

## **THIS WEEK'S STUDY: 11/28-29/2022 *Romans Chapter 14!***

**PLEASE NOTE WE WILL CONTINUE TO NEED A PASSCODE TO JOIN THE STUDY!**

**MONDAY 7 PM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)**

**THE MONDAY NIGHT STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN CLASSROOM HS107, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!**

**MEETING ID# - 87858644763 Passcode: 087484**

Join Zoom Meeting -

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87858644763?pwd=b25tUzhkaTE0UzIrSnpkVmZEWGJVQT09>

**Meeting ID: 878 5864 4763 - Passcode: 087484**

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**TUESDAY 7 AM Bible Study - Time: 07:00 AM Pacific Time (US and Canada).**

**THE TUESDAY MORNING STUDY HAS RESUMED MEETING IN THE FAMILY ROOM, CCCM, AS WELL AS CONTINUING IN ZOOM!!**

**MEETING ID# - 85309150746 - Passcode: 715340**

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### **OPENING PRAYER**

**Review - *Rom 12:1-2,9,21*)** *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. [2] And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. [9] Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. [21] Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

**Shall we turn to *Romans, chapter 14*** - the law of liberty; the law of love! Walking in Christian love, beginning with not judging one another and not causing another to stumble; being careful never to allow our law of liberty to ever come before, or have priority over our law of love!

**TEXT:**

***(Rom 14:1-23)***

### **Do Not Pass Judgment on One Another**

[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. [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.

### **Do Not Cause Another to Stumble**

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

### **Do Not Pass Judgment on One Another**

**Rom 14:1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.**

- **Weak in the faith**, means that while these people are truly Christian, being in the faith, they are weak or less developed in their faith. They are born again, they are members of the church and every right to be. Where then have these people gone wrong? Though they have clearly seen the great central matter of salvation, when it comes to particular details of life and living, quite unconsciously, they dropped back from the faith position into an old legalistic, pre-Christian way of thinking. They began to think in terms of justification by works. Here are people in the church, all Christians together. Yet, some of them are in difficulties with regard to certain problems. Because of these differences, they are tending to judge one another, especially over doubtful things, quarreling with one another. Some are even despised by others. Here, we are being told that we should receive those who are weak or less developed in their faith. We are to be careful *not to disputes over doubtful or non-essential things*.
- **It is amazing how that we have allowed petty differences** to divide the body of Jesus Christ. **(Tit 3:9) But avoid foolish disputes, genealogies, contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and useless.**

**Rom 14:2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.**

- **That is, weak in the faith.** There are some people today who feel convicted about eating meat. They are vegetarians. Paul, writing to Timothy, said in the last days (*1Ti 4:3*) *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.* It is nothing to argue over. We will see the proper attitude that we are to have over these differences.

**Rom 14:3** *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.*

- **We are to receive this weaker brother in exactly the same way** that God has already received him, and in the same way that we also have been received by God! We are not to look down and say, oh, that man does not eat. Can you believe that? In other words to sort of look down on those who feel those convictions? But on the other side of the coin, those who have those convictions should not be judging those who eat meat. It is rather easy not to look down on those that have those strange convictions, but what I have even more difficulty with is judging someone who has greater liberty than I do. If someone is doing something that I personally have convictions over, I am prone to say, how can they do that? How can they say they are Christians? Look what they are doing. When you turn the coin around, it is a little different. But the key is, as we get to it, is to walk in love! Yes, there can be differences of convictions.
- **It is possible for one person to have honest convictions over an issue and another person not to have those same convictions.** We are not to despise those that have the convictions. But in the same token, they are not to judge us who may not have the same convictions that they have!
- **The reason they are not doing those things** is that a younger believer may not have the same liberty that you have in your relationship with Jesus. They are not doing those things because they are learning to measure out the conviction of the Holy Spirit versus the condemnation of the devil. They are being sensitive to that and that is a good thing! But when you are stumbling that person, what you are doing is telling that younger believer not to pay attention to the inward compass, which he has to the conviction of the Spirit and to set that aside and do the thing, you think is acceptable for you to do!

