

Romans 14

[Rom. 14:5](#) ¶ One person regards one day above another, another regards every day *alike*. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

[Rom. 14:6](#) He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

- Concerning amoral matters, sin is defined as going against the leading of the Holy Spirit, as reflected in our persona, convictions
 - In verse 5, Paul says that regardless on which side of any particular issue we find ourselves, we must be fully convinced in our minds
 - Know what God has directed you to do
 - And if not, seek His will before making any decision
 - Then Paul uses a couple of common examples to make his point
 - One man has days observed above another, another man doesn't
 - If you decide to observe a Sabbath, do so "for the Lord"
 - Meaning, do so because you are convinced that the Lord has instructed you to do so
 - Similarly, if you eat meat (pork), give God thanks for the liberty
 - And if you abstain, give thanks for the Lord for your restriction
 - After all, if your decision on any amoral matter is due to clear direction from God, then thank Him because we give thanks in everything
 - We receive His instruction in thanks
 - To summarize the first half of 14...

[Col. 2:16](#) ¶ Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day —

[Col. 2:17](#) things which are a *mere* shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.

[Rom. 14:13](#) ¶ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this — not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way.

[Rom. 14:14](#) I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

[Rom. 14:15](#) For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

[Rom. 14:16](#) Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

[Rom. 14:17](#) for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

[Rom. 14:18](#) For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

- The second half of 14 then makes application from the reality of liberty
 - We have many possible freedoms concerning amoral matters, and the Lord will lead us into potentially different practices for His own purposes
 - Meanwhile, love compels us to respect those differences, and be sensitive to another's convictions
 - Paul gives us the classic phrase, don't stumble your brother or put a stumbling block in your brother's way
 - A stumbling block is a trap or hindrance
 - Something to trip a person in their walk with God
 - To be the cause of another's fall into sin
 - Remember, these may be amoral matters, but if we cause someone to do something that violates their conscience, we have drawn them into a sin of disobedience
- Paul explains how this might happen in verses 14-17
 - Though there is nothing unclean in itself (meaning all food is amoral)
 - Nevertheless, if someone believes it is unclean, it is unclean to them in that they are convicted to see it that way
 - Remember, we're not saying that their conviction becomes reality for everyone
 - That's why Paul says in verse 14, to them it is unclean

- So, if they do something that is against their conscience, then in their mind they are knowingly disobeying God
 - Whether or not the act is actually offensive to God becomes irrelevant at that point
- Very important point
 - To cause a brother to stumble doesn't mean to bring them to a point of sin in moral matters
 - It means causing them to go against their conscience even in amoral matters
- Simply going against our conscience is sin and therefore the food has become a stumbling block
- Paul says don't destroy your brother over food
 - Don't allow your practice of your personal liberty to draw someone else into doing something that they feel is wrong
 - And by your influence, you teach them to disobey their conscience and do other than what God has convicted them to do
 - That's what Paul means when he says don't let something that is intended for good (i.e., food) become an evil thing (a cause for sin)
- That's why in verse 17 Paul says the kingdom is not about food, but love
 - Food is truly amoral
 - It has no inherent goodness or badness
 - It is simply a matter of how it is used
 - Don't make the point about behavior, but heart attitude of love
- Finally, Paul sums up by commanding us to be about the building up of one another, not the tearing down

[Rom. 14:19](#) So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.

[Rom. 14:20](#) Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

[Rom. 14:21](#) It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or *to do anything* by which your brother stumbles.

[Rom. 14:22](#) The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.

