

ROMANS CHAPTER 14

Romans 14:1

Who is the weak person described in this verse? He is weak, not strong, but he is a believer because he is "in the faith." He is weak in his doctrinal understanding. Perhaps he is a new believer or perhaps a believer who has failed to grow in the things of God (2 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 3:1-4). Perhaps he has not been under sound teaching. This weak believer is not living in sin. There is no indication from the context that there is a moral problem involved. However, the person does not understand what Christian liberty is all about.

What is our responsibility toward this weak brother? "RECEIVE" such an one. Do not reject this person. Receive him, take him to yourself, accept him, count him as one of you, consider him a beloved brother in Christ. This word "receive" is illustrated in Acts 28:2: "And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and RECEIVED us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold." Paul was received kindly by these uncultured people and treated very well. Weak believers need to be treated kindly and well, for Christ's sake.

Why should we receive this weak believer? The reason is given at the end of verse 3: "for God hath received him." See also Romans 15:7. If Christ received him, how can we reject him? How thankful we should be that the Lord received us: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; **and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out**" (John 6:37)! God has received us and will never cast us out or turn us away.

"**Doubtful disputations**"--do not receive the weak believer for the purpose of having a big dispute and quarrel. Do not take him in just to criticize his scruples and to pass judgment on his opinions: "I'll let you come into our assembly, but you need to realize that when it comes to what things Christians are allowed to eat, you have much to learn!" "You are welcome here, even though you have some serious hang ups and we will need to straighten you out." "Now that you are one of us, let's have a debate about what we should and should not eat, and I'll prove from the Scriptures that you are wrong!" This is not the way the weak brother is to be received.

Romans 14:2

The believer with a correct doctrinal understanding knows that he may eat all things. Under the law, the Jews had certain foods that they could eat and certain foods that they could not eat (see Leviticus 11). God was teaching them to make a distinction between the clean and the unclean, the holy and the unholy (Lev. 11:44-47). During the present dispensation nothing which God has created is off-limits if it be received with thanksgiving: "For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Tim. 4:4-5). The weak believer mentioned in Romans 14:2 was in the habit of eating only herbs or vegetables, believing that it was not permissible to eat all things (believing that meats were off-limits).

Romans 14:3

This verse serves as warning to both the strong and the weak believer. The strong believer's tendency would be to despise the weak (hold him in contempt, look down upon him). The weak believer's tendency would be to judge or criticize or condemn the strong believer.

The strong believer might say, "You foolish vegetarian! How can you be so doctrinally weak? Don't you know that as believers in Christ we can eat all things?" [DESPISING]

The weak believer might say, "You should not eat meat. You should not eat pork. You are wrong to do this!" [JUDGING]

The last phrase in verse 3 ["for God hath received him"] may refer only to the strong believer who is being judged by the weak believer, but it may refer to both ["him that eateth not" and "him that eateth"]. Even if it refers only to "him that eateth" it still remains true that God has received both. God has graciously received every believer (Romans 15:7) and because of this we are to receive our fellow believers, whether weak or strong (see Rom. 14:1 where believers are told to receive those who are weak).

It should be noted that God (through Paul) mentions the one "who is weak" (verse 1) but does not refer to the strong believer as "strong." Even a believer who is mature and understands doctrinal issues is very weak apart from the grace of God (compare 2 Timothy 2:1, "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus") and is even prone to certain sins such as despising his brother (Romans 13:3,10) and being lifted up in pride because of his knowledge (1 Cor. 8:1). It is in our weakness that we learn God's strength (2 Cor. 12:10).

Romans 14:4

This verse is for the person who judges his fellow believer because of what he eats. The word "servant" refers to a household slave. The one judging needs to realize that he is not the head of the house. He is not this man's master or lord. He is merely a fellow servant, a fellow slave, a fellow believer. A servant is responsible to his master only. To his master he is answerable and to no one else. The master is the only one who has the right to judge him. The believer's Master is the LORD Jesus Christ (see verse 9). The believer is accountable and responsible to Him. It is before His judgment seat that we shall stand (verse 10).

Suppose two men worked at a factory and one said to the other, "You are doing a terrible job!" What this co-worker says, whether true or false, 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.

