

How does your church handle cultural conflicts?

How might worship help your church engage conflicts well?

Have you ever seen conflict lead to growth?

video discussion guide



The Problem

The church is shrinking in the West, its positive contribution to the wider culture is in decline, and young people are leaving in droves. Why? It is, in part, because in the face of today's messiest cultural conflicts, the church doesn't act like Jesus. An often painful disconnect exists between the words and actions of Christians and the character of Christ, our Prince of Peace.

The Opportunity: The Colossian Way

The Colossian Way (TCW)—a ministry of The Colossian Forum—invites Christians into practices that help them engage challenging topics with the aim of building up love of God and neighbor. It's an innovative practice based in the historic Christian tradition that seeks to transform culturally divisive “Wicked Problems” such as politics, sexuality, gender roles, and origins into opportunities for lifelong spiritual growth and witness. There are several ways to practice The Colossian Way:

- Host a TCW public forum in your community
- Offer a TCW conversation during Sunday school
- Participate in a TCW Leader Training
- Lead a TCW small group in your faith community
- Lead a video discussion (using this guide) in your faith community or with a group of friends and family

*Facilitated
by The
Colossian
Forum*

How to Use This Guide

STEP 1: Watch a video.

STEP 2: Discuss the video.

Invite the members of your group to engage the questions associated with the video. Feel free to make notes at the end of this guide.

STEP 3: In the middle of Step 2, stop and pray.

While God is already in your midst, intentionally attending to his presence can shift the posture of your hearts and minds regarding the topics under discussion and, more importantly, regarding members in your group who may hold different perspectives.

STEP 4: Share your experience.

We invite you to share your feedback through a brief survey at rebrand.ly/TCWvideos.

STEP 5: Connect with us.

Visit colossianforum.org/connect. To learn how to bring other Colossian Way practices into your church or faith community, visit colossianforum.org/tcw.

Video 1: Wicked Problems

colossianforum.org/wicked-problems



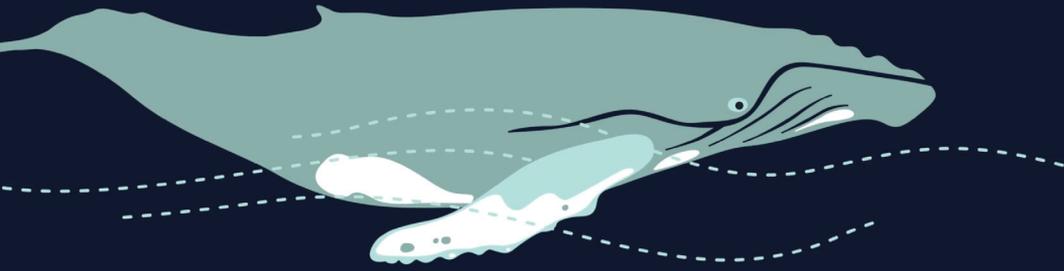
*"God has given us everything we
need to make progress on these
important conversations."*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1.** Have you or your church faced something that you would call a “tame problem”? How did you solve it?
- 2.** Have you or your church faced something that you would call a “wicked problem”? How did you handle it? How was it different than dealing with a tame problem?
- 3.** What are some wicked problems facing churches today? How does your church typically respond to them?
- 4.** What are some characteristics of a culture war? If the church addressed divisive issues in a different way, what would that look like? How do you wish churches would respond?
- 5.** Is it realistic that God has already given us everything we need to deal with wicked problems? What has God given us that might help us not only navigate them but glorify God as we do?

Video 2: Christian Virtues

colossianforum.org/christian-virtues



*"Worship forms us, helping us
see conflict through the lens of
love for God and neighbor."*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. When we're in the middle of a conflict, is it counterintuitive to turn our attention from *information* (e.g., news feeds) to *formation*? Why? Can you see yourself doing it?
2. 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?
3. In what ways is information good? In what ways does it harm?
4. 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?
5. Could your church be a safe place to have difficult conversations about divisive issues? Do you see your church being open to trying a new way of engaging conflict, not as war but as a gift? Talk about how these ideals could be put into practice at your church and discuss barriers to doing so.

Video 3: Conflict as Opportunity

colossianforum.org/conflict-as-opportunity



"If you want to get strong, you don't avoid pain. You lean into it until the weight gets easier and easier to lift."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1.** Some pine cones mature for two years and then wait for fire to complete their growth. How do worship and church life form us in ways that make us ready to face the fire of conflict?
- 2.** Share a story of a time in your life when pain was an important part of your growth.
- 3.** Weightlifting makes muscles strong. To be strong in virtue, we must work those muscles. In your church, describe some times and places where you see people working the muscles of love and patience.
- 4.** Name some wicked problems that are impacting your church. Apply the pine cone metaphor to them. Imagine the fires of conflict transforming your church. What would that look like?
- 5.** Share a story about a time when you saw people in a church “practicing what they preach, in the middle of the fire.” What did people say and do? What was the outcome?

Conflict as Opportunity

Through The Colossian Way, The Colossian Forum equips leaders to transform cultural conflicts into opportunities for spiritual growth and witness. Our vision: Christian communities that act like Christ, *especially* in the face of conflict.

Cultural Conflicts
(Wicked Problems) + **Christian**
Virtues = **Conflict as**
Opportunity



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