

- c. To walk becomingly. v. 13 cf. I Thess. 4:12; Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:18; I Pet. 4:3; II Tim. 2:14, 23-24; I Tim. 6:3-5.
- d. To put on the Lord Jesus Christ. v. 14 cf. Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:9-10; Gal. 5:16-24; I Pet. 2:11.

Text

14:1-12. But him that is weak in faith receive ye, yet not for decision of scruples. 2 One man hath faith to eat all things: but he that is weak eateth herbs. 3 Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. 4 Who art thou that judgest the servant of another? to his own lord he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand. 5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let each man be fully assured in his own mind. 6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord: and he that eateth, eateth unto the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, unto the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. 7 For none of us liveth to himself, and none dieth to himself. 8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But thou, why dost thou judge thy brother? or thou again, why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow,

And every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then each one of us shall give account of himself to God.

REALIZING ROMANS, 14:1-12

568. What is the meaning of the word "receive" in 14:1?
569. How would one be received for "decision of scruples"?
570. Someone must be right in this matter of eating. Who is it?
571. Is strength or weakness in faith dependent upon knowledge? In what way?
572. There is one mutual responsibility. What is it?
573. How could God receive someone who was not correct in his views?
574. Is Paul teaching "irresistible grace" in vs. 4? Please explain the phrase, "for the Lord hath power to make him stand."
575. Could we apply the principle here stated to Christian baptism or the Lord's Supper? Why?

576. Should we esteem the Lord's day as above all other days? How will the instruction here given apply if we do esteem Sunday?
577. Why is it so important that we be fully assured in our own mind?
578. Why should we feel the Lord has any interest in eating or days?
579. How deeply grateful we should be to our Heavenly Father. In everything we should give thanks. How can we do this if there is a difference of opinion as to right or wrong?
580. It is easy to see how none of us lives unto himself. How is it that "none dieth unto himself"?
581. We belong to the Lord Jesus by right of purchase. It then becomes no matter of choice with us. How must we settle all questions?
582. Christ is Lord of the dead according to vs. 9. How is this so?
583. Should we delay our judgment on all matters in favor of the final judgment of God? Explain.
584. Are Christians going to stand before the judgment seat of God? If so, for what purpose?
585. Does gossiping about the ignorance or frailties of our brethren constitute judging? Will we be judged for such action?

Paraphrase

14:1-12. The Jewish Christian who is weak in the faith concerning meats and days, receive ye into your company, but not in order to passionate disputations concerning his opinions.

2 The Gentile Christian, indeed, believeth that he may eat every kind of meat; but the Jewish Christian, who is weak in the faith, eats vegetables only in heathen countries, because he cannot find meats which he thinketh clean.

3 Since both act from conscience, let not the Gentile who eateth every kind of meat, despise the Jew who eateth not certain kinds; and let not the Jew who eateth not certain kinds, condemn the Gentile who eateth all kinds: for God, by the spiritual gifts bestowed on the Gentile, declareth that he hath accepted him.

4 Who art thou that condemnest another's household servant? He is accountable to his own master, and not to thee; so that by his own master's sentence he must be acquitted or condemned: and he shall be acquitted; for God hath power to acquit him at the judgment, and will do it, if he hath acted conscientiously.

5 With respect to days, the Jewish Christians, indeed, thinketh one day more holy than another; the new moons, for example, and sabbaths: but the Gentile Christian, better informed, thinketh every

day alike holy, because the law of Moses is not the law of Christ's kingdom. Let every one direct himself according to his own conviction.

6 He who observeth the Jewish holy days, observeth them in obedience to Christ, who he thinks hath commanded them: He who doth not observe these days in obedience to Christ, he doth not observe them, knowing that Christ hath abolished them. He who eateth all kinds of meat indiscriminately, eateth them in obedience to Christ, who has permitted them to be eaten; for he giveth God thanks for them, in the persuasion that they are permitted; and he who eateth not every kind, in obedience to Christ he eateth them not, and showeth his persuasion that they are not permitted, by giving God thanks for the food he is allowed to eat.

7 In thus declaring their subjection to Christ, both of them act properly: for none of us liveth by his own will, and none of us is allowed to die by his own will.

8 But whether we live by the will of Christ: or whether we die, we die by the will of Christ. Whether we live therefore or die, we are Christ's subjects; and should not, in religious matters, be guided either by our own will or by the will of others, but by his.

9 To this implicit obedience from all he hath the completest title: for to this end Christ both died and rose, and liveth again in heaven, that he might rule and judge both the dead and the living.

