

Respecting Other People, Even Those Who Oppose You

“Tough-As-Nails” is a new competition reality TV show. Contestants are divided into two teams of six players each. The contestants were chosen from high risk and physical professions such as a former Marine, Alaskan fisherman, steel worker, roofer, farmer, forester and a prison guard, to name a few. They are all hard-working, motivated men and women ranging in age from their 20’s to people in their 60’s.

The majority of each week’s show features a competition between the two teams, testing the strength, skill, unity and teamwork of each team. Each episode concludes with an individual competition. The last place individual is eliminated from the individual competition but still fully participates in the team competition.



The Marine veteran spoke about the strong allegiance to the team when he said, “The philosophy of the military is you give it all for your team.” It was expressed many times that participants felt their teammates “had their back.” Watching the show we see evidence of both teams bonding, regardless of winning or losing the competition.

The show’s format encourages teamwork and cooperation, especially within each team. But, what was enjoyable to watch was the deep appreciation and respect the contestants had for the opposing team. It is a rare characteristic in a competitive reality show that people deeply care for each other, including those on the opposing side.

We are going through a period of time in our country when there is a deep division between opposing sides of anything. In our current culture there is a wide chasm separating political parties or even such topics as whether or not to wear a face mask in public during this pandemic. We get “up in arms” about the restrictions placed on us by our government in the name of public health. We want everyone to believe what we believe. Our thoughts seem to be blind to any other point of view than our own. As a result, many people are developing animosity for others just because they view things differently than we do.

Watching Tough-as-Nails has been a welcome respite from the world in which we live. Contestants are giving it their all through some very challenging competitions, yet they have a genuine respect for everyone involved. They are loyal to their team, but not at the exclusion of respecting those on the opposing team. *Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing (1 Thessalonians 5:11).*

What does the Bible say about how we should act when there are opposing viewpoints? Paul said, *Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves (Philippians 2:3-4).* Jesus wants us to appreciate the value of others, as He does. *Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor (1 Peter 2:17).* We are not without fault and yet Jesus still loves us. *My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you (John 15:12).*

It is my hope and prayer that we will accept people who think differently about social or community issues than we do. God gave us free will to make choices but He wants us to be unified in our allegiance to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus showed us how to live our lives. As we seek to align ourselves with Jesus, be kind to all people. *Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person (Colossians 4:6).* We live in a competitive world, but we can make the effort to value all people, even those who think differently than we do. Our ability to do that helps to make us “tough-as-nails” and a winner in God’s eyes.

Prayer: Dear Lord. Thank you for loving us even when we don’t measure up. Help us to put away our anger when others don’t agree with us. Let us have an attitude of understanding, appreciation and love for all people. Amen.