

# Accepting

May 24, 2020

Romans 14:1-12

In our study today, Paul discusses accepting other believers even when they differ from you in some practices and beliefs. Romans is Paul's letter to the Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome. He encouraged their acceptance of each other in order to develop and mature their attitudes toward God and others. Believers should accept one another despite our non-essential differences. Christians can rest in the knowledge that God has accepted us even in our spiritual weakness.

If we truly believe that Jesus is Lord, we must accept others who likewise repent of sin and confess Jesus as Lord. Of course, differing beliefs in fundamental doctrine is non-negotiable but it seems too often we lose sight of our service to Christ to instead focus on our differences with others.

When you find yourself wanting to judge others, think about God's acceptance of you. Only His grace can explain why He accepted us. If His grace can reach down and save another poor sinner, who are we to challenge his or her convictions about something incidental simply because you don't share that same conviction?

All spiritually maturing believers can look back at some convictions that changed once we grew in the Lord. Even the apostles needed years with Jesus for training and spiritual maturity. Paul went to Arabia for three years before returning to Damascus (Gal. 1:17-18). This type of acceptance comes from spiritual maturity. *[excerpts from Don Schuman Pastor, Temple Church, Myrtle]*

## Stop Judging (Romans 14:1-4)

- Paul addresses two types of believers, the weak and the strong.
- Believers were not to spend their time and energy arguing ***"about disputed matters"***.
- Instead, Paul urged unity in the body and acceptance of all believers.
- The first point of contention dealt with dietary concerns.
  - Jesus taught that all foods were clean and could be eaten (Mark 7:18-19)
  - Peter learned in a vision they were free to eat all kinds of food (Acts 10:15).
- Paul called those who ate only vegetables "weak".
  - Some feared meat sold in the marketplace had been a sacrifice to idols.
  - Or perhaps the meat had not been prepared with Old Testament rules.
- The "strong" in the faith looked down on the "weak".
  - Self-righteous pride was in "strong" believers.
- Paul detested the division and called for Christians to refrain from being judgmental toward other believers.

### ***"Who art thou to judge another man's servant?"***

- In matters of religious practices, we need to show grace and acceptance, not judgment and disdain.

- **What issues stir debate in the church today?**
- **Why is unity among believers so important?**

*Accept one another,  
then, just as Christ  
accepted you.*

ROMANS 15:7 NIV



ROMANS 14:3

## Honor God (Romans 14:5-8)

- The second example of differences among the Roman believers related to observance of special days.
  - Jewish Christians observed Jewish feast days.
  - Gentile Christians may have paid attention to Roman “lucky” and “unlucky” days or days related to pagan feasts.
- The same division and disdain toward the two groups played out here as well.
- Paul warned both groups: ***“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”***
  - Paul was indifferent to the special days.
  - Each group needed to carefully think through their position and then put it into practice.
- Why was Paul indifferent?
  - Because whatever day they decide to observe, regard it ***“unto the Lord”***.
    - *Our goal should be to Honor Christ.*
- Actions to honor God by the days they did or did not observe (and the food they did or did not eat) should be recognized and appreciated by fellow believers, not judged and looked down on.
- ***“For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord”***.
  - Every aspect of our life (what we think, what we feel, what we desire, what we do) is done for the Lord. Christ is to be in control of every aspect.
  - The Lord also controls every aspect related to the believer’s death.
- ***“We are the Lord’s”*** – God has accepted us through faith, we belong to Him.
  - *Our goal in life must be to honor Him no matter the cost!*

➤ **How can you turn a disagreement into an opportunity to honor the Lord?**

➤ **Do you judge other believers who do things different from you? Why? For what purpose?**

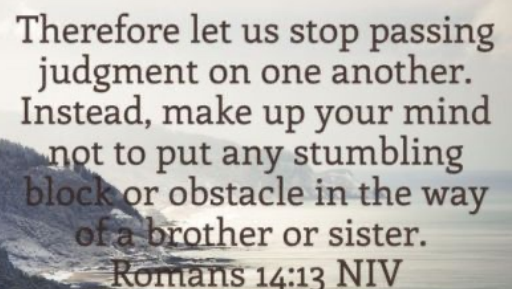
## Remove Obstacles (Romans 14:9-12)

- Whether the Roman Christians were “weak” or “strong”, they all had one thing in common.
    - They claimed Jesus as their Lord and Savior.
    - The thing they shared was infinitely more significant than any differences they had.
  - Paul commanded believers not to judge or despise because God had accepted both the weak and strong believer; fellow church members should accept him or her as well (14:3)
    - Rather than judging others, we need to remember our position as those whom God will judge. ***“As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me ...”***
    - Leaving all judgment to the Lord, frees us to relate to one another in love.
  - We must not allow judgmental attitudes to hinder people from coming to Christ or to prevent young believers from growing in their faith.
- **How can Christians show respect for another’s convictions?**
- **What can cause a Christian to become a stumbling block?**

**Biblical Truth: Believers should accept and encourage other believers to facilitate unity.**

*So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. Ephesians 2:19-22*

- 1** Accept Others (Romans 14:1-2)
- 2** Keep from Pride (Romans 14:3-4)
- 3** Live by One’s Conscience (Rom 14:5-6)



Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.  
Romans 14:13 NIV