Lesson 2: Jesus and… Conflict
John 8:1-11

1 but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him, and he sat down to teach them. 3 The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6 They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. 7 When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. 9 At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" 11 "No one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

1. How do you react in conflict? What is your primary response when conflict arises? (some give four categories: fight, flight, freeze, and annihilate)

2. Look down with me at verse 6. Why were they using this question as a trap or basis for accusing Jesus?
    a. *Leader's Note: This section of a commentary provides some understanding for this question: By bringing the defendant, explicitly citing Moses' words, and inviting Jesus to compare his response to that of Moses, they seek to create a dilemma resembling that of paying taxes to Caesar. If Jesus opposes her execution, he must explain why he reduces a sentence in the law of Moses; if he approves her execution, he can be viewed as usurping Roman prerogatives in the name of returning to God's law, hence charged with treason. Roman law did not permit execution by subject peoples and did not authorize execution for adultery. Jesus was already known for his mercy toward sinners, so his interlocutors may have planned to challenge his fidelity to the law.*

3. No one knows what Jesus wrote in the dirt on the ground, but it left a big reaction by the Pharisees. What do you think he wrote?

4. It's not a secret that this woman was actually caught committing adultery. How do you think she was expecting to be treated? How would you describe the way Jesus treated her?

    a. *Jesus doesn't just let this woman go and go about his way. He shows her, and all of the Pharisees and people in the crowd, that sin is a big deal, and that all of us have sin. He is technically the only one who could throw a stone at her, but he doesn't. While he doesn't throw a stone or condemn, he also acknowledges that her actions were sinful, but gives her the freedom to be forgiven and live differently.*

5. What can we learn about how Jesus deals with conflict? What are some characteristics of Jesus in conflict?