

Christlike Dialogue



CONVERSATIONS THAT GLORIFY GOD

OUR *mission*

To engage people with
differing views in conversations
that honor God.



“ Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my
heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer. ”

Psalm 19:14

WHAT IS A GROUP OF EIGHT?

- Eight people who want to engage in honest conversation about racial concerns in America.
- Each person in the group seeks to dialogue in ways that are honoring to God.

WHAT A GROUP OF EIGHT IS NOT

- It is not for people who want to debate, who need to be “right” and demand others to see things exactly as they do.

HOW TO BEGIN

- Two Christian friends, one an African American and the other, a Caucasian, agree to start a *Group of Eight* to discuss racial concerns in America. The African American invites three African American friends and the Caucasian invites three Caucasian friends to form a *Group of Eight*.

TIME COMMITMENT

- The group commits to meet once a month for at least one year. Each group determines time and location at which their group will meet. Plan on a couple of hours per meeting.

FACILITATORS

- The two people who start the group will arrange a meeting place, facilitate discussions, and communicate with the group.

CHRISTLIKE DIALOGUE TRAINING

- Group members are to receive training for *Christlike Dialogue* and *Group of Eight* orientation at their initial meeting.

WHAT IS CHRISTLIKE DIALOGUE?

A Christlike dialogue is an honest conversation guided by the Holy Spirit that includes:

- Other-minded listening (*Philippians 2:3-4; James 1:19-20*)
- Seeking and speaking the truth in love (*John 14:6, 8:32; Ephesians 4:15*)
- Focusing on Christ’s interests (*1 Timothy 1:15; Ephesians 4:13*)
- Entrusting the outcome to God (*1 Peter 2:23; 2 Timothy 2:24-26*)

PARTICIPANTS AGREE TO:

- **PRAY** and ask God how He wants to use your group to bring change that will glorify Him.
- **INCLUDE** Jesus, His interests, and the Word of God in your conversations.
- **ADHERE** to the *Guidelines for Christlike Dialogue*.
- **CULTIVATE** a safe conversational environment with freedom to communicate openly.
- **SHARE** personal life stories with each other.
- **DISCUSS** current events relevant to racial concerns in America.
- **IDENTIFY/EXAMINE** your source of truth, the reliability of your source of truth, and how it influences your belief system.
- **CONNECT** with other *Groups of Eight* to learn from one another and share how God is at work building bridges among people of different backgrounds, cultures, and world views.
- **REMINDE** each other that the spiritual battle between good and evil is very real. “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against...the spiritual forces of evil... (*Ephesians 6:12*).
- **BE SINCERE** and honest in your intent to try to bridge the racial divide in the church and our nation.
- **MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY** regarding the information shared in discussions.
- **COMMIT** to the *Christlike Dialogue* approach!

WHY PARTICIPATE IN A GROUP OF EIGHT?

- To know Jesus better
- To mature in Christ
- To seek God’s answers to life’s challenges
- To build bridges instead of walls
- To engage in conversations that glorify God
- To talk face to face to gain understanding of one another’s viewpoints and eliminate gossip and stereotyping in the process
- To replace ignorance with knowledge
- To replace lies and deceit with truth
- To be a beacon of light by modeling unity rather than division, and love instead of hate, because of Jesus Christ

GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTLIKE DIALOGUE

PRAY. Ask God to help you gain a greater understanding of each other, of what is true, and of what God might want to reveal about Himself through the conversation. (*Psalm 18:30*)

FIND COMMON GROUND. Identify a common subject of interest for the dialogue. Read John 4:1-26 for an example. It can be anything you can identify as common ground (*such as water in the example*) that might help you relate to one another more clearly.

BE HONEST. Authenticity is highly valued. (*Proverbs 24:26*)

BE HUMBLE. If one of the parties is in authority over the other(s), it's important to give people under authority freedom to respectfully discuss matters of concern without negative consequences. (*Matthew 20:25-28*)

BE TEACHABLE. Remain open to the possibility of being wrong about your position, and to the possibility of being deceived. (*Proverbs 3:5-6; Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:26*)

LISTEN. Learn from one another and don't attempt to persuade others to your point of view or assume someone is wrong just because he or she doesn't agree with you. Seek to understand and be understood as to why each of you believe what you believe. (*James 1:19-20; Philippians 2:3-4*)

PURSUE TRUTH. Agree to give one another the freedom to speak the truth as each perceives it, without interruption from the other(s), except to ask questions for clarification. Agree to consider the Bible as a reliable source of truth and wisdom for life's challenges. (*Psalm 51:6; John 14:6; 8:32*)

PERSEVERE IN LOVE. It is not important to agree with one another; it is important that you extend mutual respect and perfect courtesy to others, despite differences. This does not mean that you condone something about which you disagree; but it does mean that you don't withdraw your love from others just because they don't see things exactly as you do. Remember: the relationship is more important than the issue. (*John 13:34-35; Titus 3:1-2*)

JUDGE NOT. Refrain from being critical or judgmental of others. (*Matthew 7:1-5*)

TRUST GOD WITH THE OUTCOME. Agree to leave another person's decision, and the consequences of that decision, between that person and God. (*1 Peter 2:23; 2 Timothy 2:24-26*) Some situations may require church discipline to be administered in love. (*Matthew 18:15-17*)

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