[Rom. 14:23](#) But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because *his eating is not from faith*; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

- Building up means strengthening fellow believers to serve the Lord all the more faithfully
 - And tearing down means weakening the obedience and faithfulness of the Body
 - How foolish would it be to undermine God's work in the Body for the right to eat certain foods
 - If you are with believers who feel convicted not to eat pork, but you certain it is permissible
 - The loving thing to do is to submit to these restrictions as long as you are called to fellowship in that group
 - Or move on in a loving way so that your practice of these liberties don't cause a brother to go against their conscience
 - Instead, allow people to live according to their conscience in amoral matters
 - Don't eat, drink wine or do anything to cause offense
- Rule #1 – What faith you have in your liberty, have it before God
 - Be assured in your own mind...do it for the right reasons
 - Do what you do in confidence because you are sure this is something God has permitted
 - Don't condemn yourself by what you approve
 - Don't commit a sin by approving something that you know in your heart is not within your liberty as given by God

- Happy is a man who lives according to his convictions without second guessing himself
 - But notice this man is to have these as his OWN convictions
 - He can't make these someone else's convictions
- Rule #2 – He who doubts is condemned by what he eats
 - If you are doing something with a doubt as to whether is it permitted, then you sin because you act not on faith, but on a fleshly basis
 - Your doubt is evidence that your are not convinced in your spirit
 - So wait on God
 - So don't do anything just because others are doing it
 - And don't ask them to stop because you feel convicted
- And now Paul moves to the application of salvation
 - It is still in the general area of Christian liberty or practice
 - But he moves to a general discussion of unity within the Body and self-sacrificial love

[Rom. 15:1](#) ¶ Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not *just* please ourselves.

[Rom. 15:2](#) Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification.

[Rom. 15:3](#) For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME."

[Rom. 15:4](#) For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

[Rom. 15:5](#) Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus,

[Rom. 15:6](#) so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[Rom. 15:7](#) ¶ Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

- Verse 1 is an obvious transition away from the discussion of differences in personal liberty to a focus on loving and sacrifice for the sake of unity
 - Those who have felt lots of freedom are given the greater responsibility in the relationship between stronger and weaker faith
 - When we are engaged in relationships with those who don't feel the same liberties, we have the responsibility not to please ourselves
 - Rather, please our neighbor for his good and edification
 - Obviously, neighbor here is in the context of a believers
 - Someone who can be edified spiritually
 - So our goal is to be selfless in pursuing others' happiness above our own
- And where do we go for our example in this regard?
 - Where else but Christ Himself
 - Quoting Psalm 33:11 speaking of the Messiah, He would be the one whom the reproach we deserved fell instead
 - Can we equal this kind of self-sacrificial effort? No, but we should try
 - Because what was written in earlier times was for our instruction
 - Paul's talking about the OT,
 - And most likely he's referring specifically to David's comments concerning the Messiah
 - We are to draw both perseverance and encouragement from knowing that Christ put the world's interests above His own
 - And so we too can face sacrifice knowing that it pleases God
- And in a climax of his discourse on liberty, Paul says may God, Who is the one to create perseverance and encouragement cause us to be of one mind

- The whole point of gathering and serving together is to operate as a single body, testifying to Christ in us
 - So seek every opportunity to live and think and work as one with our brothers and sisters
 - To the chief end that we will give glory to God with one voice
 - And we are working toward that goal when we are accepting one another faults and all

[Rom. 15:8](#) For I say that Christ has become a servant to the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God to confirm the promises *given* to the fathers,

[Rom. 15:9](#) and for the Gentiles to glorify God for His mercy; as it is written,

“ THEREFORE I WILL GIVE PRAISE TO YOU AMONG THE GENTILES,
AND I WILL SING TO YOUR NAME.”

[Rom. 15:10](#) Again he says,

“ REJOICE, O GENTILES, WITH HIS PEOPLE.”

[Rom. 15:11](#) And again,

“ PRAISE THE LORD ALL YOU GENTILES,
AND LET ALL THE PEOPLES PRAISE HIM.”

[Rom. 15:12](#) Again Isaiah says,

“ THERE SHALL COME THE ROOT OF JESSE,
AND HE WHO ARISES TO RULE OVER THE GENTILES,
IN HIM SHALL THE GENTILES HOPE.”

