

# Thanksgiving Conversations

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] I don't think we'll be talking turkey today, but if you look at the title of the message, Thanksgiving Dinner Conversations, and the scripture we'll be looking at today is in the book of Romans. I'd like you to please turn to Romans chapter 13, and we'll be looking at chapter 13, verses 1 through 7.

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God, and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid.

For it does not bear the sword for nothing, for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. Therefore, it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this, you also pay taxes. For rulers are servants ■like dektokos igo why they omreads of God, devoting themselves to this Very thing. Renter to all what is due them. Tax to whom tax is due. Custom to whom costum. Fear to whom fear. And honor to whom honor.

Thank you. Why don't you package those why don't you do so? have your Bibles open, would you come back just a few pages to a passage that I should like to add to what Gary has just read, and it is in Ephesians chapter 4. I wanted the Romans 10 passage to be inserted into our study for the purpose that it talks about government, and of course it doesn't say anything about any particular kind of government, just the fact that there is a need for government, and it may exist in many forms, but the point that I want to make from that Romans 13 passage is it is out of government, it is out of government, and the legislation that issues forth from government, that politics is built. There is no such thing as a government without politics.

They go hand in hand, and the subject that we are going to address today is a follow-up to a message that was brought a few weeks ago in subject matter dealing with dinner table conversation with family and extended family in, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas and holidays and things like that and get together, and what is it that should be talked about? What is it that can be talked about? What is it that is up for discussion? And I set forth two areas that I think the scriptures make quite clear are the two most important areas of our existence. One has to do with our present day life in the here and now. The other has to do with our eternal life that we will enjoy hereafter. Those two areas are the most critical that anyone can engage as a human being. Your present life, your future life.

[ 4 : 5 0 ] What can compare with that? Absolutely nothing. So we suggested that in areas of politics and areas of religion, there should be free and open discussion about those issues rather than to say, now, at our family get-togethers, we have two subjects that are off limits.

We never talk about it. One is politics, and the other is religion. And I disputed that. I think that those ought to be very seriously considered. And to that argument, my darling daughter disagreed with me.

And she did what I taught her to do. That is, when you are convinced that you have a position that is right, you should have the courage to set it forth.

And her mother and I both taught her that. She has been exemplary in doing that.

My dear little daughter has a mind of her own. And I might add, it's a very good one. And it is one that sometimes has the audacity to take her father to task about this.

[ 6 : 10 ] So, let me just say up front, and it greatly pains the male ego to say this, but I have modified my position.

And I want to explain to you what the modification is and the why of it. So, let us read a counter subject that could or could not prevail at a family dinner table.

And I should hope that it would be, but there are obvious reasons why it may not be at all acceptable at a lot of family dinner tables, depending on the convictions of those who are in attendance.

So, verse 29 of Ephesians 4 says, and I would remind you, it is addressed to Christian recipients.

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification, according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

[ 7 : 17 ] And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by which you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

And wouldn't it be a wonderful world if everybody applied those principles, but not everybody even agrees with them or believes in them, and they're certainly not going to make an effort to apply them if they don't.

So you start off with a mixed bag, and it is obvious, as I mentioned at the outset, that when Paul wrote this, he never intended it to be something incumbent upon unbelievers to do because they do not have the desire to do so, and even if they had the desire, they do not have the capacity or ability to do so because of their status outside of Christ.

So, in connection with what is written in the bulletin, we are going to address this issue, and by the way, there will be a time for Q&A; so be ready, if you will, with any comments or questions you may have.

The article says, Is there a solution to this?

[ 9 : 04 ] Can really important issues be debated in a friendly manner, or does it have to end in bitterness and resentment? The answer is for the spiritual element to prevail.

But, what if all present are not on board with that? Which is often the case at large family gatherings, because people are usually there, because they are related, not because they are in agreement, politically or religiously.

Sometimes you get both, and then, of course, that changes the whole tenor of the discussion. So, as is said, what if all present are not on board with that spiritual element to propel?

Be prepared to add your perspective. It should be quite interesting. Any guidelines to offer, be thinking about it. And I also made mention of the fact that somewhere, I guess it is in the bulletin, I didn't see it, did I?

Anyway, I talked about, tonight we will have our annual business meeting, assuming that everybody who is there is still on speaking terms, after the message.

