



6

Accept

?

HOW DO
YOU DECIDE
WHAT'S
NOT WORTH
ARGUING
ABOUT?

The POINT >

Strong relationships are not hindered
by differences of opinion.

> ROMANS 14:1-4,13-19

¹Accept anyone who is weak in faith, but don't argue about disputed matters. ²One person believes he may eat anything, while one who is weak eats only vegetables. ³One who eats must not look down on one who does not eat, and one who does not eat must not judge one who does, because God has accepted him.

⁴Who are you to judge another's household servant? Before his own Lord he stands or falls. And he will stand, because the Lord is able to make him stand.

.....

¹³Therefore, let us no longer judge one another. Instead decide never to put a stumbling block or pitfall in the way of your brother or sister. ¹⁴I know and am

persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself. Still, to someone who considers a thing to be unclean, to that one it is unclean. ¹⁵For if your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy, by what you eat, someone for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Therefore, do not let your good be slandered, ¹⁷for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. ¹⁸Whoever serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and receives human approval.

¹⁹So then, let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another.



THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

FACT:

Our eyes actually see the world upside-down, and our brains flip the image so it's right-side-up.¹



LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // FAMILY

God calls children to honor their parents throughout their lives as a reflection of honor and love for Him. Further, we are to demonstrate love toward all members of our families, including siblings, extended family, and those who God brings into our families as a result of fostering, adoption, or remarriage.

What a wonderful world it would be if everyone started reading from the right script, which just so happens to be the one in my hand! But the reality is we don't live in a perfect world. We don't always see eye to eye with others, even the people we love most. The question for each of us is: What do we do when we disagree—when the other person seems to miss our “right” way of seeing things?

A lot of us spend an enormous amount of time persuading others to subscribe to our point of view. But what happens when this approach doesn't work? What happens when we talk until we're blue in the face, but the other person still stands his ground? Does this mean the relationship is over?

In the Book of Romans, Paul teaches us to remain humble when we have differences of opinion. Clearly, some hills are worth dying on and at times we need to stand our ground, but Paul helps us see where to draw those lines. Paul's instructions guide us to maintain strong relationships no matter how different our opinions may be.

ROMANS 14:1-4

1 How should we treat others when we disagree as Christ followers?

2 What unintended damage can occur when we criticize, judge, and argue?

ROMANS 14:13-15

3 How can we identify if an action or attitude is a stumbling block?

4 What may act as a stumbling block in your life?

5 How do you balance enjoying your freedom and avoiding stumbling blocks?

A selfish, me-centered way of thinking doesn't build healthy relationships. Instead, we need to consider others and make adjustments to our own lives. #BSFLRelationships



ROMANS 14:16-19

6 How does serving Christ in this way change how we approach disagreements?

7 What freedoms do you enjoy that may be offensive to others?

8 What are some specific ways we can pursue peace with those with whom we have differences of opinion?



LIVE IT OUT



GOD
JESUS
HOLY SPIRIT
BIBLE
SALVATION
CREATION
CHURCH
PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY
& WORLD

LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING // FAMILY

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Throughout our lives, we will have differences of opinion with many people. Considering we spend so much time with our family and feel safest to express ourselves fully at home, we're going to have perhaps the most disagreements with family members. However, we're called to love our family in a special way, and even during disagreements, we should work hard to make sure the members of our family know we love and value them.

> CHRIST

We are called to live in a close relationship with Jesus. Many times, when people experience difficulty in their relationships, they choose to walk away. And many have walked away from God when they've found that obeying Him is difficult.

9 When have you disagreed with God about something He's said through the Bible? How did you respond?

10 How will you work to make sure your convictions are biblical, so you:

Understand what God
desires of you?

Are willing to live
in obedience?

> COMMUNITY

11 What “freedoms” do you enjoy which may offend others?

12 Are you willing to give up those freedoms in showing love to another person? How will you do this?

13 How have others pursued “freedoms” that may go against your convictions? How will you show grace to them?



> CULTURE

In our culture, when people face challenges in relationships, many would rather walk away than do the necessary work for forgiveness and reconciliation. God, on the other hand, relates to His people through a covenant, which means He's willing to go to great lengths to restore broken relationships.

