

Benham Brothers Offer Tested Advice for Weary Christian Culture Warriors

If you're going to get in the game today, transforming the culture instead of letting it transform you, it's important to engage in a way that communicates truth with grace.

Because true love captures the delicate tension between the two—to have one without the other is not true love.

“Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (John 1:17b).

Jesus' life reveals this perfect balance. So if we want to love others like Jesus did we'll tell them the truth, yet we'll do it with grace.

We've met countless Christian leaders who often get disoriented when their biblical worldview faces conflict. One leader asked us, “If I do a national TV interview with a panel of guests diametrically opposed to my beliefs, how do I keep from offending them while still communicating the truth?”

Several others have asked similar, difficult questions. They don't want to hurt anyone's feelings. But by choosing diplomacy, many Christians have simply remained quiet. We understand that pressure. So here's how the Lord taught us to approach this.

As we wrote about in our second book, *Living among Lions*, the first step is to have a hard head and a soft heart.

We know it sounds odd, but just sit tight and keep reading. We'll explain.

By hard head, we mean our goal is to please God, not man—to stand firmly on His principles and timeless truths, regardless

of what others say or do.

By soft heart, we mean the motive behind our engagement is not self-righteous frustration, but love—genuine love for God and love for people.

Oswald Chambers summed it up nicely, “Never water down the Word of God, preach it in its undiluted sternness; there must be unflinching loyalty to the Word of God; but when you come to personal dealing with your fellow men, remember who you are—not a special being made up in heaven, but a sinner saved by grace.”

In today’s volatile and sometimes hostile culture, if we don’t have a hard head and a soft heart, we have little chance of showing people God’s love.

We should not approach people with the goal of simply making our point, or getting them to think like us. Rather, we should approach them with a heart of compassion, wanting God’s best for their life—even if it offends them at the time.

Having a hard head and a soft heart enables us to speak the truth in love, with a heart of compassion *and* unflinching loyalty to God’s word, regardless of what people think of us.

“But speaking the truth in love, we may grow up in all things into Him, who is the head, Christ Himself” (Eph. 4:15).

The reality of love is that it doesn’t stop with a feeling. Love always takes action to serve the other person’s best interest. Like the protection of a father for his child when danger is around, he’s willing to do or say what his child doesn’t *want*, if that means providing what his child truly *needs*.

The only problem, though, is living like this will create conflict.

Just don’t forget “iron sharpens iron” (Prov. 27:17a).

Marshmallows don't sharpen marshmallows. {eoa}