



Dear Friends,

Difficult questions face us on all sides. We often avoid them, argue about them, and divide over them. Is there a way beyond apathy or argument, division or tolerance to discipleship and faithfulness?

Yes.

That may seem like an audacious answer, but the gospel **IS** audacious. So we believe there is a way through difficult questions to discipleship and faithfulness.

The Colossian Way small group experience is designed to help Christians of all ages who disagree to engage difficult questions in ways that build up love of God and love of neighbor. By gathering Christians who disagree, confessing that all things hold together in Christ (Colossians 1:17), bringing our difficulties before God in prayer, listening to varied experts on the topics being discussed, attending to Scripture and the resources of the faith, and learning to listen across difference, we can trust the Holy Spirit to transform us into the image of Christ.

Want to learn more? If so, consider watching and discussing the three videos below with your leadership team or small group. The first video introduces the concept of wicked problems, the second explains why Christian virtues and practices matter, and the third presents conflict as opportunity.

ABOUT US

The Colossian Way is an experience that includes information to equip us to change how our churches think and behave when facing challenging issues.

The Colossian Way is a ministry of The Colossian Forum,

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THE
**Colossian
Way** *Truth and Love
Held Together*

Video 1: Wicked Problems



Play the video:

<http://www.colossianway.org/wicked-problems/>

or

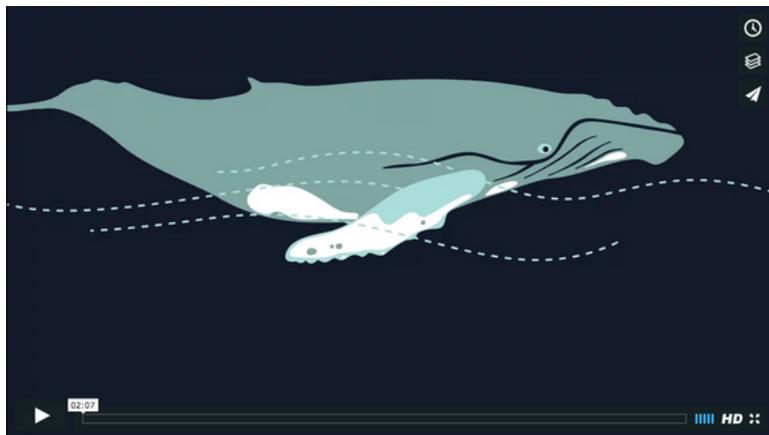
<https://vimeo.com/180640688>

Discussion questions:

- Have you or your church faced something that could be called a “tame problem”? How was that problem solved?
- Have you or your church faced something that could be called a “wicked problem”? How is it different than a tame problem?
- What are some wicked problems facing the church today? How does your church generally respond to wicked problems?
- What are some characteristics of a culture war? If the church addressed divisive issues in a different way, what would that way look like?
- How do you respond to the claim, “God has given us everything we need to make progress on these important conversations”? Does that seem realistic? What has God given us that might prove sufficient in the midst of difficult conversations?



Video 2: Christian Virtues



Play the video:

<http://www.colossianway.org/christian-virtues/>

or

<https://vimeo.com/187857994>

Discussion questions:

- In what ways is it counterintuitive to turn our attention in the middle of conflict from information to formation?
- Have you ever gathered information to fight for your point against an opponent? In what ways is that satisfying? In what ways is it not satisfying?
- What does worship mean in your life?
- Discuss the claim made in the video: “Worship forms us, helping us see conflict through the lens of love for God and neighbor.” Have you ever seen people engage in conflict differently because they worship together? If you haven’t seen this, can you imagine what it might be like?

questions continued on the next page . . .



Video 2: Christian Virtues

Discussion questions (continued):

- Is it true that church is “the perfect venue” for difficult conversations and conflict? Many people experience the opposite--church being the most painful and difficult place for the real stuff of life. Could your church be the perfect venue for hosting difficult conversations about divisive issues? Could your church be a place where worship forms people such that they engage conflict not as a war, but as an opportunity to live out love for God and neighbor? Talk about how these ideals could be put into practice at your church.
- In what ways is information good? In what ways does it fall short?
- Tell a story about a memorable experience in Sunday School from when you were young. What lessons or practices from Sunday School are as true and relevant today as they were then? What Sunday School insights could help your church engage in conflict and conversation over divisive issues?
- Tell about a time in your life when conflict proved to be a catalyst for growth. How could this be true for your church today?



Video 3: Conflict as Opportunity



Play the video:

<http://www.colossianway.org/stories/>

or

<https://vimeo.com/180188904>

Discussion questions:

- The pine cone matures for two years and then waits for fire to complete its growth. How do worship and church life mature us in ways that make us ready to face the fire of conflict?
- “If you want to get strong, you don’t avoid pain. You lean into it until the weight gets easier and easier to lift.” Share stories of times when pain was an important part of growth.
- Weightlifting makes muscles strong. To be strong in virtue, we must work those muscles. In your church, what are times and places where people work the muscles of love and patience?
- Name some wicked problems that impact your church. Try out the pine cone metaphor as a way of viewing these challenges: imagining that the fires of conflict could transform your church. What would that be like?
- Share a story about a time when you saw people in church “practicing what they preach, in the middle of the fire.” What did people say and do? What were the results?