

Centuries of Strife

Healthy Conflict, Healthy Church (October 25th, 2020)

PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- You **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.
- Review the learning objective to focus the conversation, read the primary scriptures as a group, summarize the main points, ask the questions, and use supporting texts to enhance the concepts.

DISCUSSION

Opening Prayer: (1-2 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's a suggestion of how your group can invite God into your time together.

Thank the Father for loving us so much that He came to us in the person of Jesus to sacrifice Himself on our behalf while we were still sinners! Pray that as we navigate the chaotic waters of our cultural moment that we would humbly listen and obey the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we seek to love one another, just as you have loved us. Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to remind us of the spiritual victory we have over sin in Jesus Christ! Pray that the Spirit would help us find the right words to speak, new opportunities to serve our neighbors, and continue to transform us into the likeness of Jesus!

Discussion: (45-60 minutes)

What's Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny led us into the third week of our new series titled *Centuries of Strife*. Pastor Danny focusses our attention to *Acts 6* and the inadvertent conflict created between the leaders of the church and the overlooked Hellenistic Jews. Pastor Danny uses these texts to explore how the early church handled situations where certain people groups were overlooked in the church. Then, he encourages us with a helpful framework so that we might be able to process our complaints and determine whether we ought to bring them up to someone in the church. Finally, Pastor Danny highlights the healthy culture of conflict resolution in the early church that allowed them to move forward and continue the spread of the word of God!

“Great faith is a product of great fights.” – Smith Wigglesworth

Suggested Questions

Check-In: *Icebreaker* – We all know that children complain about a wide variety of things! What was the one thing that you complained about the most when you were a child?

Study Tip: This week's sermon deals with the conflict between the Hellenistic Jews against the Hebraic Jews. These two parties formed as a result of the Jewish *diasporas* (the Greek word meaning "scatterings"). The Hellenistic Jews would have lived outside of the geographical region of Israel due to voluntary commercial or conquest-oriented dispersions, or the involuntary exiles of the Northern (722 B.C.) and Southern (586 B.C.) kingdoms. One more major *diaspora* occurred under King Ptolemy in Egypt (around 300 B.C.) and extended the Jews throughout the known world (Acts 2:9-11). Therefore, the linguistic and traditional differences between the two parties would have been glaring, a source of more divisions in the ministry of the early church. Inevitably, conflict arose as the Hellenistic Jews began to express their γογγυσμός (*goggysmos*). This Greek noun meaning complaint or murmuring is the exact word used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament to describe the Israelites grumbling toward Moses in the wilderness (Ex. 15-17; Num. 11-14). In those stories, God continues to miraculously provide for the Israelites while they refuse to obey and forfeit the promised land. *How would this New Testament story play out?* In the midst of Israel's grumbling, God reminds Moses that he has an organizational structure – a **team** of people – ready to serve so that Moses can focus on meeting with God on behalf of the Israelites (Ex. 18; Num. 11:16-30). In the same way, the apostles are convicted that they need to form a **team** to διακονεῖν (*diakonein*; *to serve*) the tables and distribute food and finances (Acts 4:35-37) to the widows. *Recognize that Greek word?* Scholars suggest that this story marks the beginning of the office of *deacon* in the church (1 Tim. 3:8-13)! The incorrect way to read Acts 6 is to assume that the office of *teaching pastor* is more important than that of a *deacon* or *servant*. Rather, Acts 6 is a crucial call to the church to step into the ministerial role and good works that God has prepared so the body may function properly (see Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12). As we identify conflict in this study guide, begin asking yourself how **YOU** might be the solution!

Objective #1: Process your complaints through Pastor Danny's framework for healthy conflict.

Primary Texts: Acts 6:1 – Pastor Danny begins by talking about how relationships tend to needlessly break due to either the lack of conflict or the mishandling of conflict. Within the church, Pastor Danny makes the point that we will inevitably experience conflict as a diverse body of people with the God-given mission to learn how to love each other. **Think about a complaint you may have about the church (do not feel obligated to share unless you feel led) and put them into Pastor Danny's suggested framework: (1) Does your complaint really matter? (2) Who can you share this complaint with? (3) Would it be wise to share the complaint? (4) How should I voice the concern? Which one of these questions is the most difficult for you to answer as it pertains to your complaint?**

Supporting Texts: (Dealing with Conflict) Matt. 18:15-20; James 1:19-21, 3:16-17, 4:1-10;

Objective #2: Establish a first step towards conflict resolution inside the church.

Primary Texts: Acts 6:2-5a; Ephesians 4:25-32 – Next, Pastor Danny looks at the solution the apostles came up with to resolve the conflict. He argues that the problem was probably not solved instantly and there may or may not have been a miraculous sense of peace that swept the church. Instead, Pastor Danny highlights that the groups involved were pleased because their culture of trust made healthy conflict resolution possible. **What do you think would be a great first step to healthily approach the complaint you wrestled with in question #1? What factors are preventing you from taking this step?**

Objective #3: Identify how you can (re)orient your complaint around the Gospel of Jesus!

Primary Texts: Acts 6:5b-7; Matthew 5:23-24; Luke 17:3-4; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Colossians 3:12-17 – Finally, Pastor Danny's last words of encouragement are to (1) fight about things that matter, (2) let the Gospel help you fight with courage and compassion, and (3) have courage to stay focused on the mission. **What are some of the things that God might be leading you to do so that we as a church can come together to do the beautiful work of keeping our church healthy and holy?**

Closing Prayer: (5-10 minutes)

In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.

Thank our Heavenly Father for sending His son to die for our sins and release us from the bondage of our spiritual enemy! Ask that the Holy Spirit would continue to equip us to live, love, and forgive like Jesus in the various situations of conflict and strife that we may face. Finally, pray that we as a church would unite as a people who are *known by* our love for one another as we humbly seek to resolve our internal issues and learn how to grow closer to you through them.

THROUGHOUT THE WEEK

-Welcome Back!: We would love to have you *safely* join us for one of our three in-person services (9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m., and 5:00 p.m.). Reserve a ticket each Wednesday starting at 9:00 am by visiting our [Welcome Back Website](#)

- Fall 2020 Daily Reader: Interested in diving deeper? You can spend the next 8 weeks walking with us through the entire Bible as you to put on your kingdom lens through this difficult season! You can find the daily reader at [3Crosses.org/fall2020](https://3crosses.org/fall2020)

-Stay up to date with Coronavirus Ministry Opportunities: Help us out by pointing the people in your Community Group to [3Crosses.org/coronavirus](https://3crosses.org/coronavirus). If you or anyone in your group is looking to serve food in our pantry, access spiritual care, or seek financial assistance, you can find all you need at [3Crosses.org/neighborhood](https://3crosses.org/neighborhood)

- Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week! Pray that the members of your group would begin to seek resolution to conflicts in their lives!

-Community Group Fall 2020: For more information about joining a group, leading a group, or general inquiries, contact AJ at avanegas@3crosses.org