

ROMANS 14:1-12

Welcome the person who is weak in faith—but not in order to argue about differences of opinion.

One person believes in eating everything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. Those who eat must not look down on the ones who don't, and the ones who don't eat must not judge the ones who do, because God has accepted them. Who are you to judge someone else's servants? They stand or fall before their own Lord (and they will stand, because the Lord has the power to make them stand).

One person considers some days to be more sacred than others, while another person considers all days to be the same. Each person must have their own convictions. Someone who thinks a day is sacred, thinks that way for the Lord. Those who eat, eat for the Lord, because they thank God. And those who don't eat, don't eat—for the Lord, and they thank the Lord too. We don't live for ourselves and we don't die for ourselves. If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord.

Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to God. This is why Christ died and lived: so He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. Why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you look down on your brother or sister? We will all stand in front of the judgment seat of God. Because it is written,

*As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me,
and every tongue will give praise to God.*

So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.

.....

Paul makes it personal: "each of us will be accountable to God." It is that final accountability to the God of the universe, not nit-picking over differences between "strong" and "weak" believers, that must be the focus of the bride of Christ (Leonard Sweet, 2016).

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September 17, 2017

Spiritually Accountable

From Paul's perspective, the final answer to all these questions and problems is the application of the law of love: "Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you" (15:7 NRSV). The noun 'Lord' (kyrios), is a reminder that everyone must answer to Christ (Lyons, 2008).

The crucified and risen Lord alone has the right to determine what obedience demands of each of His subjects. Christian liberty of conscience —the right to decide for oneself on matters of private opinion (Romans 14:6)—must not be confused with autonomy. The obedience we owe the Lord takes precedence over any differences we may have with fellow believers. And this alone is a matter of life-and-death importance. Disagreements over diet and days pale by comparison (Dunn, 2002).

We are called to welcome, accept, and love one another; but we live (and die) for the Lord alone. Every generosity we demonstrate is a product of our relationship with Christ. Nowhere in scripture are disciples asked to judge each other. Judgment belongs to God alone.

Love doesn't pull rank.

Love finds ways to encourage.

Love functions in community, so we love people together.

We acknowledge the authority of the living God and come under the Lordship of Christ.

Living surrendered to Jesus shows in our relationships.

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