

## Conflict as Opportunity: An Introduction to The Colossian Forum

January 31, 2024 — [The Colossian Forum](#)

Throughout history, Christians have committed themselves to a “way of life” or rule of life at various times. Often, these rules of life were created as an effort to remain faithful to Christ in the midst of really challenging times. A rule of life is simply a commitment to live your life in a certain way—with some goal in mind. To live on purpose so that you can become the kind of person you long to become—and stay that person, even when things get hard.

The goal of The Colossian Forum is to invite Christians to embrace a way of being, a way of life in the midst of these challenging times that we’re currently experiencing. We long to see Christians think, pray, and act like Christ in the midst of our deepest disagreements.

We do this by helping Christians imagine a hopeful future where difference doesn’t have to mean despair. We not only paint a picture of what could be, but we offer concrete practices to help live it out. That’s the essence of a rule of life: A vision of where you want to go, and practices to help you get there.



### Conversation Overview

- ☐ What were some of the messages about conflict that you’ve taken on over the years—maybe even without realizing it?
- ☐ Conflict Is Opportunity: For discipleship and witness.
- ☐ North Star: Love of God and Love of Neighbor (Matthew 22:36–40)
- ☐ Test for Success: Increased Fruit of the Spirit, Decreased Works of the Flesh (Galatians 5:19–23)
- ☐ Our sinful tendencies to anxiety and conflict: Avoid and Defend
  - Avoidance
    - Sequester ourselves in communities that are homogeneous
    - Avoid conversations about divisive topics with those who don’t see things the way we do
  - Defensiveness
    - Approach disagreements as arguments
    - Often results in contempt for those with whom we disagree
- ☐ A Practice: Get Curious
  - Curiosity means we listen well, slow down and see the other person as beloved.
  - Sample Curious Questions
    - What do you mean by that?
    - Why does this matter to you?
    - How did you come to see it this way?

- Tell me more.
  - Can you give me an example of...?
- Introspective Curious Questions
  - What if what they are saying is true?
  - What might I have misunderstood about what they said?
  - What if I were to assume they are acting reasonably?
- A Posture: Humility
  - Posture is our way of being. Our character, who we are, and how we orient to the world around us.
  - Humility is being aware of and owning our limitations while pursuing deeper knowledge, truth, and understanding.
  - Examples from scripture
    - Abigail and Nabal (1 Samuel 25)
    - Jesus washing the disciples' feet (John 13:1–17)
    - Jesus holds truth (conviction) and grace (compassion) together (John 8:3–11)

## Resources & Links

[The Colossian Forum Video Discussion Guide](#)

[Monir Shahroudy Farmanfarmaian, \*Tir\*](#)

[Philip Yancey \*Where the Light Fell: A Memoir\*](#)

[Demon Copperhead by Barbara Kingsolver](#)