

Reconcilable differences; Church wars

I. Introduction-

If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. Mk 3:24

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:18 & 21

Reconcilable; to restore to friendship or harmony
reconciled the factions, settle, resolve

Differences; the quality or state of being dissimilar or different
the difference between right and wrong

A. "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity," St. Augustine

For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. Mathew 7:13

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me.'" Mathew 7:27

Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Mathew 7:13

His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.' Mathew 25:21

B. In the non essential doctrines for knowing God- we have liberty

By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." John 13:35

Non-essentials where there's freedom to disagree:

- Forms of church government (e.g., elder-rule, congregational, Episcopalian, "Moses-model",
- Apostolic rule of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, also called dominion and fivefold ministry and Kingdom now theology
- Our role/God's role in salvation (e.g., monergism vs. synergism).
- Proper candidate and mode of baptism (e.g., infant baptism, sprinkling or full immersion).
- The nature and function of communion (e.g., real presence, spiritual presence or memorial only).
- The use of musical instruments in worship.
- The nature of charismatic spiritual gifts (i.e., are all, some or none of them valid for today?).
- The day of worship (e.g., Sunday, Saturday or every day).
- End-times viewpoints (eschatology).
- The role of women in the church (e.g., can women lead/teach men).
- Procession of the Holy Spirit

C. Why the essential are important to us as a Church and as Christ followers-

Jesus said to him, "*I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.*" John 14:6

Jesus came and said to them, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*" John 28:18

D. Beware of false prophets-

For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths. II Timothy 4:3

If our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. II Corinthians 4:3

E. A painful example of how dangerous false teachers –

Becoming a Christian is not merely believing some creed or going to church. It is having Christ Himself take residence in your life and heart. Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in . . ." If you would like to have a relationship with Christ, simply pray this prayer and mean it in your heart:

"Dear Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner. I believe You died for my sins. Right now, I turn from my sins and open the door of my heart and life. I confess You as my personal Lord and Savior. Thank You for saving me. Amen."

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. Galatians 2:20

Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Mathew 16:24

<https://crossroads-ridgecrest.org/media/j2fdtyw/am-i-heaven-ready>

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Exodus 20:7

67% of American adults claim to Christians in 2021

Biblical Worldview 6%

Secular Humanism 2%

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism 1%

Postmodernism, Nihilism, Eastern Mysticism 1%

Syncretism 88%

Biblical Christianity 2%

F. The battle is over truth-

Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” Jesus said to them, “Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. But because I tell the truth, you do not believe me.

John 8:31

II. Have unity in the essential truths of Christianity

A. God communicates and validates His essential truths to the world-

<https://www.gotquestions.org/proof-inspiration-Bible.html>

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. II Timothy 3:16

The sum of your word is truth, and every one of your righteous rules endures forever. Psalms 119:160

Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me? Jeremia 22:27

Immutable; cannot be changed

Inerrant: completely accurate, without errors

Authoritative: commands and truth to be obeyed

B. God’s truth are founded on a solid foundation of evidence-

Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

“Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passions, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.” John Adams

C. Do we believe and follow God’s inspired word or Satan’s lies

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Jam 1:5

You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Jam 4:4

C. Is our God big enough, wise enough, totally in control to give us His word?

“Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh. Is anything too hard for me? Jeremiah 32:27

The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Psalms 103:19

D. We fully cannot understand God and His ways

For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. Isa 55:8

For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. I Corinthians 13:9

Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! “For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?” 35 “Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?” For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen. I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 11:32 & Romans 12:1

C. Essential doctrines needed to know, follow and love God-

Choose this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your fathers served in the region beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. Joshua 24:15

D. Expose, avoid and the lies of the devil and his false prophets-

<https://www.gotquestions.org/false-teachers.html>

Have nothing to do with foolish, ignorant controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kind to everyone, able to teach, patiently enduring evil, correcting his opponents with gentleness.