What kind of Master is our Lord Jesus? Our Lord does not want His servants to fall. He wants them to stand. God holds them up. God is for them and not against them (Rom. 8:31). As the hymn says, "Upheld by His gracious, omnipotent hand." God is able to make them stand! As believers we should imitate our God in this. Our desire ought to be to hold up our fellow believers and do everything we can to help them stand. We must not push them down by JUDGING them or by DESPISING them. May we lift them up and help them on to higher ground. "Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:26).

Romans 14:5

Our subject now moves from foods to days. Should we regard one day as more special or more holy than another day? One believer thinks so but another believer considers each day the same. On the question of foods Paul identified the weak believer (verse 2). Here Paul does not make such an identification. One believer picks out one day and says, "This day is special. This day is holy." The other believer considers all days to be holy: "Saturday is just as holy as Sunday and Sunday is just as holy as Monday." Which believer is right? Which believer is the strong believer with the correct doctrinal understanding of days?

Elsewhere Paul warned against the legalistic danger of observing certain days: "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain" (Gal. 4:10-11). It is true that the custom of believers has been to worship on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week (Sunday), the day Christ arose from the dead. Hebrews 10:25 gives strong warning to those who may forsake the assembling of themselves together with believers. However, in the New Testament we never find the command: "KEEP THE LORD'S DAY!" For the believer in Christ, every day is "holy ground," as we serve the Saviour and walk in a manner worthy of our high, heavenly and holy calling (Eph. 4:1). Obviously we should not be more dedicated to Christ on Sunday than we are on every other day. However, in religious circles we admit that there are many "Sunday-only Christians" who put on a very good show on Sunday morning and live quite differently the rest of the week. Brethren, such things ought not to be so!

The same principle applies to GIVING. It is the weak believer who thinks that one tenth of his income belongs to the Lord and the rest belongs to himself: "I have ten dimes. This one dime is holy and special. It is the tithe. The other nine are for my own use." The strong believer sees things much differently: "All that I have belongs to the

Lord because I am not my own; I am bought with a price (1 Cor. 6:19-20). I may give one or more of my ten dimes to the local assembly, but the remaining dimes belong to the Lord also and I want to be a good steward of all that God gives me."

Romans 14:5 pertains to the question of Sabbath keeping in apostolic times. Alford comments on this passage:

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,—who as in verse 6 paid *no regard* to the (any) day. He must have visited him with his strongest disapprobation, 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.* [Alford's Greek Testament, comments under Romans 14:5]

William Newell, in his commentary on Romans, quotes from the church fathers concerning their understanding of the Sabbath observance. He quotes Ignatius who was martyred about 115 AD: "Those who were concerned with old things have come to newness of confidence, no longer keeping Sabbaths, but living according to the Lord's Day, on whom our life, as risen again, through Him, depends." Justin Martyr (martyred about 168 AD) when reproached by Trypho with "giving up the Sabbath," said this: "How can we keep the Sabbath, who rest from sin all the days of the week?" For further study see the MBC paper entitled, [The Sabbath and The Lord's Day](#).

At the end of verse 5 Paul said, "Let every man be FULLY PERSUADED (fully convinced, certain, assured) in his own mind." Today we are living in a time when the importance of doctrine is minimized and the attitude often is this: "It doesn't really matter what Christians believe, especially on issues where there are differing opinions. The important thing is that we love each other." But notice that Paul does not say that these things are unimportant. He does not say: "It doesn't matter what you believe about eating foods and observing days." No, on the contrary he says that every believer should be convinced in his own mind about these matters. Let God convince you and persuade you as to what is right! We are to love those who are weak in the faith (verses 1 and 3) and we are to build them up, but God never encourages the believer to be weak in the faith and weak in doctrine. When it comes to doctrinal issues and matters of faith and practice, believers need to be "fully persuaded." May God help us to stand, withstand and understand!

Romans 14:6

Not only should the believer be "fully persuaded" (v. 5), but he should do what he does "to the Lord" (v. 6). "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, **as to the Lord**, and not unto men; knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23-24). Verse 6 treats both debatable topics which have been introduced: eating (v. 2) and regarding or esteeming days (v. 5). The structure of the verse is that of CHIASMUS or inverse parallelism:

- A. The weak believer who regards the day
 - B. The strong believer who does not regard the day
 - B. The strong believer who eats (all things)--see verse 2.
- A. The weak believer who does not eat (all things), just herbs.

