

**Resolving Conflict as a Small Group Leader**  
**Mark Naylor – mark.naylor@twu.ca**  
**Northwest Baptist Seminary**



**Description** – The biblical mandate of becoming ministers of reconciliation (2 Co 5:16-19) is examined as an important skill for small group leaders. Following Patterson et al (*Crucial Conversations*), it is proposed that *dialogue* is the primary skill that leverages conflict towards healthy relationships. Disciplines (such as “start with heart”) and tools (such as “make it safe”) required to create a context conducive to healthy dialogue are introduced.

## 2 Cor 5:16-19 – ministry and message of reconciliation

Mt 5:9 – peacemakers: it is the children of God who do this.

- 1) If we are to be called children of God, we must be involved in reconciliation. We are not given the option to ignore tensions. It is not a virtue to let frictions in relationships alone; they need to be dealt with.
- 2) Conflicts are not an interruption to ministry, they are the ministry.

**Patterson, K. Grenny, J. McMillan, R. and Switzler A., *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High* (New York: McGraw-Hill 2002)** – Provides essential tools for engaging people with positive and relationship building outcomes when opinions differ, stakes are high and emotions run strong.

## Tools for resolving conflict: Gracious Dialogue is the key.

- create *dialogue* in a *safe* environment.
- Avoid a fool’s choice (violence or silence) by
  - o Learning to Look – what is really happening?
  - o Tool 1: Stepping out of the conversation
  - o Asking – do we need mutual purpose or mutual respect? Always deal with the latter first.
  - o Looking for a third way
  - o Tool 2: Contrast to Fix Misunderstanding
  - o Mastering your stories
    - Tell the rest of the story
    - Turn victims into actors.
    - Turn villains into humans.
    - Turn the helpless into the able.
  - o Tool 3: STATE your path
- Tool 4: AMPP
- Tool 5: ABC