[Rom. 15:13](#) Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

- Now Paul takes Jesus' example a step further
 - He says that Christ made Himself a servant of others (i.e., He gave His life) specifically with two godly purposes in mind
 - First for the Jew, Jesus became a servant to confirm the promises given to the Jewish fathers
 - And to the Gentile, Christ's self-sacrificial act brought praise and glory to God for His mercy
 - In other words, God had good purposes in mind as Jesus obeyed His direction
 - So, when we obey God's call that we sacrifice our liberty or rights or desires for the sake of others, we can be sure that God is at work doing something through our obedience

- Since there was little doubt among Paul's audience that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Jewish promises, Paul doesn't offer any scriptural proof for that purpose
 - But he does want to demonstrate how the Messiah was always intended to be a source of hope to Gentiles
 - So he quotes from Psalms, Deut and Isaiah to show that Jesus was intended to bring glory to God for His mercy to Gentiles
 - Then Paul concludes the formal teaching portion of His letter with something close to a salutation
 - He says may the God of hope grant you everything you need in believing, so you may abound in hope
 - A great verse to meditate on
 - Does our hope and our joy and our peace find their source in our believing or something else?
 - Is it by the power of the HS, or something else in our lives?
- The rest of 15 we covered in the first night, concerning Paul's reason for writing and not visiting until now

[Rom. 16:1](#) ¶ I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea;

[Rom. 16:2](#) that you receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and that you help her in whatever matter she may have need of you; for she herself has also been a helper of many, and of myself as well.

[Rom. 16:3](#) ¶ Greet Prisca and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus,

[Rom. 16:4](#) who for my life risked their own necks, to whom not only do I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles;

[Rom. 16:5](#) also *greet* the church that is in their house. Greet Epaenetus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.

[Rom. 16:6](#) Greet Mary, who has worked hard for you.

[Rom. 16:7](#) Greet Andronicus and Junias, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are outstanding among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me.

[Rom. 16:8](#) Greet Ampliatus, my beloved in the Lord.

[Rom. 16:9](#) Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys my beloved.

[Rom. 16:10](#) Greet Apelles, the approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the *household* of Aristobulus.

[Rom. 16:11](#) Greet Herodion, my kinsman. Greet those of the *household* of Narcissus, who are in the Lord.

[Rom. 16:12](#) Greet Tryphaena and Tryphosa, workers in the Lord. Greet Persis the beloved, who has worked hard in the Lord.

[Rom. 16:13](#) Greet Rufus, a choice man in the Lord, also his mother and mine.

[Rom. 16:14](#) Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas and the brethren with them.

[Rom. 16:15](#) Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.

[Rom. 16:16](#) Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the churches of Christ greet you.

- Chapter is a very personal list of thoughts and greetings
 - It includes 36 names, 8 with Paul and the rest in Rome
 - 27 men, 8 women
 - Two households and three house churches
 - Most of the names are Gentile, reflecting the growing population of Gentiles in that church
 - Interesting that Paul could name so many in Rome and yet had never visited
 - Why does Paul list so many names in this letter?
 - A couple of reasons come to mind
 - Not having lived here means that Paul could list everyone he knew and wanted to extend his love to them personally
 - Paul was a friend-maker as well as a soul winner. He had friends in the Lord and wanted to show his appreciation to them (Wiersbe)
 - Secondly, Paul was trying to reaffirm his connection to this church through his representatives
 - Another way to build a bridge to a church that hadn't yet met him
- The first name, Pheobe, is the one who carried this letter to Rome from Corinth where Paul wrote the letter
 - She might have been a deaconess