[ 10 : 24 ] this morning. So, let me warm to my subject, if I may. And I want to begin by stating some kind of propositions that you can use as a background for questions and comments that may come later.

We're talking about family gatherings, including immediate and extended families that occur very often at holidays, weddings, funerals, reunions, et cetera.

And as I've already mentioned, some agree, and even formally assist, and make it clear to everyone present, that religion and politics are out of bounds for conversation.

And the question might very well ask me, why? Why do people have strong opinions and convictions about religion and politics?

Some do not, and some do. I suspect there probably isn't anyone here who hasn't seen what I consider to be one of the more outstanding movies, certainly one of the more outstanding musicals ever made.

[ 11 : 37 ] The Sound of Music, Julie Andrews, and the singing, Bond Trapp Family, one of the most endearing things that Hollywood has ever done.

And in the movie, the man who played the male lead was Baron von Trapp. And he was an Austrian, you'll recall.

And apparently, he was a veteran of the Navy of some sorts. And this is at a time during the 1940s when Nazi Germany had marched into Austria and taken over.

And there were pictures of the swastika that were posted all over the place. And Baron von Trapp, who was the father of all of those seven children that made up the von Trapp Family Singers, he is the man that Julie Andrews eventually ended up marrying.

And you know the story. There was a, I guess you would call him a humorous kind of likable, money-grubbing uncle in the picture.

[ 12 : 43 ] And he was the one who had the idea of being able to capitalize on the musical talents of the von Trapp Family Singers. And he was thinking in terms of something big.

He was going to be the promoter and so on and so on. And the issue came up about the Nazis coming in and making demands on the people and so on. And Mr. von Trapp made a statement in reference to that.

And it caused this uncle who was the arranger for the group to sing at the folk festival that was going to be a really big deal there in Salzburg.

and he made the statement to Baron von Trapp, you know I have no political interests.

In short, it didn't mean a snap to him that the Germans had come in or any demands that they were making because he voluntarily withdrew himself from any issue having to do with politics.

[ 13 : 59 ] And there are a number of people who feel that way. There are a number of Christians who feel that way. They say politics is a corrupt, dirty business and I don't want anything to do with it and I don't even bother to vote because even if you go and vote, those who are in power are going to do what they want to do anyway and it doesn't make any difference whether you vote or not so I don't even bother and there are people who feel that way.

I have no political convictions. His name was Max as I recall, he said. He had a voluntary detachment from political concerns and it could all be summed up with the expression that I have heard a number of people make over the years, I don't want to get involved.

What's wrong with that? What's wrong with being detached, neutral? One who does not promote a religious idea or a political idea.

One who positions oneself in a sphere of neutrality. I don't have any interest, any stake in this, I've got no skin in this game, I just withdraw myself from it and let those who want to do their thing do their thing but my thing is to have nothing to do with it or get involved at all.

Religiously, there is a new category of conviction that has surfaced in our society. I don't know if you're aware of it or not but it is an actual category that government documents are now including in their list of people who are categorized as to their religion or their faith, etc.

[ 15 : 47 ] And what this new group is called is nuns. That's not N-U-N-S as in a Catholic sister.

It's N-O-N-E-S as nuns. Nothing. I have no spiritual, religious interest, conviction, involvement, commitment of any kind.

When it comes to those things, count me out. That's what the nuns are saying. And they, of course, would not bother to vote and what's wrong with that?

What's so bad about people not voting anyway? To divorce oneself from things political means to have nothing to do with the governance, order, or laws under which I live.

I am willing to have no voice, no input, no part in my present world as to what standards I will live by.

[ 16 : 58 ] I am content to merely comply with whatever decisions and demands are placed upon me by others who are involved in politics and make the laws.

Thus, I do not and will not vote in any elections. And I've heard a number of Christians saying, I don't bother to vote. Politics is a dirty business.

I don't want anything to do with it. Are you aware that politics, whether you consider it good or bad, politics determines your present social order and the laws under which we all live.

That is true of any so-called orderly society. And it doesn't make any difference what kind of government it is. There are politics involved.

Can you say, I don't want anything to do with that? Is it responsible as a human being to be that withdrawn from the sociological order?

