

These slides were a part of a three message series on the subject of

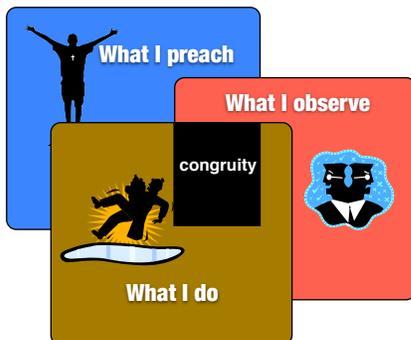
## Spiritual Dissonance

for Gracepoint  
by Jim Abrahamson.

# Dissonance #1

Why we experience it  
and how it helps us.

Dissonance comes from the lack of congruity between what I preach, observe, and do.



We cover dissonance by claiming that mistakes were made but not by us.

We seek to be  
“in the right”  
as apposed to  
“in the light”

Psychiatrists  
Police  
Scientists  
Parents  
Judges  
Nations  
Husbands & wives  
Prosecutors  
Politicians  
Churches

Dissonance involves intellectual conflicts as we read the Scriptures

**Psalm 78:69**

“the earth which is founded forever”

**II Peter 3:10**

“the earth and its works will be burned up”

Dissonance involves social conflicts.

**1 Corinthians 3**

“1 And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. 2 I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, 3 for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?”

## Dissonance involves moral conflicts.

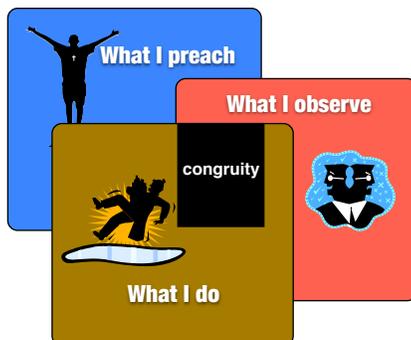
Romans 7

“<sup>19</sup> For the good that I wish, I do not do; but I practice the very evil that I do not wish. <sup>20</sup> But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. <sup>21</sup> I find then the principle that evil is present in me, the one who wishes to do good. <sup>22</sup> For I joyfully concur with the law of God in the inner man, <sup>23</sup> but I see a different law in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind, and making me a prisoner of the law of sin which is in my members. <sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death?”

## Observation #1

**Dissonance**  
(cognitive, social & moral)  
**marks us as truly human, bearing the image of God.**

**Dissonance can only be possible if:**



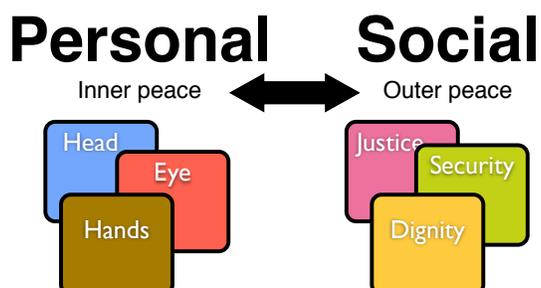
1. we have two conflicting natures
- and
2. we bear the image of God

## Observation #2

**Social Dissonance**  
(Injustice, war & disrespect)  
**comes from Personal Spiritual Dissonance.**

James 4:1

“What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war on your members?”



The path to a loving community starts at the Cross.



# Observation #3

## Dissonance

(cognitive, social & moral)

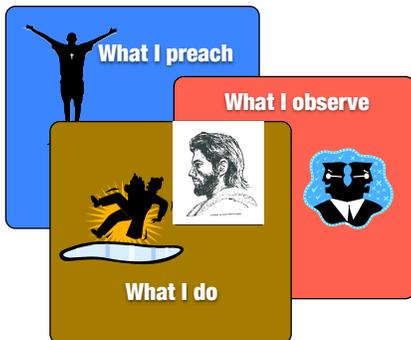
**draws us to the Gospel**

- transferring our hope from self to Christ.

The fact that we have an appetite for the Kingdom is our first step toward the King.



Dissonance  
is what leads us to



1.  
the Cross  
of Christ

and

2.  
the hope  
of glory.

# Dissonance

1. Embrace it as revelation.
2. Help others learn from it.
3. Let it lead you to Christ.
4. Celebrate because

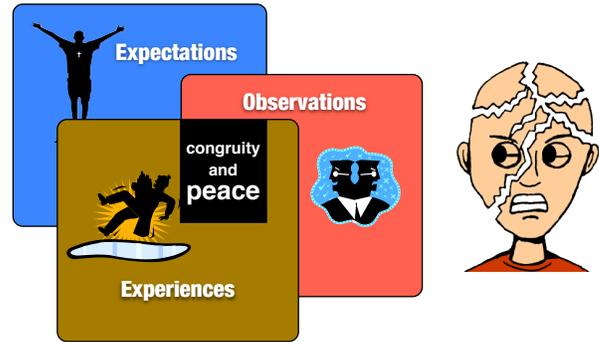
God grades  
on the Cross  
not on the curve.



# Dissonance #2

Why we experience it and how it hurts us.

Spiritual **STRESS** comes from unresolved dissonance.



## Observation #1

We equate mistakes with stupidity and shame

## Adam & Eve's Dissonance

"she took from its fruit and ate"  
Gen.3:6

"I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid myself."  
Gen.3:10

"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me from the tree and I ate."  
Gen.3:12

1. **sin**

I made mistakes

2. **shame**

I am a stupid person

3. **strategy**  
to relieve the shame

Mistakes were made but not by me



### Genesis 3:6



"When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate;"

1. Magnify the dissonance.
2. Misperceive her perception and hope.
3. Get her to commit to the wrong strategy of action.

## The stress of dissonance

**Guilt**



**Shame**

Conviction  
of a particular sin

Sin centered

Rejection  
of self

Self centered

## Observation #2

We often try  
to relieve our  
dissonance in  
unhealthy ways.

