

Primary and Secondary Issues of Theology and Practice

Romans 14:1-23

Part 2

Introduction

1. In Romans Chapter 12 and following, Paul addresses practical aspects of the Christian life.
2. And foundational to all our behaviour is love (Rom.12:9-21) since, "love is the fulfillment of the Law" (Rom.13:10)
3. Sadly, the church in Rome was not acting in love (Rom.14:3)
Disagreement over secondary issues like food and religious days had caused division.
4. Paul's chief concern was not their differences, but how the Christians treated one another (Rom.14:3)
With the two main groups in the church at odds with one another, the potential for a split along Jew and Gentile lines was a possibility.

1. The first principle in a partial solution: Understanding why Christians have blind spots with regard to secondary issues (Acts 10)
2. Romans 14:1-12 is principally addressed to the "strong" (Gentiles) and how they are to relate to the "weak" (Jews)
3. God's command to the "strong" on how to treat God's people who have divergent views of a secondary nature (Rom.14:1-12)
 1. "Accept" (NASB), or, "Welcome" (ESV) him (Rom.14:1,3)
 1. "Accept" or "Welcome"
 2. An adversarial attitude (Rom.14:1)
 2. Accept him: Who are you to do otherwise? (Rom.14:3; 8:34)
 1. The "strong" Christians (Gentiles)
 2. The "weak" Christians (Jews)
 3. Accept him: Who made him accountable to you? (Rom.14:4; 1Cor.4:3-4)
 4. Accept him: For conscience sake (Rom.14:5)
 1. The need to pursue the truth about secondary issues (14:5b)
 2. Differing convictions: A reality in the church (14:5a)
 5. Accept him: He is the Lord's (Rom.14:6-9)
 1. Differences of opinion on secondary issues are not to divide the body (14:6)

2. The “weak” Christian’s belief on a secondary issue is not necessarily an indication of confusion about the Gospel (14:7-9)
 1. “Food” and “holy days” do not define the Christian faith
 2. Living for Christ alone (14:7-9)
 1. Notice the emphasis on Christ the “Lord” (14:8,9)
 2. Notice that the true Christian life is all about Christ the Lord (14:7f)
 3. Notice that Christ alone is Lord over death, and our life (Rom.14:9; Jn.10:27-28)
6. Accept him: God alone sees the human heart (Rom.14:10-12)
 1. Brothers (14:10)
 1. Why are you fighting your brother?
 2. You are “brothers” (and sisters) because Christ has made you brothers (and sisters) at great cost to Himself.
 2. The Last Judgment includes Christians (14:10b-12)
 1. The Day of Judgment (Rom.14:10b; Rom.8:1)
 2. The inevitability of the last judgment does affect each Christian (Rom.14:12; 1Cor.3:10-15)
 3. The Final Day: All pretence, self-serving and motives will be exposed, and an assessment of our lives will result (Rev.20:12)
 4. On that Day, our heart service of Christ will be established and rewarded (1Cor.3:10-15; 4:5; 2Cor.5:10)

Conclusion

1. Be certain to distinguish between primary and secondary doctrines (Acts 20:24)
2. With regard to Christian teachings of a secondary nature, we are all blind or partially blind (“weak”) in one area or another
3. Blindness to spiritual truth can only be reversed through the hearing of God’s Word and the opening of our eyes by the Spirit
4. We are all to walk humbly before God recognising that though we are absolutely sure that we “see” (“strong”); we in reality, can be “blind” (weak”) (E.g. the apostle Peter)
5. The “weak” on some secondary issues can be highly regarded servants by God (E.g. the apostle Peter)
6. We are to constantly pray that God would increasingly open our eyes to see (to have a better understanding of secondary issues) (E.g. Peter)
7. Warning: Most denominational church splits are caused through secondary issues
8. In the final analysis, secondary Christian issues are not our primary concern—the Gospel is.