

## *Responsible Faith*

*ROMANS 14:10-23*

*“Do the strong in faith have to forgo anything about which the weaker believer might object? In a world with so much variety there is hardly anything you or I might do that will not be objected to by some other believer. Moreover, there are believers on both sides of most issues. If we were to listen to what all these other Christians have to say and try to live by their standards, we would either fall into a new legalism or go crazy trying to balance thousands of conflicting claims on our behavior.*

*William Barclay expresses this well when he writes, ‘Paul is not saying that we must always allow our conduct to be dominated and dictated by the views, and even the prejudices, of others; there are matters which are essentially matters of principle, and in them a man must take his own way. But there are a great many things which are neutral and indifferent, ... and it is Paul’s conviction that in such things we have no right to give offence to the more scrupulous brother.’*

*Barclay says, ‘It is a Christian duty to think of everything, not as it affects ourselves only, but also as it affects others.’ This is the part of what it means for a believer in Christ to be guided by a Christian mind.” Boice*

- I. Our Lord and Master is very concerned over how we treat one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. When we judge other believers concerning disputable matters, we put ourselves in His place by holding them accountable to our standards instead of His. Our concern should be to make sure that we conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of grace, knowing that we will all stand before him at the Bema Seat judgment.

Rom. 14:10-12

2 Ti. 4:7-8

**2 Cor. 5:10** *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*

- II. Jesus has given us tremendous responsibility to live our faith in ways that build others up instead of tear them down. He has given us freedom to live our lives as our conscience dictates concerning disputable matters, but we must judge whether what we allow hurts or helps others who are weak in their faith. We will be judged on whether our freedom has caused others to stumble morally, spiritually or emotionally.

Rom. 14:13-16

Acts 15:28-29

1 Cor. 8

*“Scripture does not merely say, ‘Stop judging’; it says, ‘Stop judging others; if you want to judge, start with yourself.’” Ray Stedman*

- III. Paul exhorts us to keep an eternal perspective concerning all matters of the faith. Our allegiance is to God and his kingdom, and our actions are to reflect that. His kingdom is righteousness, peace and joy. It is pure, it is without discord or angst or threat in any form, and it is a place where we will live with a constant and unwavering sense of joy and gratitude. This is how we are to be toward one another here on earth as we make it our goal to please Him and those whom He has brought into our lives.

Rom. 14:17-18

- IV. The Lord has called the strong to be sensitive to how our actions toward disputable matters affects others. He wants us to make it our goal to live in ways that build up the body of Christ for mutual edification. Therefore, we must make every effort to make sure that we do not keep those whose conscience condemns them on disputable matters from stumbling in their faith.

Rom. 14:19-15:2