

Prayer:

Slide # 1

Romans

Theme: The Righteousness of God – The Gospel of God

Outline:

- **Prologue:** 1:1-17
- **Doctrinal:** 1:18-8:39
God’s holiness – man’s sinfulness – 1:18-3:20
Justification by grace through faith – 3:21-5:21
Sanctification of the believer – 6:1-8:39
- **Dispensational:** 9:1-11:36 (The place of Israel and the church)
- **Practical: 12:1-15:33** (Duties and privileges of the believer)
- **Epilogue:** 16:1-27

Paul, in Romans, after laying the gospel foundation that we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, then develops the theme of how we should then live. As believers, we have a LIVING faith that is to be lived out!

In Romans 12-15 Paul shows how our faith is to be lived out in the context of relationships and responsibilities. Disproportionately, he deals at great length with the importance of harmonious relationships in the body of Christ as seen here in Romans 14 and 15.

It is HARD for people to get along. We expect this of unbelievers.

Slide # 2

Titus 3:3 (NKJV)

3 For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, **hateful and hating one another.**

This is how the world carries on, but that is not how God’s people are expected to carry on. We are now new creations in Christ. We now have the Holy Spirit. However, we also still have the old flesh nature – and right there is where the rub comes in.

For the motley crew that makes up the body of Christ, to get along well, is to the glory of God. Biblical love that thinks of the other person is to define true believers. Christ said all men would know we are His disciples by our love for one another (Jn. 13:34-35).

Unity among God's people is a major theme in the NT. Indeed, it is to be a unity centered in TRUTH and centered in HOLINESS. But to show you how important this is, note Paul's letter to the Corinthian Church as seen in 1st Corinthians. The church at Corinth had lots of problems including problems with open immorality and drunkenness at the Lord's table. Yet, the very first thing he deals with in the letter is the issue of UNITY.

As a church, we are made up of all kinds of people who come from all sorts of backgrounds. There are young and old. We have differences in education, personalities, stations in life, and life experiences. Some come from a pagan background, others from a very religious background. The one thing we, as true believers, all share in COMMON is our FAITH in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Some are mature, and some are immature. And yet God, by His grace, expects us all to get along.

In this scenario, there is a special responsibility that falls on the mature to work with the immature and bring them along. And that is what Paul now deals with in Romans 14. Those stronger in the faith are to be very tolerant of those who need to grow. It requires walking in love, and love is always costly to the one loving. By the way, this is the stuff of good shepherding. Good shepherding is not FORCEFUL with the weak, but rather patient and tolerant as it seeks to bring them along.

Slide # 3

Romans 15:1 (NKJV)

1 We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

Romans 14:1–6 (NKJV)

1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

To "**receive**" means to accept them for who they are or fully welcome them as a brother or sister in Christ. There is no probation here. It means to accept fully (cf. Acts 18:25; 28:2; Philemon 17).

Note they are weak in the faith but they are in the faith. This means that they are a true believer, and on that basis, they are to be accepted.

And in accepting them into the fellowship we are not to receive them with the mentality that we are now going to argue them straight. Sometimes people can have just enough knowledge to be dangerous. They might even be right in what they know, but they go about it completely wrong. These people do more damage than good.

The weak are to be received, “**but not to disputes over doubtful things.**” “**Doubtful things**” is more literally “**reasonings**” or “**opinions**”. These are matters of opinion that are not matters of essential doctrine.

The sense here is that the person weak in faith is to be received but not for the purpose of arguing over his opinions concerning religious scruples. The weak person has “**convictions**” that may reflect immaturity or a lack of understanding, but those spiritually more mature should not have the attitude, “*Well, I will accept you as a believer, but I am now going to argue with you until you see things properly.*”

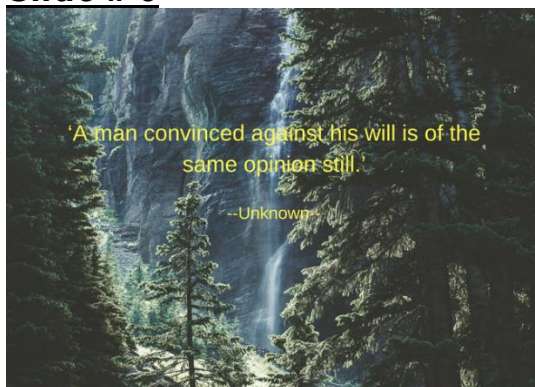
You can’t argue people into the kingdom, and once they are saved, you can’t argue with them into maturity, either. That is not the right approach.

