

Discernment Study

Week 3: Fundamentalism

I. INTRO

- LAST week we looked at MODERNISM, which was a LIBERAL movement that attacked the AUTHORITY of the Scriptures.
- And this morning we're looking at FUNDAMENTALISM, the CONSERVATIVE movement that OPPOSED Modernism, and DEFENDED biblical INERRANCY.
- And RIGHT AWAY, we run into a PROBLEM in DESCRIBING FUNDAMENTALISM, because no single definition of the movement can encompass all of its various FACTIONS.
- That's because the movement CHANGED and FRAGMENTED numerous times since it was founded, so there is a lot of VARIETY in CONVICTION and PRACTICE among Fundamentalist groups.
- **What we CAN say is that at its CORE, ALL forms of Fundamentalism have always been marked by MILITANCY and SEPARATION.**
- I DON'T mean Militancy in the VIOLENT sense. Militancy just means STANDING FIRM on core convictions, and ACTIVELY OPPOSING those who contradict.
- And SEPARATION means TWO THINGS. 1) THE COMMAND that individual believers separate from sin and worldliness, and;
- 2) ECCLESIASTICAL SEPARATION, where a LOCAL CHURCH SEPARATES from those who are deemed to be in unrepentant sin or who contradict on some essential doctrine.
- Now, there is CLEAR BIBLICAL SUPPORT for standing firm on our convictions, contending for them, and even separating over them.
- And CERTAINLY believers are commanded to separate from sin. So neither the idea of MILITANCY nor SEPARATION is in itself the problem in Fundamentalism.

- The PROBLEMS come when Christians are militant over SECONDARY, MINOR, or even UNBIBLICAL convictions;
- When the PURSUIT OF HOLINESS becomes external and self-serving, and crosses into LEGALISM and SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS;
- Or when churches become FACTIOUS and SECTARIAN, separating with BROTHERS over MINOR issues.
- When it was FOUNDED around 1920, Fundamentalism was a SOUND MOVEMENT. It was militant in its concern for BIBLICAL ORTHODOXY, and those concerns were CLEARLY ARTICULATED in five very specific biblical doctrines:
 - 1) Biblical Inerrancy
 - 2) The Virgin Birth of Christ
 - 3) The Bodily Resurrection of Christ
 - 4) Christ's Substitutionary Atonement
 - 5) The Authenticity of Miracles
- The Early Fundamentalists were Militant and Separatist on these 5 issues, because they RIGHTLY considered them to be TESTS of GENUINE FAITH.
- FUNDAMENTALISM BEGAN WELL, but in time, some Later Fundamentalists became militant over SECONDARY or even TRIVIAL issues, and ended up BECOMING LEGALISTIC, SECTARIAN, and characterized by PARTISAN BICKERING.
- Some took matters of CONSCIENCE and made them BINDING MORAL STANDARDS and tests of Christian faithfulness. Matters such as what CLOTHES you can and cannot wear, the length and style of your HAIR;
- Or whether it's sin to go to the MOVIES, DANCE, get a TATOO, get your EARS PIERCED, send your kids to PUBLIC SCHOOL, or play CARDS.
- Others even separated over their devotion to UNBIBLICAL DOCTRINES, such as the belief that GOD INSPIRED the copying and translation of the King James Version of the Bible.
- Or that the PHYSICAL, HUMAN BLOOD OF CHRIST actually has DIVINE, MYSTICAL properties that cleansed us from sin.

- So in describing Fundamentalism, we have to use the term carefully. We CAN'T SAY, "All Fundamentalists believe that it's a sin to play cards, or go see a movie." Because that's JUST NOT TRUE.
- Again, what we CAN say is that all Fundamentalists are committed to MILITANCY and SEPARATION;
- They support STANDING FIRM on convictions that are important to them, CONTENDING for those convictions, and if need be, SEPARATING from those who contradict.
- So as we EVALUATE the movement, we have to do the hard work of DISCERNMENT. We have to drill down and ask hard questions about specific doctrines and convictions, and then compare those things with the SCRIPTURES.
- Then when we have those answers, we can better judge whether someone's Militancy over an issue is PRINCIPLED and BIBLICALLY SOUND;
- Or if it crosses the line into LEGALISM, SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS, and SECTARIANISM.
- To that end, we will ANSWER 4 QUESTIONS relative to Fundamentalism this morning.

