

Sunday, August 19, 2018

Mark Moser

Gray Matters—Romans 14

(Page 948-9; Children's 1414-5)

Do you like things that are morally clear? What to do about things that are "gray"?

- Romans 14 helps us do well with 'gray matters'

Vegetarianism (14:2): some Christians are practicing it, some aren't.

- Q: Wait, can we eat meat?
- A: Yes, see 14:14, 20. (Similarly, see what Jesus said in Mark 7:19-20.)

Side question: Why can we eat pork now when it was forbidden in the Old Testament? Listen to the message "Did God Change His Mind About Eating Pork?" (Mark Moser, 2/25/18) <https://goo.gl/zi1Rb7>

If Paul answered this question clearly ("Yes, you can eat meat"), why a whole chapter?

Because it's a little more complicated:

1. *Motivation matters.* "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." (14:6)
2. *Stronger brother vs. weaker brother conflict.* Those who are "weak in faith" (14:1) eat only vegetables, and strictly speaking, this is an unnecessary restriction. But they might be doing "in honor of the Lord" (14:6), and yet those strong in faith are judging and discouraging them! (14:4)

In light of this complexity -- several intertwined issues -- Paul gives some key principles:

1. *It's not just about you and God.* "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." (14:15, see 16-19 also)
2. *Gray matters: on your knees before God, try to do the right thing.*
 - "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." (14:23)
 - "Why do you pass judgment on your brother?... So then each of us will give an account of himself to God." (14:10,12)
 - "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind." (14:5)
 - "The faith that you have, keep between yourself and God." (14:22)

Are you lost in a world of interrelated, "gray" situations?

- On your knees. Try to do the right thing in the Lord's eyes. Try to be fully convinced as possible, but don't fake certainty. Give room for future growth.
- *"Lord, I'm trying to do the right thing, but I'm not 100% sure. But I'm trying to serve you, because you are my Lord and I am yours. If I am wrong, correct me and show me a better path. But this, I believe, is the right thing to do, and I will do it."*