Slide # 4

2 Timothy 2:24 (NKJV)

24 And a servant of the Lord **must not quarrel** but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient,

Slide # 5



Think about this: How many times in your life has someone successfully, in a quarrelsome way, forcefully argued you into their position?

I think that seldom works for thoughtful people. It is often seen as simply more heat than light – which is often the case. I know for myself quiet, thoughtful reasoning consistent with facts and logic most often carries the day for me in bring about a change of my mind.

As a brand new believer, I went off to Bible college. I was so green I didn't even know about eternal security. One evening, I was with an upper classmate, and we were down doing laundry in a dimly lit room. I don't even remember the context of what we are talking about, but he was just kind of reasoning out loud, and he said, "You know, ***if you could lose your salvation, that would mean you are working to keep it. That would amount to a works salvation.***" It was like a light came on in my mind! I saw clearly. Instantly my entire theology was turned right side up and the guy talking didn't even know it.

Quiet reasoning with a teachable heart is far more profitable than disputing over "doubtful things."

Slide # 6

Philippians 3:15 (NKJV)

15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and **if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you.**

We have to give room for God to work with the weak.

Someone says, well what about what Paul says in 1 Cor. 1:10.

Slide # 7

1 Corinthians 1:10 (NKJV)

10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all **speak the same thing**, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the **same mind** and in the **same judgment**.

But I want you to note the CONTEXT here. Paul is addressing the saints in Corinth who call on the name of Jesus Christ as Lord (1 Cor. 1:2). They had the testimony of Christ confirmed in them (v. 6) and were in "the fellowship of His Son" (v. 9). In that context they were arguing and having division over human leaders (v. 11-13). In that context Paul is urging for UNIFORMITY regarding the Lordship authority of the Person of Christ.

When it comes to the Lordship of Christ, we must all speak the same thing, have the same mind and the same judgment. Our unity is centered in Christ not mere human leadership. Note that in 1 Cor. 1:10 Paul says, “***I plead with you...by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ***”.

When it comes to the gospel of Christ involving the person and work of Christ, there is to be absolute UNIFORMITY in our thinking.

Slide # 8

2 John 9 (NKJV)

9 Whoever transgresses and does **not abide in the doctrine of Christ** does not have God. He who **abides in the doctrine of Christ** has both the Father and the Son.

When it comes to gospel truth, there is to be no tolerance of error, as Paul brings out in Galatians (Gal. 1:8-9). But what Paul is talking about in Romans 14 is not dealing with the fundamental gospel issues. Rather, he is dealing with areas where Christians can agree to disagree and still have fellowship. Paul is dealing with what we might term as “Gray Area Scruples.” Gray Areas are those areas not specifically dealt with in Scripture and scruples are a kind of moral compass involving the conscience in the regarding of what is right and wrong.

Paul in Romans has just dealt with the issues of carousing, drunkenness, sexual promiscuity, sensuality, strife, and jealousy. The Bible clearly speaks to these kinds of issues showing that they are wrong! No debate there!

Slide # 9

1 Thessalonians 4:3 (NKJV)

3 For **this is the will of God**, your sanctification: that you should **abstain from sexual immorality**;

When the Bible clearly speaks, that ends the argument! There is to be UNIFORMITY there. However, there are many “**Gray Areas**” where the Bible doesn’t specifically speak, and how people approach these areas differs depending on various factors, including maturity. So “convictions” or “scruples” about various things differ. It becomes a matter of conscience related to where the person is at spiritually. Here we must give space.

