

Transformed!

How God Renews the Lives of His People

Get Personal

Part 19: An Audience of One

A Note from Pastor Keith...

God calls us to be passionate people—people of intensity and conviction. But convictions can clash and deteriorate into conflict. When this happens our transforming influence vanishes, and God’s Kingdom and His people are harmed. How can we prevent differing convictions from damaging God’s Kingdom?

Promote LOVE and ACCEPTANCE.

Sometimes disagreement turns into division.
Don’t let it!

1. **“I’m smarter than he is!”** Maybe. But God is smarter than *you* are and He accepted him.

¹Accept him whose faith is weak, **without passing judgment** on disputable matters. ^{2a}One man’s faith allows him to eat everything....
^{3a,c}The man who eats everything **must not look down on** him who does not... for God has accepted him.

Romans 14:1, 2a, 3a (all references are NIV)

Note: “Disputable matters” refers to a disagreement over whether certain behaviors are morally acceptable. These are. They are not “gray areas.” Biblically, these behaviors are fine. My point is...

Actual sin is not in view. It must be confronted.

[Jesus said,] “If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him.”

Luke 17:3

2. **“I’m holier than he is!”** Maybe not. But God is holier than *you* are and He accepted him.

^{2b}...another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. ^{3b-c}...the man who does not eat everything **must not condemn** the man who does, for God has accepted him.

Romans 14:2b, 3b-c

Oh, did I mention that actual sin must be confronted?

3. Besides, he’s not *your* servant anyway. He’s God’s.

⁴Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Romans 14:3c-4

By the way, actual sin must be confronted...lovingly!

¹Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted.

²Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

Galatians 6:1-2

Get Personal!

What disagreements—not actual sin issues, but *disagreements*—are dividing churches both internally and from each other?

What issues are dividing some of us here at Grace?

How are we justifying these divisions?

How do those justifications stand up to today’s passage?

Live your life for an Audience of One.

And let others do the same.

1. The TRUE audience for our convictions is God.

⁵One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who regards one day as special, **does so to the Lord**. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, **does so to the Lord** and gives thanks to God.

Romans 14:5-6

2. Why? Because each of us belongs to Him.

⁷For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, **we belong to the Lord**. ⁹For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

Romans 14:7-9

3. If God is the only audience, He's also the only critic.

¹⁰You, then, **why do you judge your brother?** Or why do you look down on your brother? For **we will all stand before God's judgment seat**. ¹¹It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" ¹²So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. ^{13a}Therefore let us **stop passing judgment on one another**.

Romans 14:10-13a

Love People. Build the Kingdom.

1. Love others by honoring their convictions.

^{13b}Instead, **make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way**. ¹⁴As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. ¹⁵If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. **Do not** by your eating **destroy your brother** for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷For **the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit**, ¹⁸because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.

Romans 14:13b-18

2. Instead of tearing down God's Kingdom, build up and encourage God's people.

¹⁹Let us therefore **make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification**. ²⁰**Do not destroy the work of God** for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall. ²²So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and **everything that does not come from faith is sin**.

Romans 14:19-23

Get Personal!

God's Word is clear that we are accountable to one another for *actual sin*. But on matters of personal conviction, we are accountable only to God.

How do you stay accountable to God for your convictions? (Hint: Look at verses 5-8 and 23.)

In what ways does going to war over differing convictions destroy people *and* the work of God?

In practical terms, what can you do to love others of differing convictions?