

September 2024



FOX RIVER  
BAPTIST CHURCH

# Fox River Life



## September 2024 Newsletter

### **How Can I Love People Even When They're Wrong?** **The "Problem" of Conviction**

*Paul told us in Romans 12:9 to "abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good." But what happens when we disagree on what's "evil" and what's "good"? It's one thing for a church to disagree on the color of carpeting. It's quite another to disagree over whether a Christian can cast a vote for a political candidate who downplays the ongoing consequences of racism. Or whether Christians may assent to an adoption agency's prohibition against physical discipline. Or whether a Christian can attend the celebration of a Hindu festival. What makes these disagreements so difficult is that for many, they are matters of right and wrong, not merely of preference. We can stop judging and despising people. But how can we positively love them? J. C. Ryle wrote that "every man has a conscience within him, which must be satisfied before he can be truly happy." That's true of my conscience, but it's also true of yours. If you're my friend and you're doing something against my conscience, your actions challenge my happiness and, as a result, they challenge our friendship.*

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This practical guide shares 8 truths to show readers how they can cultivate God-exalting unity by loving those in the church who, if they're honest, sometimes drive them crazy.

Theoretically, we could just have different churches for different convictions. A church over here that's about the gospel and that speaks strongly about illegal immigration. A church over there that's about the gospel and that advocates for the payment of reparations to the descendants of slaves. Many years ago, while I was on a trip to Afghanistan, an article was published about the Kabul synagogue. Who knew there was still a synagogue in Kabul! But there was, though its membership was reduced to two men. And they made the news because, due to incessant quarrelling, they were considering splitting into two synagogues, each with a membership of one. Is this not where the "different churches for different convictions" takes us? Surely, we can do better.

And yet . . . can you really go to church with other Christians who are wrong on important matters? Can your attitude toward them really be the "genuine love" that Paul commands? That's what we'll address in this chapter. But first, we must understand exactly what type of disagreements we're talking about.

### **Different Speeds of Disagreement**

Paul begins Romans 14 by warning us not "to quarrel over opinions." The word the ESV translates as "opinions" literally means "reasonings"—consistent with its use here as reason-based implications of Scripture. Thus, the NIV uses the phrase "disputable matters." These disagreements are not about truths "either expressly set down in Scripture, or [that] by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture," to use the helpful language of the Westminster Confession. Instead, they're based on reasoning from those truths. About such matters we should not quarrel.

Where does this fit into the broader hierarchy of disagreements we might have with fellow Christians? In their book *Conscience*, Andy Naselli and J. D. Crowley identify three different levels of disagreements.

. First-level disagreements are those one cannot deny "and still be a Christian in any meaningful sense." These truths emerge as inescapable conclusions when the Scriptures are faithfully read, either because they are explicit in the text or rise unavoidably from the text.

. Second-level disagreements "create reasonable boundaries between Christians." These are issues faithful Christians may disagree on, and where disagreement means they should gather into different churches. Historically, disagreements over baptism and church government fall into this category.

. Third-level disagreements need not separate Christians into different churches. When I have referred to "nonessential" matters in this book, it is this category I have had in mind. That is, matters that are not essential to agree on to be together in a church.

It's these third-level issues that Paul writes about in Romans 14. Specifically, he addresses three different disagreements, though he clearly intends the principles he lays out to apply more broadly. First is the question of whether a Christian can eat meat (Rom. 14:2). Next is a debate about celebrating special days (Rom. 14:5). And third was disagreement over Christians drinking wine (Rom. 14:21). Of course, your church has its own set of disagreements. You may not want to be in church with people who disagree with you in these ways, but neither can you honestly say that these issues should split you into different churches.

### **Consider the Judge**

In Romans 14:10, Paul asks the provocative question, "Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God." This perspective of God's judgment is one we don't often consider, but we should. As we progress through the final chapters in Romans, and threats to unity become more morally fraught, Paul increasingly points us to God's final judgment 2

In fact, in this short chapter on convictional disagreement, Paul mentions our final accounting before God six different times (Rom. 14:4, 10, 12, 18, 22, 23). These references fall into two categories. First, we should be conscious of God's imminent judgment of others because he's the judge and we're not (Rom. 14:4). And second, we should be conscious of God's imminent judgment of our own lives (Rom. 14:12). Both categories are crucial if judging and despising are to give way to genuine love.

Not only must you consider their accounting before God, but you must consider your own. While we will not be condemned for our sin if we are in Christ (Praise God, Jesus paid its penalty [Rom. 8:1]!), a final evaluation of our lives still awaits: "Each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:12).

The reality of God's future judgment forces a brilliant reprioritization of what is "wrong" in your church. As Paul says in Romans 14:20, "Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats." In this debate about food, Paul tells those with freer consciences that they're right, and those who can't eat meat are wrong. And yet . . . what's really wrong is an insistence on Christian freedom to eat meat in front of them. (Contemporary debates over alcohol come to mind.) Or consider verse 15: "By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died" (Rom. 14:15). What strong language! Yes, these people will find out on judgment day that their consciences were too narrow. But you will face a much stricter accounting for your failure to bear with them in love. This brings to mind some of Martin Luther's opening lines in his treatise on Christian freedom: "A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all." Freedom in Christ, yes—and with it, the delightful bondage of love.

