

# THE STRUGLE

## Week 2 - Rage, Resentment, and Running Away

### THE MAIN POINT

Everyone handles conflict in various ways. Some of us express anger or hurt directly; others of us hold grudges or try to avoid the situation altogether. It's important to be aware of our own patterns of dealing with conflict. In this meeting we will find out more about how students currently deal with conflict in their lives.

### MATERIALS NEEDED

- Snacks
- Printed materials for the activity - separate document

### GETTING STARTED

Welcome everyone. Ask them how their week is going. Thank them for joining the group. Go over the rules before jumping in to the discussion.

#### **RULES FOR SMALL GROUP:**

**Commitment** - Commit to being at every group meeting (make it a priority!)

**Confidentiality** - What is shared here stays here.

**Be honest or be silent** - don't make up an answer just to have one. Sometimes the most honest answer is no answer, so if you need to, just say pass.

**Respect** - for one another, their thoughts/ideas/opinions (no put downs).

Last week we started talking about conflict. Conflict is simply a part of life. People handle conflict in many ways - some are confrontational, some more cautious. If your way of handling conflict were an ANIMAL, what would it be?

(This is meant to be "not too serious." Have fun with it!)

Examples:     **A crocodile** - lying in wait, ready to attack but waiting for just the right moment  
                      **A dog** - barking unnecessarily; making a big deal out of *absolutely nothing*  
                      **A rabbit** - stays still, hoping no one notices, then runs away

## ACTIVITY

### Rage, Resentment, Run Away!

**DIRECTIONS:** Split your group into two teams. Give each team a "conflict story" from the list below on a piece of paper. Each team will act out the conflict. Give each member of the team a role card (included below). They will either handle the conflict with rage, resentment, or run away. After they act it out, have the young people on the other team try and guess which role they are (rage, resentment, or run away).

An example:

*Person A tells Person B a secret, and asks them to keep it quiet.  
Person A later finds out Person B told their secret to several  
other friends. How will Person A react?*

*Card #1 - Rage (direct expression of anger/frustration)*

*Card #2 - Resentment (bitterness, passive-aggressiveness)*

*Card #3 - "Run away!" (avoidance)*

## GOING DEEPER

Last week we talked about how conflict is unavoidable. But what's interesting is the way each of us deals with conflict. Some of us just immediately burst out in anger (rage). Some of us take it out on other people and act bitterly and petty towards them (resentment). Others of us hold it in, keep it to ourselves, feel the tension of it, but still avoid addressing the issue (run away).

We're going to look at a real-life conflict situation which involved all three of these approaches. This drama is from the Bible; if you ever wondered if everyone in the Bible were somehow "perfect," this incident may surprise you.

First, a preview of the characters: **Read Genesis 25:27-28 or tell the brief story in your own words.**

- Who are the members of this family? *Isaac and Rebekah are the parents of Esau and Jacob, twin brothers.*
- What alliances do you see within the family? *Isaac favored Esau - both his firstborn and a "wild game hunter" - while Rebekah favored Jacob.*

**Now tell the story from Genesis 27:1-45 in your own words.**

- Let's match the three ways of coping with conflict with the people in this account.
  - a. Which person seems most bound by RAGE? (*Esau, Gen. 27:36, 41-42*)  
What does Esau plan to do when he finds out Jacob stole his blessing?
  - b. Which person seems most RESENTFUL? (*Rebekah, Gen. 27:5-13*)  
Toward whom do you think Rebekah is resentful? (*maybe her husband Isaac, who has the authority to give blessing; maybe Esau, since he's dad's "favorite"?*)  
How does Rebekah manipulate her husband's blessing?
  - c. Which person RUNS AWAY? (*Jacob, Gen. 27:43-45*)  
How do you feel toward Jacob for running away as he did?
- Which person are YOU most like when it comes to conflict - Esau (rage), Rebekah (resentment) or Jacob ("Run away!")?

Proverbs is a book in the Old Testament of the Bible. It's full of wise sayings about how to live your life, including how to handle conflict. Below are three verses - each connected to one of these ways of coping with conflict.

