

Doubtful Disputations
Romans 14:1-12

Review:

1. Because Christians are freed from legalism, it is easy for disunity to take root in the Church.
2. Although Paul was forceful when addressing matters that are essential to the gospel, he allowed for genuine differences of opinion among true followers of Christ.
3. Our role as Christians is to accept other believers as God has accepted us.
4. It is critical for all Christians to study God's Word to become fully convinced in our own minds about things that are not essential but are still important.

Go Further: Read Acts 15:1-29

1. In verse 1, what was the important issue that faced the Church at Antioch? Was this essential or non-essential to the gospel?
2. In verse 2, how did the church decide to settle this question?
3. Who does verse 4 say were at the meeting in Jerusalem?
4. In verses 3 and 4, what did Paul and Barnabas report God was doing through their ministry? Why was this important to the question before the Assembly?
5. How does verse 5 summarize the position of Paul's opponents? What is the spiritual status of these people?
6. Verses 6 and 7 state that there was much discussion and debate. What does this fact tell us about the question that faced the church?
7. Peter's speech is recounted in verses 7-11. What does Peter say God has done among the Gentiles?
8. What does Peter say about the Law of Moses in verse 10?
9. James' speech is recounted in verses 13-21. (This James is the brother of Jesus, not the James who was one of the 12 disciples). After summarizing the words of Peter (whom he calls by his Hebrew name, Simeon), to what authority does James appeal in verses 15-18?
10. In verses 19-21, James suggests a solution to the Assembly. What four restrictions does he suggest need to be placed on Gentile believers' behavior?
11. What allowance does he make for Jewish believers' desire to follow the Law of Moses?
12. Who do verses 22 and 23 say made the decision to send the letter summarizing the Assembly's conclusions?
13. What level of agreement does the Assembly say it reached in verse 25?
14. In verse 28, Who does the Assembly say was in agreement with their conclusions?

Apply:

1. Why is it important that James cites not only the experience of the Church but also the authority of the Scriptures? What lesson should we draw from this?
2. The Assembly praised Barnabas and Saul but also chose to send Judas and Silas along with them to deliver its conclusions to the church in Antioch. What lesson can we draw from this?
3. The question of the necessity of circumcision prompted the meeting of the Assembly, and yet circumcision is not mentioned in the Assembly's letter. Why do you think the Assembly did this? What does this tell us about how we should deal with disagreements?