1) What are some of the COMMON CONVICTIONS within Fundamentalism, and what do the Scriptures teach about these convictions?

2) Individual Separation: What is the difference between LEGALISM and HOLINESS?

3) How do we BIBLICALLY NAVIGATE differences between professing believers in MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE?

4) Ecclesiastical Separation: What is the difference between BIBLICAL SEPARATION and SECTARIANISM?

- We'll begin with a BRIEF HISTORY of Fundamentalism, but before we move on I want to make TWO THINGS CLEAR.
- First: the term "Fundamentalist" is often used only in the NEGATIVE SENSE, even in many churches, because of THE LEGALISM and

FACTIOUSNESS that exists in some Fundamentalist circles.

- But you can't paint everyone under the banner of Fundamentalism with a BROAD BRUSH. That's why we ASK QUESTIONS and get all of the facts before we make judgments.
- And IN FACT, if you read up on the early Fundamentalists, like J Gresham Machen, or BB Warfield, I think you'll come away with a NEW APPRECIATION AND RESPECT for at least the early part of that movement.
- We owe those men a GREAT DEBT for their willingness to be MILITANT and SEPARATIST over doctrines like Biblical Inerrancy.
- Second: In the course of the hour we'll discuss some TYPICAL CONVICTIONS within the Fundamentalist movement. Where those convictions are UNBIBLICAL doctrinal positions, we will point out the ERRORS.
- But in the case of PREFERENCES and MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE that someone holds PERSONALLY or within THEIR FAMILY, I want to be clear that we are not PASSING JUDGMENT on those things.
- Our goal is to determine what IS and IS NOT biblical, not to JUDGE in those areas where God gives liberty;
- Other than to hold everyone to the BIBLICAL COMMANDS that govern how we NAVIGATE those liberties and convictions of conscience.
- That said, let's move on to the HISTORY of Fundamentalism.

II. BRIEF HISTORY of FUNDAMENTALISM

- So last week, we learned how DARWINISM, German HIGHER CRITICISM, and the PROGRESSIVE SPIRIT of the times led to the growth of THEOLOGICAL LIBERALISM in the Church.
- By the 1890's, Liberals were DOMINATING in the fight with conservatives, and within just a few years almost ALL of the older established SEMINARIES had become Liberal, and Liberalism was rapidly spreading to church PULPITS.
- Finally, in 1910, conservatives began to RALLY behind what the "5 Fundamentals", which again, were: 1) The Inerrancy of the Scriptures 2) Substitutionary Atonement, 3) Virgin Birth, 4) Bodily Resurrection, 5)

Authenticity of Miracles

- And Between 1910-1915, they PUBLISHED a 12 VOLUME SET called “The Fundamentals” that mounted a BIBLICAL DEFENSE of these doctrines, and the term “Fundamentalist” was coined in 1920 to describe the movement as well.
- This battle between MODERNISTS and FUNDAMENTALISTS took place inside the major church DENOMINATIONS and their SEMINARIES, and the Fundamentalists had two goals:
 - 1) To contend for the 5 Fundamentals and REVERSE the tide of Liberalism
 - 2) To get the teaching of EVOLUTION out of PUBLIC SCHOOLS.
- Now, though Fundamentalism was not effectively WINNING the battle within the CHURCH, they DID have the RESPECT of the PUBLIC.
- But that RESPECT was largely LOST starting in 1925, after the so-called “Scopes Monkey Trial” in Tennessee, where the state legislature had recently passed a measure banning the teaching of Evolution.
- A SHOW TRIAL was contrived to have the law overturned, and the ACLU sent out a PRESS RELEASE looking for a teacher who would volunteer to be ARRESTED and tried as the defendant in a test case.
- Clarence DARROW, a famous militant atheist attorney agreed to be on the Defense Team. And William Jennings BRYAN, a famous Christian attorney and former Secretary of State, agreed to be on the Prosecution Team.
- The courtroom was PACKED with reporters and the proceedings were broadcast NATIONALLY on radio. And this represented the first and largest public exposure to the DEBATE between EVOLUTIONISTS and CREATIONISTS, and it was a NATIONAL SPECTACLE.
- At a critical point, Darrow put Bryan on the stand to answer QUESTIONS about the Bible, but Bryan wasn’t prepared to answer them.
- Bryan himself DIDN’T BELIEVE that the 6 days of creation were literal days, but thought that they were indefinite, perhaps very long, periods of time.
- So given Bryan’s INABILITY to give substantial answers, and the BIAS of the press in favor of the Evolutionists, Fundamentalists were portrayed before the public as IGNORANT and BACKWARD, and out of step with the times.

