



**COMMUNITY
CHURCH**

Offer Hope. Grow in Community. Be the Church.

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Romans 14:1-12: Disputable Matters

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(1-3)

In Rome where these Christians lived, there were meat markets and that meat they sold had often come from some sacrifice to Zeus or another Roman god and then parts were sold in the market. So, some Christians didn't want to touch it because they used to believe in those false gods. Others thought: "We are free in Christ! There is only one God and it's not Zeus. He is not real. So, we can buy this meat and eat it with a clear conscience."

Paul doesn't try to solve the debate. He just says don't quarrel over things that are not clear teachings of the Bible.

God has accepted both of these people that have different views on what kind of things you can eat – disputable matters. The Bible is clear on some things, but it is not clear on all things and these disputable matters are not to be used by you to play God and condemn someone.

(4)

You are not their master – they have a master. It is not you. It is God!

(5)

Jewish people held a Sabbath day of rest on Saturday and some of these new Christians still kept the Sabbath on Saturday. Some gave up Saturday to focus in on the Lord's Day of resurrection on Sunday. Are there Bible verses that tell us what to do on Sunday? These are more examples of disputable matters – that Paul says, we should be fully convinced about in our own mind, but not put on someone else.

(6-8)

MOVIES: You and I are both individually accountable to God about these disputable matters. Can I go see this movie? You may feel okay with it, and I may feel a conviction that I should not see it – and since the Lord is my master, I need to follow Him on that conviction and not go see it even if my godly friends are okay with it.

DEVOTIONAL: I may feel like doing a devotional every morning reading the Word and praying is what I should do for my relationship with God, and you might not be a morning person, you talk with God in a whole different way than me. You need to do what God has called you to do.

(9)

For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. (Romans 14:9)

For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

(10-12)

We are accountable to God.

God has accepted them.

God has marked them His own.

God is their master.

God can guide their behaviors (on disputable matters) without my help.

Let's stop dumping on one another, and let's allow God to deal with each of his servants how, when, and as kindly as he will. And while we are at it, let's be thankful that he has dealt as kindly as he has with us. If he had not, we would all be in deep trouble.

(James Montgomery Boice)

Applications:

1. Start by accepting your brothers and sisters (not condemning them).
2. Yes, there are times we must admonish one another.

When you join HOPE, you become jointly responsible for making sure we continue to faithfully proclaim the Gospel. This means you become jointly responsible for what is taught at this church and that your brothers and sisters remain faithful. (1 Corinthians 5)

There are definitely non-disputable matters!

“Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.” (Romans 13:13)

3. Stop dictating to others how they should live in disputable matters.

“In essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty; in all things, charity.”

(EFCA – Augustine/John Wesley/Moravian Church)

Non-Essentials:

Where should Christian’s shop and/or not shop?

What length hair should a young man have?

How short can a skirt be on a young lady?

Can Christians drink alcohol?

What is an appropriate amount to spend on your car/truck?

How much make-up should a Christian wear?

Can I get plastic surgery?

What movies should we never watch?

What is appropriate music for a believer?

How should we vote?

Do Christians have to exercise?

What should my devotional life look like?

How often should I fast?

What are the specifics about Christ’s return?

What spiritual gifts is God still giving to His people today?

How should I feel about gun control?

What type of school should Christians send their kids to?

What should I wear at church? Or what should I wear when preaching?

4. Let God be their God (and yours).

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (2 Timothy 4:7–8)

Home Group Questions ...

1. Read Romans 14:1-12 in a contemporary translation like NIV or ESV.
2. We can learn a lot while studying highly cultural passages (Roman meats, sacred days, etc.) by reading them in a modern paraphrase (like The Message or NLT). Re-read The Message Version of Romans 14:1-12.

“Welcome with open arms fellow believers who don’t see things the way you do. And don’t jump all over them every time they do or say something you don’t agree with—even when it seems that they are strong on opinions but weak in the faith department. Remember, they have their own history to deal with. Treat them gently. For instance, a person who has been around for a while might well be convinced that he can eat anything on the table, while another, with a different background, might assume he should only be a vegetarian and eat accordingly. But since both are guests at Christ’s table, wouldn’t it be terribly rude if they fell to criticizing what the other ate or didn’t eat? God, after all, invited them both to the table. Do you have any business crossing people off the guest list or interfering with God’s welcome? If there are corrections to be made or manners to be learned, God can handle that without your help. Or, say, one person thinks that some days should be set aside as holy and another thinks that each day is pretty much like any other. There are good reasons either way. So, each person is free to follow the convictions of conscience. What’s important in all this is that if you keep a holy day, keep it for God’s sake; if you eat meat, eat it to the glory of God and thank God for prime rib; if you’re a vegetarian, eat vegetables to the glory of God and thank God for broccoli. None of us are permitted to insist on our own way in these matters. It’s God we are answerable to—all the way from life to death and everything in between—not each other. That’s why Jesus lived and died and then lived again: so that he could be our Master across the entire range of life and death, and free us from the petty tyrannies of each other. So where does that leave you when you criticize a brother? And where does that leave you when you condescend to a sister? I’d say it leaves you looking pretty silly—or worse. Eventually, we’re all going to end up kneeling side by

side in the place of judgment, facing God. Your critical and condescending ways aren't going to improve your position there one bit. Read it for yourself in Scripture: "As I live and breathe," God says, "every knee will bow before me; Every tongue will tell the honest truth that I and only I am God." So tend to your knitting. You've got your hands full just taking care of your own life before God." (Romans 14:1–12, The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language)

3. How was this helpful in putting it into our more modern way of saying things? Did it help you understand the passage a little better? In what ways?
4. What are the “disputable matters” that you struggle to call “disputable”? How are you at trusting the Lord to convict and teach your friends/your kids? Describe an area where people are free in Christ to be a part of something, but you personally know you are not free because of personal conviction.

Home Group Questions ...

1. Read Matthew 25 as a group.
2. What was Jesus trying to communicate?
3. Describe a time in your life when you have acted like the “foolish virgins”. ...or like the “wise virgins”.
4. What could help you live on mission with Christ?
5. What sabotages you?