

ROMANS 14:1-12
NOVEMBER 14, 2021



FBC SUMMIT STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

What is something you argued with someone about this past week? Was it worth it? Why or why not?

How do you know if arguing about something is worth it or not?

The church at Rome had both Jewish and Gentile believers, and the two groups had different cultural ways of expressing their faith. These differences led to arguments in the church and threatened their unity. Let's read what Paul said they should do about it.

DISCUSSION

> **HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 14:1-12.**

What kind of issues might we be tempted to argue over here at Summit?

What danger is there for Summit Students when we criticize each other?

Why is it so tempting to pick apart the opinions of others?

How can either eating or not eating something give glory to God?

What do you think Paul meant by "none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself"? How does that make a difference in how we treat one another?

Who is Lord over all? Who is the only fair judge of all?

What did Paul say every person will do one day (v. 10)? What did Paul say would happen when we stand before God (v. 12)?

How do you feel knowing that you will be held responsible for your actions before God one day? How might this reality help you focus on what really matters?

GOING DEEPER

Read 1 Corinthians 3:10-15. How does 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 tie in to Romans 14?

Thinking back on Romans 14:1-12, what would be work that might be found to be of good quality? What would be work that might be found to be worthless (burned up)?

APPLICATION

Here at Summit Students, how can we know the difference between what things are worth “drawing a line in the sand” over, and which ones aren’t?

How can we guard ourselves against being judgmental of others in their personal decisions?

PRAYER

Ask God to help you be encouraging to others. Pray that the Holy Spirit will convict you of your own sin so that you might be humble towards others as you are aware of your own faults. Ask the Lord to bless Summit with the fellowship of unity as you treat others with a welcoming love that only comes from Christ.

COMMENTARY

ROMANS 14:1-12

14:1–4 At Rome there were Jewish Christians who were reluctant to give up certain ceremonial aspects of their religious heritage. They were uncertain about how faith in Christ affected the status of Old Testament regulations. Others embraced the new freedom in Christ unencumbered by an overly sensitive regard for the past. Paul identified these two types of believers in Rome: the “strong,” whose faith allowed them to eat whatever they wanted, and the “weak”, who ate nothing but vegetables.

The tendency of those who eat whatever they want is to look down on those who for reasons of conscience are unable to exercise the same freedom. Freedom in such matters tends to create an attitude of superiority. It is tempting to hold up for ridicule those whose lifestyle is more restricted than one’s own. The Christian is not to despise or treat with contempt those who are still working through the relationship between their new faith in Christ and the psychological and emotional pressures of a previous orientation.

On the other hand, the person who does not eat everything must not sit in judgment upon the one who does (cf. Matt 7:1). A natural consequence of the more restricted perspective is to condemn those who are enjoying greater freedom. What is wrong for me translates easily into what is wrong for everyone. But the fact that God has received them ought to temper one's tendency to criticize. Since God has found room for them in the fellowship, any attempt on our part to exclude them will fail to meet with God's approval. It is not up to us to judge the servant of another (cf. Jas 4:12). That prerogative belongs exclusively to God. The strong as well as the weak will stand because the Lord is able to make them stand.

14:5–8 There was considerable diversity in the early church. Some believers regarded certain days as more sacred than others. Old Testament law had declared that feast days were consecrated to God in a special way. The Sabbath, for instance, had its own set of regulations. Other believers, however, regarded all days alike. After all, all life belongs to God, and every day offers unique opportunities for worship and service. More important is that each person be fully persuaded in his own mind. What the other person does is a matter of that person's conscience. Each believer must be convinced for himself or herself whether or not to regard some days as more sacred than others. Those who observe special days do it to honor the Lord (v. 6). Those who eat meat do it in honor of the Lord. They bless the Lord for the provisions he supplies. At the same time, those who abstain from eating meat also do it in honor of the Lord. They too give thanks to the Lord. There is no difference in their motivation. Both conduct themselves in such a way as to please their Master.

"None of us lives to himself alone" (v. 7). What Paul was saying was that all believers live out their lives accountable to God. Decisions about such matters as special days and eating meat are not made in isolation but in accordance with the will of God as understood by the individual. Even in death believers maintain their relationship to God. To live means to honor the Lord. To die is no different. Whether we live or die we belong to the Lord (cf. 1 Thess 5:10). Since each believer belongs to God, it is out of place for any to question the decisions of another in matters not central to the faith.

14:9–12 "For this very reason" (v. 9) looks forward and is explained by the final clause of the verse. The purpose of Jesus' death and resurrection was "that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living." His lordship is universal. His subjects are not merely those who are alive at the present time. All who have died previously are subject to his authority. Therefore he is the judge of all. Why then, asked Paul, do you weak believers (the abstainers) pass judgment on your brothers in Christ (those who do not abstain for the sake of conscience)? God is their judge, not you. And turning to the strong believers, Paul asked why they held the weaker Christians in contempt. It was wrong for them to look down on their fellow believers who were not as yet able to set aside the regulations that previously controlled their religious life. Each and every believer will stand before the judgment seat of God.