

COVID-19 PARENTS AND STUDENTS BIBLE STUDY GUIDE

STUDENTS →

BIBLE
STUDIES
FOR LIFE.

Session 6

DEALING WITH MESSY RELATIONSHIPS

Accept // Romans 14:1-4,13-19



ONE SHEET

THE POINT: Strong relationships are not hindered by differences of opinion.

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

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? In the Book of Romans, Paul taught 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.

▶ **How do you decide what's not worth arguing about?**

ROMANS 14:1-4

In Romans 14, we read that rival groups of individuals were popping up in the church because members were joining forces according to their personal preferences. Believers became critical of one another because of their different views. This division was wrong, especially given that they were arguing over petty things. They were not debating the gospel or dividing over whether Jesus had truly died for their sins. They were arguing over the ways they would reach their community for Christ. They fussed over the foods they would eat and not eat. They fought about the specific days they would celebrate their festivals. While one group may have been more mature in their thinking, both groups were guilty of a critical spirit. Rather than running each other down and resenting the positions held by the other group, Paul challenged them to accept one another.

▶ **How should we treat others when we disagree as Christ followers?**

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

ROMANS 14:13-15

Out of respect and love for others, mature Christians choose to give up certain freedoms, removing anything from our lives that would cause others to feel wounded in their conscience. Our personal relationships are more important than our personal freedoms. The strong should always look to invite the weak into their lives, making accommodations and providing an environment that would help the less mature to grow. It is easy to fall into a selfish, me-centered way of thinking. It's likely we've all tried to justify our behavior by saying they just need to get over it. This mentality doesn't build healthy relationships. Furthermore, wounding a brother or sister in Christ for no good reason is wrong. We need to have the opposite attitude. Whenever we consider the conscience of others and make adjustments to our lives, we are demonstrating maturity that God desires for us.

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

▶ **What may act as a stumbling block in your life?**

ROMANS 14:16-19

Our attention should be continually centered on the kingdom of God.

▶ We live to make God's glory known throughout the earth.

▶ We live to build His kingdom and promote His purposes.

▶ We live to see our Savior return in power and glory, ready to serve Him.

Just as Jesus came to serve, we are called to be servants. Times may arise when we must make a clear moral and biblical stand, and that stand could potentially cause division. Even then, however, we must stand for truth in a loving way with unity in mind (Eph. 4:15). Scripture compels us to do our part to preserve relationships. The kingdom of God is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. Let's promote these things in the lives of our families and our churches. Let's never give up on those we love. Instead, we should be willing to make sacrifices in order to build relationships.

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

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