No one’s conscience but his own can direct him. He may be taught the Word, however, and God will bring him along. He must not be forced. – ***William Newell***

Note that Paul realizes it is inevitable that Christians will not agree on every secondary thing. There are many “Gray Areas” where Christians may disagree. Here are some examples.

Slide # 10

“Gray Area Scruples”

1. Homeschooling
2. Vaccinations
3. Translations
4. Style of Music
5. Alcohol
6. Sunday
7. Christmas
8. Politics
9. Theaters
10. Eating at a Bar and Grill
11. Dress
12. Giving
13. Tobacco
14. Sports
15. Diet

The thing about “Gray Area Scruples” is that oftentimes people get it in their minds that their thinking is a CONVICTION that should be held by all – and therefore, they seek to promote their agenda and make it a matter of fellowship.

Believe as I believe, No more, no less; That I am right, And no one else, confess; Feel as I feel, Think only as I think; Eat what I eat, and drink but what I drink; Look as I look, Do always as I do; Then and only then, Will I fellowship with you. – **Unknown Author**

What Paul is saying is that there are certain “scruples” (differences of opinion) for which we should make allowance – especially in relationship to those who are spiritually weak.

The weak are immature and untaught, and as Paul unfolds his argument, he shows they may actually be WRONG (cf. Rom. 14:14). Weakness is not strength. Sincere new believers often tend to have a “legalistic” tendency - thinking everything is “**black and white**.” They need to be strengthened.

However, there is a right way to go about bringing them along. In this growth process, Paul has instructions for both the weak and the strong. No two-thinking people agree on everything, and we should not expect that in the Church, there is going to be a UNIFORMITY of thinking across the board. Certainly not when there are differing levels of maturity which is always the case.

Someone has well said, “**Christians are not clones.**” We are all at different places in our journey of faith. And we need to give space for this reality instead of having a critical spirit.

And Paul shows this goes both ways. He has instructions for both the weak and the strong, which, in effect, illustrates how LOVE is to handle this type of situation.

Paul now gives examples of differences in thinking in the body where unity is to prevail in spite of these differences. Again, we are not talking about fundamental gospel doctrine or essential doctrine, but rather secondary issues related to growth and maturity.

2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

We don't know that Paul is dealing with the exact situation he dealt with in 1 Corinthians 8-10, but it is noteworthy that we believe he was writing from Corinth in the context of his third missionary journey (cf. Acts 20:1-3).

It is not specifically stated but many commentators think it probable that those who would eat only vegetables were probably converted Jews who were now skeptical to eat anything out of the secular market that would have been considered “unkosher”.

So here is a difference. The strong believed (and rightly so) that they could eat any and everything. After all Christ Himself said, “whatever enters a man from the outside cannot defile him” (Mk. 7:18). Paul is very clear in 1 Tim. 4.

Slide # 11

1 Timothy 4:4–5 (NKJV)

4 For every creature of God is good, and **nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving;**

5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

Yet, a Jew who had been raised his whole life to believe that some things were “unclean” – such a person would probably carry scruples about eating with them into conversion. They might look back to Daniel and his friends who ate vegetables only and hold them up as a model to emulate (Dan. 1:8, 10, 12, 16). Peter had to be shown through direct revelation that it was okay to eat what he had previously considered “unclean”.

Slide # 12

Acts 10:13–15 (NKJV)

13 And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.”

14 But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For **I have never eaten anything common or unclean.**”

15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, “**What God has cleansed you must not call common.**”

This matter of eating or not eating is not a matter of salvation. It is not a gospel matter. It is a matter of growth, and so Paul counsels...

3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

The one who realizes he has the freedom to eat should not despise him who does not eat. He should not look down on him and think little of him because of it. He should not treat him with contempt! And on the flip side, the one who does not eat should not judge him who eats as thinking they are in sin. And the reason is because ***“God has received him.”***

God has received him should probably be understood in relation to both the strong and the weak. Certainly, in verse one, the weak person is to be received because he is in the faith, and then here, in verse 3, the closest antecedent is the strong one who eats – God has received him.

In both cases, God has received them because they are both believers – they are both in the faith. God receives people on the basis of FAITH ALONE! There is nothing else required as Paul has labored at length to show earlier in the book.

