

Romans 14:1-23 **Application of the concept of Love among Believers**

Disputes in the Church especially in dietary matters – Stumbling blocks for weak believers

1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

2 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.

4 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.

Points of dispute in the Roman assembly

5 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.

Conclusion

7 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.

13 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.

15 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.

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Facts Revealed:

Disputes in the Church especially in dietary matters – Stumbling blocks for weak believers [Romans 14:1-4]

✚ When Jews and Gentiles are brought together in the Church of Jesus Christ, they come from very different backgrounds with different traditions.

✧ The problem first arose in Antioch of Syria over circumcision and Jewish law.

✧ Paul and Barnabas brought the question to Jerusalem for a decision from the Apostles in the home Church.

✧ The conclusion was sent back in the form of a letter from the Apostles,

They wrote this letter by them:

The apostles, the elders, and the brethren,

To the brethren who are of the Gentiles in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia:

Greetings.

Since we have heard that some who went out from us have troubled you with words, unsettling your souls, saying, 'You must be circumcised and keep the law'--to whom we gave no such commandment-- it seemed good to us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men to you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who will also report the same things by word of mouth.

For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you **abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality.**

If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well.

Farewell. [Acts 15:23-29]

✚ Now Paul, writing to the mixed Church at Rome is focusing on a similar problem.

✧ Jewish believers are attempting to bring Gentile believers under the Jewish traditions which go far beyond the essentials mentioned in the Apostle's letter above.

✧ The only dietary law that applies to the Gentiles is that given to the Gentiles through Noah, which involves blood, as the letter from the Apostles demonstrates. [Genesis 9:4]

- ✧ All other things are not prohibited for the Gentiles. [Genesis 9:2-3]
- ✧ Therefore the Jewish law should not be imposed on the believers among the Gentiles.
- ✧ The over riding principle is that of Love.
- ✧ Paul warns against judging and criticism of others because of their differing traditions.
- ✧ The focus is to receive each other in love, and avoid disputes over doubtful things because God has received Gentile believers as well as Jewish believers. [Acts 10:1-48, 11:1-18]
- ✧ Each man answers to God, and before God he either stands or falls, and God is able to make him stand.

Points of dispute in the Roman assembly [Romans 14:5-6]

✧ Holy Days

- ✧ Sabbath or Sunday (the Lord's Day) worship of the Lord.
- ✧ Holy Days or every day.
- ✧ Each group observes the day to the Lord with praise, which is good.

✧ Foods

- ✧ Jews refrain from eating certain foods and give God thanks for what they eat.
- ✧ Gentiles eat things forbidden in the Jewish law and give God thanks for what they eat.
- ✧ One should not condemn the other, because both are acceptable to God.

Conclusion [Romans 14:7-23]

- ✧ Since we do not live or die to ourselves alone, but to God, whether we live or we die, we are the Lords. [Romans 14:7-8]
- ✧ Jesus lived, died, rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. [Romans 14:9]
- ✧ **We will all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ**, where each of us will give account to God for what we have done. [Romans 14:10-12, 2 Corinthians 5:10]
 - ✧ Therefore, let us not judge (criticize) one another, or cause our brother to fall. [Romans 14:13]
 - ✧ Paul is fully convinced that nothing is unclean of itself. [Romans 14:14, Acts 10:15, 11:9]
 - ✧ However, if someone considers it to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
 - ✧ Christ died for both Jew and Gentile, therefore, if we walk in love, we will not eat or drink something before him that will injure his conscience. [Romans 14:15]
 - ✧ Do not destroy one for whom Christ died with your dietary freedom. [Romans 14:15]
- ✧ The Kingdom of God is **Righteousness, Peace, and Joy** in the Holy Spirit. [Romans 14:16-17]
 - ✧ Whoever serves God in these things, is acceptable to God and approved by men. [Romans 14:18]
 - ✧ Our focus must be on things that make for peace, for the edification of one another in the Body of Christ. [Romans 14:19]
- ✧ Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. [Romans 14:20-23]
 - ✧ All things indeed are pure.
 - ✧ If we cause offense to another by our freedom, it is evil.
 - ✧ Do not cause someone to stumble by what you eat or drink.
 - ✧ Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves or disapproves.
 - ✧ Whatever is not of faith is sin.