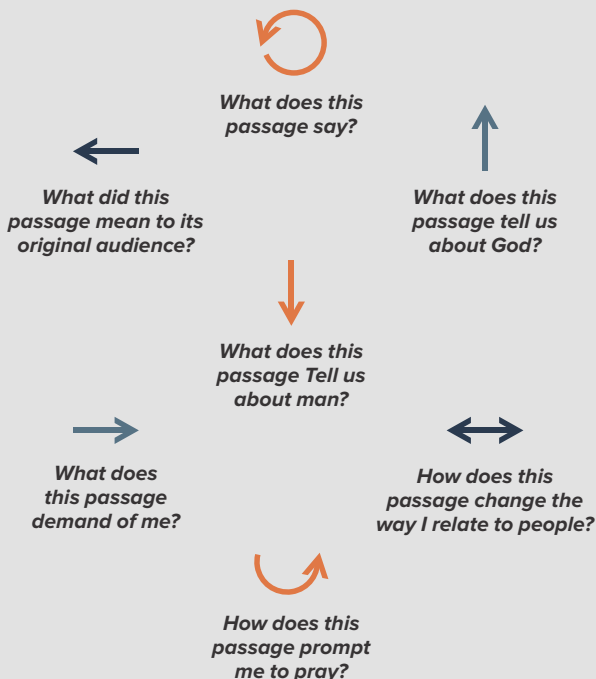
14 Who is a non-Christian you care about, but with whom you've had a difference of opinion or a conflict?

15 How will you show him or her you care enough to work through the disagreement? Share about how God has never given up on you, even when you've done things that have offended Him.

DAILY DEVOTIONS



The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



Day One COLOSSIANS 3:11

Because of our fallen nature, people are naturally inclined to divide ourselves according to similarities. Today, we experience divisions based on skin color, the shape of our bodies, interests such as sports or music, perceived beauty or lack thereof, the amount of money our parents have, and many other things. This is nothing new, and in the Bible we read that people divided themselves based on similar ideas. However, when Paul wrote this letter to the church, he wanted them to understand very clearly that a relationship with Jesus tears down all walls that would divide us. We are called to unity, and to show favoritism or prejudice based on surface-level characteristics is a blatant offense against God. If Jesus is everything to us—as He should be—then these other things shouldn't matter.

- **Where do you see divisions in your school, community, or even in your church?**
- **Why is it such an offense against God to show prejudice?**

Day Two

COLOSSIANS 3:12



Earlier in Colossians 3 (vv. 5-9), Paul called the church to put away behaviors and perspectives associated with the old sinful nature. But it's not enough simply to get rid of unhealthy practices. We must replace them with new and healthy ways of thinking and living. Instead of anger and lust, greed and filthy language, Christians are to take up living toward our brothers and sisters in compassion and kindness. We're to refuse to let pride take root in our hearts and be humble, gentle, and patient in dealing with others. These are the ways God has treated us—when we certainly didn't deserve it! We are called to treat others in these same ways. If we simply try not to be bad, chances are we'll fall back into old habits. However, the alternative is to replace sinful patterns with new healthy ones. This “putting on” is a key to growing in Christlikeness.

- **Why is it necessary to “put on” new, healthy behaviors?**
- **What behaviors do you need to “put on” in order to grow in Christlikeness?**

Day Three

COLOSSIANS 3:13

Many people expect the church to be a place where everyone is perfectly kind, no one ever offends anyone else, and we enjoy living in perfect peace. Though we are to seek to bring God's kingdom to earth in every way possible, the truth is that we won't experience this kind of reality until we're in heaven. In the meantime, we are to strive to live like Jesus, while recognizing that others—even in the church—are going to offend and injure us. (We'll do it to others as well.) This is why it's so important to forgive. If God cut us off, refusing forgiveness, when we offended Him, we'd have been kicked out of the family a long time ago. But this isn't the way He treats us. He's patient, offering grace and mercy every time we approach Him in repentance. If God's forgiven us this way, then we owe it to others and Him to forgive in the same manner.

- **How would you describe the forgiveness God has kindly given to you?**
- **How are you tempted to hold on to unforgiveness? Who do you need to offer forgiveness (invite a leader to help you work through this if you need to)?**

Day Four

COLOSSIANS 3:14

Galatians 5:14 teaches us that “the whole law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.” As Christians we are to put off our old, sinful ways of living, and we’re to replace them with new thoughts and behaviors that show we’ve truly been changed by God. But the most important change that occurs in the heart of a believer is that anger and hatred are removed and replaced with genuine love. Without love, no other good thing can exist, for they all flow out of love. When asked which commandment is most important, Jesus told the Jewish scribe that loving God is the most important calling in our lives, and loving people will flow out of our primary love for God. Without this kind of love, the church can never be what God intends we would be. However, with love, we’ll be unified with our brothers and sisters and God will use us to impact the world.

➤ **Why is love the most important calling in our lives?**

➤ **How is love the fulfillment of all the commands in Scripture?**

Day Five

COLOSSIANS 3:15



When we allow divisions to characterize our relationships, we experience no peace personally, and we do damage to the name of God. However, when we refuse to accept the divisions that are so common in the world, and instead we love and accept others despite differences of opinion, the grace of God is put on display. This doesn’t mean that we are to condone sinful behaviors that are blatantly offensive to God. Instead, we should challenge those perspectives while, at the same time, showing patience and kindness to the people who hold those perspectives. When we work hard to find this balance, we’ll experience peace with God, which matters more than anything this world has to offer.

➤ **How do you know when to accept others and when to challenge their perspectives?**

➤ **How have you experienced God’s peace in your life?**