

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Zoom Meeting ID:

 **828 7580 6094** ► **Thursday October 9, 2025**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Romans 14:11–12 (NASB95) ¹¹For it is written, “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.” ¹²So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

The Unity of Strong and Weak Christians—part 1

Receive One Another with Understanding

Romans 14:1–9 (NLT)

¹Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. ²For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables.³Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them. ⁴Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.

⁵In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that

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whichever day you choose is acceptable. ⁶Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God. ⁷For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. ⁸If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.⁹Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.

Romans 14:1–9 (NASB95)

¹Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. ²One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. ³The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him. ⁴Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

⁵One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ⁷For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

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POINT – 1 GOD RECEIVES THEM

¹Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. ²One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. ³The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him (14:1–3)

The first reason all believers should receive all other believers is that God receives them. The **one man** who **has faith that he may eat all things** obviously refers to the stronger, more mature Christian who appreciates and exercises his freedom in Christ. The first example of freedom is that of the Christian's right to **eat all things**.

The gospel of the New Covenant in Jesus Christ includes no ceremonial or dietary restrictions, Mosaic or otherwise. However, after Peter began his ministry, He was still afraid to eat animals that were declared ceremonially unclean under Old Testament law. It took three repeated declarations by the Lord in a vision to convince Peter that **“What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy” (Acts 10:15–16)**. The greater teaching of the vision was that Peter **“should not call any man [that is, Gentiles] unholy or unclean” (v. 28)**.

As noted earlier, some Gentile believers, like some Jews, were troubled by the eating of certain foods, but for different reasons. Because of the idolatry and immorality related to their former religions, they could not bring themselves to eat meat or any other food that had been used as an offering to a pagan deity. Like Peter, they were still spiritually **weak** in regard to such things. Consequently, some Christian Jews and Gentiles would eat **vegetables only**, taking no chance of eating meat they considered to be defiled by idols.

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In verse 3 Paul gives a double injunction. The first is to the strong, to whom he says, **Let not him who eats regard with contempt him [the weak] who does not eat.** Many Jews of that day regarded all Gentiles **with contempt**, and many Greeks and Romans had the similar regard for those they referred to as barbarians.

It seems unlikely that many genuine Christians in the early church, at Rome or elsewhere, looked down on certain other believers **with contempt** in its most extreme sense. But it takes only one extremist to damage an entire congregation. Throughout the ages, churches have been plagued by those who proudly consider themselves to be spiritually superior.

Paul's next injunction is to the weak: **and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats.** Like **regard with contempt**, the term **judge** translates a strong basic meaning of separating and isolating. In a legal sense it referred to finding an accused person guilty of a crime.

In this verse, **regard with contempt** and **judge** are essentially synonymous. In both cases, one type of person disdains the other, and both are wrong. The strong member considers the weak member to be legalistic and self-righteous, and the weak member judges the strong member to be irresponsible at best and utterly and shamelessly immoral at worst.

Although the phrase **God has accepted him** directly follows **him who eats** (the strong), the context makes clear that divine acceptance applies both to the strong and to the weak, to the one who eats freely and to the one who does not. Paul's point is that, if God Himself does not make an issue of such things, what right does one of His children have to do so? If the strong and the weak have equal

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acceptance by and fellowship with the Lord, it is sinful arrogance for those two kinds of believers not to accept each other.

POINT 2 - THE LORD SUSTAINS EACH BELIEVER

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. (14:4)

The second reason every Christian should accept every other Christian is that the Lord sustains them all. A believer who is “strong” about matters that are not doctrinal or moral, and that are neither commanded nor forbidden in Scripture, is just as much in need of God’s strength as the one who is “weak.” We are *all* weak in the sense that everything good and righteous we possess is a gift of God, never the product of our own wisdom or efforts.

But the remaining influence of the flesh often tempts liberated believers to think legalists are so rigid and self-righteous that they sacrifice not only much personal joy but also limit their usefulness to the Lord. On the other hand, the same fleshly influence tempts legalists to believe that liberated believers are self-centered and loose-living and therefore cannot serve the Lord effectively.

Being well aware of those tendencies, Paul confronts both groups with the stinging rhetorical question, **Who, are you to judge the servant of another?** What right do any of you, mature or immature, well taught or poorly taught, have **to judge the servant of another**, especially a fellow **servant** of Jesus Christ? A believer’s personal assessment of other believers does not in the least affect their standing before the Lord. Paul wrote, **“To me it is a very small thing that I should be examined by you, or by any human court; in fact, I do not even examine myself. For I am conscious of nothing against myself, yet I am not by this acquitted; but**

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the one who examines me is the Lord. Therefore, do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness and disclose the motives of men's hearts; and then each man's praise will come to him from God" (1 Cor. 4:3–5).

It is **to his own master**, namely, Jesus Christ, that each believer **stands or falls**. And as far as matters of religious tradition and preference are concerned, every believer, strong and weak, will pass divine judgment, because the Lord does not take such things into account. **Stand he will**, Paul says of every believer, because **the Lord is able**, and obviously willing, **to make him stand**.

Earlier in the letter Paul posed a similar rhetorical question. "Who will bring a charge against God's elect?" He asks. "God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us" (Rom. 8:33–34). "For I am convinced," he continues a few verses later, "that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (vv. 38–39).

Jesus Himself assures those who belong to Him: "I give eternal life to them, and they shall never perish; and no one shall snatch them out of My hand" (John 10:27–28). The closing benediction of Jude's brief epistle reflects that promise, reminding believers of "Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy" (Jude 24).

