

# SONG *of* SOLOMON

## Part 4

### Big Idea

To the surprise of many, one-fourth of the Song of Solomon is dedicated to the topic of conflict. Conflict arises in every relationship, and Solomon's marriage was not immune. Solomon knew that healthy conflict is a good thing in relationships, and rather than teaching how not to fight, he reveals how to fight right. Healthy conflict leads to healthy relationships of all kinds: marriage, business, friendship, etc. Every relationship, especially marriages, have seasons: honeymoon, disillusionment, and commitment. Rather than simply managing a relationship and ignoring, obscuring, suppressing, or minimizing problems, learning how to have healthy conflict in every season leads to resolution.

While every relationship has a season, conflict has three stages: the fight, the choice, and the reconciliation. Learning to fight fair requires creating boundaries, capping time, and controlling words. Establishing and agreeing to the rules of engagement before conflict arises helps minimize collateral damage, embarrassment, and prolonged arguments. Pride is the primary spiritual issue within conflict, so we must take care to focus on the issue. It is important to make the decision to step away from pride—it is a conscious choice to LUVE: listen, understand, validate, and empathize. Ultimately, reconciliation is possible through forgiveness beyond an apology. True forgiveness is giving someone the kind of forgiveness God has given each of us. Remember that the center of every conflict is spiritual warfare. In relationships, preparing for conflict means we decide how to engage in healthy conflict and minimize the strongholds of evil. When we consciously choose to engage in healthy conflict that is centered on God's kind of forgiveness, the devil must flee! As Ruth Graham said, "A good marriage is the union of two good forgivers."

### Discussion Questions

- How is the world's way of resolving conflict different from God's healthy way?
- What steps can be taken to reduce the effects and influence of pride during conflict?
- In what ways can the effects of evil be removed from healthy conflict?

### Prayer Focus

Ask God to reveal conflicts in relationships that you are currently managing. Pray for Him to provide you wisdom to reconcile with others in those relationships. Ask God to provide forgiveness that heals and restores relationship under conflict.

### Next Steps

Prepare a plan for resolving conflict in healthy ways. Seek forgiveness in any relationship that you are managing rather than reconciling. Think of places where you need to be the first to give-in and step-in.

### Leader Tip

Focus on helping your group think about strategies and language that must be present in healthy conflict. Discuss ways to be first in LUVE!