

Bill Hybels: Incivility (Even in Christian Leadership) Is Killing Us

By **Joshua Pease** - August 10, 2017

In his opening talk for the annual Global Leadership Summit, Willow Creek Community Church Pastor Bill Hybels addressed what he believes is one of the most damaging trends harming the United States: incivility.

In our culture there is an increased disrespect for women, widening gaps between the rich and poor, social media vitriol, politicians who spend more time berating each other than solving problems, Hybels said. “How do we lead in an era of run-away divisiveness and disrespect? The solution has to begin with me.”

For the sixth Summit in a row, Hybels reiterated that the culture of any organization—especially a church—will only be as healthy as a leader cares for it to be. Reminding the

audience that “we of faith do not get to choose who we respect,” Hybels laid out his 10 rules every leader must follow to combat the caustic incivility invading not only American culture, but others as well.

1. Set the example of how to differ with others without demonizing them
2. Model how to have spirited conversations without “drawing blood”
3. Never interrupt others who are talking and do not dominate the conversation
4. Limit your volume level and refuse to use incendiary or belittling words that are guaranteed to derail a discussion
5. Set the example of being courteous in word and deed
6. Never stereotype
7. Apologize immediately when wrong instead of denying or doubling down
8. Form opinions carefully and stay open minded if better information comes along
9. Show up when you say you’re going to show up and do what you say you’ll do
10. Set rules of respect for everyone in the organization and enforce them relentlessly

Hybels spent a little more time addressing the fourth point, encouraging leaders to identify the four or five words that are like “lobbing a grenade over a wall” and “expunging them from your vocabulary.” He also challenged every church leader to develop their own “civility code” that is relentlessly enforced amongst their church staff, including an example of one he’d seen from a successful local business.

We will greet and acknowledge each other.

We will say please and thank you.

We will treat each other equally and with respect.

We will be direct, sensitive and honest.

We will address incivility.

“When is the last time you reflected deeply on your own conviction on respecting others?” Hybels asked the audience. “Maybe it’s time we all step up and say we will set the standard for inclusivity and have zero tolerance for disrespect while we are at the helm.”

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Josh Pease is a writer & speaker living in Colorado with his wife and two kids. His e-book, [The God Who Wasn't There](#) , is available for purchase on Amazon.



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