Slide # 13

Romans 5:1 (NKJV)

1 Therefore, having been **justified by faith**, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ,

This is the KEY point. Because both are believers, there can be fellowship.

Yes, admittedly, one is weak, and one is strong, but there can still be fellowship. Yes, the whole counsel of God shows we seek to bring the weak along to a position of strength, but we do so gently and winsomely, and not forcefully in a way that would push them to violate their conscience.

If we separate from those who differ from us on minor matters, we will soon be left all alone. In fact, I don't always even agree with myself!

- **Steven Cole**

There is a great lesson here. It is not always wise or right to forcefully correct everything at every point. There is a proper and a wise way to bring the weak along that doesn't violate their conscience.

I have known well-intended believers who think it is their job to jump on any and every little thing that is out of line in another believer's life. They are what has been referred to as "**Well-intended dragons.**"

There are dragons of a different sort, decidedly real. In most cases, though not always, they do not intend to be sinister; in fact, they're usually quite friendly. But their charm belies their power to destroy.

Within the church, they are often sincere, well-meaning saints, but they leave ulcers, strained relationships, and hard feelings in their wake. They don't consider themselves difficult people. They don't sit up nights thinking of ways to be nasty. Often they are pillars of the community—talented, strong personalities, deservedly respected—but for some reason, they undermine the ministry of the church. They are not naturally rebellious or pathological; they are loyal church members, convinced they're serving God, but they wind up doing more harm than good.

They can drive pastors crazy ...

(Identifying a Dragon) - Marshall Shelley

One time, we had a guy come to our church – who had previously been in the ministry. I was young and he thought it was his job to mentor me. I have had a few of these guys! Admittedly I could use all the help I could find – providing it is truly helpful.

But as we went along, this guy turned out to be a rigid "legalist" who thought he was strong, but in fact, he was very weak. He had a list of all the things wrong in the church.

He said some guy sat up front with his legs crossed and he thought it was disgraceful and that I should confront him about it. He thought it shameful that we had a business meeting on a Sunday night, he complained that a missionary had his hair too long. This was all in one meeting with him and this was just part of his list.

He was a well-intended dragon. He was an example of a weak brother who judges others who have liberty and are actually strong. Well, he did not stick around too long, and in fact, as we went along, he came to want nothing to do with me.

How dare we reject a person whom God has accepted? Indeed, the best way to determine what our attitude toward other people should be is to determine what God's attitude toward them is. – **John Stott**

Indeed, if God has received them – who are we to reject them? The great issue in the matter of fellowship is whether they are a true believer or not. If they are a true believer, then we can have fellowship if a sin issue is not involved (which is an important qualifier). We can work with ignorance. We can work with weakness - and we who are strong are told to do so.

But the weak brother is also not to have an attitude of condemnation towards the strong. This issue of NOT having a critical spirit goes both ways. If we are believers, we are to give “space” to one another. Biblical LOVE involves properly agreeing to disagree on secondary matters.

4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

It is very human to judge others quickly.

H. A. Ironside related a story about a certain bishop in New York. The bishop was sailing for Europe and found that he was to share a cabin with another passenger whom he did not know. After he had met his cabin mate, he went to the ship's captain and asked if he could leave his gold watch and other valuables in the ship's safe. He explained that normally he would not do that, but he had been to his cabin and had met the man who was in the other bunk. He said that judging from his appearance, he was afraid that he might not be trustworthy.

The captain took his valuables to store in the safe and said, “I'll be glad to take care of them for you, bishop. The other man has already been up here and left his valuables for the same reason.”

Who do we think we are to judge God's servant? This is God's prerogative alone! In matters of conscience, God's servants are ultimately accountable to God alone and no one else. In matters of conscience, each person must be allowed to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12-13). No one should ever try and play God in another believer's life! That is way out of bounds. This is assuming the role of God!

Christian fellowship does not imply a right to run other people's lives for them; only Christ can – and will – discharge such a right.

