



This is the second week of *The Lord of the Rings*, a series designed to address issues related to marriage, sex, dating, etc. The topic for our discussion this week is conflict resolution and learning to fight fair.

Lord of the Rings

- **What's the biggest fight you've ever been in with your spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend? What was the cause of the fight?**

- **How do you resolve conflict in your marriage or dating relationships?**

- ***Read James 4:1-10***
 - ◆ **What are some "hot buttons" that make you angry?**
 - ◆ **How can you diffuse the anger?**
 - ◆ **How do you deal with conflict?** Do you ignore it, silent treatment, fly off the handle, talk through it calmly?

- ***Read Ephesians 4:26-31***
 - ◆ **Discuss how we "hit below the belt" by keeping letting potential conflict "stew" below the surface and never deal with it.**
 - ◆ **How can the words we use over time erode our marriages?**
 - ◆ **Have you ever held onto something (a grudge, a hurt, an offense)? In the end, did you find it hurt you more?**

- **If the goal in conflict is restoration, how can we best do that with our spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend?**

- **Is there any conflict in your marriage/dating relationship that needs to be dealt with? How will you deal with it this week? Will you make a commitment to Fight Fair?**



Lord of the Rings

GG Leaders:

Thank you again for giving me feedback about your groups. Some of you have done a great job of letting me know exactly what is happening and what positives and negatives you are experiencing in your group. I am really excited to hear about some “big wins” in a couple of our groups as some newer folks are really beginning to value the small group atmosphere and are getting plugged in. If you have any specific testimonies you want to share, let me know so we can pass them on to the rest of the leaders so we can all celebrate the wins together.

There are a lot of questions in the Travel Guide this week. Be aware of this and move your conversation efficiently so you don't go over on time. Plan ahead and know the questions so you can skip questions your group may not need and focus on questions that hit your group at its greatest need. Be sure to spend some time in at least one of the Scripture passages . . . I suggest the Ephesians passage as primary, because it bridges to the application point of working through conflict and resolving it. However, for those who struggle with the root of the issue, the James passage will be helpful, too.

Andrew

This is the second week of *The Lord of the Rings*, a series designed to address issues related to marriage, sex, dating, etc. The topic for our discussion this week is conflict resolution and learning to fight fair.

This weeks' topic is on conflict resolution. The series is focused on marriage and dating relationships, so most of the discussion should center around the issues raised in these relationships. However, if someone brings up a situation that reveals a seed of bitterness or unforgiveness, you may want to pursue it a little. Sometimes unforgiveness toward someone outside our marriages can breed bitterness that can spill into our marriages and breed conflict within. If you sense a situation like this in your group, encourage the folks to deal with the issue at its root.

- **What's the biggest fight you've ever been in with your spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend? What was the cause of the fight?**

Conversation-starter and diagnostic question . . . listen carefully, but move on quickly.

- **How do you resolve conflict in your marriage or dating relationships?**

This diagnostic question leads into the Bible passages. You may want to revisit the answers here as you work through the follow up questions below. Particularly for those who tend to ignore the issue or sweep it under the rug. Keep mental notes here to breed healthy conversation later.

- ***Read James 4:1-10***

This passage highlights the “motivators” of unjust anger. Each of the following questions need to be related back to this passage. As you get an answer to each question, do a follow up for each person similar to “What motivator do you see in this passage that explains your ‘hot button?’” And “now that you see the biblical truth behind your ‘hot button,’ what can you adjust in your attitude to diffuse the anger?” Etc.

- ◆ **What are some "hot buttons" that make you angry?**
- ◆ **How can you diffuse the anger?**
- ◆ **How do you deal with conflict?** Do you ignore it, silent treatment, fly off the handle, talk through it calmly?

Listen carefully to this last question. Use the answers you receive as a lead-in to the Ephesians passage. Again, the James passage helps highlight the root of our anger. The Ephesians passage helps us get past it.

- **Read Ephesians 4:26-31**
 - ◆ **Discuss how we "hit below the belt" by keeping letting potential conflict "stew" below the surface and never deal with it.**
 - ◆ **How can the words we use over time erode our marriages?**

I would definitely take a moment here to focus on the “extreme words” we often use in arguments. When we get in fights we often say, “You always . . .” Or “You never . . .” Almost without exception, this just isn’t true. When we use extreme language, it builds a wall over time that invites a response with equally extreme language. Encourage your folks to make a habit of keeping current arguments current and to not bring past issues into the argument unless they are *really* relevant . . . which leads us to . . .

- ◆ **Have you ever held onto something (a grudge, a hurt, an offense)? In the end, did you find it hurt you more?**
- **If the goal in conflict is restoration, how can we best do that with our spouse/boyfriend/girlfriend?**

As you discuss this question, refer back to the scriptures above. Essentially, our goal is to “fight fair:” 1 - don’t sweep problems under the rug, but work them out. 2 - Don’t bring in past issues and don’t use extreme language. 3 - seek and give forgiveness to each other as the conflict gets resolved. 4 - When forgiveness is extended, try to keep it that way and not to bring it back up in the future.

- **Is there any conflict in your marriage/dating relationship that needs to be dealt with? How will you deal with it this week? Will you make a commitment to Fight Fair?**

Application question . . . Don’t leave without measurable goals for the coming week!