[ 18 : 06 ] More than anything else, it is politics that decides the kind of world and society in which you live. Do you really want to detach yourself from that?

Are you content to have no voice or input in deciding what kind of temporal existence you have in your world, but are willing to simply go along with whatever others decide for you?

If so, you won't bother to vote. You are inviting totalitarianism.

Totalitarianism is the kind of government that you get from a mass of people who are willing, either by choice or by no choice to let others make decisions for them as to what kind of life they will live or what kind of laws they will live under.

Politics, whatever kind it may be, politics concerns itself only with temporal issues. By that I mean once you are dead, politics has no more interest or control over you.

[ 19 : 26 ] But while you're alive, it certainly does, whether you agree with it or not, whether you like it or not. Not so with matters of religion.

Religion extends beyond the reach of politics and involves issues of eternal, ongoing significance. Politics is the fabric or key to present day living in a temporary existence.

Religion is the fabric or key to living in an eternal, ongoing, unending existence. So you can't get away from these two.

You're either here or there. and not by choice, but by necessity. You are here or there. All depends as to what degree you want to have any say in it.

These two, politics and religion, are the two biggies, the two biggies of your life, whether you believe it or not, or whether you like it or not, they are inescapable.

[ 20 : 42 ] And if they are inescapable, what are you going to do about them? Your existence as a human being does not allow you to opt out.

If you think you can, you are living under an illusion. You are self-deceived and this is precisely where multitudes are living, both temporarily and eternally.

Now think of that. How many people are there in our world that are living, conducting their daily lives on the basis of false assumptions that they have made?

Maybe made in good faith, no doubt in good faith, but erroneous nonetheless. And so much of this goes on. I would even go so far as to say probably the majority of the world lives that way.

And the majority of those are not even aware of it. there are no subjects more vital nor more deserving of our discussion, debating, and deciding than our temporal existence and our eternal existence.

[ 21 : 55 ] Those two. Can you think of any others? Those two wraps up the whole package.

There isn't anything else. we owe it to each other to talk about them. But here's the problem.

Can it be done in a calm, congenial, friendly way, such as at a Thanksgiving dinner with family and extended family without tempers flaring, and names being called, and if we can't, what does that indicate?

People do have strong beliefs, convictions about issues that inflame passions. Rhetoric can become explosive and bombastic to the point the whole family gathering is tense and unenjoyed.

And it may be such that some of those present at it may say privately to one another as they are leaving, well, you can count me out for any further family gatherings.

[ 23 : 26 ] I'm just not going to be available. I'll be busy. I won't be able to attend. What are you going to do at a family gathering when Uncle Henry is there?

Uncle Henry is the family atheist. Uncle Ben is the family gay guy. The plot is thickening.

Aunt Peggy is a lesbian who was asked to not bring her partner to the gathering. Cousin Sam and his wife are devout Christians.

Half the gathering are Democrats and the other half Republicans with a couple of independents thrown in. And don't forget the global warmers. What a mix.

What a nightmare in the potential. Now granted this may be a little extreme but I'm just trying to point out the principles and the difficulties that can be involved in a gathering of people who are related to each other who probably care about each other a lot but who also have really strong and different convictions ideas opinions beliefs etc.

[ 24 : 59 ] So is that any reason to put politics and religion out of the range of discussion? My answer is not at all provided the discussion is free of anger rancor tempers flaring and names being called and who will want to show up for the next family gathering.

This all indicates the importance of the subject matter does it not? Now it doesn't make any difference if people have opinions or ideas about things that don't amount to a hill of beans anyway.

I mean people can argue over the greatest Yankee team versus the greatest Dodger team of all times and it can be done with seriousness and yet there is a certain amount of levity and good naturedness and jabs back and forth and nobody really gets angry about it.

They just go on about it and disagree and then they eat their dessert together and have a great time and that's the end of it. But some of these things that we've been talking about are issues that run very deeply.

In fact there aren't any that run more deeply than this. And in part I am convinced that the adversary would just as soon not have these things talked about at all.

[ 26 : 34 ] Because you know what happens when people talk about things they share ideas they share convictions they share whatever is on their heart. And if it is a kind of gathering where a person is setting forth their position with the hopes of obtaining the agreement of others maybe because others have never heard of what they're sharing or maybe they've never considered the aspects of what they're sharing and they are dispensing information with the clear intent of winning somebody over to their position and they are doing so because they are convinced that their position is one that really needs to be applied to this individual.

