



## Thermal Nuclear Family Week Two

### Opening Prayer:

God, we want to use our time to connect with each other and to hear from you. Help us to make this circle a safe place, and help us to be transformed by your love and truth.

### Talk It Over:

This week we looked at the idea that all families will encounter conflict. The specific topics that spark conflict and the ways in which we handle conflict will vary, but we can all be sure that conflict is bound to happen.

- What does the idea that conflict inevitable will happen stir up in you? Are you stressed by conflict or drawn to it?
- How did the family you grew up with handle conflict?
- How do you typically handle conflict now? How has your style of conflict progressed over the years?

### Read James 4:1-2

The big idea here is that the outside conflict we experience is likely because of internal conflict. And by not looking inside of ourselves to face and own what is happening inside of us, we often make things worse by blaming others and holding others responsible for our happiness. We also give too much power to others when we make them responsible for our happiness. In turn, simply by owning and acknowledging that part of conflict is being fueled by the fact we aren't getting what we want, we can help defuse a situation, bring more truth to the conversation, and gain powerful perspective.

- Have you dealt with someone who tried to hold you responsible for their happiness?
- Can you look back at a conflict you likely made worse by not taking proper ownership?
- Who do you know who does a good job at owning their happiness even in the midst of conflict?
- Looking at your current life, is there a conflict you are facing that you might need to rework based on what you heard this week?

### Read James 4:1-3

While we are not guaranteed to get everything we want, God cares deeply about our desires. He wants us to come to him directly with our desires and frustrations. By turning to God with our heart, we also open ourselves up to God's love, grace, peace, and just as importantly, instruction. Consequently, we are then better equipped to handle the conflict with others in healthy, life-giving, wise ways.

- Are you pretty good at turning your desires to God or is this a new idea?
- Has following God's lead ever helped you deal with conflict? Or have you ever chosen to not follow God's lead in a conflict and later regretted that choice? Share about that experience.

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Like so many things, it's important to examine our desires. Desires can be good and healthy, but desires can also be unhealthy and negative. Dealing with unmet desires — whether the desire is healthy or unhealthy — can leave us feelings empty, abandoned, angry, sad, and so on. Unmet desires can cause growth or serious damage in a relationship by the way in which we respond to the dissatisfaction.

- Some of us might be quicker to blame ourselves for the unmet desire, but others of us might blame God or others. What is your default method to deal with unmet desires?
- If you feel comfortable share about an unmet desire you are processing right now. Is the desire healthy or unhealthy? Where are you in this process now? Remember, we all have healthy and unhealthy desires. Having unhealthy desires isn't wrong — it's part of being a broken human in a broken world. What matters most is how we deal and respond with the unmet desire. *\*\*\*If no one shares consider journaling about this during your week.*

#### **Read Psalms 37:4**

While there undoubtedly are victims in some circumstance, God has not designed up or called us to be victims to life. God wants us to live our life in an empowered way. Proactively chasing our own happiness, and laying our desires before God, is a way in which we can take ownership for our life.

- Some of us have a propensity to take too much ownership and others of us have a bent to avoid ownership. What is your natural bent? Does it depend on the situation? Where did you learn this bent?
- Looking at your life this season, are there any ways in which you can take more ownership for your happiness?

#### **Closing Prayer:**

God, help us to handle our relationships, and the conflicts that arise, from an empowered, loving, peaceful place. Help us to take ownership of ourselves, to be aware of our internal lives, and to handle conflict in a life-giving way for all involved.

#### **Extra Challenge and Prayer Challenge:**

Last week, we tossed out the the extra challenge of proactively asking others "How can I help?". This week, when conflict arises, pause before pointing the finger and blaming anyone. Acknowledge that more than likely you are not getting what you need, take that desire to God, and ask God for wisdom on what you can do to bring about life-giving resolution.