

**Honoring God and Governing Authorities**  
**Week 2: COVID Questions**  
Holy Trinity Sunday School, Fall 2021

**I. Employing Principles of Honoring God and Governing Authorities Case Study: Vaccine mandate for employers of over 100 persons**

a. How do we think through the full scope of biblical instruction and therefore, how do we respond? Do we comply? And if we do not comply, how do we do so rightly?

b. Keep in view the three spheres of authority – Family, Church, State

c. Begin with our own hearts

i. We reject the fleshly impulse of autonomy (no one will tell ME what to do)

ii. Assess your own posture: subjection, honor prayer

d. Then and only then ask: is the government justified? Need for great understanding

- e. Recognize that government is not always to be obeyed, but it is a high bar for justifying civil disobedience

From Evangel Presbytery, *Conscience and COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates*:

*This is not to say that there is never a place for a vaccine mandate. Moreover, making such a judgment requires the magistrate to weigh carefully three matters: (1) the risks posed by COVID, (2) the potential benefits of COVID countermeasures, and (3) any potential harm (particularly restrictions in liberty) that might attend those countermeasures. Some countermeasures (such as mask mandates) are less harmful, creating a lower level of restrictions on familial, ecclesiastical, and personal liberties. Other countermeasures (such as vaccine mandates) are potentially more harmful, coercing citizens' submission to an invasive medical procedure which goes to the heart of individual liberty. Vaccine mandates thus require reasonable evidence of broad and unambiguous benefits to the lives of those subject to the civil authority's mandating them. Such broad and unambiguous benefits were present in the past when civil authorities mandated vaccines for diseases such as smallpox and polio, which threatened to kill or maim upwards of 30% of the population. Mandates have also been deemed acceptable when a specific vaccine was judged capable of eradicating a serious disease. In such cases, vaccine mandates have been proper, but this is not the case with COVID vaccines. Thus far, our civil authorities have not demonstrated that COVID is a disease whose threat is similar to these others, nor that the vaccines currently available are capable of eradicating this virus.*

## **II. How to work through differing convictions in the church: Stewardship, Liberty, and Charity**

### **a. Stewardship of Our Bodies**

- i. You are called to steward your own body.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, (20) for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.*

ii. What about, “My body, my choice”?

iii. Romans 14:7 *For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.*

b. Charity and Liberty of conscience

c. The basic principle of Romans 14:1-7

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. (2) One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. (3) Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. (4) Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand. (5) One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. (6) The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. (7) For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

WCF 20.2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are, in anything, contrary to his Word; or beside it, if matters of faith, or worship. So that, to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands, out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience: and the requiring of an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.