**Confess your sin, exult in your forgiveness, and delight as forgiveness turns your heart toward love.**

Consider four ways in which your final accounting before God can change the posture of your heart toward those with whom you disagree, to whom you are bound in love.

1. **Prioritization**. Passages like Romans 14 push the priority of various disagreements a few steps into the background and the unity of the church into the foreground. As Paul says in Romans 14:22, "Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves." When your heart is in the thick of judging and despising, look to your Judge. Remember that you will likely face a stricter judgment for failing to disagree in love than you would if you'd simply argued the wrong side of the disagreement.

2. **Freedom**. For some, it feels disingenuous to pursue a friendship at church while ignoring a festering disagreement. But Paul's prioritization of such disagreements relative to unity and love gives us freedom to do just that. It probably isn't wise to never discuss your disagreement. But with God's final judgment in view, you can pursue such friendships without resolving your disagreements.

3. **Peace.** By which I mean peace in your heart that expels anger. Very often it's God's judgment that we must remember when we're angry with others at church. Just as smoke indicates fire, anger indicates injustice. The question is how you'll respond to that injustice. Will you spin your heart into a whirlwind of self-righteous contempt by endlessly rehearsing to yourself arguments against those you disagree with? Or will you quench your anger in God's soothing promise to one day settle all wrongs?

4. **Love.** Remember the generative power of forgiven sin. When judging and despising emerges in your heart, don't just try to push it back down or ignore it. Confess it, using the strong language that Paul uses here. "Lord, I confess to you that in my attitude toward Omar, I'm seeking to destroy one for whom you died." "Lord, I confess that in my judging of Sherri, I'm creating stumbling blocks to her affection for you." Confess your sin, exult in your forgiveness, and delight as forgiveness turns your heart toward love. "Be wretched and mourn and weep. . . . Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you" (James 4:9-10).

### **Escape from Judging and Despising into Love**

Our hearts are a mess, aren't they? They are full of judging and despising. That's why we so desperately need to consider what Paul gives us in Romans 14. We must consider faith, especially the faith of those we disagree with. And we must consider God's judgment, both the final accounting of those we disagree with and our own. This is not a paint-by-number plan to guarantee immediate love. But as you immerse yourself in these truths, God's word will be at work to humble, reshape, and reform you.

It's fitting, then, that this section ends with a poignant reminder of God's love for us: "Welcome one another as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God" (Rom. 15:7). With this, Paul finishes this section where he began it in Romans 14:1, telling us to welcome those who are weak in faith. But now we see its result: "the glory of God." Is this not what we want in our churches? As we welcome those who disagree with us because Christ has welcomed them, God's glory shines more brightly than if we never disagreed in the first place.

In His Name & For His Glory,  
Pastor Tim  
Pastor Tim Godfrey  
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(920) 277-1527



## Children's Church

### Carol Smith 3-6 years old

Children's Church is going very well. The kids are learning the books of the Bible in order and are beginning a study of the prophets.

### Angela Groff 7-12 years old

The children in our class Lydia, Gracey and Sebastian are starting a new session about the attributes of God, and how the prophets display the attributes to the people.

We are still writing to our Pen pals Henry and Josette Citac. It's exciting to possibly mailing our first letter to them this week.



## Sunday Evening Services Schedule

September 1—No Evening Service

September 8—Corporate Prayer

September 15—Sol Fide

September 22—Corporate Prayer

September 29—TBD



### Financial Update 2024

Budget needed weekly: \$ 2836.35



Contact Mark Wildenberg 920-378-3380 with questions.

Women's Prayer

Wednesdays at 9:30am



**September 1**

Jeffery Smith

**September 8**

Kyle Tubbs

**September 15**

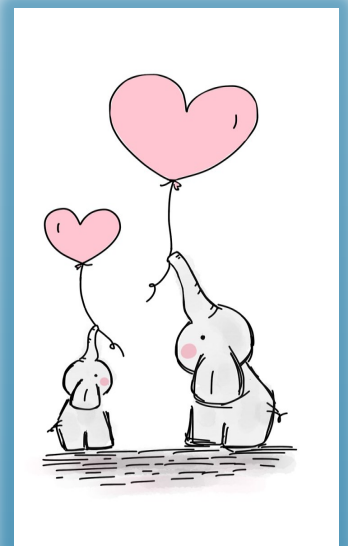
Bob Abitz

**September 22**

Scott Smith

**September 29**

Ryan Smith



Women's Bible Study

Thursdays at 1:00pm

Starting on September 12

Men's & Women's

Bible Study

Saturdays at 8am

Starting on September 14

Please contact the  
Church Office at 920  
-734-6162 or Carol  
Smith at (920) 475-  
8727 to volunteer  
for Nursery  
Ministry.

