

Faithful Disagreement:

*Building Durable Relationships
with God & Each Other*

A Course in Three Parts
moderated by Tom Gamble & David Ealy



FORUM 102: WEEK 1

“Paying Attention to Our Filters”

Introduction

Remember the Ground Rules

Be mindful of the covenant we established as a class:

- Have respect for one another**
- Care enough to listen**
- One person speaks at a time**
- Confidentiality**
- Reserve Judgement**
- Speak Up**
- Listen**
- Pray**

Our Manner of Discourse

We established an invitational method of speaking. When one person is done talking, it is their job to invite the next person to speak (not necessarily the person to either side of them). Invitations can always be respectfully declined.

Homework

We will take time at the beginning of this class to review the homework. Think in particular about how it relates to the topic of hearing.

Definitions

This session will expand our usual review of vocabulary to dig into several areas that make up our perception, understanding and responses to others and ourselves.

Filters in Real Time

This particular class will press our awareness of filters at work in ourselves and in others. We will be reflecting on an actual event in Canton, NC to practice.

Facilitators

TOM GAMBLE has led development of self-managing work teams in manufacturing facilities. His contact information is rtgamble122@aol.com or 336-578-3632.

DAVID EALY has studied and practiced pastoral counseling. His contact information is david@hawfieldschurch.org or 336-524-1234.



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Semantic Warnings

DEFINITIONS

Filter |'fɪltər|

noun

1. a porous device for removing impurities or solid particles from a liquid or gas passed through it: *an oil filter.*
- short for filter tip: [as modifier] : a *cheap filter cigarette.*
 - a screen, plate, or layer of a substance that absorbs light or other radiation or selectively absorbs some of its components: *filters can be used in photography to reduce haze.*
 - a device for suppressing electrical or sound waves of frequencies not required.
 - *Computing* a piece of software that processes text, for example to remove unwanted spaces or to format it for use in another application.

verb [with obj.]

- 1 pass (a liquid, gas, light, or sound) through a device to remove unwanted material: *the patient is hooked up to a dialysis machine twice a week to filter out the cholesterol in the blood* | figurative : *you'll be put through to a secretary whose job it is to filter calls.*
- [no obj., with adverbial of direction] move slowly or in small quantities or numbers through something or in a specified direction: people filtered out of the concert during the last set.
 - [no obj., with adverbial] (of information) gradually become known: *the news began to filter in from the hospital.*

Prejudice |'preɪdʒəs|

noun

- 1 preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience: *English prejudice against foreigners* | *anti-Jewish prejudices.*
- dislike, hostility, or unjust behavior deriving from unfounded opinions: *accusations of racial prejudice.*
- 2 chiefly Law harm or injury that results or may result from some action or judgment: *prejudice resulting from delay in the institution of the proceedings.*

verb [with obj.]

- 1 give rise to prejudice in (someone); make biased: *the statement might prejudice the jury.*
- 2 chiefly Law cause harm to (a state of affairs): *delay is likely to prejudice the child's welfare.*

Paradigm |'pærəˌdɪm|

noun

1. technical a typical example or pattern of something; a model: *there is a new paradigm for public art in this country.*
- a worldview underlying the theories and methodology of a particular scientific subject: the discovery of universal gravitation became the paradigm of successful science.
2. a set of linguistic items that form mutually exclusive choices in particular syntactic roles: *English determiners form a paradigm: we can say "a book" or "his book" but not "a his book."* Often contrasted with *syntagm.*
- (in the traditional grammar of Latin, Greek, and other inflected languages) a table of all the inflected forms of a particular verb, noun, or adjective, serving as a model for other words of the same conjugation or declension.

Belief |bi'li:f|

noun

1. an acceptance that a statement is true or that something exists: *his belief in the value of hard work* | *a belief that solitude nourishes creativity.*
- something one accepts as true or real; a firmly held opinion or conviction: *contrary to popular belief, Aramaic is a living language* | *we're prepared to fight for our beliefs.*
 - a religious conviction: *Christian beliefs* | *I'm afraid to say belief has gone* | *local beliefs and customs.*
2. (belief in) trust, faith, or confidence in someone or something: *a belief in democratic politics* | *I've still got belief in myself.*

PHRASES

be of the belief that hold the opinion that; think: *I am firmly of the belief that we need to improve our product.*

beyond belief astonishingly good or bad; incredible: *riches beyond belief* | *the driving we have witnessed was beyond belief.*

in the belief that thinking or believing that: *he took the property in the belief that he had consent.*

to the best of my belief in my genuine opinion; as far as I know: *to the best of my belief, Francis never made a will.*