**Rom 14:4** *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.*

- **Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls.** Let us assume that you are very wealthy, having many servants in your home, and you invite guests for dinner. The servants are there, waiting on them. If one of your guests would start to rebuke one of your servants, whom you feel is doing a marvelous job. He is doing exactly what you told him to do. He is waiting the table just as you have instructed him. But this person begins to get criticize him. You begin to judge, saying, wait a minute. I told him to do that. He is not your servant. He is my servant. I will take care of him, if I feel he is wrong. Yet here we are judging one another but we are all servants of Jesus Christ! Who am I to judge the way you serve the Lord? What I need to be interested in, is how I serve the Lord. That I serve the Lord in a manner that is pleasing to Him. That I do what He has commanded me to do. That I am looking to Him for my instructions and directions. Yet, it does not really work that way all the time, does it? People are judging how a person serves God, what a person believes, and things of this nature. There is too much of this going on in the church! This is tragic.
- **Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.** There were some people that I thought would never stand. God made them, upheld them, helping them to stand. We are to avoid this business of judging another for eating meat.

**Rom 14:5** *One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.*

- **Going from “the diet” question to the “the day” question.** What day should we worship God? In the early church there were varying opinions. Many of the early Christians were Jews. They brought their Jewish traditions and law into the church. They still were Kosher. Peter was

Kosher. When the Lord there in Joppa, letting down the sheet before Peter, who saw all of these manner of beasts and creeping things. The Lord said, "Rise Peter, kill and eat." He said, not so, Lord! I have never eaten anything that is unclean! There was this division that developed in the early church because the Gentiles for the most part believed that they should worship the Lord on the day that Jesus was resurrected from the dead. Some of the early church fathers even wrote treatises on why Sunday should be the day for worship. This was long before Constantine. The Jehovah Witnesses try and say that Constantine was the one that entered into Sunday worship. No, if they knew their church history, they would know that the early church fathers had discussed this among themselves. Justin Martyr and Tertullian and others, dealt with this long before Constantine ever came along, which day we should worship. Many of them had come to the conclusion that Sunday, the first day of the week, was the day of new beginnings. We have a new beginning! We have a new life in Christ! Let us worship on Sunday. That created a controversy in the early church, which would be the proper day to worship the Lord?

- ***One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike.*** But then you have this character that esteems every day alike, Me! I mean every day is the Lord's day, giving every day to Him! When I wake up in the morning, I say, well good morning, Lord! What would You have me to do today? My life is Yours. My time is Yours. I give myself to You. Guide me today, Lord. I wish to do the things that You desire for me to do. I am Yours to command, beginning each day that way. Every day to me is the Lord' day. So, this 'day of worship' issue is irrelevant to me because it is every day for me. But there are some people that are really hung up on days.
- ***Let every man act according to his own conscience in these matters.*** Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. It is a matter of how God has dealt with you, individually. A believer should do only those things to which he can give himself fully and without reservation. (Col 3:17) *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.* Whatever you do for God, you should do with enthusiasm! This is a great guiding principle: if you have a question in your mind about something you are doing—whatever it is—for you it is wrong. It might not be wrong for me, but it is certainly wrong for you.
- ***Meeting together as body of Christ is very important!*** (Heb 10:25) *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* Although the day of the week that the body of Christ is to meet together is not so critical, it is most important that the body of Christ does meet together!

***Rom 14:6 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.***

- ***He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord*** (the Lord's Day); *and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it.* (In other words, it is not a conviction on his part.)
- ***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.*** This is, he feels, is the way the Lord would have me to be. He would not have to eat that, so I will not eat that. So, it is to the Lord that he follows that conviction. He gives God thanks. The key is that we all give God thanks. I give God thanks that I can eat a steak. They thank God that they are delivered from meat. You know, they do not have to eat meat. They think they are delivered. You know to tell you the truth, Paul may have had an occasional pork chop. He had great liberty.

***Rom 14:7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.***

- ***We are not to be living for ourselves,*** but we are to be living for Jesus Christ. (Php 1:21) *For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.*

**Rom 14:8** *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.*

- **For if we live, we live to the Lord;** We do it as to the Lord! If I have convictions on a certain issue, my convictions are to the Lord. I keep those convictions as to the Lord, as obedience to the Lord.
- **And if we die, we die to the Lord.** Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For before his own master, he either stands or falls. We belong to the Lord. We each one are to follow Him, being obedient to Him, because He is Lord!

