

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE – SEEKING HUMILITY OVER DISUNITY

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All emphasis added are mine

The Question:

How can you in your local church, with its diversity in maturity, gifts, backgrounds, convictions, etc. maintain/preserve unity in Jesus Christ and the gospel while passionately pursuing truth and conformity to Christ?

Two Ditches on the Path of Unity



ALL WE NEED IS LOVE

ALL WE NEED IS TRUTH



TWO DITCHES ON THE PATH OF UNITY

1. "All We Need is Love"

- There is no universal truth.
- What's true for me may not be true for you.
- Jesus is A way, but it's unloving to say that Jesus is the ONLY way.
- Doctrine divides, so we shouldn't study or talk about doctrine.
- Eventually end up denying truth altogether

TWO DITCHES ON THE PATH OF UNITY

2. "All We Need is Truth"

- Doctrine consumes.
- Doctrine does end up wrongly dividing.
- Essential/Non-Essential doctrines, convictions and preferences are mingled together.
- Someone who disagrees on any of these is viewed as a heretic.
- Eventually act in ways that are very unloving to brothers and sisters in Christ.

NARROW WAY DOWN THE MIDDLE OF THE PATH OF UNITY

1 John 3:18 *Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth.*

- 100% truth and 100% love

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS

The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith in Modern English
(Founders.org)

Chapter 1 - The Holy Scriptures

7. Some things in Scripture are clearer than others, and some people understand the teachings more clearly than others. However, the things that must be known, believed, and obeyed for salvation are so clearly set forth and explained in one part of Scripture or another that both the educated and uneducated may achieve a sufficient understanding of them by properly using ordinary measures.

ESSENTIALS AND NON-ESSENTIALS

Theological Triage (Dr. Al Mohler)

- First order doctrines – most central and essential to the Christian faith.
- Second order doctrines – believing Christians may disagree, though this disagreement will create significant boundaries between believers.
- Third order doctrines – believing Christians may disagree and remain in close fellowship, even within local congregations.
Example – nature and timing of millennial kingdom

The number of categories we use or the names we use for these categories is not important, but the principle is critical.

ESSENTIALS

Where our unity is NOT:

- Shared backgrounds, experiences or ethnicity
- Past or present sin
 - *Corinthians 6:9-11 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*
- Lifestyle choices

ESSENTIALS

Ephesians 3:6 *This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel.*

What is the Gospel?

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-5 *Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, 2 and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you—unless you believed in vain. 3 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, 4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, 5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*

ESSENTIALS

1 Corinthians 15:1-5

v3 – I delivered to you as of first importance...

- Literally “among the foremost points”
- Implicit – there are other things of secondary or lesser importance.

v3...that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures

v4 that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

v5 and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.

