

DON'T BE A GONG

The first thing we are in conflict with is _____.

- Society is saying that, in order to tolerate we must _____. One must lay down one's strongly held convictions...one must walk away from one's strict, overbearing "religion" and see that _____ is the supreme virtue.

Ephesians 4:31-32 (ESV)

Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

- When _____ enters the conversation, _____ loses.
- When we engage with _____ we need to remember that _____ needs to be our focus.

Luke 6:35-36 (NIV)

"But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked. Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful."

- No one cares how much you _____, until they know how much you _____.
 1. It must come from a stance of _____.
 2. It has to reflect God, not _____.
 3. It needs to come from an understanding that we cannot expect _____ out of an individual who _____ God.
 4. We need to acknowledge that we are _____ the ones saving anyone.
 - a. The Holy Spirit causes us to be _____. (John 3:5)
 - b. The Holy Spirit allows us to _____ Jesus as Lord. (1 Corinthians 12:3)
 - c. The Holy Spirit provides our _____; it is _____ our own effort. (2 Thessalonians 2:13)

The second area in which we as believers experience conflict, is with _____.

- We as believers have an obligation to one another to work out our _____.
- We as Christians have an obligation to _____ one another.

The last but the greatest area in which we have conflict is with _____.

- We are seeking to _____ in our _____.
- We cannot write the _____ we want. Instead, we must _____ the _____ who is.
- Jonah was _____ in who _____ wanted God to be.

The reconciliation for our fractured imago dei, and the very solution to all our conflict can be summed up in one word: _____.

1 Corinthians 13:1 (NIV)

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. What does “being a gong” mean to you?
2. What do you think about the differences in the ways the dictionary, culture, and the Scriptures define the words *tolerant* and *intolerant*? Have you been faced with the cultural definition by a friend or family member?
3. Sometimes the point is raised that to be tolerant, by the culture’s definition, one of the parties involved in conflict must set aside their beliefs for the “greater good.” Do you believe this is the correct way to reach a solution? If not, why not? If so, why?
4. We have all engaged in conversations that have gone south! After hearing today’s message, can you think of anything you could have done differently?
5. Read **1 Corinthians 13**. Discuss how David, as well as others in the Bible, disagreed with God but remained faithful to him. Have you ever found yourself in disagreement with God? If so, what is a good practice to recenter your faith and trust in him?