

Does It Matter?

Hey.

Hey. What's up?

It still doesn't matter.

It still doesn't...? Oh, this again.

I'm tellin' ya.

Really? Are you willing to talk about it?

Well, sure.

All right. But remember, we're writing this to high school youth, so let's not bore them to death.

No problemo. I'm so hip I can't see my shoes.

Can't see your...?

Because I'm so hip. My hips are so big I can't see my feet. Get it?

On second thought, risk the boredom. Just make your case.

Okay. All those little details and doctrines that you worry about don't matter; what matters is that we tell people the Gospel.

That's your point.

That's it.

Thank you. It sounds like you're saying that you're worried that "doctrine" will prevent us from working together to tell people about Jesus.

That's right. The bickering has to stop.

And you're saying that the way to stop the bickering is for me to stop worrying about the details of doctrine....

Yup.

So, I'm the problem: I'm not willing to bend.

It sounds, harsh, I know; but yes. You're sweating the small stuff.

Stuff that doesn't matter?

Not in the big scheme.

Doesn't matter either way?

Right.

So it matters to me, but it doesn't matter to you one way or the other.

You got it.

Well then, if it really matters to me, and it really doesn't matter to you, then you won't mind believing what I believe so we can work together.

Uh...what?

It's like a couple on a movie date: She really wants to see a certain flick, while he doesn't care. So, they agree on the movie that she really wants to see, and they're both happy. With you and me, I believe those details are important. You don't think it matters. So if you don't care one way or the other, then you might as well believe the same things I do. There. We're happy.

Whoa. I didn't mean that. I meant it's important that we not get bogged down in the details.

Oh. See, that's a different statement. Now you're not saying that the details don't matter. What you are saying is that it's important not to look at them.

I don't get your point.

Well, when this discussion began, the idea was that things matter to me and don't matter to you. Therefore, the fact that we don't work well together is my fault because I won't bend.

Yeah.

But that's not true. My position matters to me, and your position matters to you. You're not willing to bend anymore than I am.

So, I'm part of the problem?

It would seem so.

Bummer. I want to be part of the solution.

Thanks, cliché-man. It looks like we must determine who is correct. Shall we move on?

Before you do, let me just say why I'm right. People are dying out there without the Gospel. We don't have time to worry about all the details! We need to get them the Good News!

I agree that we need to tell them the Good News. But are pitting "doctrine" against "evangelism?"

Exactly! There's two types in the Church. There are those who sit around and study the Bible in detail but never do anything about it, and there are those who don't have time for that because they're too busy telling people about Jesus.

I see. Are you familiar with the term "straw man"?

Nope. Why?

No reason. Let's try this: You need heart surgery.

I do?

I'm being hypothetical. You don't need heart surgery. You're fine.

I'm feeling better already.

How can I repay you?

Just stick with me here. Pretend you need heart surgery.

Okay.

You have a choice between two doctors. One has read every book there is about heart surgery, but he never actually operates. The other didn't really pay attention in medical school, but he's excited to crack you open and play with your innards. Which do you want?

Uh, is there a third choice? Such as...?

Such as a doctor who has read his stuff and does the surgery?

Oh. So you want a guy who knows his stuff and does it?

That's the one.

And that's my point! Why is this any different? If we know all the details of the Bible but never tell anyone, we've sinned. But likewise, if we go out and tell people about Jesus, but don't know what the Bible says about Him, that's no better. It's important both to know and to tell.

"Know and tell." It's like "Show and tell," but it's "Know" instead of "Show."

Get it?

Uh...yeah. You go, hip dude.

Right. And now I've found your flaw!

My flaw?

Indeed. Your flaw is that you are saying that, to evangelize, you have to know everything about the Bible. You probably think that only pastors should ever tell anyone about Jesus.

You really should look up the meaning of "straw man" sometime.

Don't have an answer, do you?

Actually, I do. Pastors are called to tell about Jesus—publicly from the pulpit or in private conversation. Others have different vocations, and they can talk about Jesus as they have the opportunity.

I could use a vocation. I'm thinking two weeks in Hawaii.

That's vacation, not vocation. Your vocation is the calling that God has given you: If you're in

school, you have the vocation of student, and your tasks are to study and learn. And, as a student, you have chances to tell your friends about Jesus, when the opportunity comes along. All Christians can talk about Jesus in the vocations that God has given them.

But not everyone knows all those details of the Bible that you think are so important.

You make it sound like I'm saying you have to know everything before you say anything.

And...?

And I'm not. How about this: Every Christian has the privilege of telling others about Jesus. They can tell what they know, and they should never stop learning more. That'll happen, anyway, as they continue to attend worship and Sunday school.

That's what you're saying?

That's what I'm saying.

Huh. I had you pegged as something else.

Yes, you told me. Now, can I ask you a question?

Shoot.

Thank you. You've said that, for the sake of telling people about Jesus, we shouldn't worry about the details of doctrine.

And I stand by that.

All right. First, what does "doctrine" mean?

Let's see...doctrine means, um, "heavy stuff that I don't want to deal with."

I sure hope your heart surgeon has a different way of dealing with heavy stuff. Actually, a better definition is "something taught." Doctrines are teachings.

Well, that's fine— if you want to use the dictionary.

I'm funny that way. Now, if we're talking about "doctrine," we're talking about what the Bible teaches.

Okay.

My question is, which doctrines are okay to throw out?

Huh?

Which teachings does Jesus say we can ignore?

Look, I don't like the question, and I don't want to get into the specifics. I'm saying that since people are saved by believing in Jesus, the other stuff matters less.

Which Jesus?

There's only one, of course.

Would that be the Jesus who was just a nice man, as some teach; or the Son of God who became man to die for your sins?

Well...

Would that be the Jesus who created you, or are you an accident of evolution?

Uh...your point?

Not every teaching about Jesus is right.

True.

And if you don't care about the right teaching, it's most likely that you're going for the wrong teaching.

I...guess. Your point?

Some teachings are true, and some are false. Does it really matter what we say about Jesus?

Yes. I suppose it really does.

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provided without cost on
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