

Allsorts Church 101: My conscience, your conscience and Christian maturity



How to NOT be a dopey Christian

Sam explored how we can come to our own convictions about questions that the Bible doesn't explicitly answer, how we deal with other people's differing convictions and how this can lead to a transforming Christian maturity.

Sam explained some of the 'fallout' and misunderstanding between Jews and Gentiles in the church in Rome. We saw that although the Bible is explicit and clear about much of our behaviour now we follow Jesus (e.g. 13v13) , some contemporary issues can be harder to work out. We looked at the model for reaching convictions by reading the bible together and praying: with friends, leaders and the world wide church (All Christians everywhere throughout time).

We went on to see that true Christian maturity is found in our ability to lovingly walk with those who have different convictions to us and put their needs first. We finished by seeing how we are called, like Jesus, to welcome those who are different and to have a patient and humble attitude, as Sam challenged us to make true friendships that cross divides and look at our own attitude before complaining about others.

Questions (possible answers on next page)

1. Who is Paul referring to as 'weak' in verse 1 and why?
2. Who are we ultimately accountable about moral and conscience issues? (14v4 and v12)
3. In pairs: (i) What issues of conscience do you find yourself grappling with? (ii) Are there issues that you find yourself disagreeing with other Christians about? (iii) Are you prayerfully seeking to answers for these issues in scripture, alongside others? (iv) Are you being gracious and humble when you disagree with others?
4. On your own or in pairs: consider what kind of people you find it hardest to welcome and interact with? *Try to be open to God to reveal your own unknown prejudices. Take time to repent of these.*
5. Pray together about how God can help you be more welcoming to others and form some true friendships across divides this term. Also pray about what part your group could take in this term of welcome.

Suggested answers

1. The Jews who continued to practice their laws, such as food laws. He himself had seen how Jesus had fulfilled the law and taught that we are now free from these obligations. The letter to the Galatians is all about this issue, where Paul wants to see that their righteousness is in Christ, not in law keeping.

2. God! But this doesn't mean we can be a 'lone ranger' and disregard our brothers and sisters. We should be open to correction and humility at all times.

3+4 try to help people be honest. Being honest and vulnerable yourself about your own failings, weakness and fear will help others in the group to do so.

5. Try to have some vision for what it means for your group to contribute to our 'term of welcome'.