

## **Conflict**

### **Ready:**

"If your brother sins against you, go and rebuke him in private. If he listens to you, you have won your brother."  
-Matthew 18:15

### **Set**

Kobe Bryant said that Karl Malone was like a "big brother — a mentor," as well as a friend to him last year as he played alongside of him as part of the Los Angeles Lakers. This week, their relationship has blown up in front of the whole nation. In response to the fireworks, Charles Barkley said that these two "know better. They know to take care of these things in private and not let it out into the public."

In Matthew, Jesus says that we should approach those who have hurt us first and foremost in private — one on one. We should be honest and try to show them how they've upset us. Chances are we can work it out right then and there, as many conflicts between "brothers" are miscommunications and are readily forgiven.

If that doesn't work, the next verse says that you should bring in one or two others. In other words, you need a referee — an unbiased, trustworthy person who can make sure both sides are being fair as they try to work out the problem. If that still doesn't work, the next verse says that we might need the accountability of the entire Christian community. If after all that we still don't have the conflict resolved, we may just have to agree to disagree as lovingly as we can through Jesus' help.

### **Go**

1. Are you currently in the middle of a disagreement?
2. How have you approached the other person/people?
3. What could you change about your approach based on Matthew 18?

### **Workout**

Matthew 18:15-20

Matthew 5:21-26

Proverbs 12:18

Proverbs 17:27

### **Bible Reference:**

Matthew 18



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