

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

Every Green Herb For Meat

Scenario:

Brethren in the congregation tend to get together for social meals and other social activities. One of those activities is an occasional cookout with hamburgers, hot dogs, etc. Everyone is generally invited to the home of a couple in the congregation for this cookout. Noticeably, there is one family that is never there. It is not that they are too busy or even anti-social. So, curiosity sets in for several members who decide to reach out and make sure there is not some problem that keeps this family from these cookouts.

Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

During an inquiry concerning the noticeable absence of this family from these cookouts, the following statement is made: "We don't come to the cookouts because we believe that the Bible limits what we eat to every green herb (Genesis 1:29). So, we are vegetarians. For us, eating flesh is consenting to the murder of a creature of God."

A Later Statement Is Made:

When asked why this had not previously come up and why it hadn't been studied out, this statement was made: "While we strongly believe these things, and we believe ya'll are in sin, we don't believe it is a test of fellowship."

For Discussion: What do you see in those statements?

- Social interaction outside of the assembly is good and acceptable to God. This is something Christians are to engage in aside/apart (**Romans 14:17**) from assembling together for spiritual things (**Acts 2:46, Acts 16:13-15, Romans 12:13**, and **I Peter 4:8-9**).
- It would be/is noticeable when a person or persons do not participate in something all of the brethren are doing over a period time. That could be concerning (**Proverbs 18:1** and **Jude 1:19**). For help understanding the wording of **Proverbs 18:1**, the ASV 1901 translation: "*He that separateth himself seeketh his own desire, And rageth against all sound wisdom.*"
- Curiosity... We have to be careful here. It would be more noticeable if someone is social, but tends to avoid one particular activity or setting. However, asking questions rather than making assumptions [evil surmising] is the way to find out (**Proverbs 18:13**). If evil surmising were to occur, that is sinful (**I Timothy 6:3-5**).
- With all matters wherein we question our brethren, we have to be sure our motives are right (**Romans 12:9-10, Galatians 5:13**, and **I Peter 3:8-11**).
- If there is a genuine spiritual concern, one should cautiously seek to help (**Galatians 6:1**). Hopefully, that is what happened in this scenario.

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

Regarding the Statement That Arises From Our Scenario:

- If someone is completely new to studying the Scriptures, **Genesis 1:29** could be confusing. It should be a short-term confusion though if that person is studying through the book. If one were to read through the ninth chapter, they would find this instruction: *“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth. And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered. Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things”* (**Genesis 9:1-3**).
- When studying the Scriptures, you have to take all of them into consideration and not just one Scripture on a particular subject (**Luke 4:4** and **II Timothy 3:15-17**). If you get it wrong, you’re lost (**II Timothy 2:14-18** and **II Peter 3:15-18**). See: https://www.wordsoftruth.net/thereisoftentimetobay_2017.html and https://www.wordsoftruth.net/Sermon_IfYouJustPluckVersesOutOfContext2018.pdf
- Under the Law of Moses, Israel was permitted and forbidden certain animals for meal consumption (**Deuteronomy 14:1-21**).
- Things changed once the New Testament came into effect (**Acts 10:9-16**).
- Under the Law of Christ, every creature is good for consumption if it be received with thanksgiving (**I Timothy 4:1-5**).
- Jesus is our sinless example (**I Peter 2:21-22**). He was a meat eater (**Mark 14:16-18** [passover included lamb; **Exodus 12:21**] and **Luke 24:40-43**).
- In **Romans 14:1-23**, the Scriptures clearly indicate that the eating of meats is a liberty.
- This statement is a problem: “For us, eating flesh is consenting to the murder of a creature of God.” It is an explicit violation of **I Timothy 4:1-5**! There is nothing in the Scriptures from which one could draw such a conclusion. Therefore, it is a doctrine of men and that in itself is wrong and has to now be addressed (**Matthew 15:1-14**, **Romans 16:17-18**, **Colossians 2:4-8**, and **Titus 1:10-14**).
- Lest one refer to **Romans 14:1-15:7**, **I Corinthians 8:1-13**, or **I Corinthians 10:23-33** to justify a difference in “conscience”; we have to understand why those texts exist. There were congregations with Jews and Gentiles. Jews had been rightly taught, under the Law of Moses, to abstain from certain meats (**Leviticus 11:1-47**). Gentiles were taught not to eat meat offered to idols at one point (**Acts 21:25**), but instructed otherwise later (**I Corinthians 8:8**). That would be confusing. In addition, the markets and feasts had meats offered to idols, some weaker consciences struggled with that. There was one truth they had to agree on. However, one could concede their liberty for the weak conscience of another. That is entirely different than coming up with a man-made doctrine (**Proverbs 30:5-6**, **Isaiah 8:20**, **Jeremiah 7:30-31**, **Romans 10:1-3**, **I Corinthians 4:6**, and **Revelation 22:18-19**).
- The conclusion of their doctrine means that if a Christian eats meat, he or she has consented to murder. That puts the meat eater into the shoes of Paul when he consented to the death of Stephen (**Acts 22:20**). It is a condemnation to us supposed meat eating murderers (**Galatians 5:19-21** and **Revelation 21:8**).

An Exercise To Discern Both Good and Evil (Hebrews 5:14)

Regarding the Later Statement That Is Made From Our Scenario:

- It is very reasonable to ask why this hadn't come up before. How can a person worship with people with whom they have such a difference (**I Corinthians 10:14-22, Ephesians 5:6-11, I Timothy 6:3-5, and Revelation 2:14-16**)?
- Sin is transgression of the law (**I John 3:4**). What law is transgressed by eating meats? NONE! To say someone is a sinner is to say that person is lost (**Romans 6:23**). A sinner is violating the will of God that we "sin not" (**I Corinthians 15:34**).
- Then, another false doctrine of men arises. The word of God says NOTHING about "tests of fellowship." As already proven above with rightly divided Scriptures (**II Timothy 2:14-18**), a doctrine not found in the Scriptures is a false doctrine of men!
- Fellowship, according to the Scriptures, requires full unity in the singular truth and anything else is false (**John 17:20-23, I Corinthians 1:10, Ephesians 4:1-6, Philippians 1:27, Philippians 2:2, Philippians 3:16, I John 1:1-7, II John 1:9-11, etc.**).
- Christians are supposed to love one another (**John 13:34-35 and I John 4:7-5:3**), I must wonder, how can you love your brothers and sisters in Christ, think they are in sin, and NOT say a word about it until you are approached about something (cf. **Proverbs 27:5-6 and Revelation 3:19**)?
- This family is ignoring many Scriptural responsibilities towards the sins of others both personally private (**Matthew 18:15-17**) and otherwise (**James 5:19-20**).
- In light of **James 2:9-13**, one would wonder what this family would consider a sin worthy of dealing with.