

"Living Grace Filled Life" Are you a Stepping Stone or a Stumbling Block?"

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. ¹¹It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God." ¹²So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. ¹³Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. ¹⁴As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. ¹⁵If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. ¹⁹Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. ²²So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin. - Romans 14:10-23

There are some things we know are wrong because the Bible clearly condemns them.

There are things we should clearly do because the Bible commands us to do it.

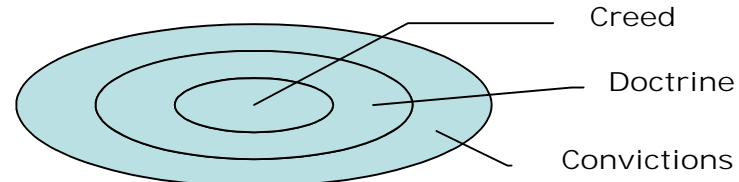
QUESTION: What about the "gray" areas?

QUESTION: How can we maintain unity within the church when it comes to disputable matters of conscience?

"In the essential beliefs, we have unity, in the non-essential beliefs, we have liberty; in all our beliefs, we show charity."

Augustine

Non-essential issues are any beliefs that do not lead people to experience salvation from sin and fellowship with God.



- ➔ Convictions: Personal belief.
- ➔ Doctrine: A belief system.
- ➔ Creed: Central belief system for salvation.

Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. ²By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. ³For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve. - I Corinthians 15:1-5

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. - John 14:6

QUESTION: What can we do to keep unity in disputable matters?

ANSWER:

- ✦ Paul commends us to do everything that would lead to mutual edification.

WARNING:

- ✦ Do not destroy the work of God over non-essential issues or your convictions.
- ✦ Be careful not to judge someone's spiritual life by their convictions or non-convictions.
- ✦ If you have to broadcast your conviction to prove your spirituality, it only shows that you are immature.
- ✦ Do not impose your opinions or flaunt your liberties in front of others. Keep that private.

"It is easier for us to look at the things that divide and not at the things that unite us."