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**This weeks focus scripture:** *Romans 14:1-13a*

**Additional scripture referenced:** *John 14:15*

**This weeks memory challenge:** *Romans 14:7-8 For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone. If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*

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† *Loving God and Loving People*.... It's getting personal!

- If we love God we will live in OBEDIENCE to God. *John 14:15*
- When our love of God leads to a love of people, we will grow in a transforming self-awareness of how our LIVING impacts other people.

GOD awareness leads to SELF awareness which leads to OTHER awareness

† The matter at hand: Romans 14 – 15:3 and *The weak and the strong*

- The characteristic dividing the 'weak' and the 'strong' is the FREEDOM that flows from FAITH in the fullness of what God accomplished in Christ. *Romans 14:14a*

† The power of acceptance. *Romans 14:1-4*

- The strong *do not love* when they look down on the convictions of the weak
- The weak *do not love* when they pass judgement on the freedom of the strong

Reality! Regarding the 'weak' and 'strong', Paul's concern is not who is RIGHT, but how they relate to one another.

When it comes to 'disputable' matters, the key goal is not AGREEMENT, it is ACCEPTANCE.

† A matter of CONSCIENCE. *Romans 14:5-6*

† The Audience of ONE. *Romans 14:7-12*

† Love *doesn't*... *Romans 14:13a*

**Day 1:** Read through all of chapter 14, and the first three verses of chapter 15, several times. As you do, journal what you see to be the most important emphasis of this text, and any questions or struggles that may come to mind.

If you have been ‘in the church’ for most of your life, have you seen the teaching of this section misunderstood, distorted, or even ignored? What are the temptations we face when dealing with this text?

**Day 2:** In this week’s message Pastor Ethan described the progression from God awareness, to self-awareness, to other awareness. Do you see this at work in your life? Why is it important for us- as followers of Christ- to be self-aware of how our emotions, choices, and actions impact others?

**Day 3:** Read Romans 14:1-4. What is the principle distinguishing factor between the ‘weak’ and the ‘strong’?

Based on this overall passage, what do you think is the most important message to ‘the weak’, and to ‘the strong’?

What is Paul’s overriding concern concerning the dynamic he is describing? What does this passage teach us about ever-present dynamics in the church, and how Christ’s love in us will lead us to respond?

**Day 4:** Read Romans 14:5-12. Why is the nature of our conscience before God so important? Why is it important to recognize that people may see some lifestyle issues differently, and yet both be honoring to God in their hearts?

In verse 1 of chapter 14, Paul says there are ‘disputable’ matters within the church. What are examples? What are matters that should not be considered disputable? Based upon this text, how would you encourage a church where there was even disagreement on what is or is not ‘disputable’? (Hint, see verse 13).

What is Paul’s emphasis in verses 7-12? How does the reality that we each are ultimately accountable to God change the way we should behave toward each other?