

THE ART OF DISAGREEING

Discussion Guide

Introduction

1. Is disagreement getting worse in modern society? If so, what do you think is causing that?
2. Have you ever witnessed disagreement to be destructive in your life or the life of someone you know? What was the result?
3. In your own experience, what has made the difference between productive disagreements and unhealthy disagreements?

Chapter 1

1. How do Christians disagree about kindness today? What passages in the New Testament can you think of that are relevant to these disagreements?
2. Have you ever observed kindness “open a door” toward a better understanding and dialogue between two opposing views? What happened?
3. In your own life, how do you know when to withdraw from a person who disagrees with you, and when to keep talking?

Chapter 2

1. In your own words, why is courage important amid disagreement? What happens in a disagreement when courage is lacking?
2. How do we know the difference between true courage and fake courage?
3. In your own life, how have you experienced being courageous to feel vulnerable? How have you experienced it as freeing?

Chapter 3

1. What does it feel like when someone is not listening carefully to you?
2. What skills have you found most helpful to better hear and understand different perspectives?
3. How do we know when we should learn something from a conflict vs. when we should disregard what the other party has said? Give an example from your own experiences or observations.

Chapter 4

1. When you are in a disagreement, what strategies have you found effective for disarming the other person and helping your words get a hearing?
2. How can we tell the difference between effective diplomacy and untruthful flattery? In seeking to build bridges, when do we know if we have gone too far?
3. Describe a time in which an argument was used effectively without the receiving party feeling alienated or embarrassed. What made this effective?

Chapter 5

1. What indicators do you watch for to be sure that you are acting out of godly love when you disagree with others?
2. What has surprised you about disagreement in general or about your own approach to disagreement as you've read this book?
3. If you focus on just one area of growth as a result of reading this book, what will it be and why?