

## ROMANS 14:1-9

### Introduction:

1. Paul begins this chapter explaining how to relate to the weaker brethren. This chapter deals with two groups of believers: the weak brother and the stronger one.
2. The proper viewpoint here is that the stronger brother (the one with the renewed mind) looks to the weaker brother that is not established in the faith and embraces him warmly, to help him to build on sound doctrine.
3. In this passage, it shows us two extremes that create an artificial atmosphere for the Christian life of the weaker brother.

- a. One extreme - is no separation from the world - just go out and live like the world. They live as if nothing had ever happened to them. Paul wants them to come out of their spiritual absence.

Romans 13:11 - And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

- b. Second extreme - does just the opposite. They reduce the Christian life to a list of do's and don'ts. They have a list of what kind of clothes to wear, not to touch or eat certain foods, or not to touch certain things. These people try to reduce the Christian life to an artificial life that does not reflect how the Christian life is to really operate.
4. Then there is the spiritual level of the believer who is more mature in the Word than others. Their faith is stronger than the weaker brother.

\*These are the things that so often cause conflict between believers and become quite unnecessary as Paul will show us in this chapter. Paul pleads for grace and understanding among the believers - particularly in the local church, where a brother can be a disruptive and trying person causing discord among the congregation.

Romans 14:1 - Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

1. Paul gives us how to deal with the brethren that is "weak in the faith". This is the one who has not understood the Dispensation of Grace truths and issues in his thinking. He has not matured in, or functioned under, grace and wants to debate from past traditions of men.

Colossians 2:20-22 - Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, Col. 2:21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Col. 2:22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

2. The weak brethren lack respect to the Word of God given to the Body of Christ Church. We are to embrace him warmly and receive him - to help him be built up in the faith.

Romans 16:25 - Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,

3. In this context, Paul is probably describing the converted Jew who still had debates about eating certain foods or working on Saturdays. These believers thought they could improve their standing before God by what they ate or by observing certain days.
  - a. The mystery message of grace though teaches us differently in Colossians.

Colossians 2:14 - Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;

Colossians 2:16 - Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

- b. The problem is aggravated by the fact that the weaker brother often thinks he is the stronger brother. He becomes arrogant, prideful, and legalistic. He believes that if he is keeping the rules, he can and has the right to become judgmental over the mature grace believers.
4. So the proper attitude these two groups (the weaker/the stronger) should show to each other is governed by the degree of a "renewed mind" that the person possesses. The stronger believer ought to receive and accept the weaker brother, but definitely not for the purpose of arguing and pointing out how ill-informed the weaker may be. The goal is to promote sound doctrine by building up and edifying the younger brother. We are to show the spirit of charity.

\*\*The next two verses show the two viewpoints of the brothers.

- The strong one knows he can eat whatever he wants under grace.
- The weak one believes there are to be limitations on his life in what he may eat.

Romans 14:2-3 - For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Rom. 14:3  
Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

1. The believer walks in the enjoyment of Christian liberty, based on one's faith, that all foods are clean. The weaker brother's conscience may have a problem with eating certain foods.

\*So Paul is not dealing with who is right or who is wrong. But he is dealing with how to relate to those who have differences, even though we know what the truth is.

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.

2. This has nothing to do with salvation or sanctification, but some people want to put personal preferences or rules (being legalistic) over the lives of others who are not like them.
3. In verse 3, Paul tells them not to allow pride to get in the way. Proverbs 13:10 - *Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.*

\*Paul says to the strong, do not look down upon the weak because he might be a vegetarian. We are not to criticize his doctrinal weakness at this time and not treat him with contempt. We are to honor our Christian liberty that Christ has given us.

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.

Galatians 5:13 - For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

4. Paul is saying a believer's eating habits, whether eating meat or being vegetarian, has nothing to do with his spiritual relationship to God. We are not to judge the weak brother by the preferences of the stronger one, because "God hath received him" into His family.

Romans 14:4 - Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

1. Every believer is a servant of the Lord and we have no right to sit in judgment as if we were the master. We all will stand before our Master (God) one day to give an account of our actions here on earth.  
  
\*The servant to his own Master will either stand or fall. If he is doing good or bad, the Master alone determines that.
2. Paul shows what kind of Master our Lord is: God does not want us to fall. However, if we do fall, God is able to hold us up.  
  
Jude 24 - Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,
3. God will sustain those on both sides because His power to do so is more than adequate to us. We are accountable to God and not to man!

Romans 14:5 - One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

1. Paul just dealt with the issue of concerning our diets, and now he brings up this subject of what day ought to be observed by honoring the Lord.
2. There is a wide variety of beliefs in Christendom as to what days ought to be observed as "the Lord's day".
  - a. Some observe the Sabbath - the Jewish people and some Jewish Christians still have a conscience against doing any work on Saturday.
  - b. Others regard the first day of the week on the calendar - Sunday.
  - c. Some pay special attention to days such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost; while others pay no attention at all.
  - d. Some observe feast days or fast on certain days.
3. Paul says believers are not to quarrel about these things. How is unity to be obtained between believers who obviously differ when we worship? Again, Paul is talking about debatable things and not doctrinal issues.
  - a. This is about those gray areas that take a renewed mind's discernment to properly understand what to do and what not to do. Whatever view one holds on this subject, the principle is this: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind".
  - b. Paul is discussing the attitude a believer with a renewed mind is to have toward those who are weak in the faith and who hold to special days.
4. Paul wants each believer to be able to stand on his own two feet and on his own convictions. Bottom line is, it is all about the Lordship of Christ.

\*When Paul wrote the book of Romans, there were no N.T. scriptures to help guide believers. What had been taught by the prophets and the early church was now being confirmed and replaced by the newly written scriptures.

Romans 14:6 - He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

1. We have seen that the strong and weak believers think differently about eating and days, but they both want to please the Lord. Both of their hearts are wanting to honor the Lord.
2. The sincere believer wants to do the most important thing: please God and give thanks to God for what they eat. We should always pray for the food that God has provided to us.

Romans 14:7-9 - For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Rom. 14:8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. Rom. 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 is emphasizing that the Lord should be the goal and the object of our lives. Paul gives the reason why we are to love and appreciate all believers in I Corinthians 10:31 - *Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.*
2. Jesus Christ is the object of our living and not about ourselves. It is the gift of God to us. "But by the grace of God I am what I am."
3. Since He owns us, it only makes sense that we are His property in life and in death. God redeemed and bought us for an eternal possession.

I Corinthians 6:19-20 - What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? 1Cor. 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

\*Paul's point is that the believer is under the control of the Lord. His Lordship continues even in death, when our bodies lie in the grave and our spirits and souls are in His presence.

II Corinthians 5:8-9 - We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. 2Cor. 5:9 Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him.

4. In verse 9, it says our life is dependent upon the fact that Christ lives. This is the reason Christ had to live again. Apart from His death, He would not own us; and likewise, apart from His living, He would have no life to share with us.

I Thessalonians 5:10 - Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

\*Next week, we will see the question of accusing a weak brother and how we are not to be judgmental of other believers.