

Matters of Conscience

Key Scriptures

Romans 14:1-13 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

² For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. ³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

⁴ Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

⁵ One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶ He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. ⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.

⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

⁹ For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. ¹⁰ But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹ For it is written: "As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God."

¹² So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

¹³ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

Key Point: When it comes to non-moral disputable issues, the best principle is to live and let live.

TALK IT OVER

Start talking: Pick a conversation starter for your group.

- Growing up, were any of the following considered taboo? How did you handle it? Playing cards, listen to rock or secular music, gambling, go to the movies, smoking (cigar, pipe, cigarette), drink alcohol, get a tattoo, body piercing, dying hair colors, wear your hair long (or short), mixed swimming, lottery tickets, Trick or treating on Halloween, Home schooling, public/private school, two piece bathing suit, the length of a woman's skirt, wearing cosmetics, watch television, go to the beach, drive certain car, get a face lift, go to restaurant that sells liquor, dancing.

Start thinking: Questions to get your group thinking.

- Read through our key passage (Romans 14:1-13) with your group. In what way is this related to what was taught earlier in Romans 13:8, Romans 12:1-2, and other passages in Romans 12-13?
- In the church in Corinth, a similar but different issues was happening. Read 1 Corinthians 8:1-13. What was happening there, how was it similar and how was it different than what was happening in the church in Rome?
- What does Paul mean when he uses the term "Weak in faith" (v. 1-2) and "strong" (15:1)?
- Where in our passage can you see the principle "live and let live?"
- Where in our passage does Paul address accountability for our actions? What does this imply about our responsibility in handling personal convictions?

Start sharing: Questions to create openness.

- How is the concept of unity different from uniformity? Why is unity rather than uniformity important in the church?
- Can you think of an example from your own life where you encountered an issue of conscience within the Christian community? How was it handled?
- In what current matters of conscience are you "fully convinced" (v. 5), or not fully convinced? (weak vs. strong)

Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week!

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Prayer Requests. It may be helpful to pray the scriptures back to God.

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