

ROMANS

MADE RIGHT WITH GOD

THE SECRET SAUCE

SUNDAY, AUGUST 27, 2023

KEY SCRIPTURE | Romans 14:1–19

DISCUSSION GUIDE

This week in our *Romans: Made Right with God* series, we continue to look at Paul's instructions to the Romans on living out the gospel in their daily lives. In chapter 12 and 13, Paul speaks generally about the sincere love that should be exhibited in their lives through devotion to one another, resisting evil, and submitting to authorities. Now, in chapter 14, Paul deals with a particular situation happening in the Roman church that is causing division. The Roman church was divided into two groups—the “weak” and the “strong”—and they are standing in judgement over each other. They are arguing about disputable matters instead of accepting and receiving one another as Christ does. Both groups should follow Christ's example of loving service for the good of the church. Ultimately, we are accountable to God for how we treat one another. Freedom in Christ is good. Love in Christ is even better! The unity of the church is essential to the expansion of the Kingdom of God. Unity is the “secret sauce” for a world loved but lost.

QUESTIONS

Icebreaker: What is your favorite “secret sauce” at a restaurant?

1. Read Romans 14:1–19 together. What were the “disputable matters” the church in Rome was dealing with? Describe the two groups Paul addresses in 14:2. (See Digging Deeper)
2. Pastor Neal listed some examples of “disputable” matters. (See Notes) Give some examples of what you think would be “disputable matters” in the church today. What activities have caused friction between you and a fellow believer?
3. What does Paul ask both groups to do in 14:3?
4. What is Paul's point in 14:5? What message is he sending to both the “weak” and the “strong”? (See Digging Deeper)
5. What reasons does Paul give for not judging others in disputable matters? (14:10) What should we do instead of judging others? (14:13)
6. What should you do if you are with friends who think something is wrong, but you think it's permitted? What about the opposite?
7. What is the true focus of the Kingdom of God? What is Paul's aim or goal for the Roman believers? (14:17–19)
8. Read John 17:20–21. What is Jesus' prayer here? Why is this important?



9. How is God calling you to respond to this message?

NOTES:

What might be “disputable matters”?

Theological issues like:

- The gifts
- Baptism (submersion or sprinkling)
- Pre-trib, post-trib, mid-trib (views of the End Times), Calvinist, Arminian

Other lifestyle issues for the Church:

- Movies
- Music
- Alcohol
- Cards
- Dancing
- Tattoos
- Smoking
- Bible translations

“Disputable matters” are not clear commandments of the Bible such as:

- There is ONE GOD
- Jesus Christ is God
- The authority of the Scriptures
- Salvation is by the grace of God through faith in Christ alone
- Things like the commandments

DIGGING DEEPER:

*What does Paul mean by “weak in faith”? In this section, “faith” has a special nuance for Paul. New Testament Scholar, Doug Moo, says “faith” here refers not directly to someone’s belief, but to one’s convictions about “what that faith allows him or her to do. The weak in faith are not necessarily lesser Christians than the strong. They are simply those who do not think their faith allows them to do certain things that the strong feel free to do.” Their conscience is more sensitive to certain things than others.

-Douglas Moo. Romans. The NIV Application Commentary. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2000.

*14:5 relates to 14:22–23. Each person should be careful to follow their conscience. New Testament Scholar, Leon Morris, says “To go along with what others do simply because they do it and without being convinced for oneself can be dangerous practice. Specifically, the weak brother [or sister] can hurt his conscience by following the strong brother’s practice without holding the strong brother’s [or sister’s] convictions.”

-Leon Morris. The Epistle to the Romans. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1984.