

**ROMANS SERIES TWENTY ONE**  
**IT'S NOT ABOUT ME**  
**Pastor Glenn Barteau**  
**Romans 14**

To often in life we look for the minimum requirement...

- Dinner Table      “Eat some vegetables.” If my kids had their way it would be lick the butter of the bread and then go play. “Eat some vegetables. How many? 3... 4... is that enough.  
 ~ Kids want to know... what’s the minimum number of vegetables required?
- Grocery store      Have you ever been in the express line at the grocery store... 12 items or less... Does a 12 pack of coke count as 1 item or 12?  
 ~ What if Ramen soup is on sale 10 for a dollar... is that 10 items or one?  
 ~ It probably depends whether you’re the one with the Ramen or behind the one w/ the Ramen.
- Husband            I was encouraging a young husband years ago that he needed to engage his wife in some conversation when he got home... set down talk to her.  
                           “‘How many minutes do I do that for’?”  
 Q:                    Ladies... How many of you think he was not understanding the point?  
 Q:                    How many of you are thinking... I wonder if that was my husband???
- TQ>>                What’s the rule?            What’s the minimum requirement for a passing grade?
- Background        The church in Rome was arguing over what the rules needed to be on a number of “gray” issues... or as Paul put it... disputable issues.
- Rom 14:2-3        One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup>The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.
- 3 issues Drinking, pagan holidays, and meat offered to idols.  
**Drinking**        Is it okay for a Christ follower to drink...? In the Greek and Roman cultures alcohol was abused terribly.... But it was also a normal, everyday part of life in the Jewish culture.
- Our issue too*      We have lots of people on both sides of this issues... you may not think so but we do.  
                           The Presbyterians have a saying... If you take a Baptist fishing... you better take 2 – because if you take one, he’ll drink all your beer.

- Not talking Alcoholism - or other clear boundaries of abuse w/ alcohol  
 ~ On principle is drinking allowed in some form or is it forbidden all together?
- Holidays**  
 There were a lot Roman holidays that had a pagan background  
 > “It’s bad, It’s all about other gods... it honors evil things...  
 > “I don’t believe in the pagan gods, I don’t worship them... I’m free in Christ, and for me it just a great chance to meet people who need to know Jesus, have some great food, and take a day off.
- Halloween*  
 It clearly has a pagan & satanic underpinnings... Is it allowed or forbidden?  
 ~ Sometimes we meet in the middle by having a “Noah’s Ark” party... all though Batman always seems to show up... because you know...
- Meat** offered to Idols  
 In Paul’s day most meat was offered to an idol before it made its way to your friendly neighborhood grocer? (Is it ok to eat meat used to worship other gods) This was a problem for the poor, because it was the only meat they could afford.  
 We don’t have this problem much in our culture... we don’t show up to Safeway and find all the T-bone steak stamped idol.
- Our Issues**  
 Dancing, movies, music, computer games, Tattoos, piercing, or a verity of augmentations?  
 ~ We all have opinions on what is or is or isn’t allowable... And we take hard stands on this stuff... we draw lines in the sand... Churches split over this kind of stuff... we break community over these issues.
- What are the Rules Paul?  
 Paul probably heard a clamoring of people saying... Paul, lay down the rules... what’s allowed and not allowed. **But Paul doesn’t do that...**
- Dana Carvey...  
 Would imitate George Bush senior on taxes... “Not gonna do it... Wouldn’t be prudent”  
 ↳ That’s Paul... “Paul, man, what are the rules?” “Not gonna do it...”
- Wrong Problem:  
 Paul didn’t answer the question they were really asking. Because they were trying to solve the wrong problem...  
 Q: They were asking who has the right rule? Are we allowed to have wine at dinner? Can I fire up the Weber?
- ⇒ Paul’s lesson is 4 words: It’s not about me!”

Exercise:	“It’s not about me!”
Q:	The right question is: How do I treat others in disputable matters? What’s best for the Kingdom?... because...
<u>Rom 14:2</u>	⇒ “It’s not..... about me!” <sup>2</sup> One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables ↳ Can you just see them... “Huh?” I don’t get. Who’s right? I missed something in there... Who gets there way Paul?
(Story)	Julie & I couldn’t work something out so my mom sent us outside and said you can’t come in until you’ve settled it. “Huh?” “Outside... work it out!
Our journeys	often times gray issues become the place we try to make it about us. <b>We want to reflect our journey w/ Jesus onto everyone else...</b> because it creates a more comfortable world for us... But the church is never about us... Jesus never made it about him... And we are asked to follow Christ in this.
	⇒ “It’s not..... about me!”
TQ>>	So how do we live out “It’s not about me” in community?
<b>Principle 1</b>	<u>Be accepting of those who have less freedom of conscience than you.</u>
Freedom Halloween	If your relationship w/ God allows you the freedom to participate in Halloween... or get a tattoo... don’t judge someone who doesn’t have the freedom in their conscience to do so.
<u>Rom 14:3a</u>	“The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not.”  Don’t say to yourself or others “They’re immature Christians... I’m so much better. It may be that your friend has seen the darker side of the occult, or has a heightened awareness of the evil associated with Halloween... and for them to participate... is a disturbing or painful thing
	⇒ “It’s not..... about me!”
<b>Principle 2</b>	<u>Be accepting of those who exercise their freedom in ways that are not appropriate for you.</u>
<u>Rom 14:3b</u>	“and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.”

