

Study 1: HOT TOPICS

Is It Permissible For the Glory of God?

Take time to open in prayer with the anticipation and the expectation of the Holy Spirit revealing His will through His word.

Recap

Take time with your group to recap the message you heard. What was the message about? Did you have any “Ah-Ha” moments (did you feel convicted, compelled, or inspired during the sermon?) Encourage each other to express any questions regarding the message and try to Biblically address them throughout the study. Keep the focus on the contents of the message.

Holy Scripture:

¹³ Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister. ¹⁴ I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. ¹⁵ If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. ¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, ¹⁸ because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.

¹⁹ Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. ²⁰ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. ²¹ It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.

²² So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves. ²³ But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.

Diving Deeper

Paul identified a specific issue the early church faced in his letter to the Christians in Rome. The issue was food offered to idols. Purchasing leftover meat from the temple sacrifices was a common practice. This practice, however, raised a moral question for some Christians: were they participating in idolatry by eating the meat? We have many such issues today. Instead of asking whether it is OK for a Christian to do something, we must ask a more important question about building up others in the community of faith. To ask the right question, we must have the right focus. We must be Christ- and kingdom-minded rather than focusing on ourselves.

The question we must ask in regards to our preferences is not, “What is permissible?” but instead “What builds up another Christian?”

As a kid, how did you generally respond to rules?

Has your attitude toward rules changed? Why?

Though smoking marijuana may be settled in your heart as sin, what are some “gray areas” in the Bible that might draw us away from Christ and could harm our witness?

Examples of what we watch, where we go, things we say, anything that becomes an addiction

Is it more important to exercise our rights than to build up believers or witness to the lost?

How might your behaviors compromise your witness to a non-Christian?

How might they compromise the health or unity of the body of Christ?

According to Romans 14:15, what did Paul point out as the main problem with being a stumbling block to others?

David Hume says reason is the servant of passions. How would your decision-making be impacted if you let love rule instead of your own desires?

The issue here is bigger than personal preference. Because God has created us to live with each other and to help each other grow in our faith, questions about “gray areas” must be asked with the right focus. Many arguments around such issues aren’t focused properly. Paul helps us see here that our focus must be on Jesus and the kingdom. With that as the right backdrop, we can make wise decisions not

based on our personal preference or personal freedom but in light the kingdom of God.

Paul was calling the Christians in Rome to look at relationships, not just rules, and make the personal sacrifices necessary to best love others.

How can you guard against becoming a stumbling block to others?

Prayer

Take this time for you or someone in the group to pray about what you have studied and praise God for what He has graciously revealed to you. Prayer requests are welcomed and encouraged. Ask God to keep your eyes on Jesus.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.”

Hebrews 10:24-25

“And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.”

God Bless