



Disagreeing Agreeably

By Jeff Bedwell on June 20, 2022

TODAY'S READING: Romans 14

How do you handle areas of disagreement about which behavior or practices are right or wrong among fellow believers? Not those areas where God has clearly spoken to us through His Word, but those areas that are less clear, more cultural, or open to differing opinions?

An important truth to remind ourselves of in an increasingly argumentative culture is this principle of Christian liberty: Unity is more important than absolute agreement on nonessential matters in the body of Christ. Yes, there are some matters we must stand firm upon and agreement is absolutely essential to be able to walk together. But there are many other issues where we can exercise charity toward one another in how we deal with them.

The Christians in Rome were united by their faith in Christ, but Paul detected a lack of unity between the Jewish and Gentile believers. His words give us guidance even today as we consider how to order our lives in matters where there is not clear direction from God's Word. They can be summarized around five questions from this text:

1. Am I fully convinced after the study of God's Word, prayer and even seeking wise counsel? (vv. 1-5)
2. Am I doing this unto the Lord? (vv. 6-9)
3. Will it stand the test at the judgement seat of Christ? (vv. 10-12)
4. Am I causing someone else to stumble? (vv. 13-21)
5. Am I able to do this by faith and not doubt – doing it with a clear conscience? (vv. 22-23)

The ability to agree to disagree is a marvelous gift in human relationships. But one thing is necessary for the gift to come to reality—a focus on a higher purpose. In the church, the higher purpose includes the glory of God through obedience to His clear commands and the fulfillment of the Great Commission given to us by Jesus Christ. When we lose sight of our higher calling and purpose, we become inwardly focused and outwardly combative.

May God help us to increasingly focus on the person of Christ, the glory of God and the fulfillment of His mission to reach the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ! May God fill us with wisdom and grace as we deal with one another in non-essential areas of our life together in Christ.

PRAYER: Father, help me walk in Your wisdom, love and power. Help me deal wisely and lovingly with others when we disagree with one another.

TOMORROW'S READING: Romans 15

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