– *New International Bible Commentary*

This assumes that the believer is God's servant. We are here for His purposes and to serve at His good pleasure. We answer to Him!

The word "servant" (Gk. oiketen) here literally means "household slave" or "domestic slave". These slaves were like family with trusted positions.

Note the emphasis that this person belongs to the Lord as seen in the fact that the LORD is referred to as "**his own master.**" As believers, we belong to the Lord. He bought us with His blood. He is our Master – meaning our Lord.

Slide # 14

1 Corinthians 6:19–20 (NKJV)

19 Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and **you are not your own?**

20 For **you were bought at a price;** therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

Colossians 4:1 (NKJV)

1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Every believer knows the Lord as his Master and it is to Him as our Master that we ultimately stand or fall. And the promise here is that every believer will be made to stand with the reason being, "**God is able to make him stand.**"

God is not going to lose anyone! One day we will all STAND before Him as holy children of God – and we will stand there because of His work in our lives.

We are saved by grace and we stand by grace. It is God Who “began a good work” in us and it is He Who will complete it (Phil. 1:6). It is God who gives the increase (1 Cor. 3:6) and it is God makes us stand (cf. 1 Thess. 5:23-24). We are His workmanship (Eph. 2:10). He doesn’t make junk and He completes His projects.

Slide # 15

1 Corinthians 1:8–9 (NKJV)

8 who will also **confirm you to the end**, that you may be **blameless** in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

9 **God is faithful**, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Thessalonians 5:23–24 (NKJV)

23 Now may the God of peace Himself **sanctify you completely**; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be **preserved blameless** at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

24 He who calls you **is faithful, who also will do it.**

God is able to make us stand, and He will do it! He is going to bring all of His children through. This is the eternal security of the believer – all believers both strong and weak. We are not secure because of our hold on God, but rather because of His hold on us (Jn. 10:28-29). 1 Peter 1:5 says we are “kept by the power of God through faith.” As Paul said in Romans 8:31, “If God is for us, who can be against us?”

Mutual toleration is a Christian virtue. God accepts each believer, along with issues stemming from his background and maturity level, and is able to sanctify him. - **HCSB**

This is true for both the weak and the strong believer. “In Christ,” there is no condemnation for any believer (Rom. 8:1). “In Christ,” nothing can separate us from the love of God (Rom. 8:38-39).

Again, this admonishment to not judge goes both ways – to the one who eats and to the one who doesn’t. Both are God’s servants. Both are accountable to God. God alone is their Master. Ultimately, we don’t give account to anyone else or for anyone else.

It is encouraging to know that our success in the Christian life does not depend on the opinions or attitudes of other Christians. God is the Judge, and He is able to make us stand. – **Warren Wiersbe**

Suppose two men worked at a factory and one said to the other, “You are doing a terrible job!” What this co-worker says does not really matter. He is not the boss. If the boss tells him that he is doing a terrible job, then he needs to be concerned. – **George Zellar**

If a servant is acceptable to his master, it does not matter what his fellow servants think. – **Leon Morris**

As I often say, we ultimately serve an “**audience of ONE.**” In the end, it won’t matter what anyone else says – it will only matter what God says. Live to please Him!

Slide # 16

1 Corinthians 4:5 (NKJV)

5 Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one’s praise will come from God.

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

First, he spoke of diet, and now he speaks of days. Again, most think this probably has either the feast days of Israel in view or the Sabbath. We can understand how a saved Jew might, in his heart, still think there is some value to observing either the Sabbath or other special religious holidays that they have observed for their whole life.

On the other hand, a Gentile not raised with that background might think every day is the same – every day is holy to the Lord.

Again, there is no explicit NT teaching either forbidding or commanding the keeping of religious holidays. So, either is fine as long as it is not made to be a matter of salvation or sanctification – in which case, every believer is free to function according to his own conscience.

It is important to know that elsewhere Paul did wave a red flag about legalistic tendencies when it comes to the observing of certain days.