## Depression

is the exhaustion of our soul  
as it pursues misplaced  
strategies to relieve  
the dissonance of  
life in a fallen  
world.



The father of lies  
wants us to find  
hope in anything  
and everything but  
Jesus.



The greatest lies we tell  
are the ones we tell to  
ourselves.

### *Satan's sneaky pack of lies*

- ✓ **Focus on the Law** - Who sinned - me (shame) or you (blame)?
- ✓ **Unrealistic expectations** for God, others, and ourselves.
- ✓ **A toxic church culture** that is narcissistic, pragmatic, and punitive.



### *Bad strategies for resolving Dissonance*

1. **Cooking the books**
2. **Compounding stupidity**
3. **Grading on the curve**
4. **Putting on the face**
5. **Lowering the bar**

## Observation #3

**Dissonance is best resolved with the truth of the Gospel not the defensive lies we tell ourselves.**

## Two types of stress from dissonance

Toxic Stress

**Shame**



Incentive to grow

**Pressure**



# Dissonance

**can lead us  
into temptation.**

Shame and Blame

# Dissonance

**can encourage us  
to grow.**

Secure and Changing

### *God's truth about peace*

- ✓ **Focus on the Gospel** - Transferred hope.
- ✓ **Realistic expectations** for ourselves, and others.
- ✓ **A healthy church culture** that is honest, realistic, gracious, and speaks the truth in love.



# Dissonance #3

How to make it work for you.

## Three hidden blessings of dissonance



A sign  
of dignity

A doorway  
to Christ



An incentive  
to grow

### Leaders must encourage

1. **HOPE** -  
They must see what **should** be.  
Communicate a clear, compelling vision or hope.
2. **FAITH** -  
They must see what **can** be.  
Motivate with expectant faith in God and others.
3. **LOVE** -  
They must accept what **is**.  
Graciously accept the reality of disappointments.
4. **FEAR** -  
They must see what others fear **might** be.  
Help others manage their fears.

### Followers must engage

1. **HOPE** -  
They must **show up** for community, growth, & ministry.  
Its not about me. Its about **Jesus** and **us**.
2. **FAITH** -  
They must expect God to work **in** and **through** them.  
Without risk there is little faith.
3. **LOVE** -  
They must respond to what **is**.  
Graciously accept the reality of disappointments.
4. **FEAR** -  
They must expect and attack their fears as **Satanic**.

### We all must live with Dissonance

1. Most human beings and institutions are going to do everything in their power to **reduce dissonance in ways that are favorable to them**, that allow them to justify their mistakes and maintain business as usual.
2. The ultimate correction for the tunnel vision that afflicts all of us mortals is more **light**.
3. Become **aware** that we are in a state of dissonance.
4. Confidence and conviction must not exclude **humility** and **teachability**.

Appreciate  
the human dignity  
embedded in dissonance.

Through moral stress  
we see the image of God  
in us.

**Appreciate  
the Gospel  
embedded in dissonance.**

Shame is God's tool before conversion and Satan's after.

**Appreciate  
the invitation to grow  
embedded in dissonance.**

Without pressure  
we don't change.

**The first challenge is  
to come clean  
and see dissonance as a blessing.**

**Romans 7**

“<sup>24</sup> Wretched man that I am! Who will set me free from the body of this death? <sup>25</sup> Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, on the one hand I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin.”

*We all must live with Dissonance*

1. Most human beings and institutions are going to do everything in their power to **reduce dissonance in ways that are favorable to them**, that allow them to justify their mistakes and maintain business as usual.
2. The ultimate correction for the tunnel vision that afflicts all of us mortals is more **light**.
3. Become **aware** that we are in a state of dissonance.
4. Confidence and conviction must not exclude **humility and teachability**.

**The second challenge is  
to come to Christ.**

**Romans 8**

“<sup>1</sup> There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. <sup>2</sup> For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death. <sup>3</sup> For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, **God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin**, He condemned sin in the flesh,”

*Two paths to peace*

**1.  
Obey the Law**

**This is what  
humans try to do  
apart from the  
Gospel.**

*We resolve the dissonance  
by managing the Law*

1. Lowering the bar - redefining sin
2. Extending the time - purgatory
3. “Cooking the books” -

**2.  
Fulfill the Law**

**This is what God  
has done in Christ  
through the  
Gospel.**

*We resolve the dissonance  
by faith in Christ*

1. Confessing our sin - Affirming the Law
2. Hoping in Christ - Believing the Gospel
3. Longing for heaven -

## The third challenge is to walk in the Spirit.

Romans 8

“4 in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, 7 because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; 8 and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

## The fourth challenge is to keep hope alive.

Romans 8

“9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him. 10 And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you.”

### *Responding to Dissonance*

1. Institutions can be designed to **reward admissions of mistakes** as part of the organizational culture.
2. Put **space** between what we feel and how we respond.
3. Become **aware** that we are in a state of dissonance.
4. We must give up the **need to be right** in the eyes of everyone.
5. We don't help others by **lecturing** them about their "stupidity." They need respect and support.
6. Give people **room to repent** of their mistakes with dignity not shame.

### *Gospel strategies for resolving Dissonance*

1. **Coming clean**
2. **Affirming the Law**
3. **Receiving the Gospel**
4. **Living under grace**
5. **Changing over time**
6. **Hoping in glory**

**God grades  
on the Cross  
not on the curve.**

**We were called to  
be witnesses,  
not lawyers or  
judges**