Although there are differences in practice with respect to eating and observing days, it is important to note that as far as each person is concerned the motive is right, the heart is right and the attitude is right. Each believer is doing what he does TO THE LORD, to please the Lord and to honor the Lord. Each one is doing it with thanksgiving, being God-conscious. Each one is putting into practice the principle of 1 Corinthians 10:31--

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, **do all to the glory of God.**" The believer who recognized that he was free to eat all things was careful to give God thanks (see 1 Timothy 4:3-5). The believer who ate herbs (v. 2) was careful to give God thanks for the herbs that were set before him. The early Christians gave thanks to God when eating (see Paul's good example in Acts 27:35).

Romans 14:7-9

What we do is important and every believer needs to be fully persuaded in his own mind. **How we do** what we do is even more important, and every believer needs to make sure he does what he does as unto the Lord. The real issue is the fact that "WE ARE THE LORD'S." We belong to Him spirit, soul and body! He is our Master and we are His slaves. This is our Christian liberty: we are FREE to serve Christ as His love-slaves! No believer "lives to himself" (v. 7). Why not? This is explained in 2 Corinthians 5:14-15, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, **that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.**" We no longer are to live for ourselves. We spent all of our unsaved life living this way (1 Pet. 4:1-2). Rather we are to live for the One who died and rose again for us.

Christian living is LIVING UNTO HIM--to serve Him, to honor Him, to please Him, to gladly obey Him. We are to MAGNIFY HIM whether it be by living or by dying (see Phil. 1:20-23). Even our dying is to be a service rendered unto Him (compare John 21:19). Our living and our dying are in His hands because we belong to Him. He rules our days and the length of our days. Death does not change the relationship. He is our Lord when we are alive. He is our Lord when we are dead. If anything, death IMPROVES the relationship because to depart and to be with Christ is FAR BETTER (Phil. 1:23) and is considered "GAIN" (Phil. 1:21), and to be absent from the body is to be PRESENT WITH THE LORD (2 Cor. 5:8). Christ died and rose and revived (lived again) for this purpose, that He might be LORD (Phil. 2:9-11).

1. I am not my own Lord (1 Cor. 6:19-20).
2. I am not Lord and Judge over my fellow believers (Rom. 14:10).
3. HE IS LORD and I am His servant and love slave, serving with my fellow believers, accountable to Him and to Him alone!

Romans 14:10

The thought of this verse goes back to verse 3. In verse 3 the weak believer was told not to judge his brother and the strong believer was told not to despise the weak believer. Believers must not judge other believers and must not show contempt for them. In light of verse 6, remember that the person you are judging or showing contempt for is YOUR BROTHER. He has the right attitude, the right heart, and he is serving the Lord and giving thanks. His motivation is right. He is not your enemy. Seek to help him and edify him and be an example before him, but don't judge him or look down upon him. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself will be the Judge of every true believer: "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

"**We**"--in the context this refers to believers only, those "who are the Lord's" (v. 8).

"**Shall**"--this is a future event to take place immediately after the rapture of the church (compare 1 John 2:28).

"**All**"--this is a judgment for all believers; none will be excluded.

"**We shall all stand**"--this is a promise. Every one of us will stand there. It is guaranteed.

"**Stand**"--to stand or appear before a judge (compare Acts 27:24 where the same verb is used--Paul must stand before Caesar, the highest human judge or ruler at that time).

WHO is the Judge before whom every believer will stand to give an account? The Judge is Christ Himself. It is

the judgment seat of Christ. Christ is seated on this throne of judgment. This is clear evidence for the deity of Christ. Christ is here said to be the final Judge of every believer, the One before whom we are accountable for every word, thought or deed. Some manuscripts even have "the judgment seat **of God**" although in 2 Corinthians 5:10 the manuscripts are in agreement that it is the judgment seat **of Christ**. Both are true because it is Christ who sits as Judge and Christ is God. God the Father has committed all judgment to God the Son (see John 5:22,27).