So there's a good faith thing. Now they may be as wrong as all get out with what it is they're trying to share but they have it in good faith and they are trying to dispense information and what this is all about and really what so much of this is all about and I just cannot escape this it keeps coming back to it.

It is how utterly vital information is. Data. Facts.

How vital it is. This present day for the first time in the history of humanity I guess at least to the best of my knowledge historically there has never been an age or a period in history of humanity until this age we are now living in that has ever been dubbed the information age.

Now that's an interesting name to give this. The information age. Information deals with data. It deals with facts.

[ 28 : 34 ] It deals with figures. It deals with truths. And sometimes it deals with false news. It's still information even though it isn't accurate information.

It isn't believable information. All I'm saying is information is extremely vital and we are all recipients of it. Good and bad. true and false different and indifferent.

We are bombarded all day long with the billboards and the television and the radio and school and whatever else.

Without even thinking about it items of information are constantly being directed toward you. Many of them want to sell something. That too involves the necessity of information.

I told some of you about this and I even showed a video to some great people years ago that was produced by Dr. Werner Gitt and I was so impressed with it and I showed it to a number of people and they just took the wind out of my sails because they didn't get excited about it like I did.

[ 29 : 44 ] And I thought it was one of the greatest things I'd ever heard. It was called in the beginning was information and I followed that. First time through I didn't get it either. It went you know right?

I am not a technical person. Everybody who's seen me fiddle with the VCR knows that. But this stuff fascinated me.

This information thing. And Dr. Gitt delved into the issue of what constitutes information and the qualities of it that make it intelligible and communicative and receptive and I thought it was absolutely fascinating stuff.

And I was absolutely blown away when he came to a conclusion. And I was thinking this in the back of my mind and I almost said it before he did and it made me feel so good because he's got a great mind.

And I don't think mine is in the same league. In fact I know that it isn't in the same league. But anyway the upshot of what he said and I'd be glad to make this available in a book or in a DVD to anybody that would like to see it.

[ 31 : 03 ] and having listed a number of things and then he came to this conclusion and he said and of course as a result information is spiritual.

What? Yes! Information is spiritual. Does that mean what you read in the newspaper is spiritual?

Well the ideas and the concepts that are communicated are spiritual only in the sense and this by the way please understand this has nothing to do with religion.

Talking about information being spiritual has nothing to do with religion. Okay? It has everything to do with the absence of physicality.

There is nothing physical or material information. And that puts it in a whole new area as far as I'm concerned.

[ 32 : 11 ] And it's one that we ought to have picked up on before we had to watch Werner Gitz talk about it. But it is so true. And I'm tempted to share that with those who would like to see it again.

So let me know if you're interested and we'll just have a get-together with the book and we could discuss that because it really breaks down in great detail what actually constitutes information.

And by that I'm talking about communicative content. information. And it is stunning what is and what is not information. So when we are talking, whether it's a family dinner table or a gathering or whatever it might be, and we are dispensing information, and you realize when we communicate the gospel to anybody, give them the good news, in essence all you are doing is giving information.

That's all you're doing. Now it is vital information, it's critical information, it's information that demands a response and there isn't enough I can say about it. But boiled down, it's just information.

It's that simple. And of course, it's the content that determines how vital and how critical it really is. So when we communicate and we talk to others about our faith, whether it has to do with, and I use the term religion not because I particularly approve of it because that's the way the world addresses it and we're just talking about throwing everything into this whole lump that the world calls religion.

[ 33 : 58 ] But when we talk about the essence of the gospel or biblical truth or something of that nature, we are communicating vital information and the reason we are communicating it is because it is vital.

Do you care about people? Do you care about someone enough to tell them the truth? Even though you know they may not be receptive to the truth.

And you know something? Upon hearing the gospel for the first few times, most people are not receptive. Most people reject the gospel upon initial hearings.

Usually takes repeated exposure to the gospel generally over a period of time. And sometimes it may take years before one actually comes to faith or they may never.

When it comes to politics, this is a hot button issue. I've even heard Grace Bible Church called that political church out on Group Road.