Semantic Warnings

Presumption |priˈzʌmpSHən|

noun

1 an act or instance of taking something to be true or adopting a particular attitude toward something, esp. at the start of a chain of argument or action: *the presumption of guilt has changed to a presumption of innocence.*

- an idea that is taken to be true, and often used as the basis for other ideas, although it is not known for certain: *underlying presumptions about human nature.*
- chiefly Law an attitude adopted in law or as a matter of policy toward an action or proposal in the absence of acceptable reasons to the contrary: *the planning policy shows a general presumption in favor of development.*

2 behavior perceived as arrogant, disrespectful, and transgressing the limits of what is permitted or appropriate: *he lifted her off the ground and she was enraged at his presumption.*

How do you account for what your beliefs allow you to say and hear?



READ:

The definitions on page 3-4, paying particular attention to how these things interact with your speech and hearing.

Which of these words do you think are most at play when you are listening to or speaking with someone?

WRITE:

In the spaces below, take time to reflect on each question and to write down examples. Be prepared to share at least one.

Where do your beliefs, paradigms, presumptions, prejudices and filters come from?

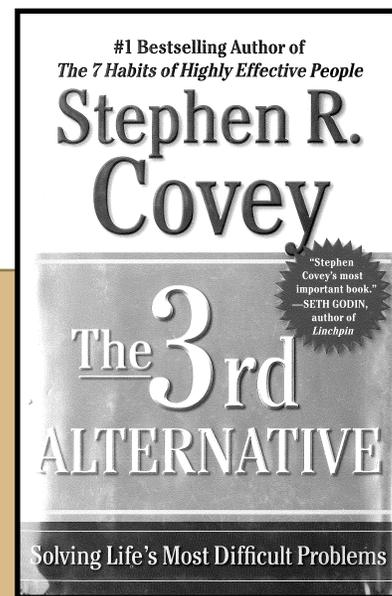
What does it mean to you to hear in light of the definitions?

How do they change (if they do)?

What does it mean to speak in light of the definitions?

“The 3rd Alternative”

READ: The excerpts from *The 3rd Alternative* by Steven Covey.



	2-Alternative Thinking	3rd Alternative Thinking
1	I see only my “side.”	I see my self-independent of my “side.”
2	I stereotype you.	I see you—as a human being, not as just a representative of your “side.”
3	I defend myself against you because you’re wrong.	I seek you out because you see things differently.
4	I attack you. We make war on each other.	I synergize with you. Together we create an amazing future that no one could have foreseen.

To a great extent, of course, we feel defined by our culture. We tend to dress, talk, eat, play, and think like the people we identify with. It doesn't matter if we're business executives, ballet dancers, priests, politicians, or police officers. We wear the uniform. We listen to the pundits. We see the movies. And we talk the talk.

The philosopher Owen Flanagan puts it this way: “We are born into families and communities with an image of persons already in place. We have no say about the location in space of images into which we are born. The image antedates us, often by centuries. . . . Once we reach an age where we do have some control, we work from the image, from the story that is already deeply absorbed, a story line that is already part of our self-image.”² We can become stout defenders of that self-image even as it becomes less and less about ourselves and more and more about an externally imposed image.

DISCUSS:

- What stands out to you from this excerpt?
- How much do you think what you hear or say is affected by culture, upbringing, genetics?
- What in your beliefs are original to you?



Awareness & Change

DISCUSS:

- Where does the willingness to know come from?
- Where does a lack of curiosity come from?
- How do grow in our awareness of our filters?
- Why should we put energy into changing them?
- What does it take to convince you of something?
- What does it take to convince you of something you didn't previously believe?
- Do you consider yourself to be "open-minded"?
- Pictured to the right are various kinds of filters. How are your filters similar? Dissimilar? How well do they work? Do they ever need replacing? Why?
- How does education affect your filters?
- How does experience change your filters?
- How does exposure to other cultures or people change your filters?



Our Senses Filter



Nature Filters



Music Filters



Time Filters



Coffee Filters



Camera Filters



Oil Filters



Water Filters



A Courtroom Filters justice.

The highest result of education is tolerance.

—Helen Keller

Perspectives from Scripture

READ: Choose one passage. Pay attention to what sticks out to you in each story and think about why.

