

“The Liberty We Have In Christ”

Romans 14:1-13

Message by Michael J. Barnard

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Teaching Aim: To illustrate that each Christian is at a different place spiritually and we should not judge the hearts of other brothers and sisters in Christ, that is something for God to do. To understand, when it comes to the gray areas of Scripture and the Christian faith, each believer has the liberty to follow the dictates of his or her own conscience so long as the action they are considering does not violate Sacred Scripture. To realize every believer will one day stand before “*The Judgment Seat of Christ*” and give an account for the way he or she lived their life.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: We are not to look down on other believers because of where they are spiritually (Rom. 14:1-4)

1. How should a mature Christian respond to the weaknesses and limited understanding of a new believer (**vs. 1**)? How should Christians treat each other when it comes to the gray areas of the Bible and Christianity? (See **James. 4:6**)
2. In **verse 2** we find a contrast between spiritually mature and immature (or new) Christians. Why did some of the Gentiles coming out of paganism commit to only eating vegetables? (See Commentaries) What can we learn from the following New Testament Scriptures about how the Old Testament dietary laws have changed under the New Covenant? (See **Acts 10:9-16; 1 Cor. 8:4-8; 10:23-30**)
3. **Verse 3** could refer either to a Jewish believer eating non-kosher foods or a Gentile believer eating meat that had been sacrificed to an idol. What warning does Paul give to all believers in **verse 3**? Why do you think there is so much division within the body of Christ today over minor issues? To despise means “*to look down upon.*” What was happening in the church at Rome according to the Apostle Paul? Does this kind of judgmentalism still occur in the church today? What are some ways that we see it? Discuss how there are disagreements among believers on some of the following issues: drinking alcohol such as wine; smoking; dancing; going to the movies; how we dress; or even the kind of Christian music that we use for worship music in the church. How does Christian liberty come into play when it comes to these issues?

4. What can we learn in **verse 4** about Christians who are judgmental on each other? According to **verse 4**, who will Christians have to answer to for their thoughts and actions? Who is at work in the lives of believers to help them stand and do what is right in the eyes of the Lord (**vs. 4b**)?

Part II: The Christian has liberty in the gray areas of Scripture (Rom. 14:5-9)

1. **Verses 5 & 6** seem to be addressed to Christians who continue to celebrate the Jewish festival days even after coming to Christ. According to **verse 5**, how should a Christian determine whether to celebrate these days or not? In both of these scenarios, to whom are the actions dedicated? How do **1 Tim. 4:4-5** and **Rom. 14:5-6** tie together? According to Paul, should Christians be looking down on other Christians for the days or festivals they choose to worship? How should we respond? (See **1 Cor. 13:12-13**) What does **Col. 2:16** teach us about these special days and festivals found under the Old Testament law? Why is this important to us as Christians today?
2. According to **verses 7 and 8**, what is our purpose in both life and death? Question #1 of *"The Westminster Shorter Catechism"* reads: *"What is the chief end of man?"* The answer to this question is: *"Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever."* How does this truth relate to **verses 7 and 8**? How should it relate to the Christian life today?
3. According to **verse 9**, why did Christ come to earth, die on the cross for our sins, and rise again on the third day? (See **1 Cor. 15:3-4; Rom. 5:8-10; 6:23**) What is meant when we say that Jesus is the Lord of a person's life? (See Dictionary) Can you honestly say Jesus is the Lord of your life? Why or why not? If Jesus is your Lord, then what can you do to develop an even closer walk with Him? Will you commit to growing in your relationship with Christ today?

Part III: All of us will one day have to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give account of our life (Rom. 14:10-13)

1. What convicting statement do we find Paul making in **verse 10**? How does this statement affect you today? Is it wrong for us to judge Christians within the church when they are openly sinning today? Why or why not? (See **Matt. 18:15-17; 1 Cor. 5:1-7**) Is it our job to judge the motivation of another believer's heart? Why or why not? (See **Matt. 7:1-5; Luke 6:37-38**)

2. What will every believer have to do at some time in the future according to **verse 10**? What is *"The Judgment Seat of Christ"*? What is being judged at this seat? (See **2 Cor. 5:10-11**) During the ancient Greek Olympic and Isthmian Games, the judge sat on the *"bema"* judgment seat. Was this *"bema"* judgment seat for handing out rewards or punishment? (See Commentaries) How does *"The Judgment Seat of Christ"* differ from *"The Great White Throne Judgment"* that is found in **Rev. 20:11-15**? (See Commentaries)

3. Another passage that refers to *"The Judgment Seat of Christ"* is **1 Cor. 3:10-15 (vs. 10)**. According to this passage, what will happen to the believer's works on the Day of Judgment? In examining your own life and works, what is the motivation behind the things you do?

4. Paul loosely quotes from **Isa. 45:23** in **verse 11**, the Isaiah passage is also quoted in **Phil. 2:10-11**. What can we learn about the deity (*or divine attributes*) of Jesus Christ from these Scriptures? According to **Psalms Chapter 2**, what will happen to those who refuse to bow down to Christ on their own? (Also see **John 3:16, 35-36**)

5. What does God promise to every believer in **verse 12**? Forgiveness in Christ does not mean that we won't have to give an account to God for our actions on earth, how should this understanding this truth change the way we live our lives? Do you think people would be as inclined to live in sin if they truly realized they would have to give account for their actions to God (**vs. 12**)? Why or why not?

6. Whenever you see the word *"therefore"* in Scripture, it means there is a conclusion coming. After explaining that each person will be held accountable for his or her actions before God, what conclusion did Paul come to in **verse 13**? Who, if anybody, should we be judging? According to **verse 13**, what should Christians not do? Note: The remainder of this chapter deals with the issue of not causing your brother or sister in Christ to stumble in their spiritual walk. What was the central theme of the first half of this chapter?

7. Have you received Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord? If not, why not do so right now in prayer? If you are a Christian and have been guilty of judging the hearts of other believers, why not confess your sin to the Lord right now and ask Him for forgiveness? (See **1 John 1:9**)

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- The ground is level at the foot of the cross, every Christian is a sinner saved by grace.
- All of us are at different places spiritually, we need to remember that and have grace on each other in the gray areas of Scripture and in our Christian faith.
- Each of us are granted certain liberties in Christ, no one should judge the motivation of another brother or sister's heart.
- Whether we live or die, it should all be done to the glory of God.
- Every knee will one day bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
- Instead of judging others, we are to judge our own hearts and do the very best we can not to cause a brother or sister in Christ to stumble in their Christian walk.