

ROMANS 14:10-23

*Before we finish out these last verses in Chapter 14, let's review the last verse we went over last week on the "Lordship of Christ".

Romans 14:9 - For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

1. Paul gives us the reason why we are to love and appreciate all believers. Christ died and rose to live again so that He might be our Lord. We then should be willing subjects to render to Him the devotion of our grateful hearts.
 - a. His Lordship even continues at death when our bodies lie in the grave, but our souls and spirits are in His presence. This is the reason Christ had to live again. Both His death and resurrection were necessary for a total Lordship of ownership.
 - b. I Thessalonians 5:10 - Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.
2. Here in Chapter 14 of Romans, Paul has been dealing with believers who have been having trouble with other believers concerning some doubtful or uncertain practices - particularly about eating meat given to idols or a matter of one's diet.
3. It becomes then the option of the individual, before God, as to what he can and cannot do. Another example would be drinking alcohol beverages and what scripture says about that.
4. This brings us back to our "liberty" again. But we have to be careful that we do not do something that in our own mind is not wrong and yet may cause a weak believer to stumble. So, we come into every aspect of life, that sooner or later, we must decide according to God's Word whether things we do are right or wrong.

*In verse 10, Paul now shows that we are not to be judgmental of other believers.

Romans 14:10 - But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

1. Christians are to have a right attitude, a right heart, and serve the Lord with thankfulness. Gossip and criticism never accomplish anything worthwhile. This violates the law of love.

*It is wrong for the strong brother to show contempt to the weak brother and say they are nothing. Christ died for all of us!
2. The fact is that every one of us (believers) are going to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. When we stand before Christ, we will not worry about men's praises - but want to receive the praise from God Himself.
3. We are to live with "the Judgment Seat of Christ" in view and let that be a motivation to the Christian life.

Colossians 3:1-2 - If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Col. 3:2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

 - a. This judgment has to do with the believer's service and not his sins. Our sins have already been dealt with by Christ. So as believers, we don't have to fear facing our sins at the Judgment Seat of Christ.

- b. The Judgment Seat of Christ will be reviewing and giving out rewards to every believer who runs their race in life for their future in eternity.
4. This is not to be confused with the Great White Throne Judgment where all the wicked and unsaved people will have their final judgment. There are other judgments mentioned in Scripture, but the Judgment Seat of Christ deals with the believers' conduct that pleases the Lord.
- a. How we respond to the weaker brother - are we building him up in the faith or causing a stumbling block before him? Our conduct is going to determine our rewards.
 - b. Colossians 3:23-25 - And whatsoever ye do, do *it* heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Col. 3:24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. Col. 3:25 But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.

Romans 14:11-12 - For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. Rom. 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

1. Paul quotes Isaiah 45:23 to point out that a day is coming when no one will escape from bowing before God - whether one is a Jew or a Gentile.
2. So then, it is clear that we all will give an account of ourselves and not of our brothers to God. Each will be accountable for their own self on how they lived their life.
3. Paul pleads with the stronger brother to stop looking down upon the weaker brother. Instead, help to edify the weak brother and help him grow in his faith. We need to also answer for our own behavior.
 - a. It is important to remember that Paul is revealing that the Judgment Seat of Christ is part of the Mystery Truth that was revealed to him. It is not found in the Old Testament.
 - b. I Corinthians 15:10 - But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which *was bestowed* upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

Romans 14:13 - Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

1. Our decision should be to avoid at all costs doing anything which would hinder a brother in exercising his faith. Instead of judging our fellow Christians in moral differences, we should not hinder a brother in his spiritual progress.
2. Paul is saying we need to stop criticizing one another and just leave the judging to God! If we want to judge someone then we need to look at our self first and make sure we are reacting to them the way God wants us to react.

*We do not want to do something wrong that would tempt them to also follow. This would then violate their conscience and cause them to stumble or fall. We are either stepping stones or stumbling blocks.
3. Too often we are so occupied with other people's faults that we conveniently overlook our own faults. We are not to judge others.