**Rom 14:9** *For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.*

**Rom 14:10** *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.*

- **Before his own master, he either stands or falls.** We should not be judging one another. We are told in the Scriptures that we should judge ourselves. Therefore let a man examine himself for if we will judge ourselves, we will not be judged of God. One day you will answer to Him. One day I will answer to Him. Before his own master he either stands or falls. One day you are going to give an account of yourself before God.
- **For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.** There are two main judgments that are coming. **There is the judgment of the unbeliever,** which is found in *(Rev 20:11-12) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. [12] And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.* This happens at the end of the thousand year reign of Jesus Christ, when the dead, small and great, stand before God and the Books are opened and they are judged out of the things that are written in the books.
- **There is the judgment of the believer.** The believer will not be standing at that judgment bar because Jesus has stood there for us. He bore the judgment for our sins. Thus, we do not stand before God to be judged for our sins because through Jesus Christ our sins have been erased! In *(2Co 5:10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.* Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we seek to persuade men.
- **The judgment of the believers is different from what is commonly called the great White Throne judgment of God.** Believers will stand before Jesus Christ and His judgment seat. In the Greek, it is known as the Bema seat or the reward seat. So we stand before the Bema seat of Christ to receive the rewards for the things that we have done in our bodies.
- **For rewards! All believers' works will each be judged as to what sort they are.** Yes, you did a lot of wonderful things, but why did you do them? What was in your heart? What was the motivation behind those works? That is going to be an important issue in that day. That is why Jesus said, take heed to yourself that you do not do your righteousness before men to be seen of men because I say unto you, you have your reward. If you do your righteous deeds in such a way as to draw a lot of attention and a lot of glory to yourself, if that is your motivation, then, that will be your reward!
- **We believers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and we will receive the things** done in our bodies, whether good or bad. The works will be tried by fire. Many of the works will burn like wood, hay and stubble. There was no true substance to them. Those that survived the fire, those we will be rewarded for. This is where Jesus will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant. You have been faithful in the little things, now I will make you ruler over many, enter into the joy of the Lord!"
- **You are to be faithful with the gifts that you have been given by the Lord!** We remember the unfaithful servant that hid that which was entrusted to him, digging in the ground, burying it. When the Lord returned, he brought it back, Lord, I know you are a hard man, you reap where

you do not sow. (**Mat 25:26a**) *"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant. Jesus said you have judged yourself. We will all stand before the judgement seat of Christ. The sinners will stand before the judgment seat of God, Revelation chapter 20. The books will be opened and whoever's name is not found written in the Book of Life will be cast into the lake that is burning with fire. This is the second death, a whole different issue. But we will all, Paul declares here, stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Therefore, we are not to judge one another. We stand before a higher court. We will stand before Jesus Christ. He, in righteousness will judge us and reward us accordingly.*

**Rom 14:11** *For it is written: "AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS TO GOD."*

- **God declares this in (Isa 45:23)** *I have sworn by Myself; The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness, And shall not return, That to Me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall take an oath. Paul quotes this again in (Php 2:10-11) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, [11] and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*
- **I have sworn by Myself;** The Book of Hebrews tells us that because God can't swear by any higher. When an oath is taken, it is always taken by something higher. Because God, when He wants to confirm by an oath, there is nothing higher to swear by, so He swears by Himself. Whenever God takes an oath to confirm the truth of what He is saying, you can be sure of this truth more than you can be sure of your own name! When God takes an oath to confirm a fact, there is nothing more certain in all of the universe!. This will surely happen. What is it here? ***That every knee shall bow, that every tongue shall confess.*** Confess what? ***That Jesus Christ is Lord!*** We are talking about mastery, about lordship. *That Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father!* Amen and hallelujah!

