

“In Truth AND Love”

by
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What A pastor who has learned a new conflict resolution technique decides to introduce it with the board. But the group ends up way off track before realizing they're doing it all wrong.

Themes: Conflict Resolution, Confrontation

Who Pastor
Bill- mid 40's
Shirley- older, senior
Gail
Tim
Helen

When Present

**Wear
(Props)** Large piece of cardboard with a simple picture of the grill of a car, with headlights apparently on “high beam”. Can be a very simple hand drawing, or as elaborate as you want. This prop lays face down next to Pastor.

Chairs for each actor.

Why Ephesians 4:15

How This script is about conflict and needs to build. Don't come out of the gate swinging but give yourself somewhere to go. Let the conflict and tensions build throughout so you're not yelling at each other through the whole skit.

Any of these characters can be male or female and any age.

Time Approximately 6 minutes

Lights up. There is a semicircle of all the actors sitting on stage. (So you don't have your back to the audience, one or two actors could be standing as if they've just gotten back from getting a cup of coffee.)

Pastor: *(very enthusiastic)* Hi everyone, and thanks for gathering on such short notice. As you know, I just attended a seminar called "Conflict in the Church: Going after the Elephant in the Room Without Trampling on the Mice". The trainer said we have to go right after conflict in the church. That we can't go around it and pretend it's not there. That we should confront it head on! Like a car, speeding down the highway!

The others nervously look at each other, a few rolled eyes.

He said to gather your most dysfunctional, er, I mean, your most *favorite* team of key people, and try out this technique.

More nervousness, eye rolling.

Now, here's how this works. Any person who wants to go after conflict *(air quotes)* "head on" with someone else, should take and hold up this metaphorical symbol of a car speeding *(pulls out the cardboard with the car/headlights and shows it while speaking)* well, speeding towards, conflict. Head on and all. *(Offering it)* Who wants to go first?

Everyone looks down, avoiding eye contact.

Anyone? Shirley, I KNOW you always have something to say. Here *(almost forces the cardboard into her hands)*. Hit the gas!

*Everyone continues to avoid eye contact, and **Bill** starts to snicker.*

Shirley: *(at Bill)* What?!

Bill: Oh, I don't know, you remind me of my *old* Chevy.

Several others snicker.

Shirley: Oh *really*?!

Bill: *(apologetic, still snickering)* Shirley, I was just—

Shirley: *(to **Pastor**, with an edge)* Hit the gas, huh?

Pastor: You betcha!

Shirley: *(deep breath, then)* OK, then *(to **Bill**)* mister big Chairman of the Ushers! How come our ushers are not in PROPER ushering uniform anymore? I'm talking shirt, tie and coat! Right now, they look like they are headed out

to read poetry at some...some coffee house! NO hippie-looking usher is getting MY tithe, no sir-re!

Bill: *(surprised, stammering)* What?! You never said anything about—first of all, they reflect the more casual dress of all of us these days—

Shirley: *(points to herself)* Not THIS 'ol saint! I'm dressed for church, like the Bible says! Like Paul and...everyone...did!

Bill: *(ignoring her now, looks to Gail)* And that reminds me *(he grabs the sign from Shirley)* Gail, if I hear ONE more praise chorus sung SO off key that even the stain glass windows start to crack, I'll—I'll—

Gail: *(caught off guard)* What?! NO one has ever told me—?

Helen: *(interrupting, nodding in agreement)* Bill's right. When I see that one guy, uh, whaz his name, coming out to sing, I want to stand up and yell to the visitors to snap on their iPods and save themselves!

Pastor: *(nervous laugh, voice)* Uh, people, I think—

Gail: *(fired up, ignoring Pastor, gets up and grabs the sign while saying)* Well, if *(looks at Tim)* SOMEONE would control the teens, my praise team might be able to actually invite the Lord into our presence! Right now, we're lucky if God just stops in for a quick "how ya doin'?" and then speeds off to some more well-behaved congregation!

Tim: Whoa!! This is the first time I'm hearing— *(grabs the sign, which is starting to tear a bit)* oh, sure, EVERYONE blames the teens, but do the *(pointing to everyone in the circle)* PARENTS ever help us with ANYthing?? Huh??

Pastor: *(nervous, concerned)* Group, I don't think we are doing this ri—

Tim: *(to Pastor)* MAYBE it's the length of the SERMON'S that are making them so fidgety!

Pastor: Wha—??!

The rest agree loudly and all focus on Pastor. Bill grabs the sign.

Bill: I mean, how about using video clips that actually have *something to do* with the message?!

Pastor: Huh? I...I thought they did!

Helen: *(grabs sign)* And PLEASE, enough with the fancy Power Point tricks! The text does not have to spiral in and dance around on the screen for 10

minutes! I have to take Dramamine with my communion these days just to watch your sermon!

Pastor: But it's an effect—

Shirley: *(grabs sign, holding it upside down)* Power Point Smouder Point! What ever happened to good old-fashioned flannel graphs that REAL preachers used to use! THOSE were the days!

Tim: *(grabs sign, right side up now)* And FURTHERmore—

Pastor: *(ignoring Tim)* Oh yeah? *(Now with anger)* GIVE me that sign, it's MY turn to—

All of them start talking loudly at once, each trying to grab the sign from the other person in quick succession—the movement and volume increase until, at the peak of the noise and grabbing, all hands are on the sign and all pull at once. The sign tears off in each of their hands and they fall backwards, onto the chairs, each holding a piece of the sign.

NOTE: the sign can be perforated before the sketch, so that when they pull, the sign tears apart in equal ways. For a few beats, they are all quiet, staring at their piece of the sign. Finally, Bill clears his throat.)

Bill: *(subdued)* Uh, sorry there Shirley. You've got a right to your opinion. I need to, uh, listen better *(he tosses his piece of the sign into on the floor, in the center of the circle).*

Shirley: Well, yes, me, uh...me too. I was making assumptions that you didn't care about, well... *(tosses her piece in)*

Gail: *(sigh)* And sorry I got so defensive. I know we have a problem there, I am just afraid to confront it. In truth. *(Her piece goes onto floor)*

Helen: And in love. *(Ashamed)* Unlike— *(her piece goes on the floor).*

Tim: *(subdued like the rest)* Yeah *(her piece goes in).* I'm sorry, I'm not telling anyone what I really need.

Pastor: *(pause)* Me either *(tosses his piece in).* I need to ask for honest feedback and trust you all enough to tell me how I can improve. In that whole 'truth and love' way. *(He smiles, and everyone has a small laugh. After a beat, he gathers up the pieces and looks at them, laughs a bit)* Not sure I can piece this together again. Maybe that's a good thing, huh? Maybe— *(holding up the pieces)* maybe we should concentrate on what we each contribute to the big picture. And just treat each piece with respect. What do you think, team?

They nod in agreement.

Good. *(With gleam in his eye)* Although you know, this experience would make a *GREAT* sermon!! *(They start to groan)* I can see the Power Point now, with video clips from the top movies of the decade, complete with dancing fonts and maybe a ventriloquist dummy, huh? Huh? *(They stare at him, pause, then)* KIDDING people, kidding!

They laugh and start to get up and head out as Pastor says, under his breath...

Pretty much. *(Aloud)* See you next week!

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