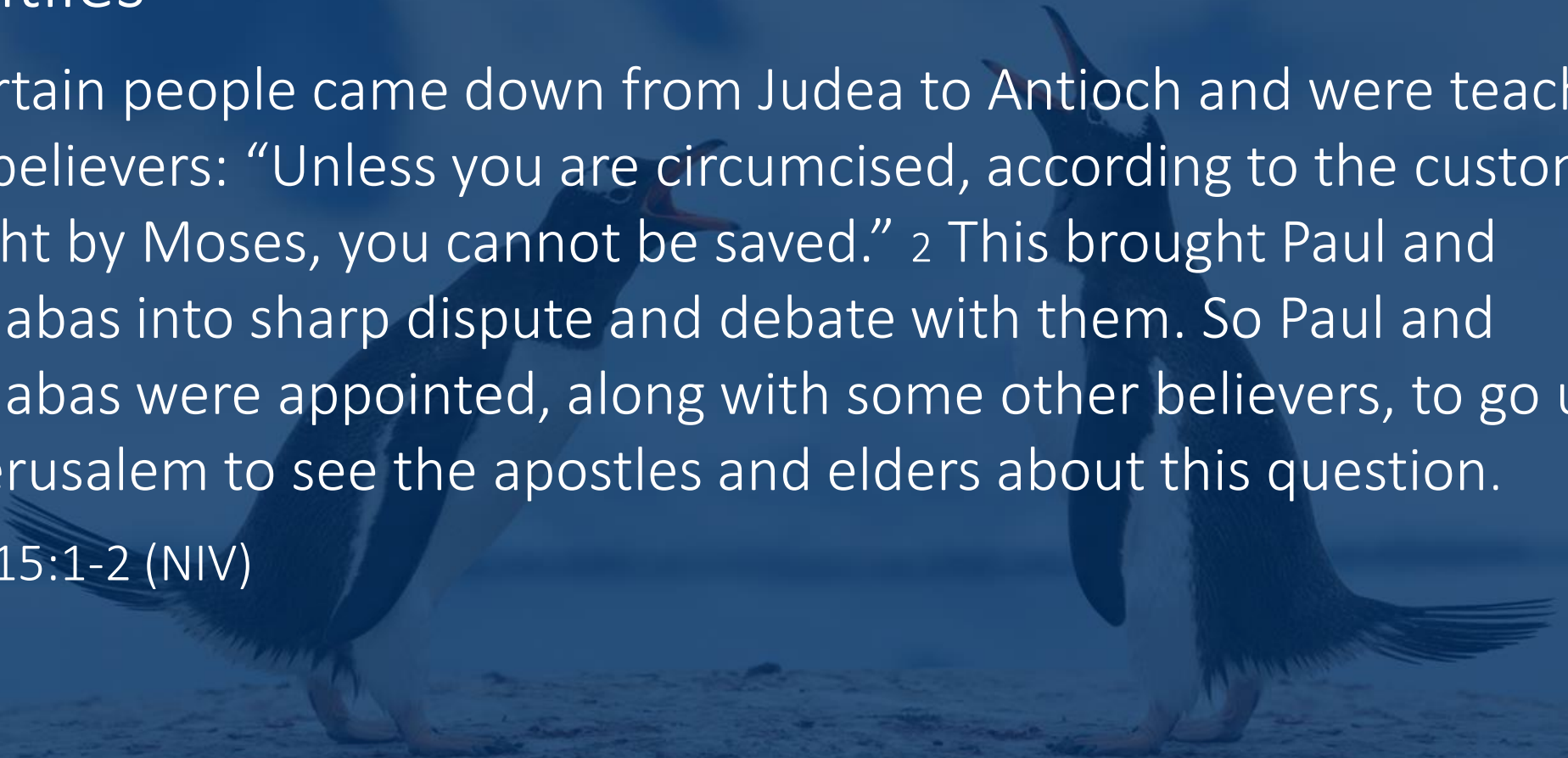


# DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

## Example: Council in Jerusalem and conversion of Gentiles

<sup>1</sup> Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the believers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” <sup>2</sup> This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

Acts 15:1-2 (NIV)



# DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

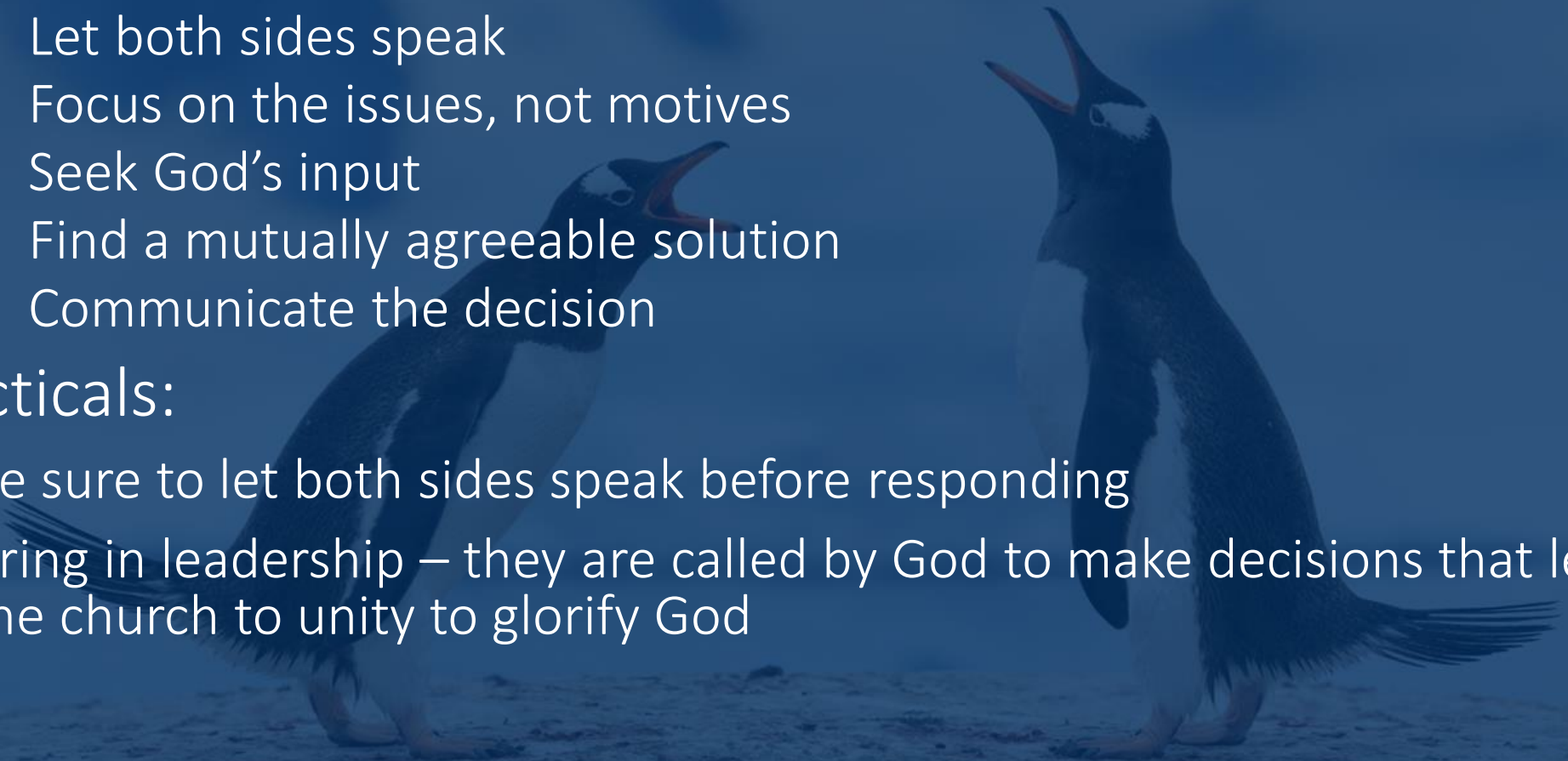
Goal: Unity

Process:

- Let both sides speak
- Focus on the issues, not motives
- Seek God's input
- Find a mutually agreeable solution
- Communicate the decision

Practicals:

- Be sure to let both sides speak before responding
- Bring in leadership – they are called by God to make decisions that lead the church to unity to glorify God



# RESOLVING CONFLICT

Confronting Sin:

Repentance

Relationship Issues:

Forgiveness

Differences of Opinion:

Unity



# QUICKLY

"Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison."

Matthew 5:25 (NIV)

# CONFLICT



## Recognize:

- Conflict can be good if it's resolved righteously
- Three common types of conflict:
  - Confronting Sin
  - Relationship Issues
  - Differences of Opinion

## Refrain:

- Sometimes it's better to avoid a conflict...
- ...but there are times where conflict is necessary

## Resolve:

- Settle matters quickly (Matt 5:25)
- Goals: Repentance, Forgiveness, Unity

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Share about a recent conflict:

- What type was it (sin, relationship, difference of opinion)?
- How did you resolve it (repentance, forgiveness, unity)?
- How could you have avoided it (overlook it, ignore it, discuss it)?

Do you currently have a conflict you need to resolve?

- How will you address it?
- Will you need help?
- Who will you ask for help?





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