ESSENTIALS



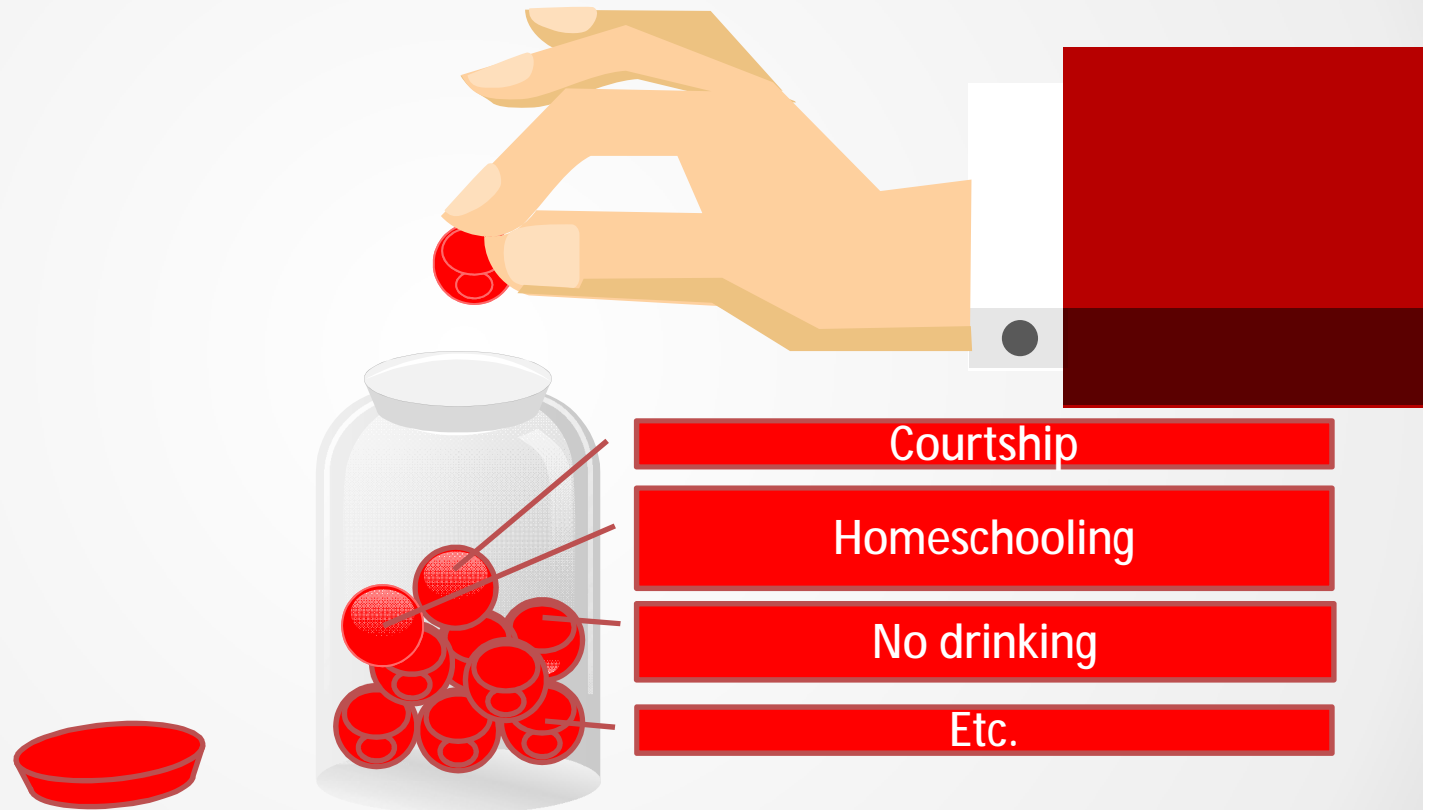
Romans 16:17 *I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.*

