**Release or Rupture?**

“But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you

that you may be children of your Father in heaven” Matthew 6:44-45

Take a rubber band and stretch it between your two hands. Feel the tension. Imagine the energy it takes to keep it stretched over time. You may even try to see how far it stretches until it breaks.

Think of a person who is causing you this kind of tension. Share with your group the nature of this conflict.

**Lose the Labels**

*You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Matthew 5:21*

Jesus asks us to look at the emotions inside. What feelings arise when you think about this conflict?

*Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. Matthew 5:21-22*

How do labels, name calling and slurs prevent understanding and peacemaking?

Are there any labels you’ve applied in this conflict which you need to peel off?

**See My Part in the Problem**

*Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24*

How does a conflict with someone prevent you from having a close relationship with God?

What is my part in the conflict? Where was I wrong? What did I do or say to add to the argument? How am I keeping or increasing the tension? Is there an apology I owe or an amends I can make?

**What Will It Cost Me?**

*Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way…Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny. Matthew 5:25-26*

What will it cost you to make peace? What will it cost if you don’t?

**Make Peace like God**

*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:44-45*

*And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister. I John 4:22*

What is one step you can take this week to release the tension in your conflict?