The writer of Hebrews confirms that Christ "is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them

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(Heb. 7:25). Paul proclaimed his confidence “that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

Discussion Questions:

- 1. In 14:1 how are we to respond to someone who is weak in faith ? Why is this so important in the body of Christ?**
- 2. How would you describe a person who is weak in their faith according to 14:2 ?**
- 3. What attitudes should we have towards those who differ with us on non-moral issues according to 14:3?**
- 4. 14:4 Why do we have no business judging fellow Christians ?**

POINT 3 - THE LORD IS SOVEREIGN TO EACH BELIEVER

⁵One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind.

⁶He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. ⁷For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; ⁸for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living. (14:5–9)

The third reason every Christian should accept every other Christian is that the Lord Jesus Christ is sovereign to each believer. Whether strong or weak, a sincere

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believer feels free or not free to do certain things out of the same motive: to please his Lord. Neither one is more or less spiritual or faithful because of his convictions. Being “strong” in this sense is not synonymous with being spiritual, and being “weak” is not synonymous with being carnal. The problem in the church at Rome, as in many churches since that day, was that some believers of both persuasions thought themselves to be more spiritual and the others to be more carnal. Paul’s whole purpose in these verses, and in the larger context of (14:1–15:13), was to enlighten believers of those false, divisive, and destructive notions.

His first example has to do with the religious significance and observance of certain days. He continues to address both strong and weak believers, noting that **one man** (the weak) **regards one day above another**, whereas **another** (the strong) **regards every day alike**.

For Jews, the Sabbath referred not only to the seventh day of the week, the day of rest and worship, but to a number of other days and periods that were celebrated and specially observed. Some pagan religions also celebrated certain days or seasons.

As with the eating of certain foods, the weak Jewish Christian remained strongly attached to the special days of Judaism and felt compelled to observe them. The weak Gentile, on the other hand, wanted to separate himself as far as possible from the special days of his former paganism because of their idolatrous and immoral character.

Paul admonished believers in Colossae: “**Let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day**” (Col. 2:16). He did not advise either the forsaking or the following of such customs, but

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rather reminded his readers of their unimportance. ¹⁷For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality. (Col. 2:17 NLT)

The apostle's words to the Galatian churches in that regard was much harsher, because some believers were returning to customs and rituals from which they had once considered themselves liberated. "How is it," he asked, "that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? You observe days and months and seasons and years" (Gal. 4:9–10).

Paul insists that **each man be fully convinced in his own mind** about observing or not observing the Sabbath or any other day. In this context, **mind** obviously includes the heart and conscience, our deepest convictions and motives. Before God, it is not a matter of observance or nonobservance but of intent. The sincere weaker brother **who observes the day, observes it for the Lord**. The sincere stronger brother **who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God**. And again, the weaker believer **who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God**.

In matters that are not specifically commanded or forbidden in Scripture, it is always wrong to go against conscience, because our conscience represents what we actually believe to be right. To go against our conscience, therefore, is to do that which we believe is wrong. And although an act or practice in itself may not be sinful, it is treated as sinful for those who are convinced in their own minds that it is wrong, and produces guilt.

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It is also sinful, however, to try to impose our personal convictions on others, because, in doing so, we are tempting them to go against their own consciences. Paul is therefore giving a twofold command: Do not compromise your own conscience in order to conform to the conscience of another believer and do not attempt to lead another believer to compromise his conscience to conform to yours.

As already noted, the greater responsibility is on the strong believer, for the very reason that he is better informed in the Word and more mature in his understanding. Paul therefore sternly warns the strong Christian: **“Take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol’s temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge, he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ” (1 Cor. 8:9–12). Speaking for himself, he continues, “Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, that I might not cause my brother to stumble” (1 Cor. 8:13).**

That is the principle he emphasizes next in our present text: **For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.** In all of Scripture, there is no greater call for holy living and for submission to the sovereign and unconditional lordship of Jesus Christ.

Neither the strong nor the weak **lives for himself** or **dies for himself**, and for the same reason—both of them **live for the Lord** and both of them **die for the Lord**.

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What we do for other believers, we do not only for their sakes but for our Lord's sake, because, **whether we live or die, we are the Lord's**. Christ is our mutual **Lord**, our mutual sovereign; and therefore, everything we do, even in our dying, should be to please and to glorify our sovereign Savior and Lord.

We belong wholly to Christ because we **"have been bought with a price"** (1 Cor. 6:20; cf. 7:23) that He Himself paid with His own blood for our redemption (Eph. 1:7). Paul charged the Ephesian elders to **"be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood"** (Acts 20:28).

We are the Lord's in the fullest possible sense, and **to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living**. To deny the *lordship* of Jesus Christ in the life of *any* believer is to deny the full work, power, and purpose of His crucifixion and resurrection. It seems inconceivable that genuine believers who love and serve the Lord and are well taught in His Word can maintain, as some do, that it is possible for a person to receive Jesus Christ as Savior but not as Lord. He died not only to save us but to own us, not only to free us from sin but to enslave us to Himself. Although the early church fully appreciated and praised Christ for His saviorhood, their earliest and most common confession was, "Jesus is Lord."

Only when He returns will Christ be universally acknowledged as sovereign Lord, at which time **"every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord"** (Phil. 2:11; cf. Rev. 17:14; 19:16). But He will not *become* Lord at that time. He already *is* **"the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords"** (1 Tim. 6:15).

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Discussion Questions:

- 1. What is the driving motivation and concern in all of these non-moral issues? 14:6**
- 2. What underlying principle governs our lives in these verses 14:7-8 ?
How is this helpful?**
- 3. What is Christ's position over us 14:9 ? How does this fit into this context?**
- 4. What stood out to you in this lesson? How can you apply it to your life?**

Closing Prayer