

**FIEC Leaders' Conference '22
Finding The Right Hills To Die On
Seminar**

- First-rank doctrines require...

Jude 3

- Second-rank doctrines require...
- Third-rank doctrines require...

"We should eagerly pursue the kind of theological conviction and strength that is willing not only to fight for the truth but also to avoid fighting in order to promote the gospel. This is the best kind of strength." (Ibid, p.144)

Two concluding comments:

- **We must learn to listen well**
- **We must be patient**

Further reading:

- Gavin Ortlund, [Finding the Right Hills to Die On](#), Crossway
- Scott Hubbard, [Of Mountains and Molehills \(desiringgod.org\)](#)
- Albert Mohler, [A Call for Theological Triage and Christian Maturity \(albertmohler.com\)](#)
- Joe Rigney, [How to Weigh Doctrines for Christian Unity \(thegospelcoalition.org\)](#)

Introduction

3 questions to consider:

- How important is the issue?
- What level of unity is in view?
- What posture is called for?

1. How important is the issue?

1 Timothy 3:16

1 Corinthians 15:1-3

Philippians 3:15

"In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; and in all things, charity."

- **Theological Triage**

- First-rank doctrines:
- Second-rank doctrines:
- Third-rank doctrines:
- Fourth-rank doctrines:

“I would suggest that a wise theologian, like a wise military general, will be characterised by patience far more frequently than by action. Most of the battles you could fight, you shouldn’t. And I’d go so far as to say that the majority of doctrinal fights Christians have today tend to be over third-rank issues - or fourth. We deeply need to cultivate greater doctrinal forbearance, composure, and resilience.” (Gavin Ortlund, Finding The Right Hills To Die On, p.125)

• **Theological Triage is complex**

“The greatest impediment to theological triage is not a lack of theological skill or savvy but a lack of humility. A lack of skill can simply be the occasion for growth and learning, but when someone approaches theological disagreement with a self-assured, haughty spirit that has only answers and no questions, conflict becomes virtually inevitable.” (Ibid, p.147)

- **We must ask questions**

- How clear is the Bible on this doctrine?
- What is the doctrine’s importance to the gospel?
- What is the testimony of the historical church concerning this doctrine?
- What is the doctrine’s effect upon the church today?

- **We must pray**

“Triage is both science and art; it requires both intellectual perception and spiritual wisdom; it runs on both careful judgment and godly instinct.” (Scott Hubbard, Of Mountains and Molehills)

2. **What level of unity is in view?**

3. **What posture is called for?**

“It’s not just about what you fight over but about how you fight.”

“I find that it’s often not the doctrine itself that causes a barrier to unity, but the spirit in which it is held.” (Gavin Ortlund)