



A STUDY OF
THE BOOK OF
ROMANS

upgrade



CHAPTER 14

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upgrade



WHEN CHRISTIANS DISAGREE

ROMANS 14

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ROMANS 14:1 – 12 (NKJV)

¹ Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. ² For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. ³ Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. ⁴ Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

⁵ One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.



ROMANS 14:1 – 12 (NKJV)

⁶ He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

**⁷ For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.
⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.
⁹ For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.**



10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written:

“As I live, says the LORD,

Every knee shall bow to Me,

And every tongue shall confess to God.”

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.



INTRODUCTION

PSALM 133:1 (NKJV)

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!

The problem of disunity has always plagued God's people—Israel in the Old Testament, and Corinth, Galatia, Philippi in the New Testament.



Romans 14 reveals a real issue in the church: some believers thought eating meat was sinful; others did not. Some set aside special days; others treated every day alike.

The issue was not about *the essentials of salvation*, but about the *gray areas* of conscience.

Key Thought:

Christians can disagree on nonessentials, but they must do so with love, humility, and a focus on Christ.



Paul gives three principles for when Christians disagree:

1. Receive One Another (verses 1-12)
2. Edify One Another (verses 13-21)
3. Guard Your Conscience (verses 22-23)



1. RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER (vv. 1 – 12)

A. The Problem in Rome

- The “weak in faith” (v. 1) clung to old rules — diets and holy days.
- The “strong in faith” understood liberty in Christ.

Conflict:

The weak judged the strong as unspiritual; the strong despised the weak as immature.



1. RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER (vv. 1 – 12)

B. Paul's Instruction: Welcome Each Other (v. 1)

- To “receive” means to accept into fellowship, not to argue over doubtful matters.

Augustine:

“In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”



1. In Essentials, Unity

Essentials are the core truths of the Christian faith and things necessary for salvation and faithful discipleship.

Examples: The deity of Christ, salvation by grace through faith, the authority of Scripture, and the resurrection of Jesus.

On these matters, there must be unity because they are foundational to what it means to be a Christian. Paul echoes this in Ephesians 4:4–6—“There is one body and one Spirit... one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”



EPHESIANS 4:4 – 6 (NKJV)

⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.



2. In Nonessentials, Liberty

Nonessentials are matters of conscience, culture, or personal conviction—areas where Scripture gives freedom.

Examples: Dietary restrictions (Romans 14), observing certain days, worship styles, clothing, or non-salvation-related theological debates.

On these issues, believers are called to allow liberty, recognizing that God may lead others differently.



Romans 14:5–6 captures this: “Let each be fully convinced in his own mind...He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord.”

ROMANS 14:5 – 6 (NKJV)

⁵ One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶ He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.



3. In All Things, Charity

Charity is the old word for love. Augustine insists that even when we disagree, whether in essentials or nonessentials, love must govern how we treat one another.

1 Corinthians 13 reminds us that without love, even the best knowledge or strongest convictions amount to nothing.

Charity means patience, humility, and a willingness to put others before ourselves.



In Plain Terms

Hold tightly to what really matters. Concerning “Essentials” – no compromise.

Give freedom where God gives freedom. Concerning “Nonessentials” – don’t be legalistic.

Show love no matter what. In all things, even in disagreements, act in Christlike love.



FOUR REASONS TO RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER

1. God has received us (vv. 1–3).

- Fellowship is on God's terms, not ours.
- **Example:** Peter in Acts 10–11—God showed Him that fellowship isn't based on food or culture.

2. God sustains His own (v. 4).

- Each believer serves the Lord, not man.
- Our success depends on God, not others' opinions.



FOUR REASONS TO RECEIVE ONE ANOTHER

3. Jesus is Lord (vv. 5–9).

- Whether eating or abstaining, observing days or not, it must be “unto the Lord.”
- **Application:** Is my conviction really about honoring Christ or just my preference?

4. Jesus is Judge (vv. 10–12).

- We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
- We won’t answer for each other, but for ourselves.



APPLICATION

Stop playing God in each other's lives.

Ask: “Am I honoring Christ in this? Am I letting Him be Lord for others too?”

Illustration: Spurgeon (cigars) and Parker (theater)—both judged, both missed the point.



ROMANS 14:13 – 21 (NKJV)

¹³ Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

¹⁴ I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵ Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;



17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.

19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. 20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. 21 It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak.



2. Edify One Another (vv. 13 – 21)

A. Don't Be a Stumbling Block (vv. 13–15)

- **Paul:** Stop judging and start watching your own life.
- Our liberty should never harm another believer's conscience.

Example: 1 Cor. 8 – meat sacrificed to idols. Knowledge without love destroys.



B. Keep the Right Priorities (vv. 16–18)

“The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.”

- We often major in minors, and churches split over music, clothing, and service times.
- But the real essentials are righteousness, peace, and joy produced by the Spirit.



2. Edify One Another (Romans 14:13–21)

C. Pursue Peace and Growth (vv. 19–21)

- Aim for things that build up, not tear down.

HEBREWS 12:14 (NKJV)

Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:

- Both the strong and the weak must grow strong in love.

Illustration: In parenting rules for babies change as children mature. We don't keep believers "babies" forever, but we don't crush them in their immaturity either.



ROMANS 14:22 – 23 (NKJV)

²²Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. ²³But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.



3. Guard Your Conscience (vv. 22 – 23)

A. Convictions Are Personal (v. 22)

- Faith must be personal. Do not flaunt your convictions or force them on others.
- If you're persuaded before God, keep it in humility, not arrogance.

1 JOHN 3:21 (NKJV)

Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.



3. Guard Your Conscience (vv. 22 – 23)

B. Violating Conscience is Sin (v. 23)

- If someone acts against their conscience, even in a gray area, it becomes sin.
- Why? Because they are not acting in faith.

TITUS 1:15 (NKJV)

To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.



APPLICATION

Don't pressure others to adopt your convictions.

Don't violate your own conscience just to fit in.

Balance: Love restrains liberty; faith strengthens conscience.



CONCLUSION

Summary of Principles:

- 1. Receive one another** – God has received us.
- 2. Edify one another** – Love builds up, liberty never tears down.
- 3. Guard conscience** – Live by faith, not by pressure.



CHALLENGE

Ask:

- Do I major in minors or major in Christ?
- Am I building up or tearing down?
- Am I living out my faith in love?

Romans 14:19 (NKJV)

Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.