



Romans 14:1-12

Partakers & Abstainers in Unity | Oct. 19th - 25th, 2014

Warm-up: “Disputable matters” are those matters of behavior, teaching or practice not covered by a *specific* moral or biblical absolute upon which believers differ in their understanding and practice. In general, when it comes to these matters would you most identify yourself as a *partaker* or *abstainer*? Why?

- Read **Romans 14:1-12** aloud. When it comes to areas of freedom, believers are not permitted by biblical authority to judge, condemn, or ridicule those different from them. *Partakers* are called to fully accept *abstainers* into their fellowship (**14:1; 15:1**). In addition, neither group has permission to look down on or condemn the other as God has accepted them (**v.3-4, 10**)
 - In general, how do you see the relationship between partakers and abstainers being played out in the church today?
 - Are you sometimes tempted to look down on the “other side”? Why?
 - What particular issues are closest to home for you and why? (e.g. *consuming or not consuming alcohol, dancing, how to school your children, celebrating Halloween, the Sabbath Day, vegetarianism, tattoos etc.*)
- Discuss the meaning of **v.5**. Why might it be important to form convictions that guide our behavior, teaching and practices, even in areas where the Bible does not provide “absolutes”?
 - What principle is being communicated in the second part of **verse 5**?
 - How is this instructive to you personally?
- In areas of freedom, whichever way we lean *may* cause others to misunderstand us. The Pharisees rejected the gospel of the Kingdom from both John the Baptizer (*an abstainer*) and Jesus (*a partaker*).
 - Why is this truth from **Luke 7:33-35** so helpful?
- ¹² “Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. ¹³ So let’s stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.” - **Rom. 14:12-13**. Every believer’s life will one day be evaluated to determine his or her reward (see **1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Cor. 5:9,10**).
 - In light of tonight’s discussion, how does this truth impact you?
 - What is one thing you plan to do differently as a result?

Wrap-up: The most important thing is that each of us must form convictions on “disputable matters” being convinced that our highest aim is always to honor the Lord Jesus. Pray for one another to this end!