The expression "judgment seat" is the Greek term "bema." Every believer must stand before the "bema" of Christ. The translation is accurate. It means a judgment seat, the seat occupied by a judge. Usually it was a raised place, sometimes with steps leading up to it. This seat would usually be mounted on a platform, even as a king's throne was usually elevated. The "bema" can be compared to the judge's seat in our court rooms today which is generally on a platform and elevated higher than any other chair in the room. The "bema" was also used with reference to the Olympic games. The athletic judge would give the "stephanos" (crown) to the victor of the contest (to the runner, wrestler, or whomever). The term "bema" is used 12 times in the New Testament. Pilate sat on his judgment seat when he judged Christ (Matthew 27:19). In Acts 25:6 Paul stood before the judgment seat of Festus at Caesarea. Later Paul stood before Caesar's judgment seat (Acts 27:24).

Paul had experience standing before different judgment seats, but the only BEMA which really mattered to Paul was the judgment seat of Christ! "Wherefore we labour [we are ambitious], that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him [we may be well pleasing to Him]" (2 Cor. 5:9). "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, **that I may win Christ** [that I may gain Christ's approval at His judgment seat]" (Phil. 3:8).

What then was Paul's point in this verse? Why are you judging your brother? You are not the Judge, Christ is! Not only is your brother going to get judged, but you are too! Be concerned about your own self, that you might receive Christ's "WELL DONE" and reward on that day!

Keep in mind that in speaking of the judgment seat of Christ we are not speaking of a condemnatory judgment resulting in eternal damnation. Such is impossible for the believer who is IN CHRIST JESUS (see Romans 8:1 and John 5:24). The believer himself shall be saved (see 1 Cor. 3:15--"he himself will be saved, yet so as by fire"). Yet how tragic that for some believers it will be a SAVED SOUL but a LOST LIFE! (the soul will be saved throughout all eternity but the life did not count for much of anything when measured by eternity's values).

Romans 14:11

In this verse Paul quotes from Isaiah 45:23--"I have sworn by MYSELF, the word is gone out of MY mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto ME **every** knee shall bow, **every** tongue shall swear." In the context of this Isaiah passage, it is the LORD (Jehovah), the Creator, who is speaking (Isaiah 45:18,21). In verse 22 a salvation call is issued to all men everywhere: "Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:22). Isaiah's main point in verse 22 is this: **There is salvation for all!** Isaiah's main point in verse 23 is this: **There is personal accountability for all!** EVERY knee will bow and bend! Those who refuse to bend the knee before the Saviour now (v. 22) will bend the knee before the Judge at a later time (v. 23).

An oath is a declaration, based on an appeal to God or to some revered person or object, that one will speak the truth, keep a promise, remain faithful, etc. Men swear by the greater (Hebrews 6:16), but since there is none greater than God, Jehovah swears **by Himself** (see Isaiah 45:23, "I have sworn **by Myself**" and compare Heb. 6:13). The fact that every knee shall bend is guaranteed by this immutable oath.

Often we think of Isaiah 45:23 as applying to ungodly unbelievers: "I know a person who has a filthy mouth and who always blasphemes Christ. Someday this same person will bend the knee before Christ and confess that Jesus is Lord!" This is true, and is clearly taught in Philippians 2:9-11 where the same passage in Isaiah is quoted. True believers reject the doctrine of UNIVERSALISM--the teaching that all men eventually will be saved. We do, however, believe in universalism when it comes to the bending of the knee and the confessing (acknowledging) of Christ as Lord. All men everywhere will do this. The difference is that it is the privilege of saved persons to

CONFESS Christ as Lord in this life (Romans 10:9-10). **Now** is the time to bend the knee before the Saviour. We need to do it now out of a willing heart, rather than doing it at a later time out of compulsion.

We have here strong evidence for the absolute deity of Jesus Christ. In the Isaiah passage it is the LORD (JEHOVAH) before Whom men will bend the knee. But when this passage is quoted in the New Testament, both in Philippians 2:9-11 and in Romans 14:11, it is the LORD Jesus Christ before Whom men will bend the knee. He indeed is JEHOVAH JESUS, a clear Bible fact which Jehovah's Witnesses completely deny. See our study, "The Deity of Christ" which shows the many places in the Bible where the sacred Name "Jehovah" is identified with Jesus Christ.

Here in Romans 14:11 Paul takes the truth of Isaiah 45:23 and applies it to believers. The emphasis is upon the word "every." Every single believer will bow the knee before Christ at His Judgment Seat. Every believer will confess and acknowledge His absolute authority as the Supreme Judge.