10 But thou Jew, why dost thou condemn thy Gentile brother, because he neglecteth the distinction of meats and days? Or thou Gentile also, why dost thou despise thy Jewish brother as a weak bigot, because he observeth these distinctions? In such matters we should not judge one another; for we shall all be placed before the judgment-seat of Christ, to be judged by him.

11 This was declared to the Jews long ago; 'For it is written, I have sworn myself, saith the Lord, the word is gone out of my mouth,' and also, 'That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.'

12 Well, then, every one of us shall give an account concerning himself to God, whose indulgence to the sincere will make many ashamed of their harsh judgments.

354. How does the discussion of the weak and strong relate to the renewing of the mind?

355. Why not attempt to instruct the weak brother?

356. What is meant by saying some matters are matters of "indifference"?

357. Explain the phrase "for the Lord hath power to make him stand" (vs. 4b).

Summary

A brother who is weak in belief, and consequently narrow in his views, we are nevertheless cordially to accept, but in receiving him, we must let alone those thoughts of his which arise out of his weakness. Their correctness or incorrectness is not a question for our decision. And where one brother regards certain days as sacred, while another holds all days to be alike, the rule is to let each be fully satisfied in his own mind, and act accordingly. In this case, the strong who esteems every day alike, is not to despise the weak; nor is the weak, who thinks one day better than another, to judge the strong. The same rule applies also in the case of meats thought to be clean or unclean. In matters of indifference, each man is a law to himself. Accordingly, in such cases we must leave each to act out his own sense of right. And as to judging one another in such matters, we must wholly abstain from it. We are accountable to God only, and he will judge us.

Comment

*Forbearance in Matters of Opinion for Those
Who are Weak in the Faith. 14:1-15:13.*

1. The weak in the faith should not be harshly judged. 14:1-12.

Once again we could say: if we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, here is a guide to our thinking. The Christian brother who feels a thing to be wrong and a sin for him to engage in, let him be. Do not argue with him about it. Receive him into your fellowship as a Christian brother. In particular, the reference Paul has in mind has to do with eating. There were those persons who did not have a complete knowledge of God's will on this subject. They felt it would be wrong for them to eat meat. "When you talk with him," says Paul, "please do not invite him to your table at which you serve meat. On the other hand, the weak brother ought not to feel he has a superior type of righteousness and attempt to instruct you in the ways of the vegetarian." In all of this conversation between the two brothers, there is much more than mere discussion. The action of judgment also enters in when one says, "I am right and you are wrong; *therefore* you are condemned." There are many matters of indifference, matters not wrong within themselves. Since each saint is responsible for a knowledge of "the faith," (Jude 3) and each member of the body is answerable to the head, who are we to judge our brother? To use the figure of Paul: "This man does not work for you; he is employed by another, even the Lord. To whom then is he answerable? To his own master. If the Lord is pleased with him, who are you to be displeased? You may be dis-

pleased, but this must never enter into the area of judgment. It is not necessary for either of you to understand or "see" how each can stand in the day of judgment. God is able to make each do so by his own divine power and wisdom."

Now, as to "special" days—are we at liberty to insert the word "special" as related to "days"? I think not. We can infer that here is a discussion of the desire of certain Jewish Christians to put a special emphasis upon the seventh day and certain other days in the Jewish calendar. I do not believe that Paul's teachings uphold the observance of "special" days. When the Jewish law was abolished was not all responsibility toward holding one day above another also abolished? Is it not what we do on Sunday that is sacred rather than the day itself? At least there were some in the Roman church who felt every day was just alike. All days are the gifts of God. The observance of the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week does not make the day (all twenty-four hours) holy; at least we have no word of scripture to say so. This will not at all be the opinion of some who read this. Very well—one regards "all days alike" because he feels it pleases the Lord, and one regards some days as "special" for the same reason. Let each mutually agree not to set the other at naught. There are two very important considerations for each Christian. However one regards the matters of indifference, let it be *his* opinion and not just the mouthing of someone else's reasoning. One must be "fully" assured in his *own* heart. The second is equally important. Whatever one does, do it unto the Lord. Let him thank God with sincerity for vegetables if he will not eat meat, thank God with sincerity if he observes Sunday (the day) as sacred. The opposite must also be true.

