

**Colony of Heaven Conversations:
Listening Well to People's Convictions about Politics
September 25, 2024**

First Conversation

Review how to listen well

James 1.19-20

My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires

1. Quick to listen:

- Ask open-ended questions (not statements in the form of a question)
- Show respect and interest.

2. Slow to speak:

- Stay with the other person. Don't jump to your opinions or your critique of their opinions.
- Check to see if you've understood the person. Repeat back to their satisfaction what you've heard.
- Practice curiosity and keep asking follow up questions.

3. Slow to get angry:

- Listen for what you can affirm.

Discuss

1. What are your greatest concerns about our nation at this moment in time?

2. As you think about these issues, what is at stake in your mind? Why are you so concerned about those issues?

3. To what extent do you think there are before-Jesus-returns answers for your concerns? What do you think those answers are?

Second Conversation

Review Jonathan Haidt's list of the six Civic Values that shape political opinions

The Stability-of-Society Cluster

- Loyalty and unity
- Authority and order
- Sanctity and purity

The Responsiveness-to-the-Individual Cluster

- Care for the needy
- Freedom from oppression
- Fairness for all

Discuss

1. Which of these two clusters of values do you identify with more?
2. How does that inform your thinking about the role and responsibility of government?

Third Conversation

Review options for voting for President

Four ways to vote according to our conscience

1. There are some who in good conscience will vote for one of the two electable candidates on the basis of which candidate they believe will bring about the most good in all areas
2. There are some who in good conscience will vote for one of the two electable candidates on the basis of one particular issue
3. Third, there are some who in good conscience will vote for a candidate who is not electable but is preferable
4. Finally, there are some who in good conscience will vote for one of the two electable candidates on the basis of which candidate they believe will cause the least damage

Discuss

What are the factors that inform the way you are planning to vote for president?

Resources

Peter Boghossian and James Lindsay, *How to Have Impossible Conversations*

David Brooks, *How to Know a Person*

Brant Hansen, *Unoffendable*

Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind*

Heather Holleman, *The Six Conversations*

John Inazu, *Learning to Disagree*

Alan Kreider, *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*

Scott Sauls, *A Gentle Answer*

Daniel Williams, *The Politics of the Cross*

NT Wright and Michael Bird, *Jesus and the Powers*