**ROMANS 14
"Christian Liberty"**

"The concept of "right doctrine" has been at the center of our own religious tradition in the American Restoration movement. We have taken pride in our Bible-centered faith. However, this emphasis on proper doctrinal positions has at times produced an attitude that does not lend itself well to matters of individual freedom and conscience. Thus strong personal opinion tends to be confused with a certain doctrinal position which allows no latitude of belief."

("Romans 14 and Christian Liberty." Firm Foundation, May 16, 1978, Royce Money)

**I. The proper regard by the Strong and the Weak (1-12)**

 A. Receive one who is weak in faith as to things one may eat (1).

 1. One with faith may eat all things (2)

 a. I Tim. 4:3-4

 2. Another eats vegetables only (2)

 a. Is it a sin to only eat vegetables?

 b. Can one be a Christian vegetarian?

 3. God accepts both (4)

 4. Neither should judge the other (4)

 5. Neither should have contempt for the other (10)

**NOTE: WHO IS "WEAK" AND WHO IS "STRONG"?**

 1. Not talking about moral weakness.

 a. I Tim. 5:11 "begin to wax wanton"

 b. Luke 22:46 "Pray, let ye enter into temptation"

 c. Lack strength to choose what is right.

 2. Not talking about spiritual weakness.

 a. Gal. 6:1 "ye which are spiritual"

 b. Matt. 26:41 "spirit willing, flesh is weak"

 c. Lack conviction and dedication.

 3. Not talking about doctrinal weakness.

 a. Rom. 4:19 "being not weak in faith"

 b. Acts 18:25-26 learned the way of God

 c. Those who do not understand a doctrine.

**WEAK ARE:**

 1. The "weak in faith."

 a. "These people were very sensitive to sin. They were so sensitive that they picked out things that were indifferent, neither moral nor immoral, and labeled them as sinful."

 b. Judged by appearances.

 c. Failed to distinguish between outward act and inward attitude and motive.

 2. "The broad context shows that those who are weak in faith are Christians who have not yet discovered the meaning of freedom in Christ."

 a. They are afraid that the church can not survive unless we maintain the status quo.

 b. New ideas threaten their security.

 1] Jule Miller filmstrips

 2] Flannelgraph

 3] Literature

 4] Videos

 5] Learning centers

 3. They are legalists at heart. Christianity is reduced to rules and regulations to be observed.

**STRONG ARE:**

 1. Those who understand the message of the gospel of salvation by grace through faith.

 2. Know that justification is apart form meritorious works.

 3. Christ has set us free from legalistic and ceremonial observance of a law.

 4. They live as free people.

 5. They do not use their freedom as a pretext for evil.

 6. Freedom is enjoyed by not abused.

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 B. Accept the weak in observing days (5-6)

 1. God's commands are not under discussion here.

 2. Be fully convinced in your mind.

 3. Jewish religious day was forbidden.

 a] Gal. 4:10

 b] Col. 2:14-17

 4. Personal days are individual’s choice.

 5. Should not be forced on another.

 C. Each member is accountable to the Lord (7-12)

 1. He is Lord of all (7-8)

 2. Each shall receive impartial judgment (9-10)

 3. We must all bow before Him (11)

**II. The necessity of proper regard of "one another" (13-23)**

 A. Because of brotherly love determine:

 1. Not to sit as another's judge. (13)

 2. Not to put obstacles in a brother's way. (13)

NOTE: The words "Stumble, stumbling block, offence" are from the same word in the original Greek text. The word describes the plate on which bait is placed and holds the jaws of the trap open until touched. Thus, the word does not refer to things that are distastful, not pleasing or offend the senses. The word describes an action that would "bait a trap and cause some brother to die."

