



# MENTORING COLLECTIVE RESOURCES

## *How to be Holy and Hospitable on Hot-Button Cultural Issues*

### **In this resource guide:**

1. Theological triage framework.
2. Recommendations of books, articles, websites, podcasts.
3. Scripture passages for further study.

\* *Each resource has been vetted through the lens of core doctrinal beliefs that align with Austin Ridge and are recommended by leaders and pastoral staff. Still, as with any resource, there may be nuances of expression by an author that are new or different to you. Therefore, we ask that you engage with a mindset to learn and consider, and always be discerning and run things through a scriptural lens and the counsel of mature believers if you have questions.*

## **Theological Triage Framework**

Theologian Al Mohler has come up with a helpful framework called theological triage. Triage means to sort. We think of it most often medically. When someone comes to the ER – a triage nurse processes what is most urgent. Which get attention first – a gunshot wound, a broken wrist, or a scraped knee? Obviously, the gunshot wound is the most important. In theology we call what is most important, what is core, a first order issue.

### ○ **1<sup>st</sup> Order Issues**

- These are core and essential doctrines of the faith – *without them, there is no Christianity.*
  - Ex. Virgin birth, Jesus is fully God/fully man, Resurrection, Trinitarianism, Authority of Scripture.
  - We stand our ground on first-order issues.
  - These are not only true facts, but their truth is necessary for Christianity.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Order Issues**
  - Believing Christians may disagree on the second-order issues, though this disagreement will often create boundaries between believers. This is when people study the Scripture and come to differing conclusions. This is when and why Christians organize themselves into denominations.
    - Ex. Baptism, Role of women in the church
      - That doesn't mean these matters are insignificant – they are deeply personal and there are implications for ministry and life in and outside of the church. Many of the most heated disagreements among serious believers take place at the second-order level. These issues frame our understanding of the church and its ordering by the Word of God.
  
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Order Issues**
  - Third-order issues are doctrines over which Christians may disagree and remain in close fellowship, even within local congregations.
    - Things like the end times: when will Jesus return? Or to be more specific, there are issues that are biblical – such as God's heart for justice, God's heart for the widow, orphan, and stranger – but we can differ as to how we live this out. We can differ over policies to address the issues.

By definition, a secondary or tertiary issue is saying it is difficult to determine and we are doing our best and we must give an account to the Lord for our view, for our church – not for others. “As best as I read this/study this, I am being faithful to the text and this person's reading is not my reading.”

This framework tells us where to stand our ground and where to yield for the sake of the gospel. And where to grant generosity on differences. This framework is most often used to consider issues of doctrine and belief. But this framework can also be applied to hot-button cultural issues, to issues of morality.

## Questions to help you filter through this grid on a hot-button issue:

- Is this [hot-button issue] a first-order issue? Meaning it is core and necessary to resolve for salvation. If so, are we adding a “work” to the gospel or is salvation Jesus + nothing? [Eph 2:8,9; Galatians]
- Is this [hot-button issue] a second-order issue? Meaning I can find scriptural support for a clear stance. I don’t yield my beliefs here, but I learn to interact with grace as I share the truth and wisdom of God.
- Is this [hot-button issue] a third-order issue? Meaning there is freedom of conscience before the Lord (Rom 14) to act in a certain way. I can grant generosity to others when their view differs from mine.

## Recommendations: Books

### ***The Gospel Comes with a Housekey* by Rosaria Butterfield**

The word “hospitality” can often create various levels of anxiety because of the perfect images of fashionably dressed hosts and impeccable homes that media and culture bombard us with. Using engaging stories from her own experiences of being on the receiving end of radically ordinary hospitality, Butterfield shows how one’s simple, but authentic, welcome can become a bridge for the gospel to reach the lost friends and neighbors in your life. This type of hospitality views our homes as God’s tools where authentic love and grace can be seen in action, revealing what true Christian faith looks like.

