

Christians Working Together

1. Example of Christ and His church
 - a. Ephesians 5:21
 - 1) What does it mean to submit to one another?
 - 2) When a difference occurs, both sides believe they are right and are speaking from the truth. The difference is tied up in reading comprehension and preconceptions, mostly from what had been learned previously.
 - 3) What is it to be divisive?
 - a) Jude 19, Not having the Spirit
 - b) Titus 3:10, Reject a factious man
 - b. Ephesians 5:25 - 26
 - 1) Gave Himself up for her – Gave up being authoritative, but did not give up on the truth.
 - 2) Sanctify and cleanse her – Present opportunities for growth
2. Promises of resolution
 - a. Philippians 3:15, God will reveal even this to you
 - b. Ephesians 4:13 – 16, Speaking the truth in love
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 3:12, Abounding in love
 - d. Romans 15:5, Grant you to be likeminded
 - e. Do we trust these promises that resolution is possible, or do we give up?
3. What should a discussion look like?
 - a. Why is the other person hesitant?
 - 1) Fear of
 - a) Looking stupid
 - b) Condemning deceased relatives
 - c) Admitting to past errors
 - d) Being deceived
 - 2) Divisive defense mechanisms have “worked” in the past; the uncomfortable situation went away.
 - 3) An overemphasis on doctrine, not realizing that finding a misunderstanding is a cause for celebration, not condemnation.
 - b. How do we set up for a successful discussion?
 - 1) Convince all parties that the Scriptures were designed for the common person. See Deuteronomy 30:11 – 14 and Romans 10:6 – 8.
 - 2) Focus on faith, which will develop understanding.
 - 3) Focus on the character of God, the character of Jesus, and Jesus’ mastery of life on earth, which are the draws of the gospel. In this way, the primary subject is how to be transformed into that character, as opposed to how to follow the rules and get into heaven.
 - 4) Ask what passages the other person thinks are important in the present discussion. Have them read the context and show how their ideas come from that passage (demonstrate reading comprehension).
 - 5) Avoid church-speak. Use plain language instead of Bible buzzwords.
4. Focus on growth
 - a. 2 Peter 1:2 – 11

- 1) Growth is essential.
 - 2) Growth means finding my own errors.
 - 3) When something in the “steps” from faith to love has gone awry, back up a step. That’s where the problem lies. Most people never developed faith to the point of mastering life (not being driven along by circumstance). So, their knowledge and brotherly love and selflessness never developed.
- b. Ephesians 3:16 – 19
- 1) Growth is instigated by the indwelling Spirit.
 - 2) The activity of the indwelling Spirit is promoted by praying (Luke 11:13) and singing (Ephesians 5:18 – 20)