WRITE:

- (From the Mark passage) What do you make of verse 27? Who is Jesus calling a dog?
- Does this fit with your image of Jesus?
- (From the Luke passage) In verse 3, who is short: Jesus or Zacchaeus? Why do you think so? (the Greek actually is not clear one way or another)
- What filters are operating for you when you read the Bible? What are your operating presumptions concerning it? Can your view of the Bible change and you still be considered faithful?

The Syrophenician Woman

— Mark 7:24-30

²⁴ Jesus left that place and went into the region of Tyre. He didn't want anyone to know that he had entered a house, but he couldn't hide. ²⁵ In fact, a woman whose young daughter was possessed by an unclean spirit heard about him right away. She came and fell at his feet. ²⁶ The woman was Greek, Syrophenician by birth. She begged Jesus to throw the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ He responded, "The children have to be fed first. It isn't right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs."

²⁸ But she answered, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

²⁹ "Good answer!" he said. "Go on home. The demon has already left your daughter." ³⁰ When she returned to her house, she found the child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

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Jesus & Zacchaeus

— Luke 19:1-19

¹ Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through town. ² A man there named Zacchaeus, a ruler among tax collectors, was rich. ³ He was trying to see who Jesus was, but, being a short man, he couldn't because of the crowd. ⁴ So he ran ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. ⁵ When Jesus came to that spot, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, come down at once. I must stay in your home today." ⁶ So Zacchaeus came down at once, happy to welcome Jesus.

⁷ Everyone who saw this grumbled, saying, "He has gone to be the guest of a sinner."

⁸ Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my possessions to the poor. And if I have cheated anyone, I repay them four times as much."

⁹ Jesus said to him, "Today, salvation has come to this household because he too is a son of Abraham. ¹⁰ The Human One came to seek and save the lost."

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A “Real Life” Example

WRITE:

On Halloween of 2013, a pastor from a church in Canton, NC, led his congregation in burning any Bibles that were not King James Version. What do you think about that?

How do you think we should respond to this man and his church?

READ:

(This article by Tom Paine)

It came out in the news today that yet another pastor is planning to burn a holy book. “Uh Oh,” you are probably thinking. “Who is getting ready to burn Korans for publicity?” But it isn’t the Koran Marc Grizzard of Amazing Grace Baptist Church of Canton, North Carolina plans to burn over a bonfire. It is the Bible. Why pray tell would Christians plan to burn Bibles? Because they want to burn “all those Satanic Bibles.” Wait, what Satanic Bibles? You know, all those Bibles printed that are not the King James Version.

Earlier in life, this would have gotten me going. While the King James Bible is a hallmark in the history of Bible, and still retains some of the most beautiful use of the English language, to think that that version is somehow spiritually superior to other translations shows a profound lack of understanding of translation of Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. I cannot

fathom anyone who has spent anytime in Biblical study taking this position (especially in the 21st century), and yet, apparently he and his church does. So much so that they not only believe the King Jams Version is the only real Bible but that all others are written by Satan and his minions.

So, what should be done? Should Christians show up en masse and voice our displeasure at the Reverend Grizzard and his church? I would say no for two reasons. First, all Grizzard will accomplish is burning paper (problematic for our atmosphere but I suspect that is not much of an issue to him). God’s Word is living and alive and not contained just in the pages of a book. As for God’s written Word, we’ve got copies of Bibles everywhere these days including on many of our cell phones. Beyond his symbolism, he will not stop anyone from reading any translation of the Bible that they wish. But, second, and most importantly, I don’t think Jesus would show up to protest in outrage but would show up in compassion and love. I hope that Christians in North Carolina do go to his church to reason with him and his church. It is not by rioting or by threat that we can change



people’s hearts and perceptions. It is by reaching out to them as brothers and sisters.

Let us pray for the Reverend Grizzard and his church. And let’s continue to read the Bible through each each translation that we find edifying.

Homework:

What filters are at work in your reaction to the idea? What filters are at work as you read the article? What do you think of Paine’s suggested response? What filters do you think are at work in Paine’s perspective?

Exploring Assumptions



CONCEPT:

LEWIS & CLARK are among the most famous explorers in our history. In the video, Dr. Tod Bolsinger compares the challenges facing the Presbyterian Church to those encountered by the explorers, Lewis & Clark.

PRACTICE:

View the video and then discuss the filters at work for Lewis & Clark and those at work in your own faith as well as the church.

You can find this video on YouTube using the URL <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu5PzgeKpT0> (there are other videos in this series).



Notes



Notes



Notes

