

Awkward Conversations

1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Week of June 11, 2023

BELONG

Ask this Ice Breaker Question: What are the strangest “household rules” that you have heard about or seen posted in someone else’s house?

- *We aim to please. You aim too please.*
- *No fussin, no cussin, no backtalkin.*
- *No one under the age of 16 may sit on the furniture.*

BELIEVE

Have someone in your group read aloud: 1 Corinthians 7:17-24

Leader Context (not to be read aloud):

We read this section last week as well. This week, we want focus a bit...

Ask these questions to prompt group discussion:

1. Rules are important for every healthy culture. Families have rules. Work places have rules. School classrooms have rules. And Churches have rules. What do you suppose is the desired connection between rules and healthy relationships?

- Circles are better than rows.
- What happens in life group stays in life group.
- We automate what is important.

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Paul he reminds people of his “rule of life” in planting churches: Don’t radically change your lifestyle as you start to follow Jesus. For Paul, this rule is intended to complement the commands of God. A command is often tied to a moral truth. A rule is often tied to a pragmatic application of truth. For Paul, both are necessary in following Jesus well.

2. Paul specifically downplays the importance of physical markers or behaviors as requirements to enter and remain in Church fellowship. What have been some physical markers or behaviors that have acted as

unspoken hurdles to community life in your family, work place, or church life before? Examples might include:

- **Tattoos, piercings, hair color**
- **Dress attire or other forms of dress codes?**
- **Allegiance to sports teams or colleges?**
- **Brand loyalty in terms consumer goods?**
- **Club memberships or park passes?**

3. Paul adds that accepting people is open-ended with one caveat. That they are *with God*. Why do you suppose that Paul adds this theological condition?

Leader Context (Not to be read aloud):

Paul concludes the passage with two words that function as the supernatural power to change the people coming to follow Jesus - "with God." As in Paul's day, our culture offers two loud perspectives on the tension of the individual and society.

- *Religious people tend argue that social well-being is more important than individual expression.*
- *Secular people, on the other hand, tend to advocate for individual expression over and against social well-being.*
- *Paul provides a middle way in this verse. He argues that the Church is healthy enough to provide space for individuals to express themselves as they begin to follow Jesus. They don't need to change anything. This is his rule. But, Paul also knows that Jesus has a way of bringing everyone into a common type of Character - the character of God. Once you add God into the mix, He will be the one to transform individuals from the inside out to become more Christ-like Christian society. This is The Gospel.*

BECOME:

- 4. Paul's teaching requires us to balance a tension. What might it look like in your community to adopt and apply Paul's approach:**
- Establish healthy rules for community life while...**
 - Not turning these rules into physical marker/behavior barriers that limit entrance into and participation in community?**

Close by praying together.

