

SERIES	Untangled: Working through Conflict
BIBLE	Matthew 7:1- 6. Psalm 139:23-24
TITLE/TOPIC	It Starts with Looking at Me
OVERVIEW	As God exists in perfect fellowship with Himself, He created humans to be relational beings. But human fellowship is far from perfect – we are often tangled up with conflicts, offenses, and strife. God’s Word has much to say about untangling our relationships, one step at a time. Come learn why relational peace is so important to God, how conflict resolution begins by looking in the mirror, how to take ownership for your part in a conflict, and how to move forward in God when others don’t want to reconcile with you.
SCRIPTURE BREAKDOWN	<p>Intro – When we have conflicts the most human, natural thing to do is place blame on others. In our flesh we are quick to see the faults in others and usually come to decisions about how evil people are, or what punishment should come upon them. This “they need to change” approach will only tangle relationships further. God has a better way.</p> <p>Today – Conflict resolution begins by looking in the mirror. Before I point out sin in you, I need God to show the sin in me.</p> <p>3 steps of wisdom in moments of conflict:</p> <p>Matthew 7:1 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.</p> <p>1. Do not judge (1-2)</p> <p>Do not pretend to know the mind, heart or motives of another. And do not pretend to be able to make a decision about that person’s spiritual condition and final spiritual state.</p> <p>Only God holds the standard of righteousness and the ability to measure the mind, heart, motives of humans. Only God</p> <p>The faulty, biased, human standard you use to evaluate others will be used against you – and you will not like the result.</p> <p>³“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.</p> <p>2. First examine yourself with integrity (3-5a)</p>

Don't focus on the little things in others when it is obvious that there are bigger issues in your own life. Humble yourself. Assume that you are not perfect. Courageously acknowledge your shortcomings to God.

Pray the prayer of Psalm 139. **Psalm 139:** ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.

²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

When God reveals sin in your life, confess it and by faith receive the forgiveness secured for you through Jesus.

I John 1: ⁸ If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

This is how you deal with your big issues, the planks in your own eyes. After acknowledging and confessing and receiving forgiveness you are free to address the issue in someone else.

Without this process of self-examination you are a hypocrite, an actor, a person pretending to be something they are not. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because they honored him with their lips but their hearts were far from God.

Matthew 7:5b ... and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.

⁶ "Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

3. Carefully, when hearts are soft to receive, share truth that would remove the speck from your brother's eye. (5b-6)

Removing a speck requires the patient's consent and agreement that something harmful is present and needs to be removed. No doctor can perform a procedure on an alert patient to who denies they need help.

*We must be sensitive to the heart of the person we seek to speak a word of correction to. We must pray for God to soften their heart so they can receive hard truth.

The doctor must have a calm body, a steady hand and clear eyesight to remove a speck from the eye. This doctor must be at peace. This doctor must want to help this patient – not do harm.

*Since we have done the work of examining ourselves with humility, now we can see other clearly. Now that we have acknowledged our own sinfulness again, we should have mercy on a fellow sinner. Because we have freshly received the cleansing and forgiveness of Jesus, we should desire the same for our brother or sister who needs correcting. As we have been shown mercy, so should we be showing mercy even as we gently share the truth of correction. As God has not repaid us evil for evil, so we should desire blessings and peace and joy for the one who needs correction.

	<p>Without being carefully, it is possible to choose the wrong time to share a word of correction. God’s truth is sacred, holy, to be revered. God’s truth is more valuable than pearls. We should not throw these things around lightly or without thoughtfulness. If the person who needs a word of correction is not in a state of mind to listen, don’t give the word. God doesn’t want His words to be mistreated, or trampled upon, or misunderstood as provoking a fight. The wrong timing can produce a violent reaction.</p>
<p>GOSPEL</p>	<p>How does this sermon bring people to the Gospel?</p> <p>Jesus is qualified to be our judge because He has no sin of His own – no specks and no planks in His eyes.</p> <p>But instead of judging us harshly, Jesus was gentle and merciful, and took all the judgment of all the sin of the world upon Himself. Jesus bore the correction and judgment of God when He died for our sin. Jesus then rose again and offers Himself as the way to be forgiven, made new. Through Jesus we can treat people with humility, respect, and forgiveness even when we work through conflicts and need to speak hard truth. Jesus empowers us to untangle our relationships.</p>
<p>NEXTSTEPS</p>	<p>Begin Connect Engage Grow Disciple</p> <p>Connect in deep, life-giving relationships with other believers.</p> <p>Grow through conflicts by obeying Jesus commands to not judge, examine yourself first, then carefully deliver God’s truth.</p>