**Rom 14:12** *So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.*

- **Of whom will you give account? Only of yourself!** You don't have to give an account for anyone else! Every one of us will give an account of ourselves. Not of our sins, but of what we did with the possessions the Lord gave us materially, the opportunities that He opened for us in ministry. The gifts He put into us spiritually. All of our works will pass through the fire! What comes out is all that will matter! Our motives, faithfulness and perseverance are so important!

**The Law of Love - Do Not Cause Another to Stumble - (Rom 13:8-10)** *Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. [9] For the commandments, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," "YOU SHALL NOT MURDER," "YOU SHALL NOT STEAL," "YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS," "YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." [10] Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

**Rom 14:13** *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.*

- **Now rather than judging, it is important that we watch ourselves,** that we not be a stumbling block to a weaker brother! That we not so flaunt our liberty in Christ that it causes a weaker brother to stumble because I have freedom to do certain things. May we always remember that the law of love trumps the law of liberty!

**Rom 14:14** *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.*

- **Jesus said (Mat 15:11,17-18)** *Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man." [17] Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? [18] But those things which proceed out of the mouth*

*come from the heart, and they defile a man.* For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. Paul gives this extremely broad statement. I know that there is nothing unclean of itself, but if you esteem it to be unclean, it is unclean!

- **If you have convictions on a certain thing, then it is important that you are true** to your convictions! Paul said, it is the conscience that we need to be concerned about. You do not want to do things that make you feel guilty. Nothing is unclean of itself. Now he, of course, is talking about meat, the unclean meat under the law. Nothing is unclean of itself. But to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
- **A problem in the early church was that many times when you bought meat** in the butcher shop, it was meat that had first of all been offered to idols. Some people had strong convictions about eating meat that had first offered to an idol. When they would go to the butcher shop and they would see a cut of meat, they would say, was that offered to an idol? If so, they would not buy it! Paul said when you buy your meat, do not ask. Also, when meat is set before you, just eat it asking no questions. That is just exactly what he is talking about. Just eat what is set before you, asking no questions. Do not ask, just eat it, enjoy it. Because the meat itself is not hurting you, unless you know that it was, and then conscience says, oh, my, this meat was offered to an idol. I should not eat this, you know. Then you feel all of the conviction, going around feeling this heavy conviction, I ate meat offered to an idol!
- **Nothing is unclean of itself, but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.** Because I esteem cigarette smoking to be unclean, to me it would be unclean. But I cannot pass that conviction on to you. I can try. But if you smoke, I should not be judging you nor should I think I am more spiritual than you are because I do not smoke!

**Rom 14:15** *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.*

- **Yet if your brother is grieved.** The first aspect of this means that your brother is made uneasy. He is hurt and troubled. He is confused and distressed by what you are doing. He is a conscientious Christian, but his understanding is limited. When he sees you eating these meats, he says I do not understand. It is wrong. It is terrible. I thought you were a Christian, but look what you are doing. You are eating unclean meat! He suffers not only in his mind, but in his spirit and heart. He is thoroughly unhappy. Secondly, “*grieved*,” being a strong expression, includes a further element. The weaker brother, seeing that you keep on doing this thing that he regards as wrong, begins to do it himself! Yet, though he does it, he feels condemned for what he is doing.
- **Because of your food, you are no longer walking in love.** The Jews regarded certain meats as unclean, and so did the pagans. But you do not, and you are not eating these meats. The words, ‘*because of your food*’ means that *your brother is grieved* by your eating of these particular meats, that to them are unclean.
- **Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died.** In this context, it would seem not to refer to damnation, but rather to a serious devastation of one's spiritual growth, likely damaging the peace of a weak brother. The peace of one that belongs to Christ, is most important, which is for whom He has so loved as to die! Therefore, it should be the object of the regard and affections of all who believe in Christ and love Him.
- **(Mat 18:3,6,14)** *and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. [6] "But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. [14] Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*

**Rom 14:16** *Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;*

- **Liberty does not mean license.** The believer is to use his liberty, not abuse it. We are always to keep in mind how our conduct will affect weaker Christians.
- **Your good.** The rightful exercise of one's Christian liberty. **(1Co 10:23)** *All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify.*

