

CHRIST FELLOWSHIP'S VIEW TOLERANCE

Culturally, in the USA, our highest social virtue is tolerance. And our greatest vice is intolerance.

Many people are confused about what tolerance is. According to *Webster's New World Dictionary, Second College Edition*: Tolerance means "to allow or to permit, to recognize and respect other's beliefs and practices without sharing them, to bear or put up with someone or something not necessarily liked."

Tolerance, then, involves permitting or allowing a conduct or point of view you think is wrong while respecting the person in the process. Notice that we can't tolerate others unless we disagree with them. We don't tolerate people who share our views. Instead, tolerance is reserved for those we think are wrong.

This essential element of tolerance – disagreement – has been completely lost in the modern distortion of the concept. Nowadays, if you think someone is wrong, you're called intolerant. Tolerance means to embrace their view. This presents us with a curious problem.

Judging someone as wrong makes one intolerant, yet one must first think another is wrong to be tolerant. Furthermore, if we never judge anything as true or false, good or evil, then we can make no moral distinctions: cannibalism becomes just another diet; sex with children becomes another lifestyle and terrorists become a different kind of patriot.

On the other hand, we must confront the opposite danger of delighting in judging. This is a common problem among religious people. It was one of Jesus' major criticisms of the Pharisees. They condemned people who did not follow their religious rules. Today some religious people do the same, such as condemning anyone who is divorced without bothering to hear their story and consider the circumstances.

And yet, we must muster the courage to stand against our culture and judge truth and goodness based on the Word of God. And at the same time, we must love people with whom we disagree. God calls us to higher virtue than mere tolerance. Jesus said to love our enemies, to do good to those who seek to harm us.

At Christ Fellowship we seek to rise above tolerance, to love all people as God so loved the world that he sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross

for all people because the Father wants all people to come to repentance and discover the salvation available by trusting in Jesus Christ.

Should you judge or not? What does God say? How can you judge without being judgmental? For insights into this question see our CF View paper, "How to Judge without being Judgmental."

*Christ Fellowship's views on this subject are guided by the authoritative Word of God.
Not all biblical references in the Word of God relating to each principle are listed.
Biblical references quoted are from the New International Version (NIV) 2011 unless otherwise noted.*