Slide # 17

Galatians 4:10–11 (NKJV)

10 You observe days and months and seasons and years.

11 I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain.

Colossians 2:16–17 (NKJV)

16 So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths,

17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

In other words, Paul is saying if you have personal “scruples” regarding the setting aside of certain days – that is a personal conviction, and that is okay, but to impinge your views on others in a legalistic way is wrong.

Nowhere in the NT is the believer commanded to kept the Sabbath (which was Saturday). Neither are we told that Sunday is now the new Sabbath. Some argue it is a creation ordinance in effect since Creation, as seen in Genesis 2:3, where it says God sanctified the 7th day. But there is a problem with this: God never commanded mankind to keep the Sabbath prior to the time of Moses. Second, the Sabbath commandment was only given to Israel, which was unique to them as God’s covenant people. Believers today are not under the law at all as indicated by Paul in Romans 6:14-15, 7:1-3; and 10:4.

Now the question is, supposing the divine obligation of one day in seven to have been recognized by him [Paul] *in any form*, could he have thus spoken? The obvious inference from his strain of arguing is, that he *knew of no such obligation*, but believed *all times and days to be*, to the Christian strong in faith, ALIKE. I do not see how the passage can be otherwise understood. If any one day in the week were invested with the sacred character of the Sabbath, it would have been *wholly impossible* for the Apostle to commend or uphold the man who judged all days worthy of equal honour, [because he must then be seen]... as violating a command of God. *I therefore infer, that sabbatical obligation to keep any day, whether seventh or first, was not recognized in apostolic times.* [- **Henry Alford's Greek Testament Commentary** comments under Romans 14:5]

Some have claimed that Sunday is now the Lord’s Day based on Revelation 1:10. That may have some merit. Christ was risen from the dead on the 1st day of the week (Lk. 24:1-9). The next two Sundays, Christ met with His disciples (Jn 20:19, 26).

The Holy Spirit was sent on the Day of Pentecost – which was a Sunday (Acts 2). The disciples assembled on the first day of the week as seen in Acts 20:7. Paul instructed the Christians to take up a collection on the first day of the week as seen in 1 Cor. 16:2.

Ever since the early days of the Church it has been the custom of the church to assemble in worship on the first day of the week in honor of the risen Lord Who rose from the dead on Sunday and instituted a whole new order things.

Now we are under grace and not under law. We are told not to forsake the assembling (Heb. 10:25) but we are not under lawish obligations. Rather now love is to govern our lives. We assemble because we want to – not because we have to.

Yet, Paul again counsels that we give space here. Believers with differing backgrounds will come at this from differing perspectives and that is to be tolerated. Paul says in relation to these secondary matters, **“Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.”**

Slide # 18

Paul’s instruction is, **Let each man be fully assured in his own mind.** Moses never could have said a thing like that! There is a sense in which these words reveal our liberty in Christ, as does no other single passage. – **William Newell**

The law was all black and white. Under grace there is liberty to make choices and there is to be allowance for differences of thinking. And through it all God is at work ever maturing us in grace.

I have often said that Christianity is a thinking person’s faith. Here again, the mind is to be engaged. We are not to try and do another person’s thinking (which is not really possible) but rather let each person reason it out for themselves. Ultimately, before God, every person is responsible for their own thinking.

All people have a right to their own convictions. This principle is basic in dealing with disputes. – **The Nelson Study Bible**

Take “Covid” as a prime example. Some people in effect said, “If you don’t think and act like I do then you are not loving.” Other, in effect said, “If you don’t think like me then you are an idiot.” But this is the point. People based on a whole host of things reach differing conclusions – they have differing opinions. Let each be fully persuaded in their own mind!

The challenge is to think through the lens of Scripture and to rightly divide our thinking in keeping with rightly dividing the Word.

But maturity takes time and we give space without condemning someone for not thinking exactly like we might think.

