

Dealing with Our Differences

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Dealing with Our Differences

1. The Purpose of Our Differences
2. The Problem of Our Differences
3. The Promise in Our Differences

The Purpose of Our Differences

What we see in:
-God Himself

The Purpose of Our Differences

What we see in:

- God Himself

- The Created World**

The Purpose of Our Differences

What we see in:

- God Himself
- The Created World
- Human Beings**

The Purpose of Our Differences

What we see in:

- God Himself
- The Created World
- Human Beings
- The Church**

The Problem of Our Differences

The Problem of Our Differences

"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

Romans 14:1- 4

Problem 1: Not Welcoming One Another

"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

Romans 14:1–4

Problem 2: Quarrelling Over Opinions

"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but **not to quarrel over opinions.** ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand." **Romans 14:1–4**

Problem 3: Despising Each Other

"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ **Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.** ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

Romans 14:1–4

Problem 3: Despising Each Other

"The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, **the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable,** and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor."

1 Corinthians 12:21–23

Problem 3: Despising Each Other

"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴ **Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?** It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

Romans 14:1–4

Problem 4: Dividing Unnecessarily

"As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

Romans 14:1–4

The Promise in Our Differences

The Promise in Our Differences

-How we view ourselves

The Promise in Our Differences

- How we view ourselves

- How we view others

The Promise in Our Differences

- How we view ourselves
- How we view others
- How we respond to others**

The Promise in Our Differences

"He will be able to cease from constantly scrutinizing the other person, judging him, condemning him, putting him in his particular place where he can gain ascendancy over him and thus doing violence to him as a person. Now he can allow the brother to exist as a completely free person, as God made him to be. His view expands and, to his amazement, for the first time he sees, shining above his brethren, the richness of God's creative glory. God did not make this person as I would have made him..."

The Promise in Our Differences

"...He did not give him to me as a brother for me to dominate and control, but in order that I might find above him the Creator. Now the other person, in the freedom with which he was created, becomes the occasion of joy, whereas before he was only a nuisance and an affliction. God does not will that I should fashion the other person according to the image that seems good to me, that is, in my own image; rather in his very freedom from me God made this person in His image."

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Life Together, p.93

Checklist – Before You Respond

- ☑ Have you humbly laid down your own human understanding and invited the Lord to lead you in his way?
- ☑ Have you addressed with the Lord's help any judgmentalism, fear, or anger that is hindering your moving toward this person?
- ☑ Have you listened with an open mind and tried to understand their perspective through a fair hearing without internal "lawyering"/rebutting?
- ☑ Have you taken the time needed for careful consideration and prayer, rather than being "quick to speak" or emotionally reactive?

Checklist – Before You Respond (cont'd)

- ☑ Have you refrained from putting stumbling blocks or hindrances in the way of your brother or sister, such as expectations that require them to conform to your image rather than God's?
- ☑ Have you sought to find the good in the person's perspective, even if you may ultimately disagree?
- ☑ Have you appreciated what God values as "indispensable" in the way he made the person different than you, instead of concluding "I have no need of you"?

Checklist – When You Respond

- ☑ Are you sharing what you heard of the person's perspective and humbly asking them if you correctly understand?
- ☑ Are you validating the good that you heard from the person prior to sharing your own perspective?
- ☑ Are you putting in the patient work of bearing with the person in love and endeavoring to neither give any offense nor take any offense?
- ☑ Are you speaking edifying words that convey your view of them as a brother or sister and your desire for their good?

Checklist – When You Respond (cont'd)

- ☑ Are you honestly and constructively sharing your own perspective, recognizing the gifting of individual personhood and voice God has uniquely given you to bring to the conversation?
- ☑ Are you differentiating between primary and secondary matters of disagreement, and not dividing unnecessarily?
- ☑ Are you seeking all the peace and togetherness you can attain even if you disagree, and are you entrusting the ultimate outcome to Lord?

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