Romans 14:12

Again the emphasis is upon "every." "EVERY ONE OF US." There is no way to escape this judgment. Notice the emphasis:

"we shall all"--verse 10

"every knee"--verse 11

"every tongue"--verse 11

"every one of us"--verse 12

Notice the awesome, personal accountability: "Every one of us shall give account of [concerning, with respect to] himself." I will not give account for you. You will not give account for me. Every believer will stand before God as an individual. Forget the other person--what he did or how he served. The issue is YOU. Every believer is personally accountable before Christ and must give account for himself. May our great ambition be to be well pleasing to Him (2 Cor. 5:9). May we be abiding in Christ our Vine (our Life-Source) so that we will not be ashamed before Him at His coming (1 John 2:28). What could be more rewarding then for me to someday hear "Well Done!" from the lips of the One who died and rose again for me (compare Matthew 25:21)? What could be more satisfying than to be able to say, as Paul said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Timothy 4:7-8)?

Another key passage on the judgment seat of Christ is 2 Corinthians 5:10--"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may **RECEIVE** the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, **whether it be GOOD or BAD.**" This word "RECEIVE" is important. It means to receive back what is yours (requit), to receive what was previously your own, to get back, to get back what you have earned, to receive your due, to get what you have coming to you based on what you have done. At the judgment seat of Christ, this reception or requital may be either positive or negative: "whether it be GOOD (positive) or BAD (negative)." In Ephesians 6:8 Paul, in speaking of this same judgment, uses this same word "RECEIVE" to refer to a positive reception: "Knowing that whatsoever **good thing** (positive) any man doeth, the same shall he **RECEIVE** of the Lord, whether he be bond (slave) or free." In the parallel passage of Colossians 3:25 Paul, again speaking of the judgment seat of Christ, uses this same word "RECEIVE" to refer to a negative reception: "But he that doeth **wrong** (negative) shall **RECEIVE** for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons."

When it comes to SALVATION, believers do not get their just due. They do not receive back what they have earned. They have earned eternal death, but by God's grace they are given eternal life (Romans 6:23). **When it comes to REWARD**, believers will get what they have earned at the judgment seat of Christ according to what they have done in the body since the day they were saved.

The Difference Between Salvation and Rewards

In the book of Romans and throughout the Word of God, the Bible believer needs to make a careful distinction between salvation and rewards. For example, in Romans 8:1 we learn that there is no judgment or condemnation for the person who is in Christ because our Substitute was condemned in our place (Rom. 8:3). Yet, here in Romans 14 we learn that there is a judgment for believers because we must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (Rom. 14:10). The judgment of Romans 8:1 is one that we have been saved from (compare also John 3:18; 5:24). The judgment of Romans 14:10 is a judgment for all saved persons and involves rewards or loss of rewards. The need to carefully discern between salvation and rewards is seen in a passage such as 1 Corinthians 3:15--"If any man's work shall be burned, **he shall suffer loss**: but **he himself shall be saved**; yet so as by fire." Loss of reward, though involving eternal consequences for the believer, does not affect the security of one's salvation. The following chart helps to focus upon some of the key distinctions between salvation and rewards:

| SALVATION | REWARDS |
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| <p>1) Salvation is a free gift and can't be earned.</p> <p>"But not as the offence, so also is the FREE GIFT. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the GIFT by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is THE GIFT: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the FREE GIFT is of many offences unto justification" (Rom. 5:15-16; and see also Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 6:23; John 4:10).</p> | <p>1) Rewards can be earned by faithful service.</p> <p>"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord YE SHALL RECEIVE THE REWARD of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:22-24, and note that the emphasis of this passage is upon SERVICE).</p> |
| <p>2) Salvation is not something we deserve.</p> <p>If God were to give us exactly what we deserve for the way we have lived and for the sins which we have committed, what would He give us?</p> <p>"If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psalm 130:3) "The wages of sin is DEATH" (Rom. 6:23).</p> <p>See also Psalm 103:10.</p> | <p>2) Reward is something that the believer deserves.</p> <p>"Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:16-17). This man was deserving of reward because his pound gained ten pounds and because he was faithful in a very little. [Caution: The believer who labors faithfully for Christ must never forget what Paul said in 1 Cor. 15:10, "by the grace of God I am what I am...I labored...yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." So even in the earning of rewards the principle of grace is operative.]</p> |
| <p>3) Salvation is not given on the basis of works.</p> <p>"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, but according to His own purpose and grace" (2 Tim. 1:9). "NOT BY</p> | <p>3) Rewards are given on the basis of works.</p> <p>"For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS" (Matt. 16:27). "And, behold,</p> |

