

Land mines: Which is better – to go around them, or to set them off?

I. THE REALITY OF OPPOSITION

A. When ministering for God – there will be opposition

1. **Matthew 10:16** *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves:*
 - a. Outside opposition: Authorities/council officers/Police
 - b. Religious people: Trying to trap you into conversations they will use against you
 - c. New Converts: There will be difficult conversations about emotional/tricky subjects
2. Some men have no ability to maneuver around these
 - a. They don't try and get around opposition – they only tackle it straight on
 - b. They view life as a fight: They gladly or openly get into conflicts – as big/loud as possible!
 1. *Standing for righteousness!*
 2. *Standing up for Jesus!*
 - c. They view any conversation as "*I had to tell the truth*"

B. The results of this approach are not good

1. They make opposition worse; *They tick people off so it becomes personal – they're offended*
2. They get into open conflicts before it is time
3. They blow people away by the way they speak/when they speak; *No more hearing!*

II. BEING WISE AS SERPENTS

A. Jesus gives a wiser option: **Matthew 10:16** ...be ye therefore wise as serpents...

1. Speaking about the ability to maneuver
 - a. A snake will try to evade trouble first – rather than strike; Will try and get around trouble
 - b. Wise: *To rein in or curb*: Rein in your pride/your impulses/your mouth!
2. When facing opposition – maneuver wisely
 - a. **Wisdom in outreach**
 1. Asking permission: Sometimes you are better off not asking (other times you have to!)
 - b. **When facing opposition with authorities**
 1. Police/authorities: You don't have to pick a fight/rail on them
 - a. *Story: Police come – one guy tells them this is the last song/keeps 'em talking while another pulls altar call*
 - c. **When facing opposition in the church**
 1. Pick the wisest time/place; Not in front of others/not at church if possible
 - a. *Launceston: Religious guy opposing – time to go. I'll tell him at church. Don't be foolish – he'll yell & make a scene & his wife will cry. Meet him at work – told him. Never saw him again – had no problems.*

III. BEING HARMLESS AS DOVES

A. Some conversations are difficult because of the subject; Emotional/painful/upsetting

1. Some people can only say everything – bluntly; Unnecessarily offensive
 - a. *Is Grandma in hell? Absolutely – she's frying right now!*
 - b. *What about my Homosexual brother? Abomination – they're gonna fry!*

B. 2 issues:

1. **The issue of timing:** Sometimes the person isn't ready to hear what you have to say!
 - a. *John 16:12 I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*
 - b. *1 Corinthians 3:2 I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.*
 1. *A snake chooses its time to strike*
 2. *MH: Do I have to stop drinking to be a Christian? Will I go to hell if drink alcohol? Knew it was a deal breaker. I told him: When it's time to stop drinking – God can tell you. He got over it – kept coming.*
2. **How you say something:** **Matthew 10:16** and harmless as doves. Don't have to say it brutally
 - a. The point is not deception/lying – it is maneuvering for the best outcome
 - b. Some people can't do this: They think it's compromising
3. The point is what's best for this person?