

# Discussion Guide

Romans 14:1-12

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## Opening Prayer

**Guided Prayer:** Pray asking for the Holy Spirit's guidance in understanding and applying the truths discussed.

## Recap

Romans 14:1-12 addresses the challenges of living in Christian community, particularly when it comes to differences of opinion on disputable matters. Paul encourages believers to accept those whose faith is weak without quarreling over disputable matters. He emphasizes that each person should be fully convinced in their own mind and live according to their conscience, whether it concerns eating certain foods or observing special days. Paul warns against judging others because God is the ultimate judge, and each person will give an account to Him. The passage emphasizes the importance of mutual respect and humility in the body of Christ, reminding believers that they are accountable to God alone.

## Understanding the Text

1. **Accepting Differences (Romans 14:1):** What does Paul mean by "disputable matters"? Why does he encourage believers to accept those with different opinions on these issues?
2. **Conscience and Conviction (Romans 14:2-5):** How does Paul describe the role of personal conscience in decisions about food and observing special days? Why is it important for each person to be fully convinced in their own mind?
3. **Living for the Lord (Romans 14:6-8):** What does Paul mean when he says that whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord? How does this relate to the way we handle differences in the church?
4. **Judgment Belongs to God (Romans 14:9-12):** Why does Paul stress that we should not judge one another? What does he mean when he says that we will all stand before God's judgment seat?
5. **Unity in Diversity:** How does this passage encourage unity in the midst of diversity within the Christian community?

## Practical Application

1. **Respecting Differences:** Reflect on a time when you disagreed with another believer on a disputable matter. How can you apply Paul's teaching to show respect and acceptance, even when you don't agree?
2. **Following Your Conscience:** How can you ensure that you are living according to your convictions while also respecting the convictions of others?
3. **Avoiding Judgment:** Are there areas where you find yourself judging others within the church? How can you shift your focus to leave judgment to God?
4. **Promoting Unity:** What steps can you take to promote unity and practice humility in your church, especially when there are differing opinions on non-essential matters?
5. **Living for the Lord:** How can you daily remind yourself that your actions and decisions should be done unto the Lord?
6. **Encouraging Others:** How can you encourage those with weaker faith without causing division or stumbling blocks in the church?
7. **Understanding God's Role:** How does recognizing that we will all stand before God's judgment seat affect the way you interact with others?

## God Has More to Say

Romans 14:1-12 discusses the importance of welcoming those with different convictions about disputable matters, not passing judgment on one another, and recognizing that each person will give an account to God. It emphasizes living in harmony despite differences and maintaining a focus on our ultimate accountability to God. Here are related biblical passages that illuminate these themes:

1. **Matthew 7:1-5:** Jesus teaches about not judging others and focusing instead on addressing one's own faults before correcting others, which aligns with Paul's call to avoid judging fellow believers on disputable matters.
2. **1 Corinthians 8:9-13:** Paul addresses the issue of food sacrificed to idols and emphasizes the importance of not causing a weaker brother to stumble, illustrating the principle of being considerate of others' consciences in matters of personal conviction.
3. **1 Corinthians 10:23-33:** Paul discusses the freedom believers have in Christ, but he also stresses that this freedom should not lead to actions that cause others to stumble or be harmed, reflecting the attitude of acceptance and consideration discussed in Romans 14.
4. **James 4:11-12:** James cautions against speaking evil of or judging a brother or sister, reminding readers that there is only one Lawgiver and Judge, who is able to save and destroy, echoing the themes in Romans 14.
5. **Colossians 3:17:** Paul encourages believers to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him, emphasizing that the intention behind actions is crucial, similar to Paul's teaching in Romans 14:6.
6. **1 Corinthians 6:12:** Paul discusses the principle that while everything may be permissible, not everything is beneficial, and believers should be careful not to be mastered by anything, which relates to the discussion of personal convictions in Romans 14.
7. **2 Corinthians 5:14-15:** Paul writes that Christ's love compels us to live not for ourselves but for Him who died for us and was raised again, reinforcing the idea that believers live for the Lord, as stated in Romans 14:7-9.
8. **Philippians 1:20-21:** Paul expresses his desire to honor Christ in his body, whether by life or by death, stating that "to live is Christ and to die is gain," which reflects the same dedication to living for the Lord.
9. **Galatians 2:20:** Paul declares that he has been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer he who lives, but Christ lives in him, illustrating the concept of living for the Lord in all aspects of life.
10. **2 Corinthians 5:10:** Paul writes that we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each may receive what is due for the things done in the body, whether good or bad, paralleling the theme of individual accountability to God in Romans 14:10-12.
11. **Matthew 12:36:** Jesus warns that people will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every empty word they have spoken, highlighting the reality of personal accountability before God.
12. **Ecclesiastes 12:14:** The author of Ecclesiastes concludes that God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil, underscoring the theme of accountability.
13. **James 2:12-13:** James encourages believers to speak and act as those who will be judged by the law that gives freedom, and he reminds them that judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful, emphasizing the importance of living with a view to divine judgment.