



Romans 14:1-12

LIVING IN HUMILITY

The favorite indoor sport of Christians...is trying to change each other. As this passage indicates, this has been a major problem in the church for centuries. All through the history of the church, the problem arises from the attitude that most of us share, I am sure, that God is clearly pleased with the way we live—but there are those others around. They drink beer and play cards; they go to movies; they smoke cigars; they work on Sundays; they wear lipstick; they dance; they play musical instruments; they use zippers instead of buttons. There is an endless list of things that can be included, debatable matters that the church has never been able to settle because of a misunderstanding of the principles that are set forth here in this very passage. We are dealing, of course, with the problem of Christian taboos, all the no-no's of the Christian life that we encounter from place to place, and from time to time. We are facing the question of how much fellowship you can have with somebody who lives in a different way than you do, who does things that you do not approve of as a Christian.

—Ray Stedman

In Romans 14, Paul finally confronts the one issue that was probably creating the most tension in the Roman church—how in the world can Jewish and Gentile Christians get along with each other when they have such different backgrounds, opinions, and convictions on how to live the Christian life?

It would have been easiest for them to separate and to form two different churches but this would be contrary to God's purpose and design for the church, the body of Christ. The whole theology of Romans 1-13 was to give them the basis for remaining united and learning how to love each other.

THE PRIMARY EXHORTATION (14:1)

As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions (ESV).

- Who are the “weak in faith”?
- What are the “opinions” (ESV) or “doubtful things” (NKJV)?
- What are we to do with other believers who have different convictions on debatable matters of the Christian life?
- What are we not to do?

“Faith” refers not directly to one’s belief generally but to one’s convictions about what that faith allows him or her to do. The weak in faith are not necessarily lesser Christians than the strong. They are simply those who do not think their faith allows them to do certain things that the strong feel free to do.

—Douglas J. Moo

Setting 1 Corinthians 8 and Romans 14 alongside each other shows us that, with regard to a particular issue, one ethnic or social grouping could fall into being “weak” (like the Greeks in Corinth) while another group could be strong. But with regard to another issue, the roles could be reversed (as with the Jews here).

—Timothy Keller

Opinions. Greek, *dialogismos*, “an inward reasoning; opinion; hesitation; doubting” (Thayer).

Welcome. Greek, *proslambano*, “to take to one’s self; take as one’s companion” (Thayer).

Show contempt. Greek, *exou-theneo*, “to regard as nothing, to despise utterly” (Thayer)

SEVEN REASONS WHY WE ARE TO ACCEPT OTHER BELIEVERS WHO DIFFER FROM US AND NOT JUDGE OR SHOW CONTEMPT:

1. God has _____ them (14:2-3).
2. God is their _____ and _____ not us (14:4).
3. We each have our own _____ (14:5).
4. We each are the _____, created by Him uniquely, called by Him out of different contexts for a specific purpose, and commanded by Him to give thanks in all things (14:6-8).
5. Jesus is _____ over us all (14:9).
6. We are part of the same _____ (14:10).
7. We each are _____ to God for how we live our lives and use the gifts which He has given us (Matt. 25:14-30). Jesus will be the One who evaluates our motives and gives us reward at His judgment seat (1 Cor. 3:10-15; 4:1-5; 2 Cor. 5:10).



It is safe to treat others as we would like them to treat us, but it is safer still to treat them as God does. —John R. W. Stott

God took both sides into His fellowship without requiring that they be vegetarians or meat-eaters. —A.T. Robertson

The judging which is condemned is prompted by a critical and censorious spirit where even the smallest defects are discovered (Matt. 7:1-4)...and is according to false or inadequate principles or standards—mere conformity to outward rules (John 7:23-24). —Hastings' Dictionary of the NT

Liberalism is taking an absolute and treating it like it's a preference, while legalism is taking a preference and treating it like it's an absolute. —Mark Vroegop

No man should make his own practice the universal standard for all people. —William Barclay

What matters to Paul, since no absolute moral norm is involved in the issues at hand, are not the specific behaviors practiced but the motivation that informs the behavior. ...Paul can tolerate diverse practices that do not violate any biblical or moral norm, as long as they are motivated by the glory of God. —Thomas Schreiner

The nature of the judgment at the judgment seat of Christ is to judge each Christian's service for possible rewards. —Bill Vaughn

In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity. —Rupertus Meldenius (1582-1651)