

Romans 14

God is the ONLY Judge

Lorraine Day, M.D.

Let it not be forgotten that this chapter, as well as those which precede, is addressed to the true followers of Christ, and not to those who do not profess to serve the Lord. In the sixth verse it is plainly shown that all who are spoken of in this chapter are those who acknowledge God as their Lord.

This chapter therefore tells us how we should regard one another as Servants of One Common Master.

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

The group of true followers of Christ, the Called Ones (incorrectly translated as the “church”), are not all perfect people, but of those who are seeking perfection. Jesus is the perfect One, and He sends out the invitation: “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me.” Matthew 11:28

In John 6:37, Jesus said, “Him that comes to Me I will in no wise cast out.” It has been said that “God reaches for the hand of faith in man to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that man may attain to perfection of character.”

The faith may be very weak, but God does not reject him on that account.

2 For one believes that he may eat all things, yet another who is weak, is eating greens.

3 Let not him who is eating despise him who is not eating. And let not him who is not eating judge him who is eating, for God has received him.

The faith of a person may be very weak, but God does not reject him on that account. Paul thanked God that the faith of the Thessalonian brethren grew exceedingly (2Thess. 1:3), which shows that they did not have perfect faith at the first. It is true that God is so good, He is very patient and forbearing with those who are not well acquainted with Him, and He does not turn away from them

because they are doubtful. It is this very goodness and forbearance of God that develops perfect faith.

4 Who are you to judge another man's servant? To his own Master he stands or falls. Now he will be made to stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

It is not for the pupils to say who shall attend school. "There is no respect of persons with God." God invites the poor and needy, and the weak. It is He, and not the pupils, who decides who shall be admitted.

He says, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," and He asks all who hear to extend the invitation. The only qualification necessary for entering the school of Christ is willingness to learn of Him. If any man is willing to do His will, God will receive him and teach him. John 7:17

Whoever sets up any other standard, sets himself above God. No man has any right to reject one whom God receives.

5 One, indeed, is deciding for one day rather than another day, yet one is deciding for every day. Let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind.

6 He who is disposed to the day, is disposed to it to the Lord; and he who is eating, is eating to the Lord, for he is thanking God.

7 And he who is not eating, to the Lord is not eating, and is thanking God.

8 For not one of us is living to himself, and not one is dying to himself. For both, if we should be living, to the Lord are we living, and if we should be dying, to the Lord are we dying. Then both if we should be living and if we should be dying, we are the Lord's.

9 For this Christ died and lives, that He should be Lord of the dead as well as of the living.

10 Now why are you judging your brother? Or why are you also scorning your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Christ said to His disciples: “Be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master; and all you are brethren. Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master (Teacher), even Christ.” Matthew 23:8

It is the master who sets the task for each pupil or servant. It is to the master that the servant looks for his reward. Therefore it is the master alone who has the right to give orders, and to pronounce judgment if there is failure. “Who are you to judge another man’s servant?” If you do not have the power to reward his success, you do not have the right to judge his failures.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

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

God is the Judge

“He puts down one, and sets up another.” Psalm 75:7

“For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; He will save us.” Isaiah 33:22.

There is one Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; who art you to judge another?”

The power to save determines the right to judge.

Does this mean that everyone can make his own rules?

Absolutely not! The Bible says that we SHOULD JUDGE one another.

In the 5th and 6th Chapters of 1 Corinthians, Paul is speaking to the followers of Christ among the Corinthians who are tolerating fornication in their midst of believers. A man is sleeping with “his father’s wife,” he is sleeping with his step-mother. And the Corinthian believers are looking the other way.

Paul strongly rebukes them and tells them they **SHOULD be judging him** and removing him from their Christian group until he learns to behave himself and keep God’s commandments. Paul writes to the Corinthian believers, in 1 Corinthians, Chapter 5,

3 For I verily, as absent in body (I'm not there with you bodily), but present in spirit (I'm thinking about you), **I have JUDGED already**, as though I were present, concerning him that has done this deed.

4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,, when you are gathering together; and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ,

5 To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (to learn NOT to live by the lusts of the flesh), that the spirit (his spiritual nature) may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

6 Your glorying (in this sinful episode) is not good. Don't you know that a little leaven (sin) causes the whole lump (your whole group) to be contaminated with leaven (sin)?

7 Clean out therefore, the old leaven (Get this man out of your midst), that you may be a new lump, as you are unleavened. Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us;

8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth

9 I wrote to you in a letter NOT to associate with sexually immoral people.

10 Or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; consequently, you ought to come OUT of the world.

11 Now I have written to you NOT to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one you are not to eat. (Don't hang around with him.)