[ 35 : 11 ] Well, let me tell you something. In case you haven't been here, I have never from this pulpit, not even once, advocated any particular political party.

I have never even suggested as to for whom you should vote. I would not insult your intelligence, implying that you don't know who to vote for unless I tell you.

And I know we get into the area of endorsement and the influence that comes behind it and everything, but that's not my thing. I just feel like I, of necessity, need to limit myself to aspects of politics that are really important.

And what they are is spiritual. It is moral. Contrary to what a lot of people think, it is impossible to divorce morality from politics.

I wish everybody, especially every Christian, could understand that. But there are those who see a clear-cut line between them. They want nothing to do with politics.

[ 36 : 32 ] I've even heard some preachers say, abortion, are you kidding? I wouldn't consider preaching on pro-life in my congregation any more than, well, I just wouldn't do it.

Why not? I'd probably lose half of my people. All I can say is, don't let the door hit you on the way out.

Good riddance. We are talking about moral issues, and abortion is as moral as you can get. We are talking about the very existence of human life.

life. Now, if you want to take the position, as many do, and we've talked about this, as many do, if you are a biological accident, there is no God involved in whose image and likeness you are made.

You are just a lump of tissue, and all you are doing is dancing to your DNA. There is no purpose for your living.

[ 37 : 42 ] There is no significance to your life. There is no intentionality of you ever coming into existence. You are literally just a piece of flesh with legs and arms and a brain and so on.

If that's the position you want to take, well, I guess an embryo in a woman's uterus, nothing more than a blob of tissue.

What's the big deal? You just follow the course that is the most logical and the most convenient, for sure, to you, and if it's in your best interest and you don't want to be saddled with that responsibility as his point in your life, no big deal.

Eliminate it. That's very consistent, logical thinking, given what your worldview is. And this is exactly the way a lot of people feel. Now, I'm not about to assign atheism to everybody who is in favor of aborting at the behest of the expectant mother.

I'm not saying that they are atheists, but I am simply saying that it is difficult for me to see how they can take a creator God into consideration who is described as the giver and sustainer of life and take that seriously and adopt that.

[ 39 : 15 ] But, you know, most of these people have never really heard the arguments for pro-life.

They have never been exposed to a solid, systematic presentation of the pro-life position. They have only heard one side.

And you know what you call that? You call that inadequate information. Most people about most issues never get the full picture of both sides when they're contemplating a position to take.

we usually get the picture of the side that presents the most persuasive argument. You know, you can be really smooth and eloquent.

We were talking about this, weren't we? You can be really smooth and eloquent and well-spoken and a spellbinder and nothing you say is right. But it sounds so good.

[ 40 : 20 ] So persuasive. So compelling. And that's exactly how Adolf Hitler, who'd winked the masses, when they stood out there before them, numbering in the tens of thousands, a lot bigger crowd, by the way, than what Donald Trump gathers.

And Hitler would stand on his platform and gesture and articulate and the people were swayed. And let me tell you something. If you don't already know this, the German people are some of the smartest people on the planet.

And look at how many bought into that. All I'm saying is we are all subject to powerful, compelling influences that may be right and good and holy and they may be demonically evil and wrong.

And you know what your job is? To sort it out. Wow. What a task, huh? What a task. I mean, how is a body supposed to know?



And celebrities with big names, well-recognized, are lined up behind each position. And you know, for some people, and you get this in the church too.

[ 41 : 45 ] You get this in the pulpit. Well, if that's what Marv believes, that's good enough for me.

Oh, I hate that. Oh, I hate that. With a passion, I hate that. There was a fellow that was, he's with the Lord now.

And this was when we were still at Roosevelt School in our early ministry. And you may remember, Marie. And he came up to me and he said, after one of my messages, he said, you know, he said, there's a lot of this stuff in the Bible that I don't understand.

I thought, well, welcome to the club. But he said, Marv, you just tell me what to believe and I'll believe it. And I tried to be kind to the man because I knew his heart was in the right place.

But his head wasn't working right. And I didn't want to offend him and I didn't want to squash him. But I tried to gently tell him, well, I appreciate your confidence in me, but I really am not worthy of that kind of confidence.

