

Growing Deeper
When Humans Collide

Week One: Avoid Avoidance
John 6:53-71

Spend FIFTEEN – Day One

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being “loves to argue,” 10 being “avoids conflict at any cost,” where would you place yourself?
2. Where would you put Jesus on this scale? Read John 6:53-71. Does this change your answer?
3. Jesus was willing to have conversations on controversial topics. He said things that upset people and cost followers. Would you have confronted Jesus and said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”
4. According to Joseph Grenny’s *Crucial Conversations*, conversations are crucial when they have three components: Strong Emotion, Opposing Opinions, and High Stakes. How do you see these three in John 6:53-71?
5. Jesus did not tone down his teaching to make it more palatable; in fact, he did just the opposite. What happens when we sacrifice truth?
6. End your FIFTEEN talking to God about your willingness to engage in hard conversations. Ask him to help you reflect Jesus’ love and courage.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Two

7. Who do you grumble to when you are dissatisfied?
8. Reread John 6:53-71. While this passage teaches us an important truth about Jesus and his purposes, we can also learn from his example of handling crucial conversations. In verse 61 who do you think the disciples were grumbling to?
9. How long did Jesus let their irritation fester? Why do you think he did this?
10. Joseph Grenny says, “You can measure the health of a relationship by measuring the average lag time between identifying a problem and talking about the problem.” How have you seen this reflected in your own experience?
11. What is lost by silence?

12. What would the disciples have lost if Jesus had not responded to their grumbling?
13. If you have doubts or disagree with things Jesus said, spend your FIFTEEN talking to him about those things. Open up time in the next week to listen to him, read Scripture, and watch for Jesus' response. If no doubts come to mind, spend your FIFTEEN asking God if you need to open up a crucial conversation with someone.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Three

14. How easily are you offended? What would your family, friends, and coworkers say?
15. In John 6:61 Jesus asks, "Does this offend you?" Look through John 6:53-59. What do you think offended Jesus' followers?
16. Some have observed that people in America today are quick to be offended. Why do you think this is?
17. What does this say about our willingness to invest in relationships?
18. One way author and speaker Ken Sande defines relational wisdom is God awareness/engagement, self awareness/engagement, and other awareness/engagement. How does Jesus manifest these in this passage (John 6:53-71)?
19. What impact would this kind of relational wisdom have on our haste to take offense?
20. End your FIFTEEN in reflection and prayer. Evaluate your own God awareness/engagement, self awareness/engagement, and other awareness/engagement.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Four

21. How has your family history and community culture impacted the way you deal with conflict?
22. Read John 6:64-71. Jesus openly acknowledged disbelief in some of his followers. What opportunity did this provide them?
23. While some followers left him, others drew closer. How would Jesus' openness create safety in their relationship with him?

24. How would having crucial conversations build trust in a relationship?
25. We often feel like we have to choose between the truth and keeping a friend. Actually we can have both. If someone feels safe with you, you both can be honest. What are ways to build safety in a relationship?
26. End your FIFTEEN asking God for ways to build your trust in him. Ask him to help you feel completely safe with him.

Spend FIFTEEN – Day Five

27. How do you evaluate whether something is worth the effort or risk?
28. Listen to or read out loud John 6:53-71. Verse 66 says many turned away. What did they lose?
29. Many followers walked away because what Jesus said was so contrary to their own views. Why did Jesus speak truth when it could result in many rejecting him?
30. Eating Jesus' body and drinking his blood is an invitation to deep dependence and intimacy. What was Jesus' priority in saying this was necessary?
31. The potential for deep, life-giving relationship made this crucial conversation worth the risk. How could hard conversations give life to your relationships?
32. Those who stayed engaged realized Jesus had the words of eternal life. They realized a relationship with him was the most important thing they could ever pursue. End your FIFTEEN reflecting on your relationship with Jesus. Thank him for the gift of life and relationship. Ask for that life to be reflected in all your conversations.