Let's read these Proverbs and talk a bit about each of these approaches to conflict.

### **RAGE (Proverbs 15:18)**

*A hot-tempered person stirs up conflict,  
But the one who is patient calms a quarrel.*

- Have you ever, in rage, said or done something you later wished you hadn't?
- Is there a time and place for being "direct" with your emotions?
- If RAGE is your "go to" expression of conflict, why?
- Do you have control over your emotions, or do your emotions control you?
- How can responding to conflict with rage negatively affect relationships?

### **RESENTMENT (Proverbs 16:28)**

*A perverse person stirs up conflict,  
And a gossip separates close friends.*

- When something goes wrong between you and someone else, on a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to hold a grudge?
- Nursing a grudge can be stressful, but is there anything about doing so that feels *good*?
- What are five ways people you know "stir up conflict" without being direct and honest?
- "Perverse" is a strong word. Why do you think the Proverb uses "perverse" to describe people who stir up bad feelings between others?
- What are the long-term consequences of being a person who creates interpersonal "drama"?

### **"RUN AWAY!" (Proverbs 28:1)**

*The wicked flee, though no one pursues,  
But the righteous are as bold as a lion.*

- What feelings motivate someone to "run away" from a conflict?
- Why do you think Proverbs describes people who run away as wicked?
- If "running away" is your "go to" approach to conflict, what about being bold causes you to feel afraid?
- In what ways do people avoid conflict? What is the most extreme thing someone you know has done to escape an uncomfortable situation?
- If you get a reputation for avoiding conflict, how do people see you over time?

## TAKE AWAY

It's obvious that neither rage, resentment, or running away are good and healthy ways to handle a conflict. Our challenge to you this week is to recognize which one of these you are most like and try to handle your conflicts differently.

If you are a person who responds in rage, maybe you need to go to someone and apologize.

If you are person who acts out in resentment when you get in a conflict, there might be someone you need to apologize to.

If you are a person who runs away from conflict, you might need to peacefully approach your friend or family member and tell them how you feel.

Let us know how this goes when you come back next week!

## **"Rage, Resentment, or Run away!" Conflict Scenarios**

Scenario 1: You just got home from a long day at school. You took two really hard tests, played hard in PE, and finally get a moment to relax. You sit on the couch and start enjoying your favorite video game. Two minutes later your mom walks into the room, starts shouting that you're being lazy, and asks you to complete a list of chores immediately.

Scenario 2: You and your boyfriend/girlfriend have been going out for a while. However, you feel like they have been spending a lot more time with their other friends and not giving you much attention. You are going through a lot right now and want to be able to talk to them, but they just aren't giving you the time of day.

Scenario 3: You told your best friend about someone you had a crush on. Later that night at a party, you notice your best friend "talking" to your crush. They're obviously flirting. Next day you see a pic on Instagram of them together. You read the caption and find out they're now dating.

Scenario 4: You're in a serious discussion over texting with a close friend who's struggling. You're in the middle of trying to help them with their problem, but the bell is about to ring. You sit in your desk in class and continue typing. You feel like you're really helping them with the situation. Suddenly, your brilliant advice is interrupted with an "EXCUSE ME!" from your teacher. Everyone is looking at you. The teacher is red in the face and starts to write you up. He asks you to hand over your phone.

Scenario 5: You went out for buffalo wild wings with friends last night and you ordered some extra so you'd have leftovers. Lunch in the cafeteria was super lame, so you are looking forward to some delicious honey barbecue boneless wings. You get home, stomach growling, open the fridge, and the boneless wings are gone. You walk into the living room, and there's your brother playing video games. Sitting on the coffee table in front of him is the empty black Styrofoam container...

Cut these cards out to give each young person a role for the activity.

RAGE: You react with ANGER. Lots of yelling. No desire to make sense of the situation or respond logically.

RESENTMENT: You respond with bitterness, passive-aggressiveness, and just generally act petty toward the person.

RUN AWAY: (Not literally) You just avoid the conflict all together. You try and change the subject or deflect blame.

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