

Completed

THE FULL PICTURE OF GOD IN
ROMANS

10

DIG DEEPER

YES, NO & MAYBE

1. I'm a strong-willed person.
2. Vegetarians have weaker faith than meat eaters.
3. If people are offended when I'm doing what God wants, it's their problem not mine.
4. Most of the rules we have in church are nonnegotiable.
5. God is not particular about most of our actions.

READ: Romans 14

🔗 Is unity more important than agreement on nonessential matters in the Christian life? Why, or why not?

ACCEPTING THE WEAK & STRONG-WILLED:

▲ (Vs. 1-4) **"...Another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables."** - The problem was that the Christians in Rome were passing judgment on [each other over] disputable matters. The disputable matters were primarily two: food (v. 2) and the observance of sacred days on the calendar (v. 5). In a nutshell, Paul's answer to the problem is to stop judging one another—Who are you to judge someone else's servant? Paul pictures Christians as the servants of God, and accountable to him alone. To one's own master he stands or falls, not to one's fellow servants. The rest of this lengthy section of the letter deals with the rationale behind his instruction to stop judging one another.

↓ (Vs. 4) **"Who are you to judge someone else's servant?"** - How often do believers find themselves guilty of passing judgment on one another over matters which are in the "gray zone"—that area to which the Bible does not address clear guidelines, especially on cultural matters that were not even part of the biblical world? More often than not, modern believers are forced to look for principles from which guidelines can be extrapolated. And when believers arrive at different practices, it causes them to judge one another.

🔗 How does this problem exist in the modern church?

FULLY CONVINCED?:

▲ (Vs. 5-8) **"Each [man] should be fully convinced in his own mind ..."** - In the first four verses, Paul disallowed judging one another. In these verses, he turns to the positive and says that each [man] should be fully convinced in his own mind when it comes to disputable matters "Disputable matters" must be emphasized here. Paul is not saying that one may commit any act or indulge in any behavior as long as he or she is convinced in his [or her] own mind. Rather, the point is that, among those spiritual behaviors that people do for the Lord, giving thanks and glory to him in the process, all are acceptable to God—and therefore should be acceptable to each other.

🔗 What are some of the "disputable matters" today that some may consider to be "indisputable matters"?



DIG DEEPER...CONTINUED

▲ (Vs. 13-23) "...Make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister." - There is something more important in the kingdom of God than being right. The most important thing is to act in love. And when a Christian insists on his or her rights to the detriment of a fellow Christian, that person is no longer acting in love.

Jesus went to extreme efforts to try to convince the Jews that things in the kingdom of God are different than in human kingdoms. Whereas we are focused on external issues—who one is, how one dresses or acts, what one eats or drinks—God is concerned with the heart: "What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean'" (Matt. 15:11; cf. Matt. 15:10-11, 16-20; Mark 7:14-23). And if what comes out of our mouth is, "I have the right to eat whatever I want!" Then we have defiled ourselves since those are not the words of a person acting in love—the highest kingdom value.

❗ How does this approach balance law, faith, & love?

❗ What does this approach, which God prefers, tell you about Him?

NOTES:

My Prayers This week:

1. How am I passing judgment on other church members?
2. What "stumbling blocks" am I placing in front of my brothers and sisters?
3. What new aspect of God's character do I understand better this week?

