

FRIENDZONE

Fighting Friends | Discussion Notes

Start off with a little activity to get people thinking about how they respond to conflict. If you are meeting in person, read out the following statements and ask people to raise a hand if they either agree or with the statement. If meeting on Zoom you may want to use the PowerPoint emailed out.

You might want to just go straight through or there might be some discussion that arises from each question.

- "I would tell a friend if they had broccoli in their teeth."
- "I am likely to avoid conflict if possible"
- "I appreciate people confronting me when I've done something wrong."
- "You can be a good friend without ever confronting your friends when they are in the wrong."
- "I have had an experience of conflict making my friendship closer"

Read Galatians 2:11-21 together. It might be helpful to explain the context of this passage. Paul travelled to Antioch to challenge Cephas (Peter's other name) because he had stopped eating with the Gentiles and had just been hanging out with the Jews. Paul challenges him publicly saying that what he is doing isn't in line with the Gospel which says that everyone is equal.

Philip explained that Paul gives us a good model for conflict by showing us how to have the right **motive**, **method** and **opportunity**. First up, the **motive** Paul has is that he loves Peter.

- Why is it important that we have the right motive for engaging in conflict?
- How can we check our motive?
- What do we do if we haven't got the motivation of love for the other person?

Next, we see that Paul uses the right **method**. Peter's mistake impacted those around him who were also falling into sin, so Paul confronts him publicly. The Consequences determine the Context. Most of the time, though, any confrontation will be done in private.

- Have you experienced a time when someone chose the wrong method, perhaps confronting in public what should have been said in private? What were the consequences?
- How do we make sure we are confronting people in the right context? What are the challenges around this?

Finally, Paul confronting Peter is an **opportunity** for them to grow closer in friendship. By judging Peter's actions as hypocritical but not calling Peter a hypocrite he is able to both change Peter's behaviour and **win a friend**. He was also able to remind everyone of the values of the Kingdom and the good news of the gospel.

- How can we make sure we aren't judging people but are still challenging their actions?
- What difference do you think it would make to your friendships if you could do conflict well?

ACTIVITY

Through the week, try to reflect on one experience of conflict you had - were the motives and method healthy? Did you run away from the conflict or try to address it well? Write down how you felt about the conflict and whether you think it leaves you feeling better about the relationship.