The great, eternal reason behind such conduct is found in verse seven. We are responsible to and for others. In our living we influence others—we are not living an exclusive life—we are constantly associated with others and in the presence of God. We should be careful so to live in eating and drinking and observing as to never put a stumbling block in our brother's path. There is one act which we shall all perform: we must all die; but even dying can be an example to others. Indeed it shall be—for good or bad. We can read into this verse that we are responsible for the eternal destiny of the souls of our brothers and sisters. They will come up to

358. Is Sunday a special day? In what respect?

359. What is the meaning of the expression—"Let each one be fully assured in his own heart."?

360. What is the great, eternal reason behind our need for full assurance of faith?

death in about the same way you do. Will this be adequate? Are you ready to die? If you are not, and others are following you, are you not also responsible to and for them? Let us live in such a manner in all things that our life will be a true example of the preparation for death.

Verse eight is the foundation on which this whole discussion (vs. 1-7) rests. We live for the honor of Christ and we die for the honor of Christ; i.e., in such a manner as to bring him honor. This we do because we belong to him. Being the living property of another, we essentially have no will in the matter. Most especially is this true when we consider the circumstances of our purchase.

What a wonderful Lord we serve. He not only rules as king here, but also over those in eternity. We indeed belong to him for he "ever lives." We are owned and ruled by him in heaven as well as on earth.

There is a question for the weak and the strong in vs. 10. Paul asks the weak, "Why do you judge your brother?" He asks the strong, "Why do you despise your brother?" Paul also has an answer: "We all shall appear before the judgment seat of God." This being true, why should we enter into the prerogatives of God? Since every inequality will be balanced, every question answered, why attempt it ourselves? Indeed, we sin when we do. The prophet Isaiah speaks of God's lordship. It shall be enough to account for our sins on judgment day. Our brother rests in the hands of an all-wise God.

Text

14:13-23. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge ye this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock in his brother's way, or an occasion of falling. 14 I know, and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself: same that to him who accounteth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. 15 For if because of meat thy brother is grieved, thou walkest no longer in love. Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: 17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he that herein serveth Christ is well-pleasing to God, and approved of men. 19 So then let us follow after things which make for peace, and things whereby we may edify one another. 20 Overthrow not for meat's sake the work of God. All things

361. We have no will in certain matters—what are they?

362. In what way is Christ the "Lord of the dead"?

363. We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. We should not therefore judge one another. Show how the two thoughts are related.

indeed are clean; howbeit it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good not to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth. 22 The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God. Happy is he that judgeth not himself in that which he approveth. 23 But he that doubteth is condemned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith; and whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

REALIZING ROMANS, 14:13-23

586. It would seem some brothers will stumble over anything. Are we to remove all objections for all brothers? Explain.
587. Why not ask the "weak brother" to study and become strong?
588. Verse fourteen contains a principle for all of us to learn and apply. Be careful how it is applied. Be more careful that it is applied. Is any meat "unclean" today?
589. We could and should forego many things because of those who are weak. How does this relate to tobacco or the theater or TV? Are any weak ones destroyed by these things?
590. What is "the good" in vs. 16?
591. Is the church the kingdom of God? We are not to spend our time and energies on matters of eating and drinking. On what should we expend our time and energies? What is "joy in the Holy Spirit"?
592. Who are "the men" of vs. 18?
593. Verse nineteen should be made into an attractive plaque and sold in stores frequented by preachers and Sunday School teachers. Mention one practical application of this verse to everyday living.
594. Who is involved in vs. 20b? i.e., who is eating with offence?
595. The stumbling in vs. 21 has reference to the loss of the soul, not the "loss of face." Do you agree?
596. On matters of indifference we are to keep quiet. Sometimes when we speak we do so to our own hurt. Explain how with special reference to vs. 22b.
597. If faith cometh by hearing, (Rom. 10:17) and we are in chapter fourteen dealing with matters of indifference, how could the principle of vs. 23 be applied?

Paraphrase

14:13-23. Let us therefore no more judge one another bigots or profane persons, because our opinions and practices are different: but ye Gentile Christians, pass this sentence rather on yourselves, that ye will not do any thing which may endanger your brother's virtue, or occasion him to sin.

14 I know by the light of reason, and am persuaded by revelation from the Lord Jesus, that there is no kind of meat unclean naturally. Nevertheless, to him who believeth certain kinds to be unclean, to that man they are unclean; and he will sin if he eat them, either to indulge his own taste or to gain the favor of others.

15 Wherefore, if thy brother, who thinketh certain meats unclean, is made to sin through thy eating such meat, whether it be by hating thee as a profane person, or by following thy example contrary to his conscience, or by apostatizing to Judaism, thou no longer actest according to the love thou owest to thy brother. Do not become the occasion of destroying him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then the good liberty which belongeth to you be evil spoken of, as an indulgence of appetite to the prejudice of others.

