

Equipping Night
February 28, 2024

Unity in the Truth: Knowing What Hills to Die on in Church and Theology

- 1. Unity and Truth are both important to Jesus**
 - a. Unity – John 17:9-11; 20-21
 - b. Truth of God’s word – John 17:17-19
- 2. Theological Triage Helps Us Avoid 2 Opposite Errors**
 - a. First error: Doctrinal Sectarianism
 - b. Second error: Doctrinal Minimalism
- 3. Theological Triage in Scripture**
 - a. First Importance: Galatians 1:8-9, 1 Corinthians 15:3-4, 14, 17.
 - b. Not as important: Romans 14:1-6
- 4. 1st Order Doctrines – Essential to Christianity**
 - a. Examples: Monotheism, Trinity, Virgin Birth, Bodily Resurrection, Justification by Faith
- 5. 2nd Order Doctrines – Not required to be a Christian, but required for leadership in a specific church**
 - a. Examples: Infant Baptism, Calvinism, Church Government, Spiritual Gifts
- 6. 3rd Order Doctrines – Important, can lead to healthy debate, but should not divide churches.**
 - a. Examples: View of Revelation, length of “days” in Genesis 1.
- 7. Triaging Cultural Issues**
 - a. Can be especially difficult because the debates get so heated.
 - b. Examples of 1st order issues: Biblical marriage, abortion, Racism / Examples of non-1st order issues: Political parties, abstinence from alcohol, how to educate your children, foreign policy.

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8. Questions to ask yourself before engaging in theological disagreement:

- a. Where do the other person and myself *agree*?
- b. What precisely are we disagreeing on?
- c. Which category of doctrine does our disagreement fit in? 1st? 2nd? 3rd?
- d. Am I committed to Christian unity with this believer, even if we never agree?
- e. Am I willing to listen to the *best* arguments of the other position?
- f. Do I care more about winning an argument or winning my brother?

9. Discussion Questions

- a. Everyone has a tendency to be either “overly divisive” in theology or to “downplay doctrine.” Which danger do you more naturally lean towards? Can you share a specific instance when you’ve noticed this tendency in yourself?
- b. What did you find helpful or thought-provoking about this idea of “Theological Triage”?
- c. Was there anything that you were confused by? Someone in your group might be able to provide some clarity.
- d. Name one or more Christians that you have *some* theological disagreements with, that still have been a tremendous influence on you.
- e. Take a look at questions to ask yourself before you engage in a theological disagreement (above). Which one of these questions is most helpful to you right now?

10. Recommended Resources

- a. Albert Mohler: “A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity”
- b. Gavin Ortlund: *Finding the Right Hills to Die On: The Case for Theological Triage*
- c. Video from TGC on Youtube: “How Pastors Can Effectively Practice Theological Triage”

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