

Do You Show Respect To Others?  
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Romans 14:1-12

- Question: How many of you have at least one sibling? Keep hands up.
- Question 2: How many of your siblings act, think, live, EXACTLY LIKE YOU? Hands up.
- Question 3: How many of your siblings are VERY DIFFERENT than you?
- How many don't claim your siblings?!? Kidding!
- If your siblings are different from you and each other, does that mean you must not be in the same family?
- Even in the same family, the kids are all different.
- It's that way in God's family.

Let's read our text

Romans 14:1-12 (NIV)

1 Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters. 2 One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables. 3 The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him. 4 Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written:

“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,  
'every knee will bow before me;  
every tongue will confess to God.’”[a]

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

- Verse 1 says don't pass judgement on DISPUTABLE MATTERS. What are they?

- DISPUTABLE MATTERS are STRONG BELIEFS a Christian may have that are NOT DEFINED as SIN in SCRIPTURE.
- In this scripture Paul was talking about eating or NOT eating certain foods and observing as holy certain days...we'll talk more about that.
- Thinking about TODAY - What are some DISPUTABLE MATTERS that Christians disagree on or fight over?
  - Lifestyle or activities?
  - Appearance?
  - Doctrines?
  - Even versions or translations of scripture.

So what's the BIG IDEA of today's lesson?

There is a famous saying that applies to this text:

*"In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity" (or, Love) - German Lutheran theologian of the early seventeenth century, Rupertus Meldenius. (Rooper-tus Mel-den-ius)*

Question: What do you think that statement means?

The BIG IDEA of this lesson is this: Show RESPECT for other Christians, even when they don't think or act the way you do when it comes to the NON-ESSENTIALS.

Let's see what today's scripture tells us:

- Verse 1: Paul says "Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters"
- Some scholars say a more accurate translation is "weak in the faith"
- What Paul is talking about is not someone with WEAK FAITH but someone who hasn't yet FULLY GROWN INTO THE FULLNESS OF LIBERTY IN CHRIST...Christian FREEDOM.
- Verse 2 explains this: "One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables."
- Some of these believers in Rome had been saved from a life of IDOL WORSHIP
- Therefore, they would have been REPULSED with the idea of eating meat that might have been sacrificed to an idol and bought from the meat market in front of a pagan temple. So they might be VEGETARIANS to avoid the RISK of eating that meat.
- A believer Paul defines as STRONG (simply more mature about Christian FREEDOM) is described in verse 3: "The man who eats everything"
- Idols are not real so "meat is meat"..."prime rib is prime rib". If God created it I can eat it!
- Paul says that person "must not look down on" the vegetarian.
- Don't CONDEMN that person who IS A CHRISTIAN...but thinks and lives DIFFERENTLY when it comes to NON-ESSENTIALS
- Let's be clear: What's a NON-ESSENTIAL? NOT DEFINED AS SIN in scripture.
- Last part of verse 3: Why should we accept them? "Because God has accepted" them.
- Verse 4 really makes the point: Who are YOU to judge "someone else's servant"
- But, wait...aren't there times we are SUPPOSED to hold other believers accountable?

- Look at 1 Cor. 5:1-2. What's the difference? SIN as defined by scripture!
- If the thing that bothers you about another Christian is NOT DEFINED AS SIN in scripture...it's a NON-ESSENTIAL.

*"In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity" (or, Love)*

- *You don't have to AGREE with their choice but you DO have to ACCEPT and LOVE them.*
- Back to Romans 14, verse 5. Paul uses another example from that day.
- "One man considers one day more sacred than another...another, every day alike."
- Look at the next line...what does it say? "Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. What does that mean? Matters of CONSCIENCE.

Chuck Swindoll writes:

*Matters of conscience are those issues that involve no clear command of Scripture and therefore result in no sin. We are encouraged to hold one another accountable and to encourage one another to be morally pure. However, we are to be guided by our own conscience for other decisions. That's what it means to be "fully convinced in his own mind."*

- Question: When it comes to NON ESSENTIALS and we find ourselves saying: "A Christian shouldn't (fill in the blank)!" WHAT WOULD BE A GOOD QUESTION TO ASK OURSELVES ABOUT THAT? Where is that found in scripture?

Some of us get so SANCTIMONIOUS in our beliefs on NON ESSENTIALS we think that one day people will stand before the judgement seat of ME. It's the judgement seat of CHRIST!

- In the last six verses Paul sums this up by making it clear GOD IS GOD and we're not!

6 He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God. 7 For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. 8 If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

9 For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.

- You may not see "eye to eye" with that Christian brother or sister on the NON ESSENTIALS...but CHRIST DIED FOR THEM TOO!

10 You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. 11 It is written:

“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,

'every knee will bow before me;  
every tongue will confess to God.'"[a]

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

- Each of us will give an account...to GOD. Not to Brother Bill or Sister Sarah...to GOD.
- Question: Why are we not QUALIFIED to judge others in the way God is?

Quoting Swindoll again:

*We are not omniscient, so our judgment doesn't have all the facts. We are not objective, so our judgment is tainted by self-interest. We are not perfect, so our judgment is hypocritical. We are not God, so our judgment has no jurisdiction.*

Warren Wiersbe puts it bluntly regarding this scripture passage:

*"The church is divided and weakened because Christians will not allow Jesus Christ to be Lord."*

How many of you have ever heard of Bob Jones University in my hometown of Greenville, S.C.? What do you know about it? I have many friends who attended there. John MacArthur went there. To say it is STRICT and CONSERVATIVE is an understatement.

Dr. Bob Jones, Sr. had occasion to have a meeting with C.S. Lewis in Oxford. According to a biography of Lewis, Dr. Bob, Sr. was asked what he thought of C.S. Lewis. He was quoted as saying:

*"That man", said Dr Jones fiercely, 'smokes a pipe, and that man drinks liquor--but I do believe he is a Christian!"* (C. S. Lewis: A Biography)

In Matthew 18:15-17 Jesus gives us specific instructions how to confront a brother or sister in SIN. But when it comes to matters NOT DEFINED AS SIN in SCRIPTURE, Paul asks: "Who are you to judge?"

So, What's The Takeaway?

- Like any family, the SIBLINGS in the family of God (born again believers) are all different. God doesn't require us to all be alike to be his "kids".
- "What are we saying about God's authority as our Heavenly Father when we disrespectfully criticize and look down on one another.?" (Leader's Guide)
- Even if someone doesn't see things the same as you or me on the NON-ESSENTIALS...we are to ACCEPT THEM and RESPECT THEM and LOVE THEM
- Remember:
- *"In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity" (or, Love)*

