



**Loving Jesus, Loving People, Plowing a Counter-Culture**

**SERMON TEXT:** Romans 14:1-12

**KEY POINT:** Our disagreements should be characterized by love and unity

**FOR LEADERS**

- **Attendance:** Please remember to take attendance for your Community Group meetings!
- **Campus Shifts:** Some big announcements went out this past week, detailing a couple big shifts for our portable campuses. Our Glen Rock campus will be reabsorbing into our permanent locations, while the Roxbury campus is now transitioning into a church plant for Commonplace Church. Please continue praying for our staff and key volunteers as they look to make some big shifts in the coming seasons!

**GETTING STARTED**

- [1] Communities Video:** Watch this week’s community extras video!
- [2] Icebreaker:** Which would you choose, the Star Wars universe or the Marvel universe and why?
- [3] Opener:** What was one takeaway you had from the sermon this week?

**PRIMARY, SECONDARY, TERTIARY?**

In the sermon this week, Ryan highlighting the importance of distinguishing between first, second and third-order issues:

- **First-order issues:** Non-negotiable things that must be believed/done in order to be a Christian. (You cannot deny these and still meaningfully call yourself a Christian.)
- **Second-order issues:** Things that are outside of core doctrine that churches must take positions on. (These may inform or determine which type of Bible-believing church you’ll attend.)
- **Third-order issues:** Issues of conscience that are of lesser importance and centrality than others. (Christians within the same congregation will differ on these issues.)

- [1]** What are some examples of things that would fall into each of these categories?
- [2]** Give an example of an issue that you feel Christians may disagree over in regard to which category it falls into. In such cases, what are the typical reasons for those disagreements?
- [3]** Why do you think we are so prone to becoming divisive when it comes to discussing these things?
- [4]** Ryan mentioned the importance of conscience, and how that plays into the way we think about these issues. Do you think it’s a good idea to always trust our conscience? Why or why not?
- [5]** What are some good purposes that are served by the fact we are each equipped with a conscience? What does it mean for a Christian to improve upon his or her conscience, and how do we do this?

*Leaders: Make sure your group understands that the issues Paul addresses in our passage this week deal with third-order issues (possibly some second-order). These questions are somewhat ambiguous, on which there is understandable disagreement within the church, not clear doctrinal or ethical commands.*



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***EXTENDING CHARITY AND GOOD FAITH***

**Ask for someone to read Romans 14:1-3.**

- [6]** What do you think Paul means by referring to the different parties here as “weak” and “strong” in faith?
- [7]** In verse 3 Paul says the temptation is for the strong to “despise” the weak, and for the weak to “pass judgment” on the strong. What might this look like in respect to some of the second or third-handed issues you identified earlier?

**Ask for someone to read Romans 14:4-6.**

- [8]** How does verse 4 teach us to think about those who disagree with us?
- [9]** What does it mean to extend the assumption of good faith to other people? In your experience, where do you see this breaking down?
- [10]** What aspects of a person’s character do you think people attack when failing to extend good faith?
- [11]** In verse 5, Paul says we should be “fully convinced” in our own mind. What do you think this means and how do we honor God in this?
- [12]** In the sermon, Ryan mentioned that there are actually some ways we can end up fully convinced that are neither helpful or honoring to God. What are some bad ways in which this could happen?
- [13]** What are some steps we can take to ensure that we are fully convinced on the important issues in the best way?

***LIVING UNTO THE LORD***

**Ask for someone to read Romans 14:4-6.**

- [14]** In what way does the reminder of our accountability before God help us to navigate issues of conscience in the church?
- [15]** Give an example of a practical issue that you struggle with because of disagreement over conscience. How can you better navigate that issue in light of this week’s passage?

***PRAYER***

- [1]** Pray that God would give us the maturity to discern between first, second and third-handed issues.
- [2]** Pray that the Lord would help us to treat people who disagree with us with love and charity.