Romans 14:14 - I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

1. Paul knew that no foods are unclean any longer, as they were for the Jew living under the Law. Paul sides with the stronger brother and says our position is unaffected by what we eat.
2. But, Paul then says there are some believers whose conscience says that something is wrong (unclean). This would be the weaker person who doesn't want to violate his conscience.

I Corinthians 8:7 - Howbeit *there is* not in every man that knowledge: for some with conscience of the idol unto this hour eat *it* as a thing offered unto an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled.

3. Paul puts the responsibility upon the stronger brother and tells him to compromise, as far as possible, in love and in the spirit of Christ.

I Corinthians 8:12 - But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ.

4. The food we eat is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

I Timothy 4:4-5 - For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: 1Tim. 4:5 For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Romans 14:15 - But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

1. If the stronger brother puts a stumbling block in the weaker one's path because of food, then he is not acting in love and being inconsiderate of his brother.
 - a. Love forgoes its legitimate rights in order to promote the welfare of a brother.
 - b. I Corinthians 8:1 - Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.
2. In the last part of this verse 15, Paul uses the word "destroy", which means to ruin or reduce to uselessness. Paul is saying that the stronger brother must refrain from anything that would lead the weaker brother astray.

*Paul's point here is that if Christ was willing to die for the weaker brother, is it too much to ask you to give up eating meat for him if the situation warrants it.

Romans 14:16 - Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

1. Where the weaker brother is concerned, he should not judge the stronger brother because of his exercise of Christian liberty. In time and with the proper study of sound doctrine, he will come to understand the reasons why. The weak brother has not learned it yet.

Galatians 5:1 - Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

2. Paul appeals to the mature believer to adjust his liberty to help avoid conflict and disunity. It takes time for the weaker believer to come to appreciate his freedom in Christ.

Ephesians 4:2 - With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;

Romans 14:17 - For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

1. Paul is saying in this context that meat and drink are not the issue, or the observing of days. But today, it is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Galatians 5:22 - But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

2. In our Dispensation of Grace, our focus is not just on the physical and material things in life. But, our priority needs to focus on the spiritual things that the Holy Spirit produces in our lives to honor Christ.

Colossians 3:2 - Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

Romans 14:18 - For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

1. When we get taken up with trivial matters like what we are to eat or drink, then we are in danger of getting a wrong impression about the Christian life.
2. What counts most is a union with the Spirit of God that is so vital in expressing our Christ-like walk in life. These are the true priorities of our liberty in Christ.
 - a. The Holy Spirit is our dispenser of the truth to the Body of Christ people.
 - b. II Corinthians 3:3 - *Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.

Romans 14:19 - Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

1. Instead of bickering over insignificant matters, we should be making every effort to maintain peace and harmony in Christian fellowship and edify one another.
2. We should strive to build up others in the faith.

I Thessalonians 5:11 - Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do.

Romans 14:20-21 - For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. Rom. 14:21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

1. We are not to cause the weaker brother to stumble. Paul is telling believers not to tear down God's work in another believer's life. Love does not tear down, but builds one up.

I Corinthians 8:8-9 - But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better; neither, if we eat not, are we the worse. 1Cor. 8:9 But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak.
2. Paul concludes this matter in verse 21. If a strong believer eats certain foods and drinks a certain beverage that is offensive to other believers, it would be good for him to stop doing that in order not to cause the weaker believer to falter.
3. We are not to live our life according to the rights and wrongs of legalism, but according to grace and the Holy Spirit of God.

Romans 14:22-23 - Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. Rom. 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

1. If a believer has complete liberty to partake of every kind of food, that should be fine. But, at times, you should hold your conviction private and not flaunt that liberty before the weaker brethren. That is when pride steps in.
2. The voice of conscience must not be ignored. The weak brother will hopefully grow in time in the knowledge of God's Word.
3. True faith is anchored upon the sound doctrine of Scripture, especially the Mystery Dispensational truth. We do it by faith as to what is right or wrong. Whatsoever is not by faith is sin.