



## ACCEPTING THE DIFFERENCES

September 14 &15, 2024

### **Romans 14:1-23 (NLT)**

Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong. For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables. Those 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. Who 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. In 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 whichever day you choose is acceptable. Those 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. For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves. If 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. Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead. So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.

For the Scriptures say, "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God." Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall. I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died. Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good. For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

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If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too. So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up. Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble. You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God.

### **Romans 15:1-13 (NLT)**

We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me." Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled. May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.

Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory. Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors. He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: "For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name." And in another place, it is written, "Rejoice with his people, you Gentiles. "And yet again, "Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles.

Praise him, all you people of the earth." And in another place Isaiah said, "The heir to David's throne will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hope on him." I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.

## **3 Reasons We Reject One Another**

### **1. Our minor differences in beliefs.**

#### **Romans 14:1 (NLT)**

Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong.

### **2. Our minor differences in what we eat or drink.**

### **3. Our desire to make them more like us in faith and actions.**

## 6 Ways We Accept One Another:



**Build each other up instead of judging one another.**

**Romans 14:1a (NLT)**

Accept other believers who are weak in faith...

## 6 Reasons We Should Not Judge One Another:

- God has already accepted us. *Verse 3*
- It's not my responsibility to judge others. *Verse 4*
- I don't know other people's motives. *Verses 5-6*
- We are all a part of the family of God. *Verse 7*
- Only Christ has the right to judge. *Verses 8-9*
- I'm only accountable to God for myself. *Verses 10-12*



**Value everyone enough to limit my personal desires.**

**Romans 14:15 (NLT)**

And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died.

**Galatians 5:13 (NLT)**

For you have been called to live in freedom, my brothers and sisters. But don't use your freedom to satisfy your sinful nature. Instead, use your freedom to serve one another in love.

**1 Corinthians 8:9 (NLT)**

But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble.



**Focus on what's most important rather than the insignificant.**

**Romans 14:16-17 (TPT)**

So don't give people the opportunity to slander what you know to be good. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of rules about food and drink, but is in the realm of the Holy Spirit, filled with righteousness, peace, and joy.

**Colossians 3:1-2 (NLT)**

Since you have been raised to new life with Christ, set your sights on the realities of heaven, where Christ sits in the place of honor at God's right hand. Think about the things of heaven, not the things of earth.

4

**Limit my liberty out of love for others.**

**Romans 14:20 (NLT)**

Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble.

**When Should I Limit My Liberty?**

- **When it violates a clear standard in the Bible.**

**1 John 3:4 (NLT)**

Everyone who sins is breaking God's law, for all sin is contrary to the law of God.

- **When I know I should do good and I don't.**

**James 4:17 (NLT)**

Remember, it is sin to know what you ought to do and then not do it.

- **When I'm not sure if it's wrong but my conscience is prompted.**

**Romans 14:23 (NLT)**

But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.

- **When I cause a fellow believer to stumble into sin.**

**1 Corinthians 8:9-13 (NLT)**

But you must be careful so that your freedom does not cause others with a weaker conscience to stumble. For if others see you — with your “superior knowledge”—eating in the temple of an idol, won't they be encouraged to violate their conscience by eating food that has been offered to an idol? So because of your superior knowledge, a weak believer for whom Christ died will be destroyed. And when you sin against other believers by encouraging them to do something they believe is wrong, you are sinning against Christ. So if what I eat causes another believer to sin, I will never eat meat again as long as I live—for I don't want to cause another believer to stumble.

**1 Corinthians 10:23-24 (NLT)**

You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is good for you. You say, “I am allowed to do anything”—but not everything is beneficial. Don't be concerned for your own good but for the good of others.

5

**Refuse to force my opinions or standards on someone else.**

**Romans 14:22 (NLT)**

You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right.

**Romans 12:18 (NLT)**

Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.



**Live by faith alone.**

**Romans 15:1-3 (NLT)**

"We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me."

**Galatians 3:10-13a (NLT)**

But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law." So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through obeying the law that a person has life." But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law.

**Romans 15:13 (NLT)**

I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.