

ROMANS SERIES TWENTY-TWO
SETTLING FOOD FIGHTS
Dr. Roger Barrier
Romans 14:13-15:5

Because “It’s not..... about me!”

Christian relationships were in upheaval in the 1st century pagan culture. The Roman Christians were having great difficulty in deciding just which activities were acceptable and which were not. They were arguing, among other things, whether or not it was all right for Christians to eat meat which had previously offered to idols.

Glenn covered the first part of this controversy last Sunday (Romans 14:1-13). The Biblical principles Glenn taught are summed up in Romans 14:13a.

I will review his teaching and then add several new insights which come from the last portion (Romans 14:13-15:5). This last section is best summed up by Romans 15:1.

ROMANS 14:13A: THEREFORE LET US STOP PASSING JUDGMENT ON ONE ANOTHER.

“Disputable matters” are areas where the Bible doesn’t expressly give direction.

Three disputable matters were rampant in the church in Rome:

1. Eating meat offered to idols
2. Celebrating pagan holidays
3. Drinking

Unfortunately disputable issues still divide and hurt Christians in the church today: Drinking alcohol, Smoking, Dancing, Dress, Movies, Music, Video games, Holidays, Tattoos, Body piercings, Bodily augmentations or upgrades, worshipping with uplifted hands in prayer and Home schooling, etc., etc. and etc.

Two extremes must be avoided as we decide what is acceptable and what is not?

Legalism: We make a list of rules and conform to the rules. Then we attempt to make our personal convictions normative for others.

Libertinism: “Since I’m free in Christ and the Bible forbids none of these things, then I’ll feel free to do any and/or all of them!”

Gary Shrader’s Four Boxes give us help in sorting out where we are spiritually and emotionally concerning in any particular area. We need to know what box we are in and what box our friends are as we sort out disputable matters.

BOX 1. I can’t and I struggle if you do.

BOX 2. I can’t but you can.

BOX 3. I can but it is a struggle for me.

BOX 4. I can and you can

ROMANS 15:1: WE WHO ARE STRONG OUGHT TO BEAR WITH THE FAILINGS OF THE WEAK AND NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES.

Who are the strong? What are the failings of the weak?

Strong Christians eat the meat without any pangs of conscience.

Weak Christians can’t do it.

Gary’s boxes are only somewhat an indicator of spiritual growth. Some very young Christians may be able to enter many areas of freedom while those much farther along in the journey may still be struggling in some of these areas.

In Romans 14:13-15:5 Paul Adds Three More Boxes.

BOX 5: I CAN BUT I WON'T BECAUSE OTHERS MIGHT STUMBLE.

Romans 14:13b: Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.

What is a stumbling block?

BOX 6: I CAN AND I'LL HELP OTHERS FIND FREEDOM.

Romans 14:19: Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

How can we find balance?

How can we help weaker brothers or sisters who are weak and/or legalistic? We restrict our liberty—and then we get along side them and help them understand why we restricted our liberty. Then we encourage them to enjoy freedom and grow strong in that area also.

BOX 7: I CAN'T SO I WON'T UNTIL I CAN.

Romans 14:23: But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Since the conscience is the interface between the human spirit and the human soul, we must never violate our consciences.

Instead, we carefully retrain our consciences according to Biblical truth so that we can experience the freedom of the Spirit-filled life.

What is sin for some is not sin for others.

RALLY AROUND THE INDISPUTABLES.

Romans 15:5: May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, 6 so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Indisputables

1. The Bible is the Word of God.
2. Jesus is 100% God and 100% man (Jesus was virgin born).
3. Jesus died a substitutionary death on the cross in our place for our sin.
4. The bodily resurrection guarantees that His mission was utterly fulfilled.
5. Forgiveness of sin and salvation come by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.
6. God establishes an eternal relationship with those who personally receive Him as Savior and Lord.
- 7.

If we get these indisputables right, nothing else will really matter. Jesus focused on the essentials as a powerful way to bring in the kingdom. So may we!