NON-ESSENTIALS

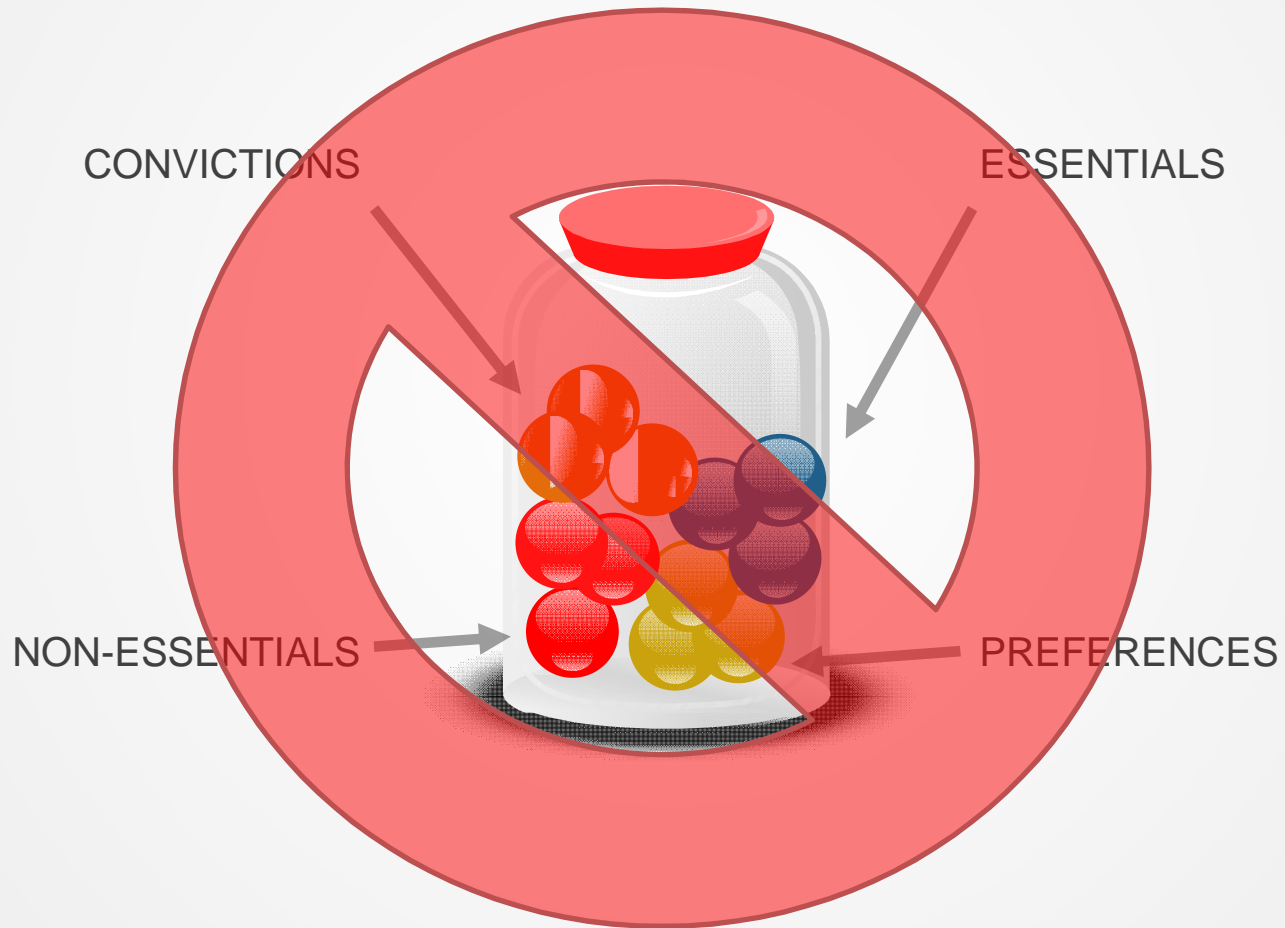
Some Non-Essential Doctrine, Convictions and Preferences:

- Baptism practices
- Courtship vs. dating
- Educational choices
- Eschatology
- Dress on Sunday
- Alcohol consumption

NON-ESSENTIALS



ESSENTIALS, NON-ESSENTIALS, CONVICTIONS, PREFERENCES, ETC.



HANDLING NON-ESSENTIALS

Romans 14:1-6 *As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. 2 One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. 3 Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. 4 Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. 5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.*

HANDLING NON-ESSENTIALS

Romans 14:1-6

v1 As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him

- Welcome him [KJV – receive, NASB – accept].
- “To take as one’s companion, to take or receive into one’s home, to grant access to one’s heart.”

v1 ...but not to quarrel over opinions

- How should we welcome him?
- As Jesus has welcomed us! (15:7)

v2 One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables

- Romans 14:14 *I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself...*

HANDLING NON-ESSENTIALS

Romans 14:1-6

v3 Let not the one who eats [strong] despise the one who abstains [weak]...

- Temptation – for the strong person to despise the weak.
- Contemporary examples:
 - Relationships prior to marriage
 - Education

v3...and let not the one who abstains [weak] pass judgment on the one who eats [strong], for God has welcomed him.

- Temptation – For the weak person to pass judgment upon the strong.
- Temptation of Pride and Prejudice