



## CELL GUIDE

**TOPIC** Culture of Encouragement

**SPEAKER** DSP Edric Sng

**THEME** Building the Right Culture

**DATE** 13 & 14 Oct 2024

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

The church is a gathering of God's people, and the church's culture is therefore the sum of the beliefs and behaviours of churchgoers. We can choose to enter church, and have its existing culture shape us, or we can be intentional about shaping the church's culture – to be one that is Christlike and reflects its identity as the body of Christ.

## THREE IMPORTANT FAITH CONVICTIONS

DSP Edric shared that BBTC has been famous for its three "No(s)", which includes No Condemnation, No Comparison and No Competition. He introduced two more – No Complaining and No Critical Spirit, and went on to elaborate on all the 5Cs:

### 1) No Condemnation -> Only Constant Encouragement

Although 1 Corinthians 5:12 calls upon us to "judge those inside church who are sinning", such judgment is not a license to condemn, but to "bring that person back" (James 5:19) to a place of awareness and repentance. Our starting point should be to bear with the failings of the weak, to act in a manner that is for their good, and to build them up (Romans 15:1-2). To condemn another person when we are in fact all sinners before God makes us hypocrites (Matthew 7:1-5).

Instead of condemning us for our sins, Jesus loves us, and His grace and forgiveness abounds (Roman 8:1 and James 3:13, read together with John 3:17). Similarly, we should extend such love to others instead of condemning them and kick start a virtuous cycle of encouragement with our brothers and sisters in Christ. As Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:11, we should "encourage one another and build one another up".

### 2) No Comparison and No Competition -> Complement and Celebrate one another

There have been many instances of unhealthy comparison and competition in the bible – for example, between Jacob and Esau, Leah and Rachel, as well as the prodigal son and his brother. These instances had only brought about more sin and suffering. Instead of comparing with and competing against fellow churchgoers, DSP Sng calls us to complement and celebrate one another. Such positive interactions will lead us to grow in Christlikeness.

We should refrain from putting each other down and should instead spur one another to love and good works (Hebrew 10:24-25), sharpen one another (Proverbs 27:17) and exhort one another (Hebrews 3:13). At the end of the day, as in John 3:29, we should be “filled with joy” at our friend’s success.

### **3) No Complaining and No Critical Spirit -> Constructive Conversations and Charity**

God revealed His anger towards complainers by saying that He will “strike them down” (Numbers 11-16). On this note, we are reminded not to be complainers or adopt a critical spirit. While such behaviours are prevalent in our modern-day church, they are actually rooted in pride and discontent. They stand at odds with what the bible teaches us about being loving and charitable to one another (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).

We need to constructively express our concerns instead of complaining and criticising. Indeed, the goal of our interactions should not be “one-upmanship” to “win debates”, but to work together as team players, serving the same God.

## **CONCLUSION**

If the above-mentioned 5Cs is present in any organisation – even a secular one, they will be like cancer and can bring the whole organisation down. Refraining from the 5Cs will guide BBTC towards a more Christlike culture. BBTC is our home church where we must be intentional about shaping and owning its culture.

# QUESTIONS

1. Have you ever been a victim of the 5Cs - condemnation, comparison, competition, complains or a critical spirit - in church or any other organisation? How did the experience make you feel and how did you respond?

2. Of the 5Cs, which are you most prone to doing and why?

3. What role will you play to intentionally shape BBTC's culture into a Christlike one? Who is one person you can encourage, complement, celebrate, extend charity to or have a constructive conversation with this week?