- From that time FORWARD, public opinion of Fundamentalism plummeted, and the movement quickly became a SUBCULTURE within American Christianity.
- They continued to fight for CONTROL of the denominations throughout the 1930's, but when it became clear that Liberals were firmly entrenched in most of the denominations, Fundamentalists began to SEPARATE and LEAVE those churches.
- They founded their own NON-DENOMINATIONAL churches, independent fundamentalist BAPTIST churches, and also got their message out nationally through RADIO programs;
- And also through independent CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS like YOUTH FOR CHRIST, which was founded in 1945 to hold youth rallies across the nation.
- In fact, YFCs first full-time Evangelist was BILLY GRAHAM, who made YFC a huge national success. But that success also brought THE NEXT defining moment in Fundamentalism's history.
- There was a HUGE FRACTURE within the Fundamentalist MOVEMENT, as some split off to start a movement they called NEW Evangelicalism.
- New Evangelicalism ABANDONED the Fundamentalist ideals of MILITANCY and SEPARATION in the 1950s, in favor of re-engaging the culture using what they thought were more POSITIVE methods.
- The NEW or Neo-Evangelicals claimed that there were NO SERIOUS DOCTRINAL DISAGREEMENTS with Fundamentalism, just a concern that Fundamentalism's style of MILITANCY had rendered it INCAPABLE of effectively reaching the culture for Christ.
- Billy Graham's CRUSADES were one example of this Neo-Evangelicalism, as he focused on OUTREACH, and kept widening the circle of churches that were allowed to participate in his Crusades.
- And to be FAIR, there certainly WERE some things to be concerned about in the New-Evangelicalism movement, precisely BECAUSE they largely ABANDONED the ideas of Militancy and Separation, rather than just work to practice those things biblically.
- For example, some were prone to UNWISE compromises in the name of outreach and engagement. The Billy Graham Crusades even began cooperating even with CATHOLIC and LIBERAL Protestant churches.

- And to be BALANCED, there were legitimate CONCERNS about Fundamentalism as well. Some in that camp were becoming increasingly ISOLATIONIST, ANTI-INTELLECTUAL, and willing to fight and SEPARATE over things that were clearly non-essentials.
- The net effect of this split on Fundamentalism was TWO-FOLD. 1) Fundamentalism's fight was no longer just with Religious Liberalism and unbelief. Now the fight was also within the fold of biblical Christianity.
- 2) And since Fundamentalist guns were now also trained on professing believers who they believed were guilty of unacceptable PRAGMATISM and COMPROMISE...
- This led the Fundamentalist movement to become EVEN MORE REACTIONARY as it sought to define itself, separate from New Evangelicalism, and keep people within the fold of Fundamentalism.
- So that's a very BASIC HISTORY of the movement. Next we'll examine and compare the convictions of EARLY and LATER Fundamentalism, and answer our first question: "What are some of the common convictions within Fundamentalism, and what do the Scriptures teach about these convictions?"
- We'll begin with Early Fundamentalism.

III. DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES OF EARLY FUNDAMENTALISM

- As we go over each of the 5 Fundamentals of Early Fundamentalism, I want you to JUDGE in each case whether it is a truth worth CONTENDING over, if it is worth SEPARATING over, and WHY.
- **The Inspiration and Inerrancy of the Bible.**
 - QUESTION: Are the Doctrines of Biblical Inspiration and Biblical Inerrancy, worth contending for and even separating over?
 - We covered this last week. Inspired = "God-breathed". Inerrant = "No errors in the original manuscripts".
 - The Bible teaches it. John 17:17, 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - ANSWER: YES it is worth contending for and separating over, because apart from the Scriptures being inspired and inerrant, it is NOT the Word of God.

