

Discussion Questions Set #1

In sermon, we learned that the Corinthians were confusing absolutes with nonessentials in their approach to attending cultic feasts. Whereas Paul viewed attending such pagan feasts as acts of idolatry – an essential issue – the Corinthians did not.

1. Why is it important to be clear on essential versus non-essential beliefs?
2. How might one determine whether a belief is essential or non-essential?
3. Reflect on the EMCC's insistence on "unity in essentials, liberty in non-essentials, and love in all things". How is such an ethos helpful for the follower of Jesus? What issues might such an insistence cause?

Discussion Questions Set #2

"I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. No one should seek their own good, but the good of others." (1 Corinthians 10:23-24)

"Each of us should please our neighbors for their good, to build them up. For even Christ did not please himself ..." (Romans 3:2-3).

Jesus "who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Philippians 2:6-8)

1. In sermon, it was suggested that for the Corinthians the choice about how they ought to live was based upon rights and knowledge, while for Paul, Christian conduct was determined by love and freedom. Discuss the outcomes of such choices. How might an overreliance upon rights and knowledge lead to unhealthy community?
2. Jesus very clearly suspended his rights to see many others brought to glory – this is an obvious example set for the follower of Jesus. Why do you think the Corinthians had begun to unlovingly exercise their rights to the detriment of others? How might something similar function in the church today?
3. Seeking the good of others and the desire to avoid self-centeredness seem such simple and consistent Biblical truths, yet Paul has reiterated this idea numerous times already in 1 Corinthians. Why do you think they struggled so greatly with the command to seek the good of others rather than one's own good?

Discussion Questions Set #3

"Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it. But if someone says to you, 'This has been offered in sacrifice,' then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience ... So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God' (1 Corinthians 10:25-26, 31-32)

This passage highlights both one's freedom to eat without concern of conscience and the requirement to be considerate of others consciences when various decisions are made.

1. Why ought the consideration of the conscience of others be a concern for the follower of Jesus? Discuss this in light of the idea of causing another to stumble.
2. Discuss what Paul's encouragement to "whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God" means to you. How is such a principle put in to action in one's life? What barriers to living in this way exist?