## Library Book Review

### The Hiding Place

By Corrie Ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill

The Hiding Place follows the life of 50-year-old Corrie Ten Boom, how she is trying to enjoy a simple life with her family her father Casper and her sister Bestie.

They lived in Nazis occupy Holland. The Ten Booms quickly realized that they need to live out their faith through actions. They started to build a secret room where they could hide and save many Jewish families. The Ten Boom opened their hearts and open their home even if it meant death.

The Ten Boom were betrayed to the Gestapo by a man named Jan Vogel in the summer of 1944. They went to prison then to Ravensbrück a Concentration camp. The sisters were considered Political prisoners. They both suffered from thirst and nausea. As they were being processed into the camp they had to change into prisoner attire. Corrie and Bestie were able to hide a bible past the guards. While in the camp they show Gods amazing love through everything they did.

As things got hard, they reminder everyone around ,"There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still." Bestie starts to get extremely sick and succumbs to her illness. Soon after Corrie is released from Ravensbrück due to a clerical error. She returned to her home and continued to open her door to anyone who needed her help.

Nikki Ovenshire



## Single Women's Ministry

September 18th at 5:30 pm Single Women's Ministry Meeting at Lois Peeters 's house: 607 Kramer St. Kimberly

Any questions please contact Lois Peeters at 920-419-4921

Isaiah 55:8-9 "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,' declares the Lord. 'As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.'"

### Fox River Baptist Church

2700 East Henry Street  
Appleton, WI 54915

Phone: 920-734-6162

E-mail: [office@foxriverbaptist.com](mailto:office@foxriverbaptist.com)

Website: [foxriverbaptist.com](http://foxriverbaptist.com)

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday  
& Thursday - 12:00 pm to 4:00 pm



Here at FRBC, we have a prayer chain meant for the sharing of prayer request needs and for sharing praise for the awesome & mighty work God does in our lives. Please feel free to share any praise or request at our new Prayer request email address:

[Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com](mailto:Prayer@FoxRiverBaptist.com)

### Care to be part of the prayer chain?

Email or call Becky Godfrey at

[becl.godfrey@gmail.com](mailto:becl.godfrey@gmail.com) —

(920) 277-1526



St. Joseph Food Program

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# September

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Canned Cranberries  
Canned Pumpkin



Help us reach our goal of 1,000 Cans

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September's Birthdays

- 01 Rhonda Dohms
- 02 Beverly Bressler
- 03 Rebecca Rickert
- 04 Bobbie Tolliver
- 04 Fran Patrick
- 09 Laura Bressler
- 10 Ruthanne Bressler
- 15 Mindy Porier
- 22 Emily Citac

September's Anniversaries

- 25 Judy and Dan Waggoner



## **Intentional Discipleship**

Men's Bible Study starting Saturday, September 14th at 8:00 am.  
The men are studying Jeremiah and meets in the Fellowship  
Hall Led by Scott  
Smith 920-903-7444

Women's Bible Study starting Saturday, September 14. The  
Women are studying 1 Corinthians chapter 14 at 8:00 am in the  
conference room Led By.  
Becky Godfrey 920-277-1526

Women's Thursday Bible Study on September 12th at 1:00  
pm, will be meeting in the church conference room, The Women  
will be starting on 2 Peter and the book of Jude. Study led by  
Nancy Wildenberg 920-378-3353

## Young at Heart

Our ministry at Care Partners in Fox Crossing will continue on Thursday September 5th at 10:30 am. Feel free to join us as we share a worship service with the residents.

Questions please call Lynn Abitz 920-788-9482

### **Senior Living Expo--Celebrating Life after 50**

Older adults, their families, caregivers and all interested are invited to attend INTERACTIVE TRADESHOW with 60+ Exhibit Booths!

**FREE** Admission, NO advance registration

**FREE** Coffee while supplies last

**FREE** Health Screenings: Blood Pressure, Skin, Hearing, Flu Shot

**FREE** Meet the Pharmacist: Call Network Health (920-720-1287) for appointment / bring meds

**FREE** Seminars on Consumer Fraud and Protecting Your Legacy

PRIZES, PRIZES, PRIZES, PRIZES

Date--Wednesday, Sept. 18, 2024

Time--8:00 am -- 12:00 noon

Place--Xtreme Air (formerly Players Choice) County Rd JJ, Appleton

Sponsored by Appleton Noon Lions Club. All proceeds go to charitable organizations.

## **Women's Ministry**

The women of FRBC had a wonderful time on August 10th as we gathered to paint sun catcher wind chimes. We will meet in the fellowship hall at 10 o'clock October 12th to continue these projects. The activities are easy and fun, the fellowship is great, and the lovely items will bless the residents of Brewster Village and Care Partners at Christmastime. Please put October 12 at 10 o'clock on your calendar and plan to join us for "Crafting with a Purpose"