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| <p>WORKS of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us” (Tit. 3:5). “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness WITHOUT WORKS” (Rom. 4:6).</p> | <p>I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man ACCORDING AS HIS WORK SHALL BE” (Rev. 22:12).</p> |
| <p>4) Salvation is a present possession (it is something that the believer has now).</p> <p>“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE” (John 5:24). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me HATH EVERLASTING LIFE” (John 6:47). “He that hath the Son HATH LIFE” (1 John 5:12).</p> | <p>4) Rewards are a future attainment (they are something the believer will receive later)</p> <p>“And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou SHALT BE [future tense] RECOMPENSED AT THE RESURRECTION OF THE JUST” (Luke 14:14). Believers will receive rewards at the first resurrection, and for church age believers this will take place at the rapture.</p> |
| <p>5) Salvation is something that can never be lost.</p> <p>“My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give unto them eternal life; and THEY SHALL NEVER PERISH [Greek--they shall never ever perish, no not ever], neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand” (John 10:27-28).</p> <p>This distinction is clearly seen in 1 Corinthians 3:14-15, “If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss [there will be loss of reward]: but he himself shall be saved [there will not be loss of salvation]; yet so as by fire.”</p> | <p>5) Rewards can be lost.</p> <p>“Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown” (Rev. 3:11). “Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward” (2 John 8). “For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My Name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward” (Mark 9:41).</p> |
| <p>6) The focus of salvation is upon SIN (we have a SIN PROBLEM)</p> <p>“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for He shall save his people FROM THEIR SINS” (Matt. 1:21).</p> | <p>6) The focus of rewards is upon SERVICE (we have a responsibility to faithfully serve the God who saved us)</p> <p>“With good will DOING SERVICE, AS TO THE LORD, and not to men: Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free” (Eph. 6:7-8).</p> |
| <p>7) Salvation involves possessing CHRIST.</p> <p>“He that HATH THE SON hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not</p> | <p>7) Rewards involve possessing CROWNS.</p> <p>“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth THE PRIZE? So</p> |

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| <p>life” (1 John 5:12).</p> | <p>run, THAT YE MAY OBTAIN. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible CROWN; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor. 9:24-25).</p> |
| <p>8) The sinner coming to Christ for salvation hears these words: “IT IS DONE!”</p> <p>“When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, IT IS FINISHED” (John 19:30).</p> | <p>8) The faithful believer about to be rewarded hears these words: “WELL DONE!”</p> <p>“His lord said unto him, WELL DONE, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord” (Matthew 25:23).</p> |
| <p>9) Salvation was accomplished at Christ's first coming.</p> <p>“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world [at His first coming] to save sinners” (1 Timothy 1:15).</p> | <p>9) Rewards will be bestowed upon believers at Christ's second coming.</p> <p>“Henceforth there is laid up for me A CROWN of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that LOVE HIS APPEARING” (2 Tim. 4:8). “And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me” (Rev. 22:12).</p> |
| <p>10) Salvation is freely received in a point of time.</p> <p>In a point of time a person believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and passes from death to life (John 5:24).</p> | <p>10) Rewards are earned throughout a whole believing lifetime.</p> <p>“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body [from the point of salvation to the point when the believer goes to be with the Lord], according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).</p> |
| <p>11) Salvation is based upon what Christ has done.</p> <p>“Being justified freely by His grace THROUGH THE REDEMPTION that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:24).</p> | <p>11) Rewards are based upon what we have done (as believers).</p> <p>“...that every one may receive the things done in his body, ACCORDING TO THAT HE HATH DONE, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10).</p> |
| <p>12) When it comes to salvation, what is man's part? The answer: FAITH</p> <p>“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved” (Acts 16:31).</p> | <p>12) When it comes to rewards, what is man's part? The answer: FAITHFULNESS.</p> <p>“He that is FAITHFUL in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is</p> |

