



## **Conflict: A Key to Laughter and Peace Michael Jr.**

**Focus** Life can bring in people and circumstances to reveal where you are not free. God wants us to press into conflict so He can show us where we need freedom and when we need to bring our burdens to Him. Invite Jesus into every area of your life, and He will make you free.

**Fun** What is your favorite or most memorable fall experience as a child?

**Review** Key Scriptures: James 4:1; Matthew 11:28

### **1. God uses conflict to show us where we need freedom.**

Conflict is a key to finding peace. Life will bring you people and circumstances to reveal where you're not free. Michael Jr. shares a story about a time he got upset. His wife expressed to him that he didn't listen, and he became defensive. But in the midst of the conflict, he paused to pray, and God reminded him of a time in 9th grade when he was put in a special education class. God revealed to Michael Jr. that he got upset because he was still trying to prove he didn't belong in that class. When we choose to push into the conflict and let God use it to shape and change us, we find new levels of healing, freedom, and peace.

### **2. God wants us to press into conflict and give Him our burdens.**

As Christians, we have to choose whether we will lean into conflict, ignore it, or run from it. During times of conflict, it is important to pray and give God our burdens. When Michael Jr. was a kid, he had some bad experiences at church. Because of those experiences, he grew to avoid conflict. But often, God wants to speak to us through life situations. There are times when we think conflict is about other people, when really it is about what is happening in our hearts. If we

don't press into conflict, we may miss what God has for us, because conflict is a tool God can use to shape and refine us.

### **3. Open the door of your life to Jesus.**

In many houses there is a "good room" where all the furniture is neat and tidy, and it doesn't look like the rest of the house. The "good room" is usually in the front near the window, and it is the place we bring guests. In the same way, many people will only invite Jesus into the "good room" of their lives, even though the rest of the house is messy and needs to be cleaned. If you invite Jesus into all your life—every room—He will come in and make you clean.

**\*Group Dynamics Idea\*** Remember that new people are just getting to know each other. Help them build relationships with other members by connecting them to others with common interests, promoting sharing amongst the group, and fostering an atmosphere of trust.

### **Discuss**

1. Why do we often choose to avoid or run from conflict?
2. Can you think of a time God used conflict to bring you to a new level of freedom? If you're comfortable, share this experience with the group.
3. How do you practically give your burdens to God?
4. Share about a time you gave your burdens to God, and you felt new levels of peace.
5. Michael Jr. gave the analogy of the "good room." Why do people only show Jesus the "good room" of their lives rather than inviting Him into all of it? What areas of your life or "other rooms" do you need to invite Jesus into?
6. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through this message?

### **Take Home**

As we conclude, remember the following:

- Life can bring you people and circumstances to reveal where you're not free.
- Lean into your conflicts and bring your burdens to God.
- Open the door of your life, and let Jesus in.

## **Prayer**

Heavenly Father, please help us lean into the areas in our lives where there is conflict. Thank You for the way You use people and circumstances in our lives to show us areas where we need freedom. We invite You into every room in our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

**\*New Leader Tip\*** When people in your small group begin to connect with one another, a new dynamic of relational care has been established. Connecting with others means we've gone beyond the surface level of knowing others. You'll notice people are on a first-name basis and even ask one another about family or work life. People will connect through different things; for some, it's sports or work, and for others, it may be kids or a season of life. Intentionally develop the connection stage of your small group.