It's important that you not violate your conscience, because to do so is not to act in faith, which is sin (14:22-23). As you grow in your knowledge of the Word, your conscience becomes more informed. You will see that keeping or not keeping certain days is not the issue; rather glorifying God in all that you do is the issue ([1 Cor. 10:31](#)). But on these non-essential matters, don't judge your brother; judge yourself. Obey God as you understand His Word, seeking Him for more understanding. – **Steven Cole**

To go along with what others do simply because they do it and without being convinced for oneself can be a dangerous practice. Specifically, the weak brother can hurt his conscience by following the strong brother's practice without holding the strong brother's convictions. – **Leon Morris**

Frankly, it is cultic to say to people, "Just check your brains and follow me." Yes, we teach people, yes we reason with them, but in the end people are responsible to do their own thinking and function according to their conscience. The goal is always maturity – and sharing the truth in love is how we get there.

Slide # 19

Colossians 1:28–29 (NKJV)

28 Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we **may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.**

29 To this end I also labor, striving according to His working which works in me mightily.

6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

Here Paul gives the interpretive KEY. Here is the bottom line issue that is to drive every Christian in all that they do.

Do they as a matter of conscience do it **“to the Lord”**. We are not under the “Law” but we are under the “Lord”. It is this reality of the Lordship of Christ that is to be the guiding factor in every believer's life.

The word “Lord” is found four times in verse 6. In verses 6-9 it is found eight times. This is one of the strongest passages in the NT on the Lordship of Christ. The Lordship of Christ guiding the conscience is now the believer's rule for life.

Slide # 20

- to the Lord
- to the Lord
- to the Lord
- to the Lord

If one is sincerely doing whatever they are doing as unto the Lord (as long as it is obviously not contrary to Scripture), then their hearts are right before God and we should not get in the way of that reality.

Slide # 21

1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV)

31 Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or **whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.**

Colossians 3:17 (NKJV)

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, **do all in the name of the Lord** Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)

23 And whatever you do, **do it heartily, as to the Lord** and not to men,

Both the strong and the weak brother, in this case, are serious about serving the Lord. They both recognize Jesus as Master and are desiring to do His will in keeping with a clear conscience.

Whether weak or strong, the motive behind a believer's decisions about issues of conscience must be to please the Lord.

– John MacArthur

Motives in non-essential matters is really what matters. Let's make some practical application. “Can you go to a blasphemous movie that contains profanity and sexual immorality?”

The answer is this: “Can you go to that movie ‘for the Lord’? Will going there enhance your relationship with Him? Will it bring glory to Him? What kind of music should you listen to? Which kind of TV programs should you watch? How much time should you give to social media? How should you spend your Sundays? How should you spend your free time?”

Apply this principle to any non-essential matter where the Bible does not give a direct command: ***Can I do it for the Lord and His glory?*** That is the ultimate issue! Your motive is crucial. (Adapted from Steven Cole)

Let each be fully convinced in his own mind – is this truly for the Lord and His glory?

Two of the mightiest preachers of England in the 19th century were Charles Spurgeon and Joseph Parker. Early in their ministries, they were close friends and even exchanged pulpits. Then they had a disagreement. Spurgeon accused Parker of being unspiritual because he attended the theater, and Parker condemned Spurgeon because he smoked cigars. Spurgeon argued that he did not smoke to excess, but when asked what he meant, he said, “No more than two at a time.” Who was right? Perhaps neither, perhaps both!

- R. Kent Hughes

Who are you to judge another’s servant? Let each be fully convinced in his own mind.

An interesting illustration of this truth is given in [John 21:15-25](#). Jesus had restored Peter to his place as an apostle, and once again He told him, “**Follow me.**” Peter began to follow Christ, but then he heard someone walking behind him. It was the apostle John.

Then Peter asked Jesus, “Lord ... what shall this man do?”

Notice the Lord’s reply: “**What is that to you? You follow Me!**” In other words, “Peter, you worry about yourself. You make sure you follow Me as Lord of your life. Let Me worry about John.” Whenever I hear believers condemning other Christians because of something they disagree with, something that is not essential or forbidden in the Word, I feel like saying, “**What is that to you? Follow Christ! Let Him be the Lord of your life!**” (Adapted from Warren Wiersbe)

Indeed, let every person be fully convinced in their own mind, and whatever you do – do it with a clear conscience as unto the Lord! Follow Him! He alone is our Lord! Let the Lord be the Lord!