

How Do We Know if Something Is Good or Bad in God's Eyes?

Sunday, April 16, 2023 ▪ Ryan Wildauer

The Bible is our _____ on what God says is good. 2 Tim 3:16-17

_____ **the help of the Holy Spirit.** John 16:13-14

_____ **God with your choices.** Rom 14:1-12

_____ **one another with your choices.** Rom 14:13-23

Romans 14:1-23

¹ As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. ² One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. ³ 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. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of 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; ¹¹ for it is written,

"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall confess to God."

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

¹³ Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another any longer, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of a brother. ¹⁴ I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean. ¹⁵ For if your brother is grieved by what you eat, you are no longer walking in love. By what you eat, do not destroy the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ So do not let what you regard as good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸ Whoever thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. ¹⁹ So then let us pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

²⁰ Do not, for the sake of food, destroy the work of God. Everything is indeed clean, but it is wrong for anyone to make another stumble by what he eats. ²¹ It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything that causes your brother to stumble. ²² The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who has no reason to pass judgment on himself for what he approves. ²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if he eats, because the eating is not from faith. For whatever does not proceed from faith is sin. (ESV)

Personal Reflection or Group Discussion Questions

Open: What are some issues that Bible-believing followers of Christ may differ on when it comes to deciding whether or not Christians *can* or *should not* engage in a particular activity?

Read & Discuss: Romans 14:1-23

1. What issue is being debated in verse 1-4? What factors might cause Christians to come to different conclusions on such matters? According to Paul, why is it important that Christians do not despise or pass judgement on one another in such situations? (How should this admonition shape our dialogue about these differences?)
2. In verse 5-6 Paul lists a couple issues where two Christians might come to different conclusions about what to do, even while both are seeking to honor God. Take a few issues you know Christians disagree on and come up with a list of reasons both sides might give for their position that are God-honoring.
3. As we confront differences of opinions over what is right and wrong, how should what Paul mentions in verses 10-12 address both how we decide whether or not we should do something *and* how we think about other believers who might come to a different conclusion? How does what Paul says in verse 4, that "the Lord is able to make him stand," relate to this discussion?
4. From verses 13-19, what values should drive how we approach different opinions on what is right and wrong within the Church? How does this fit with the New Testament instruction for believers to encourage each other in holiness and to correct those in sin? (*As in Matt. 18:15-17; Gal. 6:1; 1 Tim 5:20.*)
5. How would you summarize Paul's point in verses 20-21? Give some specific examples about how Christians might apply Paul's teaching. How might we best discern whether our freedoms will cause another to stumble? How can we avoid causing others to stumble without retreating into isolation and secrecy when we don't agree that something is biblically wrong?

Apply: How might this passage cause you to think or act differently than you have been?

Pray: Pray we would all walk with holy desires before God and much grace toward one another.