

(1) As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him.

(4) Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another?! It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

(5) One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God. For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself.

(8) For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He may be Lord both of the dead and the living.

(10) Why do you pass judgment on your brother? Or you, why do you despise your brother? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God; for it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.”
(Isaiah 45:23)

(12) So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God....

Think on these things:

- 1) This passage begins with identifying things that churches (and individuals) did not agree on: eating all food, or only vegetables; and observing Church Holy Days. Can you name some things that Christian churches disagree on today?

Christian churches disagree on several sacramental observances (baptism, Lord's Supper, foot washing, etc...). Some current struggles include ordaining women into ministry, and ordaining LGBTQ people into ministry. There is a big theological divide over God's sovereignty (Calvinism) and man's freedom of choice (Arminianism). Should we be allowed to drink and smoke? Use marijuana? Many of these topics are divisive in the modern church...!

- 2) What case can you make in the Bible for being a vegetarian? (See Genesis 1:27-31 and Daniel 1:3-16.) What case can you make for eating everything? (See Genesis 3:21-24, 9:1-3, and Acts 10:9-15). Who is right, and why?

Vegetarian? **When God created the world, His first directions followed the concepts of being vegetarians (i.e., plant eaters). The noble prophet Daniel lived this way, too.**

Eating meat? **When Adam & Eve sinned, God 'covered' them with animal skins (the first animal killing). After the flood, God opened up meat-eating for mankind, and He indicated that animals would live in fear of humans because of it. Acts reveals that even Jews were told that food was no longer limited to what they believed was 'kosher' or clean.**

Who's right, and why? **Both are right. Either way, they thank God for their food (vs.3-4)**

- 3) The irony here is that people may think that “we” are the weak in faith Christians, because we do or do not regard things the way they do. According to verse 3, what should we Christians refrain from doing/thinking?

We should not ‘despise’ those we disagree with, nor ‘pass judgment’ on them as wrong.

- 4) What does Paul say about the convictions that people hold (v.5)?

Individuals are to ‘be fully convinced’ of their own convictions --- and live by them!

- 5) How do you interpret the end of v.7? Consider Hebrews 10:19-25 in your answer.

This verse says that NOBODY lives and dies...only to themselves! As believers draw near to Jesus, growing in their faith, they realize that they are part of His Body. We are to consider how to encourage others to live in love and do good works, and to go to church regularly --- even more so as the Day of God’s return draws nearer (Heb. 10:24-25).

- 6) According to v.8, how are Christians to live and die?

Christians should live financially debt-free lives---except bearing an obligation to LOVE others!

- 7) What is this passage all about, as indicated in v.10? Have you ever experienced this while going to church? Please explain and be willing to share.

According to v.10, this passage exists to demonstrate that living in love fulfills the Law of God. We don’t generally intentionally hurt and harm the people we care for---and we must expand that group beyond immediate family to include everyone, but in particular the family of God.

The 2nd question is an optional response. Hopefully, someone has experienced acceptance and kindness by joining the family of God --- in your church!!

- 8) Jesus had something to say about this in Matthew 7:1-5. Paul had comments on the same subject in Romans 2:1-6, 1 Corinthians 6:1-6, and Galatians 6:1-2. How do you reconcile what the correct behavior ought to be? What is your conclusion?

Jesus’ famous words are, “Judge not, that you be not judged.” How we judge others will be used as the standard others use to judge us. Jesus said we must focus not on others’ faults, but with the logs (beams) in our own eyes.... Romans 2 deals with Christian hypocrisy: judging others for the things we’re also guilty of doing. 1 Cor. shows that church leaders should be consulted and obeyed in resolving disputes among members. Gal. says sinfully-living believers should be restored ‘gently’ by spiritual leaders in a church family, approaching with humility.

My conclusion: I should live by my convictions, teach them to my family, and let others do the same. It is unlikely I can ‘argue’ someone into agreeing with my opinion. I will have better success in reaching another if I continually live an upright and godly life before all.

- 9) What is the concluding thought of v.12? What do you think this time will be like for you?

Everyone must give an account of him/herself to God. Accountability to God is daunting; nothing ever done, said, or thought will be hidden from His knowledge. Except for Jesus’ saving grace, I would have no hope!

People and situations I want to pray for this week: