

## Primary and Secondary Issues of Theology and Practice

### Romans 14:13-23

#### Part 3

#### Introduction

1. Disagreement over secondary issues like food and religious days had caused division in the church at Rome.

2. 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.

So, with regard to secondary issues, how are Christians to treat one another?

3. Well, foundational to all our practical behaviour listed in Romans 12 and following, is love (Rom.12:9-21) since, "love is the fulfillment of the Law" (Rom.13:10)

4. This means that there is a,

1. Love requirement: Understanding (First talk)

Love demands that we seek to understand our brother's past (E.g., Peter)

2. Love requirement: Not judging

Love demands that we follow the Biblical guidelines about judging.

"Therefore, let us not pass judgment (judge-NASB) on one another any longer (more-NASB)" (14:13a)

1. "Accept" (NASB), or, "Welcome" (ESV) God's family members (Rom.14:1,3)

2. Accept him: Who are you to do otherwise? (Rom.14:3; 8:34)

3. Accept him: Who made him accountable to you? (Rom.14:4; 1Cor.4:3-4)

4. Accept him: For the sake of the family member's conscience (Rom.14:5)

5. Accept him: He lives for the Lord (Rom.14:6-9)

6. Accept him: God alone knows the human heart (Rom.14:10-12)

And with this directive comes a warning:

"So then each (one-NASB) of us will give an account of himself to God" (14:12)

Judgment Day for the Christian, is a sober reminder to be purposeful about our Christian sanctification. Every Christian will give an account of our thoughts, words and deeds before God.

Therefore, Paul's concern is that every Christian whether "strong" or "weak," is to take the opportunity to evaluate their own conduct in the light of how they are relating to one another.

3. Love requirement: I am my brother's keeper (Rom.14:13-23)

**1. The "strong": The correctness of their position in Christ (Rom.14:14a,20b,22)**

**1. The "strong" are right in their belief that "all things are clean" (Rom.14:14a,20b; Mk.7:19; Acts 10:15 1Cor.8:8)**

**2. The "strong" and a clear conscience on secondary issues (14:22)**

**1. Be convinced (Biblically) in your own mind as to what you believe (14:22)**

**2. Be content with what you believe (14:22)**

2. A correct perspective on Kingdom priorities is critical (Rom.14:17)
  1. Righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit characterise the Christian life
  2. The eternal realities of the Kingdom trump the minor disputes
  3. God's honour and Kingdom take precedence over everything
3. The "strong" living with their freedom
  1. The correct understanding of our status in this matter (14:18a; Rom.1:1; Titus 1:1)
  2. The correct understanding of God's directive (14:19)
    1. We are to pursue (Lit. "keep on pursuing")
    2. Peace
    3. Growth
  3. By not hindering growth (14:13b)
    1. "Stumbling block"—Anything that may cause a person to trip or stumble in his or her own walk (Rom.14:13b; 1Cor.8:9)
    2. "Obstacle": (Lit. trap or snare)
  4. Understand what hinders growth in the weaker brother (14:14b)
    1. The Jewish believer who believes meat to be unclean, to him it is unclean
    2. The "strong" are to exercise the fruit of the Spirit as they witness their brothers struggling to comprehend the fuller revelation of truth
  5. Practical application (14:15)
    1. What not to do (Rom.14:15)
    2. The first implication of being insensitive toward the "weak" (Rom.14:15b; 8:33,35)
      1. Some interpret this to mean that the Christian would lose their salvation
      2. Others believe this to mean that this refers to hindering the growth of the Jewish Christian
    3. The second implication of being insensitive toward the "weak" (Rom.14:16)
      1. The spiritual freedom of the "strong"
      2. The gospel

Conclusion (Commendation—Rom.14:18)

Always aim for: Righteousness, peace and joy.