

# THE TAKE HOME

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## Prayer of St. Francis

Lord make me an instrument of  
your peace

Where there is hatred let me  
sow love  
Where there is injury, pardon  
Where there is doubt, faith  
Where there is despair, hope  
Where there is darkness, light  
And where there is sadness, joy.

O divine master grant  
that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console  
to be understood as to  
understand  
to be loved as to love  
For it is in giving that we receive  
it is in pardoning that we are  
pardoned  
And it's in dying that we are  
born to eternal life.

Amen.

## Theological Reflection

United Methodist Theology utilizes a four fold path to help us reflect on tough subjects.

1. **Scripture** - the Bible.
2. **Tradition** is how the church has practiced faith throughout history.
3. **Reason** is how we think about our faith.
4. **Experience** is the Holy Spirit at work in us.

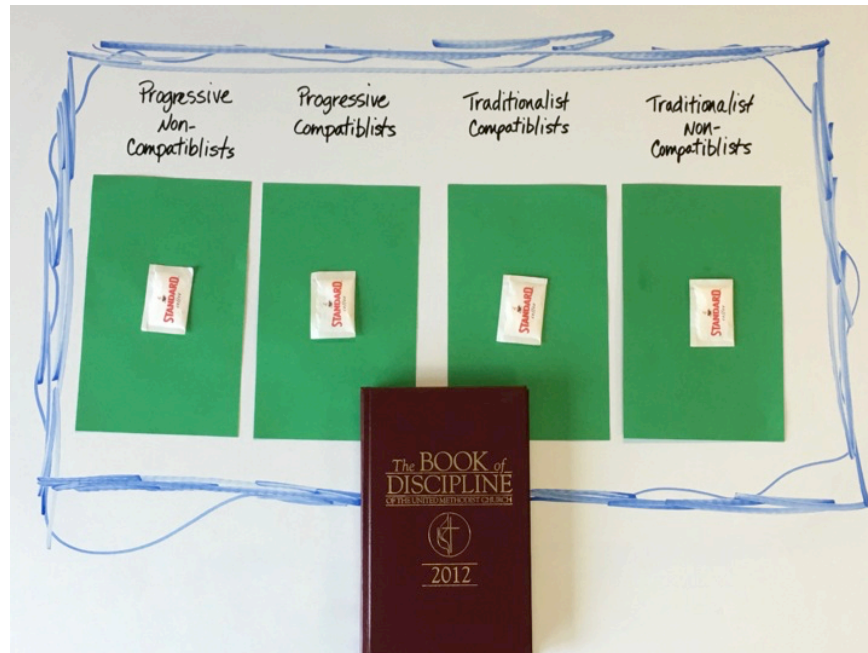
## Our goal

**Our goal is not to fix each other or try to change someone's mind.** Our focus is to **listen well**, learn and **be open** to how God might speak through this conversation.

## Words of Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you;  
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and  
be gracious to you;  
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you,  
and give you peace.

(Numbers 6:24-26)



#### Some definitions from Tom Berlin's video

- **Traditionalist Non-Compatibilists:** People in this zone are satisfied with the current restrictive wording of the Book of Discipline on same-sex marriage and the ordination of people who are practicing homosexuals. They want to see the church live out what they feel are obvious prohibitions in Scripture regarding homosexual acts. For them it is an issue of personal holiness. They are concerned that if these passages are compromised, all passages related to practices of sexual ethics and personal holiness will be compromised. Their concerns about change are of such importance to them that they would rather be in a church where all agree on these matters than feel personally compromised by a church with a diverse view on human sexuality.
- **Traditionalist Compatibilists:** These people hold traditional views on human sexuality but understand that other pastors or churches would like to have the option of offering marriage ceremonies to same-sex couples. Some Annual Conferences want to have the ability to ordain people who are practicing homosexuals. While they do not want to be forced into performing such a marriage, they can live in a denomination where this occurs, understanding that there are many issues beyond this where they find unity in our connection.
- **Progressive Compatibilists:** Many of these people have moved from Traditionalist Compatibilists into this area in more recent years. They would like to see the church offer ordination to all people and same-sex marriage to committed Christian couples. They understand that their friends on the right are not where they are and believe that the unity Christ prayed for the church can be upheld despite this difference. They respect the right of their traditionalist friends and do not want them to be forced into situations that would violate their personal beliefs. Most United Methodists are compatibilists. I would guess that 70% or more of us fall into one of these two areas.
- **Progressive Non-Compatibilists:** People in this space have deep concerns for the call of Scripture for justice to all people and Jesus' deferential care of the marginalized. These two points of biblical interpretation, among others, lead them to work for full inclusion in the life of the church. This is such a high value for them that they only want to be in a church that reflects this belief and will work for change as long as the church does not.

## We Believe

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- We believe every person is of sacred worth.
- We believe God breathed into each person the breath of life.
- We are made in God’s image.
- Jesus taught us the one another plan: Love one another, encourage one another..
- The Bible tells us what love looks like... love is patient and kind, doesn’t envy or boast, isn’t proud or self seeking or rude, keeps no record of wrongs.
- We know what love is because we see the depth of that love for us in Jesus on the cross.
- We know what our role is, because we see how Jesus served... with towel and basin, ready to do the dirty work of footwashing.
- We know the nature of God’s kingdom because of Jesus’ sermon on the mount. Blessed are the merciful, blessed are the pure in heart, blessed are the peacemakers.

### **Debate**

**vs.**

### **Dialogue**

The goal is to “win” the argument by affirming one’s own views and discrediting other views.	The goal is to understand different perspectives and learn about other views.
People listen to others to find flaws in their arguments.	People listen to others to understand how their experiences shape their beliefs.
People critique the experiences of others as distorted and invalid.	People accept the experiences of others as real and valid.
People appear to be determined not to change their own views on the issue.	People appear to be somewhat open to expanding their understanding of the issue.
People speak based on assumptions made about others’ positions and motivations.	People speak primarily from their own understanding and experience.
People oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.	People work together toward common understanding.
Strong emotions like anger are often used to intimidate the other side.	Strong emotions like anger and sadness are appropriate when they convey the intensity of an experience or belief.

\* Taken from *The Little Book of Dialogue for Difficult Subjects*

## Scriptures

o **Genesis 19** describes the abusive and exploitive situation in Sodom and Gomorrah.

o **Leviticus 18 and 20** both use the word "abomination" to describe same sexual relations and Leviticus 20, like with many other issues calls for the stoning of anyone who breaks the law

o **Romans 1:27** describes men committing "shameless acts" with other men.

o **1 Corinthians 6** lists those who will not inherit the kingdom of God: "Those who are sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, <sup>10</sup> thieves, the greedy, drunkards, revilers, robbers."

o **1 Timothy 1:8-10** describes how the law is not written for the innocent but: "for the godless and sinful, for the unholy and profane, for those who kill their father or mother, for murderers, <sup>10</sup> fornicators, sodomites, slave traders, liars, perjurers, and whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching."

### **Matthew 22:37-39**

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." <sup>38</sup>This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

### **Micah 6:8**

What does the Lord Require? To seek justice, love kindness and walk humbly with God.

### **Matthew 25:35-40**

<sup>34</sup>Then the king will say to those at his right hand, "Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; <sup>35</sup>for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup>I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me." <sup>37</sup>Then the righteous will answer him, "Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? <sup>38</sup>And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? <sup>39</sup>And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?" <sup>40</sup>And the king will answer them, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,\* you did it to me."

## Notes

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