- If the Scriptures are not the Word of God, they are not reliable to lead us to salvation, or grow us in our faith.
- **The Virgin Birth of Christ**
 - QUESTION: Is the Doctrine of Christ's Virgin Birth worth contending over and separating over?
 - The Bible clearly teaches it. Isaiah 9:6-7, and Matthew 1:23
 - But the real issue is the IMPLICATIONS for the Gospel if we reject the Doctrine of Christ's Virgin Birth.
 - If Jesus was NOT born of a virgin, then He had a HUMAN father.
 - If BOTH of Christ's parents were HUMAN, how could Christ be the Son of God, and how could He be WITHOUT SIN since the SIN NATURE is passed through ADAM (Romans 5:12-21)?
 - If He was NOT the eternal Son of God, and He was NOT without sin, how could He pay for our sins on the cross?
 - ANSWER: YES, it is worth contending over and separating over, because the Virgin Birth is REQUIRED in that it shows that Jesus is fully God and fully man, and yet sinless. Unless He is both, He is not qualified to be our substitute and representative.
- **The Substitutionary Atonement of Christ**
 - QUESTION: Is Christ's Substitutionary Atonement worth contending over and separating over?
 - The Bible teaches it Romans 3:25.
 - If Christ did NOT suffer in our place on the cross, then there is no basis for the appeasement of God's wrath on sin.
 - ANSWER: YES, it is worth contending over and separating over. God's holiness requires that justice be done. If justice is not satisfied by Christ's death on the cross, then God's WRATH still rests on every single human being.
 - EXTRA QUESTION: Could a sinless angel have died on the cross for our sins?

- ANSWER: No. They are not human, and can't be our representative. They are also not God, and are not qualified to pay that infinite debt.
- **The Bodily Resurrection of Christ**
 - QUESTION: Is the Bodily Resurrection of Christ worth contending over and separating over?
 - The Bible teaches it. 1 Corinthians 15:17.
 - Christ's resurrection demonstrates His deity (Romans 1:4), and demonstrates God's acceptance of His sacrifice for our justification (Romans 4:25).
 - ANSWER: YES, it is worth contending for and separating over, because if Christ was not raised, we are still dead in our sins.
- **The Historicity of the Miracles.**
 - QUESTION: Are the miracles of the Bible worth contending over and separating over?
 - The Bible is filled with accounts of miracles wrought by prophets, Christ, and the apostles.
 - Jesus' miracles demonstrate His deity (Matthew 11:4-6). Jesus' Virgin Birth and Resurrection are miracles.
 - ANSWER: YES, it is worth contending/separating, because these miracles are the SIGNS OF HIS DEITY. To reject them is to reject His Deity.
 - So we CAN DETERMINE 3 things from our review of Early Fundamentalist distinctives:
 - 1) The movement had a well-defined DOCTRINAL CORE
 - 2) That core was demonstrably BIBLICAL, and in fact CRITICAL to BIBLICAL CHRISTIANITY, and therefore they were JUSTIFIED in their Militancy and Separation when the mainline denominations DENIED those truths.
 - 3) You are ALL 1920's Fundamentalists!
 - Now let's examine two significant doctrinal convictions of some Later Fundamentalists to see how the movement EVOLVED, and see what

the Scriptures say to these teachings.

- **DOCTRINAL DISTINCTIVES OF LATER FUNDAMENTALISM**

Inspired KJV

- The first is the belief that the King James Version of the Bible is actually an INSPIRED VERSION. Some in Fundamentalism have even made this a TEST OF FAITHFULNESS.
- Just so we recall from last week: the ORTHODOX Doctrine of Inspiration says that God inspired the writing of the ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS ONLY, and therefore only the original writings are INERRANT.
- The process of COPYING and TRANSLATING those originals was not inspired, but we know from the EVIDENCES we discussed last week, that we CAN BE FULLY CONFIDENT that the Bible we have in our hands is faithful to the original manuscripts.
- To be CLEAR, belief in the INSPIRATION of the King James Version would mean that the KJV must be completely WITHOUT ERROR.
- Again, JUST TO BE CLEAR, while the KJV might have been widely used by Early Fundamentalists, NONE OF THEM believed anything other than the orthodox view of INSPIRATION and INERRANCY.
- QUESTION: Is there any THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM in believing the KJV to be an inspired version?
- ANSWER: Yes, because it COMPROMISES the doctrines of Verbal Inspiration and Inerrancy.
- The King James Version HAS ERRORS. If you say that the MIRACLE of INSPIRATION produced an ERRONEOUS RESULT, you're undermining confidence in the Word of God.