17 Ye need not use your liberty always; for the religion of Christ does not consist, either in abstaining from or in using meat and drink, but in a righteous and peaceable behaviour, and in joy in the Holy Ghost.

18 And the brother who, by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, serves Christ his Lord, (vs. 9), is acceptable to God, and will be approved of men.

19 Well, then, let us pursue the things which promote peace, and the things which advance that mutual edification which we ought to reap from one another's example.

20 Do not for the sake of the pleasure of eating this or that kind of meat, destroy your brother's virtue, which is the work of God. All kinds of meats, indeed, are clean under the gospel; yet that meat is bad to the man who eateth it, not from a persuasion of its lawfulness, but through the influence of example.

21 It is commendable neither to eat flesh of any kind, nor to drink wine, or to do any thing, however innocent, whereby thy brother is brought into danger of sinning, or is made to sin, or is weakened in his attachment to the gospel.

22 I own thou hast a just persuasion concerning the lawfulness of all kinds of meat. Hold that persuasion fast, so far as respects thine own conduct in the presence of God; but do not use thy liberty, so as to lead others to sin. Happy is he who doth not subject himself to punishment, by doing what he approveth as lawful.

23 For he who seeth a difference in meats, is liable to punishment, if through thy example he eat what he thinks unclean; because he eateth not from a persuasion that it is lawful, but to please others. This is wrong; for whatever is done without a conviction of its lawfulness, is really a sin, though it be lawful in itself.

Summary

Instead of judging one another in questions respecting days and meats, let each decide, rather, that he will be very careful not to place a stumbling-block or occasion of falling in the way of his brother. This is the proper kind of judging for Christians. But in the matter of meats, and in all similar cases, if eating it grieves a brother, an effect which he may be unable to prevent, we are to abstain from it in deference to his feelings. Should we not do so, we may either drive him from the church, or induce him to follow an example which he is in danger of following too far, and so ruin him. In order to avoid these results, we must abstain from eating meat, where any one is hurt by it. We must not do anything that will imperil the salvation of a brother. The strong belief which enables us to do so many things that the weak cannot do, we must keep to ourselves. We are not at liberty to use it, when by so doing we injure others.

Comment

2. The Liberty of the Gospel Should not Be Used to the Injury of Others. 14:13-23.

Speaking of judgment, we have no need to judge one another. Indeed, to do so is wrong. If we wish to exercise our powers of evaluation, let us do it in this regard—that we place no stumbling block in our brother's way. This is addressed particularly to the strong. The weak brother might actually lose his soul over this matter. Let us be careful in what we consider indifferent—it is not so to him. If someone persuades him to eat meat, he could in his present frame of mind be sinning. He might feel he should go farther, since he sinned in eating meat, and become an idolater. It is not likely he would go back to idol worship, but neither would he remain with the church. He could not continue to associate with such, and would withdraw himself from fellowship.

In verses 14 and 15 is a most marvelous principle—a principle which, if exercised, would solve so very many of today's problems. Paul presents it by stating, "No meat is unclean." Paul knew this, since he knew the mind of Christ. But all men do not have this knowledge—to those who do not, the meat is unclean. One's attitude toward it changes it for him. Let us not force a man to violate his conscience even on a matter of indifference. When we wilfully act in opposition to our own sense of right and wrong, we break down our walls of defense against Satan. More than this, if we continue to insist in

364. We are to judge one another—but in what regard?

365. How could the weak brother lose his soul over eating meat?

this matter of food, we no longer act out of love. Our consideration for the weak brother is woefully lacking.

Let it be noticed please that the eating of meat by the stronger brother was no sin, and the weak brother was not to look upon it as such *for the stronger brother*. On the other hand, since it offends the weak brother, the one who is strong will refrain from eating in the presence of the weak. Since Christ died for both, neither should judge the other. It is possible even to cause the loss of the soul. If Christ loved him so much as to come all the way from heaven to die for him, we can show a little consideration in these matters.

"I see nothing wrong in that." "The practice of such doesn't hurt me." Such expressions are often heard. When self alone is involved, such might be true, but we do not live unto ourselves—others are watching. What appears permissible to us may be offensive to them and cause criticism for the whole body. What then is good to us becomes a point of offense. What shall we do? Give up that which we thought "good" for the sake of the cause of Christ. Someone else wants to know just how far one should go in applying this rule. The answer is—just as far as is necessary to avoid criticism of the cause of Christ.

