

The Christian's Responsibilities in Time of Crisis

The Dilemma:

- 1) In our world, political correctness has created a vast divide among Americans. It is difficult, and sometimes impossible to even express our opinion on certain issues without reprisals or being stigmatized with a name such as homophobe, hate monger, or bigot. Sometimes we even face the fear of being injured.
- 2) First we have to understand not only the dilemmas we face but the barriers that are obstructing our way (without blaming.) There are a several barriers and these obstacles are in part the root cause of the dilemmas. One barrier is the double standard.
- 3) Why does there have to be a double standard? What is stopping us from having different worldviews and still live harmoniously together? One reason appears there is a strong desire in our society to ensure there are winners and losers.
- 4) Let's express Christ-like love to those who are different and let the Holy Spirit do the convicting.
- 5) Another barrier to the harmony between Christians and the LGBT community is the barrier of guilt. This is an exceptionally difficult barrier to overcome because it is unlikely to be recognized or admitted.
- 6) What contributes immensely to this barrier is political correctness which demands the LGBT lifestyle be accepted and demands its acceptance as a normal and healthy lifestyle.
- 7) I want to say this with as much love as possible and maintain the integrity of the Scriptures. I believe, based on my experience with homosexuals I personally know, that deep within their consciousness they know their lifestyle is in opposition to God's design for sex. Because of its volatility we fear addressing the issue of guilt.
- 8) Addressing Barriers: How do we deal with this barrier as Christians?
- 9) Col. 3:12 Notice, it is not just calling us to be merciful but to be *tenderly* merciful.
- 10) **Kindness:** We are to dress in kindness. What if the response back is anything but kind? Jesus said on the Sermon on the Mount in **Matthew 5:44** "*bless those who curse you and do good to those who hate you.*"
- 11) **Humility:** True humility is difficult to respond to with anger. It is embarrassing for a person to lash out angrily toward someone who is conducting themselves with humility.
- 12) **Meekness:** Meekness is the behavioral expression of humility coupled with grace. Meekness enables the Holy Spirit to work effectively through us because when we are meek our human desires, passions, and in particular pride is under the control of the Holy Spirit.
- 13) **Longsuffering:** If we are to be the instruments God uses to bridge the relationship gap with the LGBT community we will have to be longsuffering, because it is going to take a long time to bridge all of the obstacles that have been built over the years.
- 14) **Bearing with and forgiving one another:** In particular, this Scripture references bearing with someone who may not care for us, may dislike us, or hate us, has a different worldview, or may not want to be around us and who might reject us. If in our forbearance we are rejected, we are to forgive and continue to have tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another. How much and how often should we forgive? Notice the last part of verse 13, "*... even as Christ forgave you, so you also must forgive*" (imperative mood.)
Our example: Ananias let no barrier prevent what God had called him to do and he treated Saul as a brother in Christ.

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- 15) Let us be the ones who reach out to the hurting LGBT community and love them, with tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering and forgiveness when necessary. Let's not let anything stand in our way.
- 16) When addressing a barrier we must be aware of how we contribute to the barrier as well and be willing to admit and deal with it. Next we can inform others that we do not want this open dialogue process to inhibit our relationship with them, but feel it is necessary to do so in order to progress.
- 17) Open Dialogue is:
 - > Listening with the intention to understand (put aside differences for the purpose of learning)
 - > Suspending judgment
 - > Questioning other viewpoints to discover where they came from to get to their viewpoint
 - > Find out what their thinking is based on
- 18) How to Make Dialogue Happen:
 - > Ask questions that provoke thought
 - > Ask questions from which both parties can learn
 - > Ask questions that surprise
- 19) **Active Listening:** Most importantly we should actively listen to the other's views. To actively listen means to focus our hearing on what is being said and not on how we are going to respond. Actively listening means only asked questions for the purpose of clarity. Active listening takes time and energy.
- 20) **Problem Solving:** When all of the issues / barriers have been discussed, asked for their ideas and contribute your ideas on how to overcome the barriers without compromise of beliefs. Focus on what can be done or said, and not attitudes or beliefs. We should discuss without demanding our worldview be accepted.
- 21) Our suggestion may get rejected or we may even be rejected, but we should reach out, attempt to discuss barriers and discuss how to remove them. Most of all we should love with Christ like love regardless of any responses.
- 22) **Application:**
 - > **Prayer:** No matter how frequently tragedies occur, our first response should always be the same: turning to God in prayer. In our prayers we should abandon ourselves for others.
 - > **Pause:** In the wake of mass violence or other tragedies, a common pattern is to quickly connect with social media and tell others what we think before we turn to God first, "guard our heart" as we are commanded to do in **Proverbs 4:23**.
 - > The Scriptures remind us to "Let your conversation always be with grace ..." **Colossians 4:16**. We are to "... speak the truth in love..." **Ephesians 4:15**. We cannot speak the true if we haven't sought God's Word for the truth first. And we won't help the situation if we aren't speaking the truth with love. Until we can speak the truth in love we should remain silent.
 - > **Grieve:** As Christians we are called to weep with those who weep as directed in **Romans 12:15**. Although you may have had a similar experience with a similar tragedy we must still be sensitive to the anguish of others and recognize we can never fully know their emotional burden.
- 23) **Love:** Jesus Christ said, "By this shall all people know you are my disciples if you have love for one another" (**John 13:35**.) Loving those who are different is not easy. It is a sacrifice. Jesus sacrificed His life to reclaim us and bring all into a personal relationship with God. Let's all make the sacrifice of loving, respecting, and caring for others who are different. There is far too much hate and hurt in our world to turn our backs on each other just because we're different.
- 24) **Take Action:** The reality of our faith is demonstrated well in the way we walk with Jesus through the giving of ourselves to others in acts of kindness, love, compassion, and assistance. So, when there is a need let's be ready and willing to move into action. Let us move beyond just praying for those who are suffering and move into action to help!