**Colossians 1:28-29** We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

**TOPIC: STRIVING FOR UNITY, RESOLVING CONFLICT**

**Opening Question:** Looking at this topic, do you feel like this is a personal strength or weakness? In what ways have you been able to grow in this area since becoming a Christian? In what ways do you still need to grow or improve?

**READ Ephesians 4:2-6** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

**Perspective:** Unity is God’s nature, and he expects the same of his church. God’s servant needs to also help others be unified in God’s Spirit. Unity takes a willingness to “make every effort”; it does not come easy.

**Discussion Question:** What are things that we can do to help ourselves stay unified and keep the bond of peace? How can we help influence others toward spiritual unity that glorifies God?

**READ 2 Timothy 2:24-26** And the Lord’s servant must not quarrel; instead, he must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Those who oppose him he must gently instruct, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will.

**Discussion Question:** According to this scripture, how do we help those with a hardened heart? How do we help ourselves stay unified when our own heart gets hard?

**READ Ephesians 2:14-18** For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.

**Perspective:** The cross has the power to UNIFY all types of people: Men and women, rich and poor, old and young, sick and healthy, differing cultures, etc. Even your own self – which at times can be divided in heart and mind - are given the opportunity to be unified because of the Cross.
Discussion Question: How does the Cross unify so many different types of people from different backgrounds? How does conflict affect God and others in God’s church? How does the Cross help us to resolve conflicts in the Church?

Matthew 5:9 Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God. 
Matthew 5:9 NLT God blesses those who work for peace, for they will be called the children of God.

Perspective: The most important aspect of your Christianity is that you act and live as a child of God. In the process, you will be able to make peace with those who are in conflict with you. Make the effort to be a peace maker for church unity.

Discussion Question: How can I seek peace in my relationships within the church? Is there anyone I am not resolved or at peace with? What is the difference between a “peacemaker” and a conflict avoider?

Fill out the bottom portion of this sheet during your Discipling Time

Decision: _________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Prayer Focus: _______________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

Follow up Action: __________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________