12 For what have I to do with judging them also that are outside (those who are NOT believers)? **But aren't you to judge those who are within** (those who claim they are believers)?

13 But those who are outside, God judges. **Therefore, put away from among yourselves that wicked person.** 1 Corinthians 5:3-13

The Saints Shall Judge the World -- AND Angels!

Here is yet another passage where we are told that **we SHOULD Judge**.

Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law (court) before the unrighteous (judge), and not before the saints?

Do you not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters?

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life.

I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able **to judge between his brethren?**

But brother goes to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers.
1 Corinthians 6:1-6

Are you now Confused? Should we judge one another OR should we NOT judge one another?

Paul is not suggesting that it should be a matter of indifference whether or not we keep the commandments of God - - quite the contrary, since we are all to appear before the judgment seat of Christ and be judged by God's commandments. But we are taught that in those things that God's laws do not speak of in particular, one man's ways are as good as another's.

God's laws include much more than the Ten Commandments. Certainly, we are to keep the Ten Commandments. These Commandments tell us that we are not to lie, steal, kill, covet, or commit adultery, we are to honor our parents, we are to keep God's Seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath holy, we are to have no other gods before the One True God of heaven, we are not to worship idols or take the Lord's name in vain.

But God has given us additional laws that are just as important as the Ten Commandments. We are to Love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, we are to forgive everyone who has ever wronged us, we are to tithe at least one-tenth of our money back to God, we are to follow God's laws about how we eat and how we take care of our body. The Bible tells us, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. . . If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." 1 Corinthians 3:16,17

The Bible is a letter from God to us

The Bible was written in prose, not in chapters and verses. Those were added long after the Bible was written, and the chapter and verse delineations were **not** inspired. But the Bible itself **was** inspired by God.

The Bible is a letter from God to us and includes everything we need to know about how to relate to Him and to our fellow man while we live on earth. But we must read the entire letter in order to know His will for our life. We cannot take a short passage here or there, out of context and in isolation, and interpret it to be in conflict with the rest of the Bible.

Just imagine that you wrote a long letter to your child about the harmful effects of the use of drugs, pages and pages telling him how dangerous drugs are, and you included one sentence that said, “Some people may say ‘Drugs will not hurt you.’

How would you feel if you were accused of saying that you told your son, “Drugs will not hurt you,” when in fact your whole letter testified to the fact that drugs are **very harmful**. Taken out of context, you indeed wrote these words to your son, “Drugs will not hurt you.” But what fraudulent trickery it would be for someone to accuse you in this way. They would have chosen to reject your entire letter and deceitfully quote one small sentence out of context to make you “say” the opposite of what you actually said.

We cannot make a doctrine out of one text, or one Bible passage. We must read the entire letter (the entire Bible) that God has written to us, and we must diligently study every passage on the particular issue that we are confronting.

Too many times Bible scholars just look for a Bible passage that supports what they already believe, or what they would wish, or the way they would like to live, or the way they would like to eat. Instead, we must study ALL the pertinent Bible passages that address the subject at hand. And we must interpret God’s Word in a way that truthfully encompasses ALL that the Bible says on that particular subject, not leaving out a single text or passage in our conclusion.

The Bible is very clear on the Seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath as the day we are to worship God. (Please see “Was Jesus Really Resurrected on Sunday?” at www.goodnewsaboutgod.com) God leaves no latitude for our choosing another day on which to worship. There are dozens and dozens of texts showing that God does NOT leave that issue to man.

The Bible is also very specific on God’s Ideal Diet. It is the diet 1) that God gave in the Garden of Eden, 2) that man ate for 1400 years on this earth, prior to the flood, 3) that God gave to the children of Israel in the wilderness for forty years, 4) that will be the diet for both man and animals in heaven and the new earth – a

vegan vegetarian diet. (Please see www.drdy.com and the DVD, “You Can’t Improve on God” and “Getting Started on Getting Well.”)

We cannot ignore all of God’s laws, commandments and decrees to interpret this one chapter in isolation. God says,

“If you love Me, **KEEP My Commandments!**” (John 14:15)

The Bible tells us that when Jesus comes again, the “saints” will be

“keeping the **Commandments of God** and have the faith of Jesus.”
(Revelation14:12)

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.

14 I have perceived and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is contaminating of itself, except that the one reckoning anything to be contaminating, to that one it is contaminating.