- The word in Greek is diakonos, which means servant or minister or deacon
- You'll notice that woman play a prominent role in this church
- The list from verse 3 to 16 include many Latin or Greek names, though they could have included Jews with Greek names like Paul
 - Priscilla and Aquila met Paul in Corinth when they fled Rome after the Claudius ordered Jews to leave Rome
 - They were also tent makers and as Paul says, they risked their lives for him
 - Paul took them to Ephesus with him where they helped Apollos
 - Later they moved back to Rome and had a church in their home
 - We also see them back in Ephesus with Timothy
 - The first convert from Asia refers to Ephesus, (Asia Minor) not modern day Asia
 - The reference in verse 7 to apostles who were in Christ before me is interesting
 - The word apostle (apostolos) means one sent with a message
 - It can have a general meaning or a specific meaning referring to one of the 13
 - Here it is intended in the general sense of a missionary
 - Men who were believers earlier than Paul himself
- Looking at verse 10, Paul greets not Aristobulus but his household
 - Probably refers to his slaves who had become believers, while Aristobulus himself hadn't
 - Rufus may have been the son of Simon of Cyrene who helped carry Christ's cross
 - And apparently his mother was like a mother to Paul at some point
- In verse 14, the brethren probably refer to another house church

[Rom. 16:17](#) ¶ Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and hindrances contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them.

[Rom. 16:18](#) For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting.

[Rom. 16:19](#) For the report of your obedience has reached to all; therefore I am rejoicing over you, but I want you to be wise in what is good and innocent in what is evil.

[Rom. 16:20](#) The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. ¶ The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.

- Final warning
 - Classic Pauline warning concerning false teachers creeping into the church
 - One of the earliest ways to find false teachers is that they stir up dissensions and hindrances (stumbling blocks)
 - Things contrary to the teaching that the Apostles presented, which is present-day scripture
 - These false teachers are not slaves to Christ
 - Not believers
 - Slaves to appetites (to the flesh)
 - They deceive with smooth, meaning well-spoken
 - And flattering, meaning they ingratiate themselves to their listeners
 - Their success is in their style even as their substance contradicts scripture
 - And they makes us feel good
 - Proper teaching will usually be the opposite
 - It brings unity and edifies for obedience
 - It comes from a believer led by the Spirit
 - Consistent with scriptural teaching
 - Not smooth, doesn't reflect credit or glory on the person

- Not flattering, but convicts us instead
- Paul says their report of obedience has reached everywhere, so continue in that way
 - Be wise in what is good but innocent (or free from) what is evil
 - And trust God to win the battle

[Rom. 16:21](#) ¶ Timothy my fellow worker greets you, and *so do* Lucius and Jason and Sosipater, my kinsmen.

[Rom. 16:22](#) ¶ I, Tertius, who write this letter, greet you in the Lord.

[Rom. 16:23](#) ¶ Gaius, host to me and to the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the city treasurer greets you, and Quartus, the brother.

[Rom. 16:24](#) [The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.]

[Rom. 16:25](#) ¶ Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery which has been kept secret for long ages past,

[Rom. 16:26](#) but now is manifested, and by the Scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the eternal God, has been made known to all the nations, *leading to* obedience of faith;

[Rom. 16:27](#) to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be the glory forever. Amen.

- The letter ends with a list of names of those working with Paul in Corinth
 - Including Timothy in Ephesus
 - Lucius is probably Luke, who wrote the Gospel and Acts
 - Jason was likely Paul's host in Thessalonica
 - Sosipater traveled with Paul on his third journey
 - Tertius penned the words of the epistle as Paul spoke them
 - Interesting when we think about the problems in the Corinthian church that one of them was used by God to pen the Book of Romans
 - Erastus was the city treasurer of Ephesus
 - His name was found in 1929 on a marble pavement laid in the city of Corinth
 - The pavement read "Erastus, in return for his appointment as commissioner for public works, laid this pavement at his own expense."

- This was a lower office than city treasurer, so apparently he moved up after beginning his career in public office
- Paul ends with a powerful doxology
 - It combines thoughts and phrases from earlier letters and from Romans itself
 - God is able to establish us according to the gospel that Paul delivered as preached by Jesus Christ
 - A message or revelation that was a mystery kept through past ages in the scripture written by prophets
 - But has now been made manifest to the world
 - And it's revealing is leading to an obedience of faith among q
 - To that one and only wise God, may there be glory forever through Jesus Christ
 - Amen