- **Be spoken of as evil.** To blaspheme. When unbelievers see a strong Christian abusing his freedom in Christ and harming a weaker brother, they will conclude that Christianity is filled with unloving people, which reflects badly on God's reputation. *(Rom 2:24) For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES BECAUSE OF YOU.*

***Rom 14:17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.***

- **Comparing the Kingdom of God to eating and drinking.** Consider how wonderful that the Kingdom of God is in you because Christ is in you! We need to be reminded that a great day is coming when you and I will have an exalted place in this Kingdom! When we think of that, we can understand the apostle's sarcasm when he talks about meat and drink. How pathetic it is! We rob ourselves of the most wonderful things in the Christian faith and the greatest glories, when we engage in this minutia. Do you know that the day is coming when you and I will be reigning in this Kingdom? Where is your sense of perspective? Where is your sense of proportion of balance? Do I realize who I am, behaving myself as if I still belong to the world?
- **We need to see that the first and greatest in the fundamental argument, is the Kingdom of God.** You start with that, then all you do and all you are thinking, must be governed by that. If not you will go off at a tangent and make a peripheral thing to be central. You will make yourself miserable, dividing the church, producing chaos and havoc, doing harm to the Kingdom of God! That is what Paul is saying.
- **But righteousness** – *(Rom 6:18-20, 22) And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. [19] I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. [20] For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. [22] But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life.* It is in this sense that the kingdom of God is righteousness. The first thing that happens, when I become a Christian is that I am put into the realm, the kingdom of righteousness. It is the kingdom of God. That is the sphere and the reign of righteousness.
- **And peace** - We belong to one body. If we keep this in the forefront of our mind, we will no longer quarrel about “non-essential” things. The moment you remember this you cannot quarrel and divide over these indifferent matters! It is unthinkable. You have forgotten that the great characteristic of the Kingdom is peace! Producing and maintaining peace.
- **What are we to do? We are to remember the words of our Lord** in *(Mat 5:9) Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God.* Peacemaking is to be the great characteristic of the children of God! Their Father is the God of peace and they, like their Father, are to be peacemakers. It means that we realize that the Lord Jesus Christ is not only the King of righteousness, but He is also the Prince of Peace, as we remember in *(Isa 9:6b) And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace!* You and I are to give the impression to the world that the chief characteristic of those who belong to the Prince of Peace and rejoice and glory in Him, are to be peacemakers, not given to scarcely speaking to one another because of attitudes toward eating and drinking and observing of days!
- **And joy in the Holy Spirit.** Another part of the Spirit's fruit, this describes an abiding attitude of praise and thanksgiving, regardless of circumstances, which flows from one's confidence in God's sovereignty. *(1Th 1:6) And you became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Spirit.* Unfortunately, it is often absent from the lives of believers. There should be joy in our heart and lives!

***Rom 14:18 For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men.***

- **Those are not the real issues.** The real *issues of the kingdom of God are righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.* That is what it is all about. It is not about whether or not I eat meat or I am a vegetarian. The kingdom of God is righteousness. It is peace. It is joy.

- **It is rather tragic that many people within the body of Christ want to so overemphasize** the differences of belief, that they are ready to fight. It is not emphasizing the differences that we might take concerning reformation theology. The kingdom of God is righteousness. It is peace and it is joy in the Holy Spirit. I feel really sorry for these people who believe they have the corner on the truth and if you do not believe the way we believe, brother, you know, you are wrong! Thus, are constantly attacking. They are attack sheep. Jesus said you are sheep. They are the attack sheep. They are snarling. Can you imagine a sheep, snarling and attacking? Oh help us. The kingdom of God is not meat or drink. It is not the differences. It is righteousness. It is peace. It is joy. It is walking in love.
- **Approved by men.** This refers to approving something after a careful examination, like a jeweler inspecting a stone to determine its quality and value. Christians are under the microscope of a skeptical world that is assessing how they live with and treat one another. (*Joh 13:35*) *By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.* (*Php 2:15*) *that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.*
- **There will be a literal kingdom on this earth.** He is talking here about the spiritual realm that you enter by the new birth. Christ is not served by eating and drinking, but our service to Him must pertain to *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.* In these things a believer is well pleasing to God and approved of men!
- **Approved of men does not mean that men will get in your cheering section** and applaud you because you are a believer. They may even persecute you. But underneath, men do approve of genuine believers, while they despise and reject that which is hypocritical and phony.
- **This is a great principle of conduct.** The walk and talk of the believer should please God and meet the approval of the conscience of men.

