

UNPACKING CHUCH BAGGAGE

"The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man. Man asserts himself against God and puts himself where only God deserves to be; God sacrifices himself for man and puts himself where only man deserves to be. Man claims prerogatives which belong to God alone; God accepts penalties which belong to man alone."

— John Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1984), 160

Sometimes we step into a pile of pride in the church by thinking we have this whole faith and following Jesus thing figured out. It can happen when we:

- dig in our heels on traditions that we are trying to keep alive
- hold onto doctrines we have accepted instead of tested
- don't recognize our hidden prejudices

That means that sometimes we need to have an unpacking session and sort through the messages we are hearing and test them to see if we are letting God be God or if we are trying to call the shots from our human perspective. Pick any issue you know can cause division in the church and examine it against this matrix.

TRUTH	or	TOOL
is always		can become
BIBLICAL	or	BAGGAGE

Understand...others' theological perspectives

Engage...your mind in prayer, scripture and respectful dialogue

Discern...what is God saying to you

Common Ground...find it even when you can't agree