

Grace Cheat Sheet

Vanessa's tips for listening

1. Remove distractions - especially mobile phone
2. Eye contact and body language
3. Don't interrupt - you can present your view later
4. Listen, don't plan your next argument
5. Ask clarifying questions
6. Listen without judging or jumping to conclusions

Sermon Summary

Romans 14:1-15:7 give us some helpful principles in our conversations with those who disagree.

- Check yourself - are you truly convinced of this and are you ready to give account to God for your views. 14:5b and 14:12
- Accept people with different opinions - 14:1-3
- Focus on the positives, the things that build up and the things we have in common - 14:19
- Remember: God first, others second, yourself third - 15:1 and 15:7

Kieran's Resolutions

After reading through Romans 14-15, these are my resolutions:

- When I discuss a contentious issue, I'm going to do it lovingly. This means I'll listen, I'll assume the best, I'll speak kindly, I'll do my best to understand their point of view and I'll express mine without trying to manipulate.
- If I'm unable to have a reasonable discussion, I won't avoid the person, I'll avoid the topic. If it doesn't have to be spoken about, then don't. I love what Paul says in Romans 14:22. So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Now we have to be careful with this, some things have to be spoken about. But if it's a contentious issue, causing friction between Christians, just let it and go. And that leads me to my third resolution:
- I'll talk about Jesus, our common faith and the hope that we have. I'll share about the encouragement I've received from scripture, I'll change topic to something that we can agree on.
- I will never, ever let a contentious issue break my fellowship with someone. The person I'm talking too may want to break fellowship with me, but I am resolved that if it is a non-essential, a non-gospel issue, I won't let it break our fellowship.

- And my final resolution is that I will only discuss contentious issues face to face, because I'm convinced that it's impossible to do it well online.

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the listening tips am I good at? Which do I need to work on?
2. What makes something a non-essential issue? List some examples.
3. Think of the non-essential truths you hold on to and ask yourself
 - a. Am I truly convinced?
 - b. Am I ready to give account to God for these beliefs?
4. Is there anything you need to repent of or spend more time reflecting on in regard to the above question?
5. List some of the things that all Christians have in common. Why is it better to focus on these?
6. What resolutions will you make regarding your conversations?