

*Generous  
Christian Living*



**“We believe in the personal, bodily and glorious return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service, and energetic mission.”**

*(2019 EFCA Statement of Faith)*

“We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service, and energetic mission.”

*(2008 EFCA Statement of Faith)*

“Premillennial” → “Glorious”

## 2 Timothy 1:13-14

13 Follow the pattern of the sound words that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. 14 By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you.

## 2 Timothy 2:1-2

1 You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, 2 and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also.

## 2 Timothy 3:14-16

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it 15 and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God...

## 2 Timothy 3:16 - 4:1

16 ...and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. 4:1 I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom...



## 2 Timothy 4:2

2 Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.

## 2 Timothy 2:14-15

14 Charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers. 15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth. But avoid irreverent babble, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness.

## 2 Timothy 2:23-25

23 Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels.

24 And the Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, 25 correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth.

We need a process of THEOLOGICAL TRIAGE to help us discern what truth we must cling to at all costs and what takes or positions — when pressed — are needlessly divisive to Christian unity and disruptive to gospel work.

“In essentials unity; in non-essentials  
liberty; in all things  
charity.” (Rupertus Meldenius)

## 1 Corinthians 15:3-5

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...

## Romans 14:1 (NIV)

Accept the one whose faith is weak,  
without quarreling over disputable  
matters.

## *“Matters of First Importance”*

- a.k.a. primary or first-rank doctrines & practices
- ESSENTIAL TO THE GOSPEL ITSELF
- Ex. deity of Christ, justification by faith, love of one's enemies
- Proper response: COURAGE & CONVICTION



## *“Matters of Second Importance”*

- URGENT TO THE HEALTH & PRACTICE of a church, but not essential to the gospel
- Ex. baptism (infants vs. believers), spiritual gifts (cessation vs. continuation), women in ministry (complementarian vs. egalitarian)
- Proper response: WISDOM & BALANCE

## Titus 3:9-11

9 Avoid foolish controversies, genealogies, dissensions, and quarrels about the law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 As for a person who stirs up division, after warning him once and then twice, have nothing more to do with him, 11 knowing that such a person is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.

*“For Christ did not send me to baptize  
but to preach the gospel!”*  
(1 Corinthians 1:17)

## *“Matters of Third Importance”*

- IMPORTANT TO CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY & LIVNG, but not worth separating or dividing over
- Ex. days of creation/age of the earth, the timing of Christ's return/nature of the millennial kingdom, predestination vs. free will
- Proper response: HUMILITY, DIALOGUE, GRACE

“Fighting over tertiary issues is unhelpful. But fighting over tertiary issues while simultaneously neglecting primary issues is even worse.” (Ortlund)

## Galatians 5:14-15

14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 15 But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another.

## *“Disputable Matters”*

- Practically relevant, intellectually stimulating, but UNIMPORTANT TO OUR GOSPEL WITNESS & MINISTRY COLLABORATION
- Ex. Jesus born in a home or a stable? Hymns or contemporary worship songs?
- Proper response: CIRCUMSPECTION & RESTRAINT

## Romans 14:1-3

1 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.



## Romans 14:5-6

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.

# Diagnostic Questions

- To what extent does this doctrine or practice reveal the person and nature of God?
- How directly is this doctrine or practice connected to the gospel and to the storyline of the whole Bible?

# Diagnostic Questions

- To what extent does Scripture unambiguously affirm this doctrine or practice?
- How prominent is this doctrine or practice in Scripture?

# Diagnostic Questions

- How widespread is the consensus on this doctrine or practice in the Church of both the past and present?
- How relevant is this doctrine or practice to us today?