### ***Is God Anti-Gay* by Sam Allberry**

This sensitive exploration of the Bible’s teaching on sexuality has been written to help both Christians and non-Christians struggling with the Bible’s teaching on this issue, whether they experience same-sex attraction themselves or not.

Includes answers to questions such as...

- Does Jesus ever mention same-sex relationships?
- Aren’t people just born this way?
- What should I do if a Christian comes out to me?
- Surely, isn’t a same-sex partnership ok if it’s committed and faithful?
- Is it sinful to experience same-sex attraction?
- Isn’t the Christian view of sexuality harmful?
- Aren’t we just picking and choosing which Old Testament laws apply?
- Can’t Christians just agree to differ on this?
- Should Christians attend gay weddings?

## ***Secular Creed* by Rebecca McLaughlin**

How do we respond to:

- Black Lives Matter
- Love Is Love
- Gay Rights Are Civil Rights
- Women's Rights Are Human Rights
- Transgender Women Are Women

You may have seen signs with some of these messages in your neighborhood. They offer us an all-or-nothing package deal in short, a secular creed.

In this provocative book, Rebecca McLaughlin helps us disentangle the beliefs Christians gladly affirm from those they cannot embrace and invites us to talk with our neighbors about the things that matter most. Far from opposing love across difference, McLaughlin argues, Christianity is the original source and firmest foundation for true diversity, equality, and life-transforming love.

## ***Mama Bear Apologetics Guide to Sexuality* by Hillary Morgan Ferrer**

Confidently raise your children to see sexuality and gender identity through a biblical lens! In this follow-up to *Mama Bear Apologetics*, Ferrer helps parents understand how God's design reveals his nature, identify the truth *and* lies in today's world, and teach kids to be compassionate toward those with different beliefs---without compromising their own values.

## ***10 Questions Every Teen Should Ask about Christianity* by Rebecca McLaughlin**

Equip your teenagers to understand---and verbalize---what they believe! Questions often feel like roadblocks to young people---whether they are Christians, might consider faith, or think of Jesus as a fairy-tale character. Using teen-friendly illustrations and biblical truth, McLaughlin invites readers to dig deep into 10 common queries about scriptural reliability, sexuality, diversity, and other topics.

# Recommendations: Web-Based Sources

## FamilyLifeToday

- [Podcasts on a variety of sexuality topics](#)

## [Focus on the Family](#)

- Resources on parenting, faith, and culture
- [Talking to Your Child about Transgender Issues](#)
- [Talking to Your Child about Homosexuality](#)

## [Gospel Coalition](#)

- Podcast: [How to Discuss Sexuality in a Post-Christian Culture](#)
- Video: [Why We Need to Debate in Good Faith](#) – the foundational video on a series of good faith debates where the gospel is kept central. **Modeling holy and hospitable dialogue on these topics: gun control, racial injustice, pro-life womb to tomb, school choice** (Jen Wilkin)

## Tim Keller

- [The Gospel and Sex](#)
- Podcasts – [The Gospel in Life](#): 5 episodes on morality, justice, hopefulness.

# Scriptural Passages

## When is there freedom of conscience as a believer?

**Romans 14** – the presenting issue in this chapter is conflict over Jewish food laws, but the principles Paul gives apply to many issues. There can be different convictions held by Christians and this should not be a source of division. The strong and the weak are called to mutual acceptance. In differences of conscience, Paul says to be welcoming vs. 1, not to quarrel, vs. 1, not to despise each other vs. 3, not to pass judgment, vss. 3,13. He even says to yield their rights for the sake of someone else. Of course, freedom of conscience is not the same as license to sin. “So then let us pursue what makes for peace and mutual upbuilding.” Romans 14:19

**1 Corinthians 8-10** – There are many freedoms in Christ, but “nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ...For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant of all. That I might win more of them” (Paul, 1 Cor 9:12,19).

## Our Speech

**Ephesians 4:29-30** – Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

**Colossians 3:12** – We need to have humility: “Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

**John 13:35** – We need to have love: “Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

**Colossians 4:6** – We need Spirit-led speech: “Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.”

**Proverbs 15:1** – “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”