

## **The Importance of Disagreeing**

### **8-17-14**

Ephesians 5:1-17 teaches us some very important ideas about the need to disagree with some people. It is summed up in the statement that we need to expose the works of darkness. Not everyone is right; many think that they are right merely by their thoughts; this is the sign of a fool (Proverbs 12:15, 21:2). In fact, being "right" is dwelling in Christ (II John 9), who is the exclusive standard of right and wrong.

How do we know when brethren (or we ourselves) are merely assuming we are right? Sometimes there are "code words" that we use to critique the alternative view. "Peripheral issues", "hobby horses", "ultra conservative" and "legalism" are all empty words used to cause the appearance of being right; in the end they actually mean nothing.

Still others simply attempt to avoid disagreements altogether. They decide that it is best to simply focus where agreement lies. Peter was told by an angel to preach the entire truth (Acts 5:20), and Paul told the Ephesians he never failed to speak all truth (Acts 20:27). If that is the case, Christians CANNOT partake in error; we CANNOT support those in error either (Romans 1:32). To reject error means we need to be prepared to expose error with the Light (the Word).

With this attitude equipped, we need to realize that many will reject this passages teaching. They will say it is a sin to argue. Recall that many times Jesus, His servants, and all servants of God have engaged in argumentation (Isaiah 41:21, Mark 8:11, Acts 6:9, 9:29, Titus 1:9). Others will suggest it is a sin to "name names"; yet this too is an affirmed example (I Timothy 2:20, II Tim. 4:14) and commandment (Matthew 18:17, Romans 16:17). Some might even suggest that we become one-issue focused (such as is suggested about concerns on MDR in the Pacific Northwest). Yet the New Testament reveals that teachers of truth focus on what needs to be taught. Consider that Paul preached on circumcision (the "hot topic" of the first century church) in 8 of 13 letters he wrote.

What about Romans 14? Does it not teach that we are authorized to permit some error? Many see the fallacy in this statement, but to be clear, we need to determine what Romans 14 permits. First, it says that there is to be no acceptance of "doubtful things" (NKJV, 14:1). We are told that "whatever is not from faith is sin" (14:23); if it is not from Scripture (Faith, Romans 10:17) it is a sin. Finally, we see that in the parallel text of I Corinthians 8, we are told that in order for a weaker one to be accepted, they must still have the same knowledge. (8:1)

Conclusions: Paul said in Ephesians 5:1-17 that we are to change our lives, and not accept that some cannot change. We need to examine ourselves and our doctrinal approaches. He concludes with the admonition to "not be foolish". We need to know what the will of God is, and take stand for righteousness.

Psalm 139:21 Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against You? 22 I hate them with the utmost hatred; They have become my enemies.