[ 43 : 08 ] My shoulders aren't that broad. I cannot handle that. And everything that comes from this pulpit needs to be, needs to be Bereafied, you know, those, those saints at Berea were more honorable than those of Thessalonica in that they searched the word of God to see whether the things spoken by Paul were true, whether they're backed up by scripture.

And that, of course, that has to be our bottom line. It absolutely has to be. Now, if you throw together an aggregate of people, particularly if they're together by, by relationships and intermarriage and all of that good stuff, you know, that typical big families are made of, that can be a very, very dicey situation because people are coming from all kinds of different backgrounds and opinions and ideas.

And many of them are strong. Many of them, they want to spread. They want to convince others that, that in, in 10 years, the planet is not going to be here because of global warming.

And they really believe that. I mean, they are sincere about it. And they think that the rest of us are just a bunch of dolts because we don't come in line with it. So what this amounts to, boiled down, I guess, what I'm coming to is when it comes to these issues, at least, is that each of us has to take on the responsibility of developing a spirit of discernment.

And you know something? Most Christians never get around to doing that. And I'll tell you why. Because it takes work. It takes effort.

[ 45 : 01 ] It takes a willingness to imbibe yourself with information, particularly biblical information that will give you the straight scoop on the way life really is.

And I've made this point in the past, and I'm going to throw it open for a comment. Gee. I guess I'm already done and didn't know it.

But, well, let me say this. Just wait until next week.

And what we will do next week. Marie, you remind me of this. Okay. So if I don't do it, you'll know who to blame. She is a petite little thing, but she's got bigger shoulders than I do.

We will open the session next week with Q&A;, and that way I know we'll get it in. But this, folks, this is really, really critical stuff.

[ 46 : 12 ] We need to give some deep, serious, hard thinking about this. And I'll tell you what. Most Christians don't. And you know why we don't? Because we all have a lazy streak.

We all have an intellectually lazy streak. And we're too willing to, when we read a passage of Scripture and we say, I wonder what that means. And maybe I should look that up.

Well, some other time, because such and such is on TV now. And we flip the pages and we never get to it, you know, because we are distracted by so many other things.

And, yes, Jesus is important. God's important. Eternal life is important. The gospel is important. But it'll wait. And we just don't prioritize it. And we don't give the things that deserve top billing, top billing.

And I would freely admit I include myself among the guilty of that. Can you include yourself?

[ 47 : 20 ] Well, something for us to think about. And I sincerely apologize because, you know what I was thinking? I don't know where I got this.

Maybe it's just the effect of being away for two weeks. Gee. I hope it didn't impact me that much.

But I was thinking about quitting at a quarter of. And we don't quit at a quarter of. Normally. We quit at 1230.

So I'm already over my time. But you've got something to. We still have an hour. You are too kind.

You are too kind. But I sincerely would like to hear of you, your input, your ideas, your agreement or disagreement. And by the way, you understand, do you not, that you have every right to disagree with me and I will not think you disrespectful.

[ 48 : 25 ] And some people have the weird idea that to disagree with the position that the pastor takes is disrespectful. Baloney!

It isn't disrespectful if you are convinced that your position is true. Right. Like my little daughter. And it isn't disrespectful.

In fact, it is an act of compassion. When you really believe that someone has a wrong position and you care enough about them to bring it to their attention.

A lot of people don't have the courage to do that. And that's partly what is wrong with our society today. So evangelism and all these things we're talking about is simply caring enough about people to tell them the truth, to level with them.

And of course, we need to do it with compassion and with kindness and gentleness. Like, like that passage in, in, uh, Peter talks about that we should set apart Jesus Christ in our hearts and minds and be ready always to give an answer to anyone who asks us a reason for the hope that is within us with gentleness and compassion.

[ 49 : 54 ] But with conviction. Well, would you stand please? I'm not finished, but I quit. Okay.

Let's pray. Father, we recognize that these are issues that can be and often are very delicate. And believers have honest and different opinions about some of the things that we've talked about.

And yet we know that you, you have a position regarding all of these issues and your position is set forth in your word.

And all of us would honor you and serve ourselves and each other best. if we study to determine and understand what your position is, and then align ourselves with it, what better position could we take?

And thank you for making it obvious and available to us through this incredible book called the Bible. Dismiss us.

[ 51 : 01 ] Now we pray with your blessing in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen.