

08/26/22

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ROMANS

Chapter 14 EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. The Apostle Paul has been giving the Christians living in Rome - “rules of conduct” and **Chapter 14** is a continuation of that theme.
1. **Chapter 13** dealt with reactions and interactions with the government and authority in general.
- a) Bottom line – Paul told the Christians to submit to those in authority over them. He told them that in their submission, they were really submitting to the Lord and honoring Him.
 - b) He let them know that no authority can stand unless the Lord ALLOWS them to stand.
- B. This study of **Chapter 14** continues with Christian conduct, but its focus is on the conscience.
1. Paul will give us guidelines for being able to live with a clear, clean conscience – guided by the Holy Spirit – GUILT FREE.
2. But before we begin **Chapter 14** – let’s take a look at the last few verses of **Chapter 13** to “set the stage”.
- a) **Rom 13:12-14 NKJV** The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. **(13)** Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. **(14)** But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

II. **ROM 14:1 NKJV** RECEIVE ONE WHO IS WEAK IN THE FAITH, **BUT** NOT TO DISPUTES OVER DOUBTFUL THINGS.

- A. Paul starts off with the Christian “**who is weak in the faith.**”
1. We would have a tendency to associate this person as one who is also new in the faith, but I think it has more to do with maturity than length of time as a Christian.
- a) So, whatever the length of time, since conversion – for the one **who is weak in the faith** - there has been very little growth in the knowledge and understanding of the things of the Lord.
 - (1) They have had very little reading of the Bible and very little teaching of the Bible.
2. Paul says to welcome them into our fellowship, but not to criticize or condemn them, or debate with them.

III. **ROM 14:2-3 NKJV** FOR ONE BELIEVES HE MAY EAT ALL THINGS, BUT HE WHO IS WEAK EATS **ONLY** VEGETABLES. **(3)** LET NOT HIM WHO EATS DESPISE HIM WHO

DOES NOT EAT, AND LET NOT HIM WHO DOES NOT EAT JUDGE HIM WHO EATS; FOR GOD HAS RECEIVED HIM.

- A. The “weaker” brother, in this example, thinks it is more “spiritual” to be a vegetarian. While the more mature Christian knows that spirituality is not in food or drink.
 - 1. But neither one is supposed to sit in judgment of the other! And the reason? They are both accepted by the Lord. They are His children therefore it is His job to “straighten them out” if He feels it is necessary.

IV. ROM 14:4 NKJV WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE ANOTHER'S SERVANT? TO HIS OWN MASTER HE STANDS OR FALLS. INDEED, HE WILL BE MADE TO STAND, FOR GOD IS ABLE TO MAKE HIM STAND.

- A. The illustration used here, is of course, that of a master's household and how he handles his own home.
 - 1. A normal person would not think of going into another person's home and telling them how they should run it, or how they should handle their own servants – if they have them, like they did in Paul's day.
 - a) Perhaps a more current model would be telling someone how to run their business and/or treat their employees.
 - 2. Paul uses this to prove that it makes no sense to judge another Christian, because he/she is the Lord's servant.
 - a) And it is before the Lord that the servant will stand or fall, but Paul explains: that as a Christians we WILL stand because the Lord has already “approved” of us through Jesus!
 - b) We may not be perfect servants – but we will stand in His mercy and grace.

V. ROM 14:5-6 NKJV ONE PERSON ESTEEMS *ONE* DAY ABOVE ANOTHER; ANOTHER ESTEEMS EVERY DAY *ALIKE*. LET EACH BE FULLY CONVINCED IN HIS OWN MIND. (6) HE WHO OBSERVES THE DAY, OBSERVES *IT* TO THE LORD; AND HE WHO DOES NOT OBSERVE THE DAY, TO THE LORD HE DOES NOT OBSERVE *IT*. HE WHO EATS, EATS TO THE LORD, FOR HE GIVES GOD THANKS; AND HE WHO DOES NOT EAT, TO THE LORD HE DOES NOT EAT, AND GIVES GOD THANKS.

- A. Paul is saying that one person may hold Saturday as a day with special spiritual significance, while for another it may be Sunday. (or Christmas)
 - 1. But the point here is that if it is done to the Glory of the Lord – what does it matter?
 - 2. I would like to bring us back to Paul's beginning statements of this chapter.
 - a) Remember – he is dealing with the “weaker” Christians.
 - b) As we mature in the Lord, we realize that every day should be lived to the glory and honor of the Lord.
 - c) And thanks should be given to the Lord for everything we eat! Though it is a stretch to ask Him to bless a cheeseburger and fries. ;>)

VI. ROM 14:7-12 NKJV FOR NONE OF US LIVES TO HIMSELF, AND NO ONE DIES TO HIMSELF. (8) FOR IF WE LIVE, WE LIVE TO THE LORD; AND IF WE DIE, WE DIE TO

THE LORD. THEREFORE, WHETHER WE LIVE OR DIE, WE ARE THE LORD'S. (9) FOR TO THIS END CHRIST DIED AND ROSE AND LIVED AGAIN, THAT HE MIGHT BE LORD OF BOTH THE DEAD AND THE LIVING. (10) BUT WHY DO YOU JUDGE YOUR BROTHER? OR WHY DO YOU SHOW CONTEMPT FOR YOUR BROTHER? FOR WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE **THE JUDGMENT SEAT** OF CHRIST. (11) FOR IT IS WRITTEN: "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, **EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD.**" (12) SO THEN EACH OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD.

- A. The "living" and the "dying" has more to do with Who controls the living and the dying that the "living and dying" itself!
 - 1. The Lord is the "Controller" of life – the Giver and the Taker.
 - 2. And Jesus died to show all of mankind that He is God of the living and the dead!
 - a) Therefore he should be glorified whether we live or die IF He is our Lord!
- B. Then the Apostle reminds us of the great "equalizer" – the judgment seat of the Lord.
 - 1. This is the place where all of Christianity is brought to the same level. It is the Lord who will ask the questions there, not any of us.
 - a) For the Christian, those questions won't be regarding our salvation, but how we lived our life in the Lord.
 - (1) Bema Seat.
 - 2. The rest of humanity will also be brought to the great equalizing throne of the Lord, but their judgment will be for eternal condemnation for rejecting Jesus.
 - a) The Great White Throne Judgment
 - (1) **Rev 22:12 NKJV "And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.**
 - b) So, Paul's question: **why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.**
 - (1) Please notice the account we give will not be for each other – just ourselves!

VII. **ROM 14:13-14 NKJV** THEREFORE LET US NOT JUDGE ONE ANOTHER ANYMORE, BUT RATHER RESOLVE THIS, NOT TO PUT A STUMBLING BLOCK OR A CAUSE TO FALL IN OUR BROTHER'S WAY. (14) I KNOW AND AM CONVINCED BY THE LORD JESUS THAT **THERE IS NOTHING UNCLEAN OF ITSELF; BUT TO HIM WHO CONSIDERS ANYTHING TO BE UNCLEAN, TO HIM IT IS UNCLEAN.**

- A. "Don't major on the minors." There are some things in the Christian faith that we CANNOT budge on. They have been clearly spoken to us.
 - 1. But there are many "gray areas" where it is not a matter of doctrine; it is simply a matter of preference.
 - a) Paul encourages us to not lay our "trips" on another Christians, when the Lord has not spoken anything regarding it.
 - (1) Nor to enforce our "liberties" on another, when it is morally wrong for them – therefore causing them to sin.

VIII. **ROM 14:15-23 NKJV** YET IF YOUR BROTHER IS GRIEVED BECAUSE OF **YOUR FOOD,**

YOU ARE NO LONGER WALKING IN LOVE. DO NOT DESTROY WITH YOUR FOOD THE ONE FOR WHOM CHRIST DIED. (16) THEREFORE DO NOT LET YOUR GOOD BE SPOKEN OF AS EVIL; (17) FOR THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS NOT EATING AND DRINKING, BUT RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY SPIRIT. (18) FOR HE WHO SERVES CHRIST IN THESE THINGS IS ACCEPTABLE TO GOD AND APPROVED BY MEN. (19) THEREFORE LET US PURSUE THE THINGS WHICH MAKE FOR PEACE AND THE THINGS BY WHICH ONE MAY EDIFY ANOTHER. (20) DO NOT DESTROY THE WORK OF GOD FOR THE SAKE OF FOOD. ALL THINGS INDEED ARE PURE, BUT IT IS EVIL FOR THE MAN WHO EATS WITH OFFENSE. (21) IT IS GOOD NEITHER TO EAT MEAT NOR DRINK WINE NOR DO ANYTHING BY WHICH YOUR BROTHER STUMBLES OR IS OFFENDED OR IS MADE WEAK. (22) DO YOU HAVE FAITH? HAVE IT TO YOURSELF BEFORE GOD. HAPPY IS HE WHO DOES NOT CONDEMN HIMSELF IN WHAT HE APPROVES. (23) BUT HE WHO DOUBTS IS CONDEMNED IF HE EATS, BECAUSE HE DOES NOT EAT FROM FAITH; FOR WHATEVER IS NOT FROM FAITH IS SIN.

IX. CONCLUSION

- A. **(19) Pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.**
 - 1. We are not to let little things divide us, nor make a big deal about things that the Lord doesn't care about.
- B. **(21) It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles.**
 - 1. Please notice the **(21) "OR TO DO ANTHING" by which your brother stumbles!**
 - a) In other words – LOVE TRUMPS LIBERTY!
 - 2. As we close this study – keep in mind that in the next chapter, Paul will speak of a "higher love" that considers even the weaknesses of others over our own desires.