



(Brian's talk from Sunday <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlqaBQLzAYw>)

How do we deal with conflict?

Conflict doesn't have to stand in the way of progress. Jesus gave us the ideal template to transform conflict into confrontation and ultimately, confrontation into reconciliation.

Matt 11:28-30 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Questions

- Brian said that Jesus is our guide to conflict and confrontation, being gentle and lowly in heart. What are your initial thoughts and feelings about conflict?
- Can you think of an example where you have dealt with conflict well, and why did it go well?
- Can you think of a time where you dealt with conflict badly? What could you have done better?

Brian mentioned referenced 3 factors that turn an ordinary interaction a "crucial conversation" (taken from this book https://www.amazon.co.uk/Crucial-Conversations-Talking-StakesSecond/dp/0071771328/ref=pd_lpo_2?pd_rd_i=0071771328&psc=1)

1. Opinions vary
2. Stakes are high
3. Emotions are strong

There are 3 ways we can respond to crucial conversations

1. Ignore and avoid. Easy to do, but doesn't solve anything
2. Deal with them badly
3. Deal with them correctly

Questions

- What are your thoughts on the ingredients of a "crucial conversation"? Is there anything you would add to the mix?
- Out of the 3 options to respond to conflict, which one do you naturally go to, and why?

Eph 5:22 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Rom 12:10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.

1 John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

Eph 2:8-10 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Brian suggested some ways to handle conflict well is by creating the right culture, a culture of grace and honour, and by knowing our identity in Christ. The Bible tells us to submit to one another (Eph 5:22) and to love and honour one another (Rom 12:10). We can only do this because God first loved us, and it was by God’s grace that we are saved.

Questions

- How often do you think about culture or your identity and how that affects how you deal with conflict?
- How aware are you that wherever you go and whatever you do, you are creating a culture, whether you realise it or not?
- If you are aware of the culture you intentionally create, what culture is that? If you are not aware what is the culture that you would like to create and what is one simple step you could do to start promoting that culture?

Matt 18:15-20 “If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. ¹⁶ But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’ ¹⁷ If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. ¹⁸ “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹ “Again, truly I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything they ask for, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven. ²⁰ For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them.”

2 Cor 3:18 And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Rom 12:1-2 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Brian ended by giving 3 practical tips to help us all grow in conflict, and then a warning

1. Pre-empt it and prepare your heart (pray not to be reactive)
2. Learn from those who do conflict well
3. Be “transformed” to confront (pray for the ugliness of our own heart to be transformed into the likeness of Jesus Christ).

Warning! Don't touch vision until the culture is right.

Reflective questions

- Spend some time reflective on Brian's talk and the things we have talked about tonight. Is there anything which has stuck out to you or you feel like you have learnt?
- Is there anyone you feel God nudging you to confront, in love?
- Is there anyone you need to apologise to due to some conflict not handled well in the past?
- Is there anyone you know who does conflict well you would like to speak to and learn from?