 3. Not injure the weak by insisting on your rights. (15)

 B. Because of brotherly love strive for: (16-17)

 1. Righteousness

 2. Peace

 3. Joy in the Holy Spirit (17)

 4. Serving Christ

 5. Being acceptable to God (18)

 6. Awareness that the kingdom is not eating and drinking (17)

 7. Avoid having occasion that we view as good is spoken of as evil (16)

 C. Because of brotherly love let us pursue things which make for peace and the building up of one another (19-21)

 1. Do not tear down another’s faith.

 2. Strong in faith should have regard for the weak in faith.

 3. Forego the doing of anything by which a brother stumbles (21)

 D. Because of brotherly love do not force your opinion (in matters of indifference) upon another (22)

 E. to properly regard one another on must preserve inviolate his own conscience (23)

 1. Do not condemn yourself by practicing that which you do not believe to be right.

 2. Whatever is not of faith is sin. We must have faith in the righteousness of the action.

**Principles of Romans 14**

1. Judgment belongs to God, not man. (3, 4, 10-13)

2. We all don't have to see everything alike. (3-5, 14, 16)

3. All things are to be done to honor God. (6-9)

4. Each person has to account for himself to God. (4, 5, 12, 22, 23)

5. Pursue what makes for peace and mutual up building. (18-19)

6. Nothing is unclean in itself. (14-20)

7. A person's faith is something between himself and God. (4, 12, 22, 23)

8. Conscience should not be violated. (5, 13, 14, 20-23)

9. Our liberty must be limited by love. (15, 18, 20, 21)

10. We are not to despise people who disagree with us. (1, 3, 13, 15, 21)

11. What we do as individuals affects others. (7, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21)

12. The kingdom of God is more than the discussion of differences. (15, 17, 20, 21)

13. Welcome the weak brother, but not for the purpose of argument or injury. (1, 13-15, 20, 21)

**Observations**

1. There is a balance that must be maintained for a correct view of this chapter.

 A. We are to think for ourselves.

 B. We are not to live to ourselves.

2. Doctrinal correctness is not enough.

 A. Doctrinal correctness can lead to an attitude of "self-righteousness."

 B. We can begin to despise others.

3. A strict position is not always more correct.

 A. Neither is one that is too broad and general.

 B. We must warn against liberalism.

 C. We must also warn against the conservative approach.

4. The voice of conscience must not be ignored.

 A. When it is a matter of liberty, our conscience must not be violated.

 B. If it is doctrinal or moral, our conscience must be re-trained.

 C. Conscience should be corrected, but never violated.

5. We must not label as "essential" more matters than we should.

 A. Motto: "In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things love."

 B. Problem: What is "essential" and "non-essential?"

6. Our liberty has limitations, namely, those demanded by Christian love.

**VERSE BY VERSE NOTES**

1 Receive the weak brother

 Don't allow his petty ideas to rule the church

2 Strong = Faith that allows greater liberty

 Weak = Lack of ability to allow liberty

3 Strong - don't despise the weak

 Weak - don't judge the strong

4 Each worker is subject to his own boss -

 Each Christian is subject to his own Lord - Jesus

 Study -- Judging others

 A. Matt. 7:1

 B. John 12:47

 C. I Cor. 4:5

 NOTE: Not prohibited form seeing wrong action - fruit (Matt. 7:20) Does forbid - 1] Condemnation 2] Ascribing motives 3] Premature judgments

 Children are subject to own parents - Don't meddle in others lives or how they raise their children.

5 False - disregard L.S., giving, Sunday

 False - take L.S. any day

 Meaning - Jewish holy days

 Today - Christmas, Halloween, Thanksgiving, St. Patrick's, Valentine's, April Fools, etc.

 Be fully persuaded in own mind - conscience is guide

 I John 3:20

 Think it is right does not make it right.

 Think it is wrong does make it wrong.

6 If motive is service to the Lord; observe the day, eat the meat, don't observe the day, don't eat the meat

 As long as God is praised by your actions.

7 We are our brother's keeper Gen. 4:9

 Primary thought is our relation to the Lord Col. 3:17

8 Life or death - still the Lord's Rom. 8:38

9 God over dead and living Matt. 22:32

 Christ is also over both

 Life and death = two states of existence

10 The question points to unreasonable conceit - judging others

 We will be equal before Christ

 There is no place for self-righteousness, exclusiveness

11 From Is. 45:23 also Phil. 2:10-11

 Only in final judgment will every knee bow and every tongue confess

12 Individual judgment - I will answer for myself.

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 1-12 Strong and weak brothers

 13-23 Liberty and its proper exercise

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13 Do not place a stumbling block or death trap for a brother

 This is not trivial matter

 Fall = from grace, lost eternally, damnation

14 See note on verse 5

 Weak - doesn't have all the knowledge, information

15 We may grieve the weak by encouraging them to violate their conscience.

 Strong - Walk in love, don't destroy your brother.

 I John 3:14 I Cor. 8:11-12

 Destroy= perish, to be lost, separated from God

16 Don't let what you know is OK result in bad

17 Kingdom is not: Meat and Drink

 Kingdom is: Righteousness Peace Joy In H. S.

 When we attack each other over clothing, styles, hair, diet, etc., we fuel the fire of division.

18 God approves - so will men in general (the world)

19 Follow peaceful course

 Things that edify - build, strengthen

 Not tear down, destroy

 Are you building or tearing down?

 Church Lives Home Nation World

20 See notes on 14-15

21 Anything - Immaterial or unessential

22 Strong have faith to yourself and to God

 You can enjoy that luxury before God with joy in your heart and a conscience that is clear.

23 Doubt = damned

 It is either "Faith" or "Sin"

 1. Clear knowledge of God's will.

 2. If absent - Our training, scruples, conscience must tell us it is right.