

## Doctrine vs. Personal Elements of Belief [PEB]:

There are profound differences between biblical doctrine and personal elements of belief [PEB]. This seems to be one of the most misunderstood subjects in the church today. The reason for this is clear and quite understandable: firstfruits hold their personal elements of belief in the same esteem and to the same degree they do church doctrine. Whether it is doctrine or a PEB, it is natural for a member to want to "spread the truth" and convince others, in and out of the church, to have and hold the same belief.

The church has taught for decades that it is not a good idea for a member of the church to attempt to convert others regarding our common beliefs and doctrine. We have no power or biblical mandate to convert or convince. This principle is greatly compounded with personal elements of belief. PEBs are not common belief. Generally, they are the member's alone.

PEBs are absolutely fine in the eyes of God, assuming there is nothing in the Word of God to oppose it. His Word allows for PEBs.

God does not have a "Thus saith the Lord" for each and every little situation that may come up with in a firstfruit's Christian life. When we do not have a specific law or scripture to cover the specific instance, we then look to specific or overriding biblical principles. Side-by-side with this is something we read about in Romans 14.

**...for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. –Rom 14:23**

Paul is writing to Romans about members weak in the faith and one or more who could not bring themselves to eat meat which had been offered to idols. Paul writes:

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin. –Rom 14:22-23

Notice the commentary

**22–23. Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Faith** here means a firm conviction before God that what you believe is right. Paul remarks that it is proper to have and cherish a conviction, **but we must not force our convictions upon others.** We do not have the prerogative to do so. We must hold that conviction before God. **And he that doubteth is damned if he eat.** For the translators of the AV the word **damned** did not have the force it does today. It did not mean that if someone violates his conscience by eating that which he feels is wrong he will be damned to (the lake of fire). Rather the meaning is that he is condemned in his conscience for doing that which it will not allow. If he does not eat in faith believing that it is acceptable to God, he eats in sin **for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.** If our actions do not arise from our convictions then they are sinful actions and unacceptable to God. –KJV Bible Commentary ( red emphasis mine)

**The point is this:** Within the various elements of belief, each member stands alone before God in the Salvation Process as to how he or she will conduct themselves in and with that element of belief. Neither the church nor the ministry can micromanage your Salvation Process or issue lists of rules about every subject or element of belief under the sun.

The firstfruit member, as Paul states, must act on conviction or his or her conscience as driven by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. Clearly the more immersed one is in the Word of God, the more effective and spiritually practical his or her convictions and conscience is going to be.

The church has less than forty primary doctrines. These are posted at our web sites and taught from our ministry. PEBs number in the thousands and cover a myriad of subjects including those of Health and Healing. This is why we are admonished in the healing doctrine:

- 1] Not to believe that one doctor, procedure, plan of action or medicine is more righteous, Godly or spiritual than another.
- 2] Not to judge [*condemn*] others regarding their chosen plan of treatment.
- 3] Not to attempt to convince others that your chosen plan of treatment is the best.

Understand that you probably have a number of PEBs regarding health. These beliefs could be about food, diet, water treatment or sources, equipment [*water and air filters*], vitamins, supplements, minerals, herbs, folk cures, diets, fasting, exercise, exercise equipment, medical plans, medical insurance, doctors, nurses, health care providers, clinics, hospitals, hospices, nursing homes, in-home care, medic alerts, ambulance services, surgeons, operations, treatments, procedures and hundreds of related subjects.

We are directed by this doctrine and therefore, the Word of God not to attempt to force these PEBs on others or to believe that our PEBs are more spiritual or more correct than any others (Romans 14:22-23).