

Romans 14

Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.

The first order of business is to determine what is disputable?

There are negotiable and non negotiable principles in Christian life. We are never called to ignore sin but we are called to show latitude in disputable matters.

Let us now look at personal matters which are disputable.

Romans 14 talks about matters which we are not to judge because they are disputable. Disputable matters are things which God has left to our choice: things such as what we eat, what day we worship, what Bible translation we read, watching TV etc. These are matters of personal choice and are not essential for salvation. [1 Tim. 2:9](#) tells us that we must always dress modestly but other than that we should be free to dress how we like. However, in [Rom. 14:21](#), God tells us, *“It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall”*. This verse makes it clear that we must be careful not to do anything that could cause a person to fall because another person's salvation is far more important than pleasing ourselves. A certain matter may seem absolutely trivial to us but to another person, or in another culture, it may be a serious issue and damaging to their faith or bad for the Christian image. Note that [Rom. 14:10-12](#) warn us that we will all give an account of our actions to God. (Alexander)

2 One person's faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.

Meat that was used for idol worship then was sold as food. Some believers refused to associate in any way whatsoever with such product while others appreciated the good value and good meal.

Q. What would you have done?

the weaker faith is still living legalistic.

3 The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.

Paul is not addressing the eating of meat, he is addressing spiritual arrogance and dissension among brothers and sisters in Christ.

Paul's concern is for unity in the church, disputable matters should not disrupt unity.

4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

Christians should not judge another's servant.

Q. Should Christians ever Judge?

To keep God's commands, we must first judge what is right and what is wrong. For example, [1 Cor. 5:11-13](#) say, "... you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. 'Expel the wicked man from among you'". In these verses, God tells us to judge church members and expel them if necessary. Then we are told in [Rom. 12:9](#), "*Hate what is evil; cling to what is good*". How can we do that if we don't first judge what is good and what is evil? So, we must make judgments about what is right and what is wrong so that we can live according to God's commands. (Alexander)

In regards to disputable matters we do not judge. Q. Do you celebrate Halloween?

5 One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.

6 Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat

does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

The decisions we make are often personal and in response to God's speaking to us. Our lives are dedicated to God, in all we do.

7 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. **8** If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

We are God's servant and God, who owns our life, will certainly keep charge over it.

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.

he is the one supreme ruler ...you are not!

10 You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt?

Paul shows how completely God rules and reigns over our lives and then challenges the notion of a mere human passing judgment.

...For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. **11** It is written:
"As surely as I live," says the Lord,
'every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will acknowledge God.'"

This quote from Isa 45:23 tells us that all men will appear humbly before God in judgment.

12 So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God. Bema seat judgment. A judgment according to works for rewards, different than the Great White Throne Judgment.

The judgment seat of Christ: "This is the *bema* seat, equivalent to the judge's seat in the Olympic Games. After each game, the winners came

before the judge's seat to receive crowns for first, second, and third places. Likewise, the Christian's works will be tested by fire, and he'll be rewarded for those which remain... The judgment seat of Christ is only concerned with a Christian's rewards and position in the kingdom, not with his salvation." (Smith)

13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.

Instead of worrying about your brothers reward or lack thereof be concerned with your own actions. If your actions become a stumbling block to your brother or sister in Christ you are in error.

14 I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean.

Each man must respond to his own conscious.
Unclean refers to food.

15 If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.

Christian liberty should never destroy a fellow believer.
The question we ask ourselves is not "is this acceptable?" rather it is "will this hurt my brother?"

16 Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil.

Do not allow your Christian liberty to be spoken of as evil because of the way it hurts another believer.

17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, **18** because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

True Christian living is not about do's and don'ts it is about the deeper and truer things of abiding in his Spirit.

19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

We can overlook disputable things and we can pass on steak dinners if it brings peace. peace and unity is the goal.

However. It is far better to be divided by truth than united in error.

20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.

21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

This is the law of love trumping the law of right. A person can be right and still wrong...

22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God.

These things: disputable matters, get off your soap box.

Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.

If God speaks to you to get rid of something do not condemn yourself approving it. Believers are sanctified differently, we must hear and obey God's voice in our lives.

23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

If any action is not derived from faith it is sin.

Have the courage to live up to the convictions of your heart.