Weaker If you don't have freedom on a certain issue....

~ Don't assume God is speaking in their conscience in the same way he's speaking into yours.

⇒ "It's not..... about me!"

Drinking For example drinking: Just where I'm at in my conscience... It doesn't bother me a bit if someone is drinking a glass of wine around me...]

But I'm just not at the place where I can drink it myself...

(Story)

Few years ago Angie calls me up at work and says I'm cooking dinner... we had company coming over. It's a special receipt it takes a coup of beer... but I can't make it to the store in time... Can you pick up a bottle on the way home...

"I'm like no way!!! (I'm not asking you to drink, just buy it) I hear this Bak, bak, bak, bak, on the other end of the phone.

I could tell the resistance in my spirit was all about me... **my image.**

So I thought okay this will be an opportunity for me to grow in my freedom in Christ...

So I go to the gas station... I walk pass the beer section and I can't stop... I parked over by the Gatorade section and tried to look at the beer section. I grab a bottle and make it half way to the counter and chicken out.

So I go back to the Gatorade section and quote Galatians 5 a couple of times.

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery"

I grab another bottle... get half way to the counter and someone else walks into the gas station and I freak out and go back to the Gatorade section... by this time the cashier has got her eye on me... "Hal get out here I think some kid trying to make a beer run."

"Remember Glenn... the godliest people in scripture drank... and I'm not actually drinking it... I'm just holding..."

personal

It's not okay for me to hold others in contempt for having a drink because it's not right for me.

Rom 14:4

"Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

~ I'm not the judge... God is the judge... my job is to be accepting.

⇒ Because "It's not..... about me!"

**Principle 3**

Be a positive spiritual force to those around you.

Rom 14:13-15 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.  
<sup>14</sup>As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food<sup>[b]</sup> is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. <sup>15</sup>If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.

Don't use your freedom to walk over someone else... If taking a drink hurts the faith of a friend... don't do it!

Categories Every issue falls in one of 3 categories for each of us... Where you are... where those around you are.

- 1) I can't and I struggle if you do
- 2) I can't... but you can.
- 3) I can... but it's a stretch
- 4) I can... you can (Total freedom)

- Glass of wine... **I'm a 2)**... I can't but you can - "Just don't ask me to buy if for you.
- Halloween – **I'm a 4)**... It doesn't bother my spirit to participate.

~ Be sensitive to those around you... If there're a 1 on a particular issue in your life, don't use your freedom as a license to go ahead to do it. Honor them as doing what is right before them.

Casas If we do this... we can have a wide range of practices... and be a very healthy community.

T>> This

**Principle 4** Live in the freedom of Christ – It's the balance to Principle 3  
 ~ Don't allow legalism to cause you to lose your freedom in Christ.

Rom 14:16-17 Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. <sup>17</sup>For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,

Gal 5:1 "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

A Yoke In Jesus' day every Rabbi had what was called a yoke. The Yoke was their way of living out the Torah. Their list of do's and don't for achieving righteousness.

These Yokes would be very difficult... **rules layered upon rules...** arduous disciplines to gain righteousness and favor with God. And everyone who took on the yoke of a particular Rabbi would be considered one of his disciples.

↳ So... to be the disciple of a Rabbi... was to take on his yoke.

~ So Jesus comes along and says things like...

Matt 11:28

<sup>28</sup>"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

Q:

What were they weary and burdened from?

The Yoke of Rabbi's who were running them into the ground...

Matt 11:29-30

<sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Q:

Why is the Yoke of Jesus easy & light?

We're not trying to achieve righteousness through our own efforts... We live under grace...

Paul is telling us

We have freedom in Christ to live relationally w/ God... to know and be known... To live in community w/ other believers

(ILL)

A healthy marriage never boils down to following the right rules... it's about bonding and relating to your spouse... it's about giving and receiving love. It's a relationship.

⇒

"It's not..... about me!"

Vision

Casas can become a very special, very healthy community... It makes it a joy to be apart of and...

... And it makes us the kind of place that can reach out to our community with the message of God's love for them.

Wake Me Up Inside

Borderlands of belief.