

## ***Romans 14***

1 Major on the majors, rejoice that they are followers even if they don't have all the doctrine down. Trust God that they will learn and mature. Remember you are going to spend eternity with them. If we attack all the little questionable things we divide ourselves and hinder our growth. Trust the Lord to reveal the minor issues to them, smoking, clothing, gifts of the Spirit, music style. All these would divide us when they are minor issues. Jesus should be the focus!

2 Examples of disputable matters we should not pass judgement on, dietary constraints. There are a million issues that are not about Jesus. If someone trusts in what Christ did for them then they are your brothers regardless of how differently they live that out or understand Scripture. They may be way off base and following some celebrity but they are still in the Family of God. Trust the Great Shepherd and love them, don't argue with them. (unless the HS gives you something to share to help them get free, but that will come in all the fruits of the Spirit)

3 Woe now! That is a punch line. If God has accepted him in Jesus, who are you to not accept your brother? Are you saying the blood of Christ is insufficient for the person does something you don't agree with? Watch out for that!

4 Food and drink will always be a contention. If we could remember these admonitions and take the peripheral things more lightly and the core issues more seriously. My brother is Christ's servant. If Christ wants to give him different instructions or correct minor issues, that is up to Christ. No one set me up as the slave overseer. The Lord is perfectly able to instruct and teach him and I would probably get in the way. Now if it is a major issue clearly taught in Scripture, I am obligated to lovingly teach the ignorant brother or sister as Paul does in his letters. Don't be so sure he will not make it, for the Lord is able to make him stand. The Lord will perfect that which concerns me. I've written many people off that the Lord brought through. Some people probably wrote me off, but God is bringing me through.

5 First day, seventh day, everyday, so what, just worship. Yes, we all have our reasons, just live your conviction and stop trying to make everyone like you. Unity is not uniformity but harmony of differences around a common theme. Just stay in fellowship and corporate worship.

6 If the heart is after God and the outward manner is a display of that in whatever form it takes, you are on track. Don't knock another's display as if you can see his heart.

7 No man is an island. Our lives are bound up with His. Our actions should show that union. Watch out that you judge not another's actions that are different from yours, but still display a life in the Lord. Matthew 11:16-19

8,9 He paid the price to be Lord so don't try to take the job on by judging your brother. Your brother is the Lord's servant not yours.

10 Can you trust God to straighten out the minor issues. Lighten up, critical spirited people make themselves miserable and everyone around them. If you look down on your brother, check your pride meter, it is bouncing off the top. Trust the Great Shepherd to do His job in His time. Matthew 7:1-6

11 Is 45:23, Phil 2:10 One day we will all have to answer before God for every word and action unless it is covered by the blood. So if it is covered - chill out. If not, they will have to talk with God about it.

12 Himself not another. No hidden heart stuff then. From our own inner self we will answer the question, "What have you done with the life I gave you?" That could come tomorrow, then what would you answer? We like to take the focus off ourselves and point to others. That accounting will be a one on one. He wont ask you how someone else did.

13 Let's drop the critical spirit, and condemn only what the Word clearly condemns. Instead let us celebrate the differences with unity that blends different harmonies. Do a study on the use of slander in the NT and you will see it listed with the worst works of the flesh. Make up your mind - an action we must pursue - to not stumble any. If my worship style offends my neighbor I will give up that while in his presence so as not to stumble him. The critical one is the one who is weak in the faith. If he says the drums are too loud then lower them when he attends. If some insist worship include hymns do so that you not stumble them with contemporary music. HARMONIZE to the glory of God. What if you have both sides in your congregation - try to strike a balance between and share this chapter with them. OR if you have enough people, start another service.

14 If you think it is wrong it is wrong for you! regardless of my convictions.

15 Love your brother more than your freedom. Christ loved enough to give up the freedom of life itself. Can't you make a little sacrifice?

16 You will encourage the weak one to do so when you insist on a display of your freedom before him who objects.

17 It is not the little everyday form and ritual that make the kingdom, it is the heart set free to be right with God, at peace with him and your neighbor, and filled with the joy of the Holy Spirit. Look at the critical one. Do you see the joy of the HS? The critical drive joy away as they turn over and over in their mind the criticisms. Where is the fruit of the Spirit?

18 The person we see filled with that Spirit we know is pleasing God. He seeks to not offend men out of love and humility.

19 Every effort to do what leads to peace! Every effort for mutual edification. What a motto for practical Christian living. Quote that at the next church split on the carpet color.

20 Or for the sake of any petty side issue. What is more important than the side issue is not offending your brother?

21,22 Don't go sharing your liberties with all, as you may stumble some. Just be sure you obey your conscience.

23 We must examine our hearts to see if there is doubt. We may see a mature believer doing something we question. We should not join in. When in doubt don't! Don't go pushing your personal convictions. I don't drink alcohol because of a vow I made to God that I want to demonstrate my desire to be filled with the Spirit. Does that mean I should push that on others or ask them not to drink in front of me? No way! Should I slam the man who worships everyday and fellowships with believers in small groups because he does not come to church on Sunday? According to this passage, I don't think so. As long as he has not forsaken fellowship and has found his place in the body, why should I insist he follow my form. By the way, the form in America is no longer working. Maybe it is because we have insisted on it too long.