



## TIPS FOR HAVING TOUGH CONVERSATIONS

At some point, in all groups, tough conversations arise. As a leader, the way you handle these conversations sets the tone for your group.

We are a church that stands in the whitewater of being radically welcoming and inclusive, while at the same time not condoning sin. Jesus is our example. The Bible says that Jesus was, “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). When He encountered a woman caught in adultery, He neither condoned her sin nor condemned her for her past. He extended grace...“Neither do I condemn you”...and then speaks truth...“Go and sin no more” (John 8:4-11). Jesus didn’t balance grace and truth, He was full of BOTH grace and truth.

At Cross Point, we speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15). If a church speaks truth without grace, no one listens. If it speaks grace without truth, no one changes.

- Truth tells us we need to change. Grace gives us the power to do it.
- Truth shows us why we need God. Grace makes God available.

“God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can’t take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it” (Ephesians 2:8-9)

The conversation is like a wheel, the “Grace Wheel” begins with grace. When you lead with **grace**, it creates a **safe** environment that leads to the **openness** of hearing and receiving words of **truth**. There will be a higher likelihood that the person you’re talking to will be open to take **ownership** of the situation, which will lead to **confession** and the opportunity to receive **grace**. Then the cycle begins again, as the person now feels safe and is now open to hearing the truth of God’s word.

Before you engage in the tough conversation, however, pray for your heart and everyone else involved in the conversation (Psalm 139: 23-34). Communicate in person and use the following helpful tips in the conversation:

1. **Be honest** – Let the other person know what’s going on. Use “I Feel” statements.
2. **Be encouraging** – Create an environment where everyone feels they have been heard and where they feel loved and supported.
3. **Be specific** – Give examples where needed, to help clarify thoughts and feelings about the situation.
4. **Be kind** – Tone matters and can either elevate or regulate a situation.
5. **Be calm** – You can either be a thermometer or thermostat. A thermometer reflects the temperature of the environment; it simply reacts to what’s happening around it. A thermostat regulates the environment; it sets the desired temperature of the room (situation) and actively works to maintain it within a given range.

6. **Be curious** - Take time to listen and hear all sides and avoid accusing anyone of bad intentions before you hear their side of the story.
7. **Be respectful** - Respect each other's opinions even if you don't agree with them. That may mean you have to agree to disagree.

Ephesians 4:31-5:2 English Standard Version (ESV)

<sup>31</sup> Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

<sup>32</sup> Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

<sup>5</sup> Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

*For more information about ground rules for your group click:*

- [Groups Ground Rules](#)

Additional Resources:

- <https://www.faithgateway.com/grace-and-truth-in-difficult-conversations/> - .XMm2xpNKgW
- <https://leadingwithtrust.com/2013/06/23/are-you-a-thermometer-or-thermostat-leader/>
- Rick Warren [Thermostat or Thermometer](#)
- <https://globalleadership.org/articles/leading-others/2-steps-to-improve-your-difficult-conversations/>
- <https://open.life.church/training/115-how-to-have-a-strong-developmental-conversation>