***Rom 14:19 Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.***

- **Let us follow the things where we can build up one another!** To encourage one another. To strengthen one another!
- **It is a tremendous example of what Paul is saying here.** Rather than having divisions or trying to emphasize positions, just walking in love with each other, realizing that Jesus Christ is Lord! He is the Lord of our lives. We live to please Him. One day we will stand before Him and to give an account of ourselves and those things which He has called us to do, our faithfulness and obedience to the things to which He has called us. So follow after those things that edify, things that build up. To press toward the mark of spiritual values: *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.* These are the things which build up the believer.

***Rom 14:20 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.***

- **If you eat and you feel guilty,** then it is wrong to do so.
- **For the sake of food. Do not tear down the work of God.** Of course the believer has the liberty to eat meat or abstain from it—but neither will commend him to God. We are not to tear down the work of God in the heart of some weak believer for the sake of some physical gratification.

***Rom 14:21 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.***

- **Paul returns to these two points: eating and drinking.** Then he goes beyond them with the sweeping statement: *nor do anything.* *Anything* that is questionable and is a matter of conscience for a weak brother, becomes wrong for the strong one. Do not lay a stumbling block before him. It is good not to do those things if you know that he has a conscience against it.

***Rom 14:22 Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.***

- **Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God.** It does not bother me. I can eat meat, or I can do this, you know. It does not bother me. (*Gal 6:4*) *But let each one examine his own work, and then he will have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.*
- **Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves.** Oh, what a powerful passage that is! Happy is the man who lives without a conscience that is constantly pounding him, **who does not condemn himself in what he approves!** How is your conscience?

**Rom 14:23** *But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.*

- **Whatever is not from faith is sin.** You are to believe in what you are doing. If you don't believe in it, you should not be doing it. Here is a new definition of sin for the believer: Any line of conduct or any act, which is not the outflow of faith becomes sin. This is the Holy Spirit's answer of questionable things. As the believer is saved by faith, just so the believer is to walk by faith.
- **Paul gives us the law of love.** Later on he will say, I will not eat meat as long as the earth stands, if it will cause my weaker brother to stumble. That is, he will not eat it in front of them. Do you have faith, liberty? Have it at home. Go ahead and eat your steaks.
- **We are to walk in love! The little things that divide us. But the cure and the answer always is, walk in love!** You will never go wrong. If we walk in love, we know we are right. God, help us to walk in love! **Psa (133:1)** *Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!* May God give us wisdom to walk in both liberty and love.

#### SUMMARY:

- May we be careful about **the way we are prone to judge someone else**, who seems to have a greater liberty than we have in certain actions. May we **not look down on someone who has convictions** about things that really do not bother us at all.
- May **our liberty not be hurting a weaker brother**. May we **be given the grace to walk in love before them so that they will not be stumbled** because of our liberties, recognizing, **Lord, that You are our Lord and Master.**
- May **we live before Him in a way that pleases Him**, being well aware that one day we will be standing before Him, bowing our knee, **confessing that Jesus Christ is Lord.**
- **We bow our knees. Right now, making that confession!** May it be a true confession acknowledged by our lives. Our lives of service to You, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ!
- **May we walk in love! The kingdom of God is not meat or drink.** It is not the differences. **It is righteousness. It is peace. It is joy. It is walking in love.**

#### CLOSING SONG:

**THE LOVE OF GOD** - Phelps, Penrod & Gardner (4:19/4:22)

*The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell  
It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell  
the guilty pair bowed down with care  
God gave his son to win  
His erring child, he reconciled and pardoned from his sins*

*Refrain: O love of God How rich and pure!  
How measureless and strong  
it shall forever more endure the saints and angels' song*

*Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the Skies of parchment made  
were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade  
to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry  
nor could a scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky*

#### CLOSING PRAYER:

**Read and meditate over Romans Chapter 15!**