Power in the Blood

- ANOTHER DOCTRINAL ISSUE and test of Fundamentalism in some circles has to do with DIVINE POWERS associated with the literal human blood of Christ.
- There are those who believe that the blood of Christ had MATERIAL OR CHEMICAL PROPERTIES that had the power to save. That it was

“divine blood”, and therefore it was INDESTRUCTIBLE.

- They say that since it is INDESTRUCTIBLE DIVINE BLOOD, every drop of Christ’s blood spilled on earth is KEPT IN HEAVEN, and is MYSTICALLY and SAVINGLY applied to believers on earth.
- The proof text used for this is **1 Peter 1:18-19**: “knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ BUT WITH PRECIOUS BLOOD, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.”
- John Macarthur actually got into a lot of TROUBLE with Fundamentalists in the 1970s over this issue when he said that Christ’s blood was SIMPLY HUMAN BLOOD that did not have special saving properties.
- He pointed out that when the Bible refers to Christ’s “shed blood”, this is just a reference to HIS ATONING DEATH as the God Man.
- QUESTION: Is there a THEOLOGICAL PROBLEM in believing that Christ’s physical blood is somehow DIVINE, indestructible, and has special mystical properties?
- ANSWER: Yes, because saying that Christ had “divine blood” is to DENY His FULL HUMANITY, and this would undo His qualification to atone for our sin as our representative.
- And to have faith in special saving PROPERTIES “in the blood”, risks MISSING a full understanding of Substitutionary Atonement;
- Because the EMPHASIS may then be in the power and properties of CHRIST’S PHYSICAL BLOOD, rather than Christ’s death as propitiation for our sins.
- Since we see serious THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS with these doctrinal positions, it’s safe to say that we cannot support CONTENDING for them or SEPARATING over them.
- And to be fair, I think many within Fundamentalism would AGREE. Yet these doctrines are positions held among a significant CORE within the movement.

- And it just serves to show the theological DRIFT of Fundamentalism from it's roots
- **WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LEGALISM AND HOLINESS?**
- We'll spend the REST OF OUR TIME answering those next 3 questions about LEGALISM and HOLINESS, navigating matters of CONSCIENCE, and the difference between BIBLICAL SEPARATION and SECTARIANISM.
- EACH of these is an area where some in the Fundamentalist movement have fallen into ERROR and SIN;
- But my point in going over them is NOT so much to evaluate Fundamentalism, as much as it is to help US to UNDERSTAND these issues BIBLICALLY, so we're guarded from falling into those same errors and sins.
- We'll start with the difference between LEGALISM and the PURSUIT OF HOLINESS.
- **Read Galatians 3:21-25.** ²¹ Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to IMPART LIFE, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. ²² But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe." ²³ But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the Law has become our TUTOR *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."
- QUESTION: So what do we learn about the PURPOSE OF THE LAW in this passage?
- ANSWER: 1) The Law CANNOT IMPART eternal life, and 2) The Law is our TUTOR that shows us our NEED FOR A SAVIOR, because we cannot perfectly obey the Law and meet God's righteous demands.
- That's the purpose of the Law with respect to our JUSTIFICATION. It demonstrates our condition and our need. But it DOES NOT SAVE.
- **Read John 14:15.** ¹⁵ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments."
- QUESTION: What does this tell us about the PURPOSE OF THE LAW with respect to our SANCTIFICATION? The MORAL LAW tells us how to live in a way that HONORS GOD, and DEMONSTRATES OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST.

