

Sermon Discussion Guide:

# The Weaker Brother

Sunday, March 26, 2023

Scripture: **Acts 15:22–35; Romans 14:1–23**

Series: **The Spirit & The Church**

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## OVERVIEW

After returning to Antioch from their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas were confronted by controversy with respect to the requirements of the Gospel. This led them to return to Jerusalem to meet with the other apostles and elders. After debating and settling the issue with respect to legalism and the Gospel, they sent a letter outlining some practical considerations for the church to follow. Paul further elaborates on these principles in Romans chapter 14 where he describes how Christians should behave toward one another when there is disagreement.

**Deference, not defiance, should be the posture of Christians toward one another.**

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## CORROBORATING TEXTS

Mark 7:15, Acts 10:9-10, 1 Corinthians 8:10-12, Philippians 2:3-4

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you react when you believe someone is wrong? Share some experiences, both good and bad, that you have had involving disagreements among Christians.
2. In matters of Christian practice, what is the Apostle's guidance when we do not agree?
3. Have you ever held tightly to traditions and customs that you were taught and that you believed are right? Or perhaps there is an area where your conscience seems to restrict you more than other Christians you know. How do you feel when others challenge those customs and beliefs?
4. What makes a matter of conscience become a false gospel?
5. How can we sin by **not following** our conscience? Or by **following** our conscience?
6. The 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith states, "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it." (Chapter 21, Paragraph 2). What obligation does this imply for us as Christians?
7. Paul says we should, "[...] decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother" (Romans 14:30). What does this mean? Discuss some practical ways that we can live out this principle.
8. Consider the principle Paul teaches in Philippians 2:3-4 and how it relates to disagreements among Christian brothers and sisters. Pray that God would give us the kind of humble deference to one another that Paul and the apostles taught.