Some persons, of course, who raise such an objection do not want to apply the rule at all. They raise such a question as a subterfuge behind which they can hide.

The important matters in the church, or the kingdom of God, are not meats and days, eating or not eating, but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. We should give the greatest attention to whether we are right by divine law, not by human opinion, to a settled peace in our own heart and the promotion of peace in the church as a whole—blessed indeed are the peacemakers—and to the joy which the Holy Spirit himself alone can give. . . . joy, that delicate regard for the feelings of one another which, under the strengthening presence in all of the Holy Spirit, shall give joy and not grief."

The Christian who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God (whether some brethren ever accept him or not) and approved by all men who stand on the sidelines to observe the Christian race. Such was the position of the Jerusalem church when they said (and meant) that "nought they possessed was their own. They were one heart and one soul." In this they found unity among themselves and

366. Even if eating meat is not a sin, thinking it is a sin will make it wrong. Why?
367. The strong is not to eat meat in the presence of the weak. Why?
368. How far can we go in applying the rule of being careful for the weak?
369. State the important matters in the Kingdom of God.

“favor with all the people.” Let’s make it the aim of our lives to pursue the ways and words of peace, not contention. We are here to help, not hinder one another. In verses 19 and 20 is a description of a house being built and pulled down, the house of God. We are either engaged constructively or destructively in our work on God’s home, the church. “For the sake of food pull not down the work of God.”

It is good to know that all food is clean (from the distinctions of the law) but even then it can become very evil to us when we, through our eating, cause our brother to stumble or apostasize.

Verse 21 sums up in one sentence the whole point of the section. It is not a matter of right or wrong, but rather of love and concern for our brother. Does it injure him? Abstain from it.

Remain quiet about your superior knowledge of meats and days; it is a matter of indifference or opinion; not of faith. Hold it to yourself. If you do not, (speaking to the strong brother) you will condemn yourself by the very thing in which you condemn others. God will judge the man who causes the weak to fall.

Verse 23 states the principle from which all service to God must spring. What we do must be done because we believe he approves of it. When we act in doubt or even against what we feel is right, we are destroying the basis of obedience—faith in God. This we must never do, nor lead others to do so.

Rethinking in Outline Form

7. Forbearance in Matters of Opinion for Those Who are Weak in the Faith. 14:1–15:13.
 - a. The weak in the faith should not be harshly judged. vs. 1-12
 - (1) To receive the weak brother. v. 1.
 - (2) Not to judge in matters of food. vs. 2-4.
 - (3) Not to judge (that is condemn) one who esteems certain days. v. 5.
 - (4) Everything one does is to be done as unto the Lord. vs. 6-9.
 - (5) There is to be no judging of others for all alike will stand before God. vs. 10-12.
 - b. The liberty of the gospel should not be used to the injury of others. 14:13-23.
 - (1) Not to put a stumbling block in our brother’s way. v. 13 cf. I Cor. 8:7-13.

370. How shall the Holy Spirit produce joy in our lives?

371. Who is acceptable with God and “the people”?

372. We are all workmen of one type or another in the house of God. Explain.

373. How do some condemn themselves in their judgment of others?

- (2) All food is clean. v. 14 cf. Lev. 11; I Tim. 4:3-5.
But to him that accounts it unclean, to him it is unclean.
- (3) If we, through our actions or words, cause our brother to stumble in this matter then we had better take note that we are in sin. vs. 15-16.
- (4) The essential character of the kingdom. vs. 17-19.
- (5) Do not overthrow the work of God for a non-essential. That is, in your manner of observance. v. 20.
- (6) Do nothing that would cause others to stumble. v. 21.
- (7) Be careful that you do not judge yourself in the way you seek to bind that opinion upon another. v. 22.
- (8) To act without conviction is a principle condemned by God. This principle of action is condemned in verse 23.

Text

15:1-12. Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. 2 Let each one of us please his neighbor for that which is good, unto edifying. 3 For Christ also pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell upon me. 4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope. 5 Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: 6 that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God. 8 For I say that Christ hath been made a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, that he might confirm the promises given unto the fathers, 9 and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written,

Therefore will I give praise unto thee among the Gentiles,
And sing unto thy name.

10 And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

11 And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; And let all the peoples praise him.

12 And again, Isaiah saith, There shall be the root of Jesse, And he that ariseth to rule over the Gentiles; On him shall the Gentiles hope.

374. Chapter fifteen discusses the obligations of one brother. Who is it?

375. Why should the strong "give in"? In what manner should the strong bear the infirmities of the weak?