- We're not striving to be OBEДИENT so we can EARN or MAINTAIN our salvation. We're not EVEN being obedient in order to EARN BROWNIE POINTS with God.
- We're saved by GRACE through FAITH, NOT WORKS.
- But SAVING FAITH is NOT just exercised ONCE so that you are saved, and then you can go and live a life UTTERLY DEVOID of FAITH afterwards.
- SAVING FAITH is a daily walk. You GO ON exercising it throughout your LIFE. It's more than just mental assent to a set of facts. It's BELIEF and TRUST.
- You see this in passages ALL OVER the New Testament, just as you see passages that AFFIRM that our salvation is SECURED and MAINTAINED solely by Christ, NOT by any works that we do.
- For example: **2 Corinthians 7:1** says- "...Let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.
- So striving to live in OBEДИENCE to God is the PUSUIT OF HOLINESS, NOT LEGALISM. It does not mean you are trying to EARN salvation.
- What's more, **2 Timothy 3** calls us to REPROVE and CORRECT one another. So for one Christian to call another Christian to obey God, also is NOT LEGALISM.
- QUESTION: So if it is NOT LEGALISM to WORK HARD to OBEY GOD and put off sin, and it is NOT LEGALISM to TELL SOMEONE ELSE to work hard to obey God and put off sin, WHAT IS LEGALISM?
- **Read Luke 11:37-43.** ³⁷ Now when He had spoken, a Pharisee *asked Him to have lunch with him; and He went in, and reclined *at the table*. ³⁸ When the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that He had not first ceremonially washed before the meal. ³⁹ But the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees clean the OUTSIDE of the cup and of the platter; but INSIDE OF YOU, you are full of robbery and wickedness. ⁴⁰ You foolish ones, did not He who made the outside make the inside also? ⁴¹ But GIVE THAT WHICH IS WITHIN AS CHARITY, and then all things are clean for you. ⁴² "But woe to you Pharisees! For you pay tithe of mint and rue and every *kind of* garden herb, and yet DISREGARD justice and the love of God; but these are the things YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE without neglecting the others. ⁴³ Woe to you Pharisees! For you LOVE THE CHIEF SEATS in the synagogues and the RESPECTFUL GREETINGS in the market places.
- Legalism is prideful SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

- Legalism is attention to the EXTERNAL forms of godliness so the PEOPLE AROUND YOU can see it, but NEGLECTING genuine righteousness of the heart that only God can see.
- And Jesus gets right to the point in **Luke 12:1** when He tells the disciples to beware the leaven of the Pharisees, which is HYPOCRISY.
- So at core, LEGALISM is to believe that YOUR WORKS EARN GOD'S FAVOR. It's to REVEL in your own SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS. Or to add insult to injury, it's to DEMAND that OTHERS OBEY your external sham righteousness as well.
- Legalism MIGHT involve following a moral code that's MORE RESTRICTIVE than Scripture, or it might not. The issue is the HEART MOTIVE.
- QUESTION: To apply that to the practices of some Fundamentalists, can we say that if someone chooses to not go to the movies or play cards, or not have long hair if they are a man, or not wear pants if they are a woman, OR WHATEVER, that this NECESSARILY is Legalism or self-righteousness?
- Maybe. But no, not necessarily. Someone may just have a WEAK CONSCIENCE, or just DIFFERENT PREFERENCES than you. The difference between Holiness and Legalism is that the Legalist:
 - 1) Seeks to JUSTIFY himself or earn favor based on what he DOES, not find assurance based on God's work in his heart.
 - 2) Believes EXTERNAL forms of godliness will KEEP SIN AT BAY, rather than striving to walk in the Spirit and obey God from the heart.
 - 3) Sees himself as MORE RIGHTEOUS than others, rather than thinking of others as more important than himself.
- It's the HEART ISSUES that need to be addressed, not just the externals. So for yourself, if you're inclined to say that WHAT SOMEONE ELSE IS DOING is sinful, you need to do the work of making certain that the BIBLE SAYS SO AS WELL.
- And CONVERSELY, if you're inclined to believe you have LIBERTY to do something, you need to do the hard work of making certain the Bible SUPPORTS that view.
- And speaking of the CONVICTIONS OF CONSCIENCE, let's go ahead and move on to Question #3: How do we navigate differences in conviction of

conscience between believers?

- **NAVIGATING ISSUES OF CONSCIENCE**
- DIFFERING convictions of conscience can be a major cause of STRIFE between believers.
- ONE thinks it's a sin to wear CERTAIN KINDS OF CLOTHES, or send your kids to PUBLIC SCHOOL, and they see others who don't share those convictions as being worldly Christians.
- ANOTHER is able to PARTAKE of certain things the Bible does not call sin, and ENJOY HIS LIBERTIES, and he is tempted to DESPISE those who struggle with those things.
- So to UNDERSTAND OUR RESPONSIBILITIES and learn how to encourage corporate unity, we're going to look at Romans 14 and 1 Corinthians 8.
- **Read Romans 14:1-4:** "Now ACCEPT the one who is weak in faith, *but* not for *the purpose of* PASSING JUDGMENT on his opinions. ² One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables *only*. ³ The one who eats is NOT TO REGARD WITH CONTEMPT the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is NOT TO JUDGE the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴ WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE the servant of another? To his own-master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand. ⁵ One person-regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be FULLY CONVINCED in his own mind."
- QUESTION: What do we learn from that passage about navigating these differences in conviction?
- The one of strong faith who enjoys his liberties is NOT TO SHOW CONTEMPT for the weak. And the weak is NOT TO JUDGE the strong. Each must be FULLY CONVINCED in his own mind.
- The NATURAL FLESHLY TENDENCY is for believers to judge one another. The weak in faith judge the strong as being careless and worldly. And the strong judge the weak as being fearful and narrow.
- That's one way DIVISIONS form in churches that are supposed to be UNITED in the truth. Because we tend to base unity on our own likes and preferences.
- And in verse 4, Paul makes the point: You're NOT TO ENGAGE IN JUDGING on those matters. You are to ACCEPT one another.

