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CROSSING THE CHASM OF CONFLICT

Part 2: "Choosing to Love Again"

Matt Heard, Senior Pastor

Genesis 50:15-21 (Entire story: Chapters 37-50)

Conflict. It is not a pleasant thing to experience in any relationship. Yet it is inevitable if we are relating with other people to any degree of authenticity and depth. In fact, conflict—when dealt with properly—can actually serve to *increase* the health and intimacy of a relationship. Therefore it is vital that we learn how to cross the chasm of conflict.

Before we complete our study of Philippians called *Whistling in the Dark*, we are lingering on the reality that we saw revealed in Phil. 4:2-3: They encountered conflict in their relationships. Relationships in first-century Philippi experienced the same ebbs and flows that we encounter in our relationships today!

In Part 1 of this series, we looked at six steps toward building a bridge over a conflict chasm: *Humility* (submit to the most important Person); *Reflection* (carefully process and pray); *Initiative* (deal with the conflict quickly); *Communication* (seek understanding); *Confidentiality* (acknowledge the importance of the relationship); and *Counsel* (if necessary, involve a third party).

But we've all experienced a time when the bridge over a conflict chasm in our lives did not get built before hurt and misunderstanding occurred. As a result, we need to look at the broader issue of what to do when we have been hurt or betrayed or misunderstood. It is a critical issue to look at, not only for our own emotional health and the health of our relationships, but, most importantly, for the health of our relationship with God.

The experience of Joseph, the Old Testament patriarch who endured tremendous betrayal, can provide helpful direction for us.

When I have been hurt, my heart will not rest again without at least three supports:

1. _____: **Submit** _____
Gen. 50:19-20 *But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives."*
2. _____: **Give** _____
Gen. 50:21 *"So then, don't be afraid. I will provide for you and your children." And he reassured them and spoke kindly to them.*
3. _____: **Embrace** _____
Gen. 50:22-23 *Joseph stayed in Egypt, along with all his father's family. He lived a hundred and ten years and saw the third generation of Ephraim's children. Also the children of Makir son of Manasseh were placed at birth on Joseph's knees.*