God may perhaps grant them repentance leading to a knowledge of the truth, II Timothy 2:23

In the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, swollen with

conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people. II Timothy 3:1

Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. I timothy 6:20

III. Summary, application and home work

A. Test of personal belief in the essential for knowing God-

These documents need to put up- they will have hard copies available

People who identified that themselves as Christians and who attend church were asked about their personal beliefs:

Please answer each question as honestly as you can, try to think of recent examples, the last year, when this statement or principle caused you to go beyond mental assent and you took actions to put it into practice in your life.

Do you?

Have a biblical worldview Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Claim God is their highest priority in life Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Absolute moral truth exist, is defined in the bible Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Consider self to be holy Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

My success in life is based on my level of obedience to God Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Jesus Christ sinned while He was on earth Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Holy Spirit is a symbolic- not a living entity Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Satan is symbol of evil, not a living/life impacting entity Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Tithed last year 6% Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Conversation during typical week with a non-believer Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Fasted for spiritual purposes during past 3 months Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Most important decision ever made was asking God for forgiveness, Jesus to be savior Yes ___ No ___

Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

To mature spiritually I must be connected to a community of faith Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Am completely dependent on God Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Verbally confessed sins to another Christian recently Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Totally committed to investing in spiritual development Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

My most important relationship in life is with Jesus Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

God is always on my mind or in my consciousness Yes ___ No ___ Sometimes ___ I do not understand or know ___

Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting! Psalm 139: 23

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Psalm 51:6

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the LORD search the heart

and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”

People who identified that themselves as Christians and who attend church were asked about their personal beliefs. Biblical references are included for study and application. That last number after each question is the percent of self-proclaimed Christians who answered yes on the question.

Do you?

- Have a biblical worldview (Romans 12:2, James 1:3:-8, James 4:4) 10%
- Claim God is their highest priority in life (Mathew 33:3, Psalms 119:2, Jeremiah 29:13) 14%
- Absolute moral truth exist, is defined in the bible 16% (II Timothy 3:16, Psalms 119:16)
- Consider self to be holy (II Corinthians 5:21, I Peter 2:5, Colossians 1:21-2) 24%
- My success in life is based on my level of obedience to God (I Corinthians 1:1-3, Mathew 22:37- 40) 36%
- Jesus Christ sinned while He was on earth (II Cor 5:5:21, I Peter 3:18) 41%
- Holy Spirit is a symbolic- not a living entity (Acts 1:8, John 14:26, Acts 2:38, mentioned 213 times) 58%
- Satan is symbol of evil, not a living/life impacting entity (I Peter 5:8, Mark 1:13, James 4:7-10,) 59%
- Tithed last year (Malichi 3:8-10, Titus 6:10, Mathew 6:19-21) 5%
- Conversation during typical week with a non-believer (Mathew 10:32-33, Mathew 28:16-20) 11%
- Fasted for spiritual purposes during past 3 months (Isaiah 58:3-12, Mathew 6:18) 19%
- Most important decision ever made was asking God for forgiveness, Jesus to be savior (John 3:3-6, I Peter 1:17-25) 20%
- To mature spiritually I must be connected to a community of faith (Ephesians 4:9-16) 21%
- Am completely dependent on God (Exodus 20:1-7, Romans 12:1, Galatians 2:20-2) 22%
- Verbally confessed sins to another Christian within the past three months (I John 1:8-10, James 5:16) 35%
- Totally committed to investing in spiritual development (Philippians 3:7-15, I Peter 1:13-19, Ephesians 4:17-32) 18%
- My most important relationship in life is with Jesus (Hebrews 12:1-6, I John 2:1-6) 23%
- God is always on my mind or in my consciousness (John 10:27, John 15:1-11) 25%
- Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." Jn 8:32

I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. proverbs 8:17

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. II Tim 2:15

Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Acts 17:11

Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away. Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous; for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish. Psalm 1:1