- Then he goes on to specifically address the responsibilities of the stronger brother. **Read Romans 14:14-15.** ¹³ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—NOT TO PUT AN OBSTACLE OR A STUMBLING BLOCK in a brother’s way. ¹⁴ I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him IT IS UNCLEAN. ¹⁵ For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.
- QUESTION: How can the STRONG in faith put a stumbling block in another’s way?
- By FLAUNTING THEIR LIBERTIES. Someone can be harmed in their conscience and tempted to sin. Because even if it is not sinful, if they believe that it is, then it is sin for them.
- Paul goes on in **1 Corinthians 8** to make this same case to strong believers. He says in **verses 9-10** “Take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?”
- So to keep UNITY and PEACE among believers, to keep from MAJORING ON THE MINORS, and to demonstrate to the world the work of God in us, we’re to let love rule in our relationships.
- We are to ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER, both strong and weak. And the strong is to PROTECT the weak, by willingly limiting his own freedoms for the sake of his weaker brother.
- **SEPARATION or SECTARIANISM?**
- Finally, we’ll answer the fourth question, “What is the difference between Biblical Separation and Sectarianism?”
- Just to establish it right out of the gate, SEPARATION IS A BIBLICAL DOCTRINE. We are to separate from false teachers. **Read 2 John 10-11:** ¹⁰ If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into *your* house, and do not give him a greeting; ¹¹ for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds.
- **In Romans 16:17**, Paul says to “TURN AWAY from (those who cause dissensions and hindrances)”

- And of course, **Matthew 18** says that we are to REMOVE UNREPENTANT MEMBERS (unbelievers) from the Church.
- And in **Titus 3:10-11** we learn that factious men are dangerous, and we are to reject such men after just a first and second warning, rather than drawing out the process, as in **Matthew 18**.
- It's clear that Scripture calls us to separate from FALSE TEACHERS, FACTIOUS MEN, and those who are causing hindrances. But what about fellow believers?
- **Read 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15:** ¹⁴ If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he will be put to shame. ¹⁵ Yet do not regard him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.
- So we may also separate with a sinning brother, but we're to admonish him AS A BROTHER. That means going to him, patiently showing him his fault.
- As for Sectarianism, READ **1 Corinthians 1:10-12:** ¹⁰ Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment. ¹¹ For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you. ¹² Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."
- That is Sectarianism. Not separating over sin and unbelief, but separating with brothers and quarrelling over partisan issues.

Conclusion

- So clearly, Fundamentalism STARTED WELL, and we owe the early Fundamentalists a great debt for taking a strong stand against Liberalism. But it's also clear that some problems developed in the movement over time.
- First, is a LACK OF DOCTRINAL DEPTH AND PRECISION, evidenced in some of the doctrinal positions we discussed earlier.
- Second, is the tendency to MAJOR on the MINORS, with preaching that spends too much energy on CRITICIZING THE CULTURE, or on SECONDARY ISSUES than on teaching sound doctrine.
- And finally, in it's PRACTICE OF SEPARATION. In the pursuit of holiness, confusing godliness with EXTERNAL FORMS, and with other churches

separating and condemning over even the smallest issues.

- Again, that's not all Fundamentalists. But it is a significant part of the movement.
- There has been a resurgence of Liberalism in the Church with post-Modernism, and we still need people like those Early Fundamentalists, who are willing to clearly articulate the truth, stand firm on it, contend for it, and if necessary, separate over it.
- Next week we will be looking at Pentecostalism and the Charismatic movement.