

## Talk # 6 – Cannot Talk About Tough Issues

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My name is \_\_\_\_\_,

and my talk is how to have a Crucial Conversation with Someone Who Does Not Want to Talk About Tough Issues.

Have you ever tried to have a serious conversation about something that has been weighing on your heart, or you want to work through an important problem, but your family, your friend, or even your prayer and share group wasn't interested in having that conversation? Maybe they weren't even paying close enough attention to know that you had something important to share. Jesus tried to have a serious conversation with Peter, James, and John right after the Last Supper. This is Matthew, Chapter 26:

*Then Jesus went with them to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and he said, "Sit here while I go over there to pray." He took Peter and Zebedee's two sons, James and John, and he became anguished and distressed. He told them, "My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me." He went on a little farther and bowed with his face to the ground, praying, "My Father! If it is possible, let this cup of suffering be taken away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine." Then he returned to the disciples and found them asleep. He said to Peter, "Couldn't you watch with me even one hour? Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation. For the spirit is willing, but the body is weak!"*

We know that Jesus returned a second and a third time, and the three disciples were asleep each time. Jesus told them that his soul was crushed with grief, yet none of the Gospels records any response from the disciples. Jesus' attempt at a serious conversation with his closest friends was met with silence.

If our attempts at a serious and crucial conversation are ignored, it is usually because the other person does not comfortable sharing their feelings, or they feel the conversation won't do any good, or they are missing our cues that we need to talk.

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The solution is to work on ourselves first. Keep the conversations simple. Do your best to make the other person or people feel safe. Say things like “I don’t mean to make you feel uncomfortable, but I would like to talk about something.” Then be patient. Don’t nag. Don’t lose hope. Don’t go to silence or control. If you become aggressive or insulting, it reminds the other person that this conversation will do no good.

Share what it would mean to you and to the relationship if you could have the conversation. For example, maybe someone in your prayer and share group spends a lot of time talking about the events of their day, but avoids discussing their personal struggles. Instead of asking them directly about things you think they may be avoiding, you can ask them if they have a hard time discussing certain topics. Then everyone in the group can take turns naming the topics they have a hard time sharing. After everyone has shared, the group can discuss the benefits of helping each other. Sometimes even if you can’t talk about the tough topics, you can begin by discussing how to talk about them.

### **Questions for Speaker to Answer** *(please keep your comments to 5 minutes or less)*

1. Are there tough issues that are hard for you to discuss in your prayer and share group? How do you handle that? How does your group handle that? Are there things that you or your group could do better?

### **Group Discussion**

1. Are there tough issues that are hard for you to discuss in your prayer and share group?
2. How do you handle that? How does your group handle that?
3. Are there things that you or your group could do better?