Remember, the Lord has said,

‘It is not that which goeth into the **mouth** that defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the **mouth**, this defileth a man. Matthew 15:11

These words of Paul in Romans 14:14, and of Jesus in Matthew 15:11, do not negate all the health laws of the Old Testament. Both Jesus and Paul are speaking of the heart and soul of a person. What we think in our mind and cherish in our heart – that is what really defiles us.

We do not worship a wishy-washy God!

God specifically tells us which day HE has made holy – the Seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath.

God specifically tells us His Ideal Diet – a vegan vegetarian diet.

As stated above, Paul is teaching us that in those things that God’s laws do not speak of in particular, one man’s ways are as good as another’s. We are not to let small issues become a stumbling block to a new Christian.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy food, now you are not walking charitably (with love). Destroy not him with your food, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of;

17 for the kingdom of God is not food and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Breath of Holiness).

18 For he that in these things serves Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men

19 Let us therefore follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another

20 For food, do not destroy the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eats with offense.

21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby your brother stumbles or is offended, or is made weak.

22 The faith that you have, have for yourself in God's sight. Happy is he who is not judging himself in that which he is attesting.

23 Now he who is doubting, if he should be eating, is condemned, seeing that it is not out of faith. Now everything that is not out of faith is sin.

Many errors arise from careless reading of the Bible, and from hasty conclusions from detached statements, as from willful perversion of the word. Possibly many more are the result of lack of proper thought than of deliberate willfulness. We must always take heed how we read.

Clean and Unclean

If we consider well the subject under consideration, we shall not wrest this scripture from its connection. The thing presented from the beginning of the chapter is the case of a man with so little real knowledge of Christ that he thinks righteousness is to be obtained by the eating of certain kinds of food, or by not eating certain things. The idea clearly conveyed by the entire chapter is that it is by faith, and not by eating and drinking, that we are saved.

"A little consideration of the question of clean and unclean food will help us much. There is a strange idea prevalent, to the effect that things that were at one time unfit for food are perfectly wholesome now. Many people seem to think that even unclean beasts – such as scavengers that eat dung - are made clean by the gospel. They forget that Christ purifies men, not beasts and reptiles.

"There were plants that were poisonous in the days of Moses, and those same plants are poisonous now. The very people who seem to think that the gospel makes everything fit to eat, would be as much disgusted at the thought of eating cats, dogs, caterpillars, spiders, flies, etc., as any Israelite would have been in the days of Moses. Instead of finding that a knowledge of Christ reconciles one to such a diet, we find, on the contrary, that it is only the most degraded savages who make use of them for food, and such a diet is both a sign and a cause of degradation. Enlightenment brings carefulness in the selection of food.

"There is no one who can imagine the apostle Paul or any other person of good sense and refinement eating everything that he could possibly find on earth. Although most people think themselves wiser than God in the matter of eating and drinking, there are, as there always have been, certain things universally held to be unfit for food. Therefore when the apostle says that nothing is unclean of itself, he evidently confines his remark to those things that God has provided for man's eating. There are people whose conscience is so poorly instructed that they fear to eat even of things that God has given to be eaten; just as there are some who forbid the eating of "food that God has created to be received with thanksgiving." 1 Timothy 4:3. Waggoner on Romans, E. J. Waggoner, Glad Tidings Publishers p 14.198

So when Paul says, "One believeth that he may eat all things," it is evident that the "all things" does not include filth. The idea evidently is that one believes that he may eat everything that is fit to be eaten. But another, having for instance the thought that some of those things may have been devoted to an idol, fears to eat of them lest he should thereby become an idolater. The eighth chapter of 1 Corinthians makes this whole subject plain, as it runs parallel with the fourteenth chapter of Romans.

This throws light also upon the subject of days. Since the apostle evidently confines his remarks concerning "food" to that which "is allowable to eat," it is clear that those "days" that may be considered as "all alike" are those "days" only which God has not sanctified to Himself.

The Nature of the Kingdom

"For the kingdom of God is not food and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."

Peace is a characteristic of the kingdom. Therefore those who are in the kingdom must follow the things that make for peace. But selfishness never causes peace. On the contrary, selfishness is always the cause of war, and inevitably produces war if it is persisted in. Therefore, the subject of the kingdom must always be ready to sacrifice his own desires and ideas in behalf of others.

Conclusion:

It becomes evident that the fourteenth chapter of Romans is simply a lesson in Christian courtesy and helpfulness instead of teaching that the Sabbath, or anything else that pertains to the commandments of God, may be disregarded at one's pleasure. Consideration is to be shown for "him that is weak in the faith. But the one who is offended by the keeping of the commandments of God, has no faith at all.