

**PREPARATION:**

Conflicts and broken relationships are a major concern within all groups and the church as a whole. Whether they are between Christians or non-Christians doesn't matter. This lesson may be uncomfortable for some people in the group. They will be looking at their relationships with others, Christians and non-Christians. You need to be sensitive to this potential for conflict. Allow the opportunity for forgiveness and healing to take place.

Put a limit on the amount of anger and bitterness that is vented with the entire group. Allow ample time after the meeting for prayer and counseling for individuals who have problems that are more serious in this area.

In the week prior to the meeting, pray for God's grace and peace during the meeting. Ask for His guidance and wisdom for yourself as leader.

Notes:

**PURPOSES:**

1. To understand the ideals of Godly Christian relationships
2. To apply these ideals to our personal relationships with Christians

**DIGGING DEEPER:**

Leviticus 19:16-18, Matthew 22:34-36, I Corinthians 1:10 Galatians 5:13-15, Philippians 2:1-4, James 5:8-9

**CREATIVITY FOR MEETINGS*****Day Work Project***

Maybe you know a local missionary or ministry that needs help. Visit any place of ministry. (drug treatment program, a pregnancy center, a homeless shelter, a ministry to truckers, etc.) Tour the program and participate in any activities or work projects in order to help them as a group!

***Children Can Get Involved, Too!***

Have the group children make cards and artwork to send to your group members as a surprise.

***E-Mail Messages***

After home group one evening, gather around a member's computer and spend time E-mailing short messages from each member to the absent member.

***Leaving On a Jet Plane***

Take a cell member's van, have everybody travel to the airport whenever a group member is going to, or returning from, the mission field or any other trip.

***America's Funniest Videos***

During a home group party or picnic, make a video of the event, complete with fun messages from each member. Make a "special meeting" that would be totally "unofficial". Let everybody share their funniest situations in their lives. Laugh together, sing your favorite songs together, have meal together and take a video of it all. When you do it next time, watch that video together, it will be fun!

**OPENING PRAYER/WORSHIP** (15 minutes)

*"Dear Lord: We come to You with praise, thanksgiving, and awe for how You've worked in our lives. We're forever grateful for Your grace, which abounds more and more. May You direct us and guide us as we learn from Your servant Paul how to mend and prevent broken relationships. \_\_\_\_\_ (Special prayer requests and/or thanksgivings may be added here.) In Jesus' name, Amen."*

**ANNOUNCEMENTS/SPECIAL OFFERINGS** (5 minutes)

**GETTING STARTED** (20 minutes)

Start out by asking,

*"How many of you have grown or been comforted by another Christian?"*

Explain that good Christian friends are not only good for each other; they also show other people what it means to be a Christian.

Then ask, *"Were any of you attracted to Christianity by the love you saw in Christian relationships?"*

*"Did any of you ever reject the idea of becoming a Christian because of the example of improper Christian relationships?"* Let's see what Paul had to say about broken Christian relationships.

**HEARING THE WORD** (10 minutes)

*"I plead with Euodia and I plead with Syntyche to agree with each other in the Lord. Yes, and I ask you, loyal yokefellow, help these women who have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life.*

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus".*  
Philippians 4:2-7

**DOING THE WORD** (10 minutes)

Many people have been hurt and continue to be hurt through conflicts with other Christians. What can we learn from this passage about mending and preventing broken relationships? As members of the group respond, discuss what Paul means by:

1. *"agree with each other in the Lord"* - v.2 (Having the same mind in the Lord)
2. *"help"* - v.3 (We need to help other Christians to learn to agree.)
3. *"rejoice in the Lord always"* -v.4 (We need to always be joyful for our faith in Jesus, even when there are problems.)
4. *"let your gentleness be evident to all"* - v.5 (Why is gentleness important -in Christian relationships?)
5. *"do not be anxious, "but pray and be thankful"* - v.6 (How will a relaxed, confident, prayerful, thankful, attitude enhance Christian relationships?)
6. Does the seventh verse reflect the results of practicing the other exhortations? How?

**SHARING PRAYER CONCERNS/ANSWERS** (5 minutes)

**GROUP PRAYER** (15 minutes)

Pray together for unity and peace between the members of the group. Pray for God's love among the group members. If someone has anything against another – come to that person and repent. Than pray together for God's peace to be always between you.