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| <p>God does the saving; we do the believing.</p> | <p>unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" (Luke 16:10-12).</p> |
| <p>13) The question of salvation: DID YOU BELIEVE ON CHRIST?</p> <p>"It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to SAVE them that BELIEVE" (1 Cor. 1:21).</p> | <p>13) The question of rewards: HAVE YOU BEEN ABIDING IN CHRIST?</p> <p>"And now, little children, ABIDE IN HIM; that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming" (1 John 2:28).</p> |
| <p>14) When it comes to salvation there are certain things that God does not remember.</p> <p>"And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 10:17).</p> | <p>14) When it comes to rewards, there are certain things that God does remember.</p> <p>"For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward His Name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:10).</p> |
| <p>15) Salvation always involves God's full approval in Christ.</p> <p>"To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us ACCEPTED [highly favored] in the Beloved" (Eph. 1:6).</p> | <p>15) Rewards may involve God's disapproval.</p> <p>"But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. 3:25). See also 1 John 2:28 which implies the possibility of SHAME because of God's disapproval and see Phil. 3:8 where Paul sacrificed all so that he might gain or win Christ and His approval.</p> |
| <p>16) All believers share the same salvation.</p> <p>The "salvation package" of one believer contains everything that is found in the "salvation package" of another believer. We share the same "so-great salvation (Heb. 2:3). We are RICH in Christ and possess every spiritual blessing in Him (Eph. 1:3).</p> | <p>16) All believers do not share the same rewards.</p> <p>"And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom....And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father (Matthew 20:21,23). Not all believers will sit at Christ's right and at His left. This place and position will be reserved for two believers, as determined by God the righteous Judge.</p> |
| <p>17) When it comes to salvation, when will</p> | <p>17) When it comes to rewards, when will</p> |

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| <p>my judgment take place? Answer: It has already taken place at the cross!</p> <p>“...the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6). “For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Pet. 3:18). Because of this fact, the Lord assures the true believer that he will not come into condemnation or judgment (see John 5:24; Romans 8:1).</p> | <p>my judgment take place? Answer: At the judgment seat of Christ!</p> <p>“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor. 5:10). “But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ” (Romans 14:10).</p> |
| <p>18) Salvation costs nothing.</p> <p>“Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk WITHOUT MONEY and WITHOUT PRICE” (Isa. 55:1).</p> | <p>18) Rewards cost a life of service.</p> <p>Serving Christ faithfully in a Christ-hating world can be costly: “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven...Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: FOR GREAT IS YOUR REWARD in heaven” (Matt. 5:10,12).</p> |
| <p>19) Salvation is received at the time of JUSTIFICATION.</p> <p>Salvation is something we get at the beginning.</p> | <p>19) Rewards are received at the time of GLORIFICATION.</p> <p>Rewards are something we get at the end.</p> |
| <p>20) We show our gratitude for salvation by faithful service.</p> <p>“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (Romans 12:1-2).</p> <p>Paul recognized that any good thing which he did was attributed to the grace of God: “But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me” (1 Cor. 15:10). Even when it comes to faithful service for Christ, we are debtors to the grace of God!</p> | <p>20) We show our gratitude for rewards by casting our crowns before our Saviour.</p> <p>“The four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever, and CAST THEIR CROWNS BEFORE THE THRONE, saying, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created” (Rev. 4:10-11).</p> |

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Romans 14:13

Let us not judge one another any longer. Leave the judging in the hands of God (v.10). You are not your brother's judge, Christ is. Rather than judging your brother, you are to be loving your brother. Paul in this passage presents the "stumbling block" principle which many have referred to as "the law of love." Notice what is being said in this verse: "Don't judge...but judge." Paul's point is this: Don't judge your brother but **JUDGE YOURSELF** and make sure that you are not putting a stumbling block in the way of your brother. It is ourselves, not our brother, that we are to judge. Compare the oft repeated expression in the Psalms: "Judge me, O God." Let us make sure that we are

not doing anything to trip up or harm our brother in Christ. Seek to lift your brother up, not cause him to fall. Seek to help him, not hurt him. Seek to build him up, not tear him down. Place a stepping stone before your brother's path, not a stumbling block.

Romans 14:14

When Paul speaks of nothing being unclean he is referring in the context to foods that are eaten (see verses 2,6,15,17,21,23). He fully recognized that there were certain things that were morally UNCLEAN (see for example what Paul wrote in Ephesians 5:3-6; Galatians 5:19-21 and Colossians 3:5-6). Paul's point in this verse is this: "When it comes to foods that may be eaten, I know and am persuaded that there is nothing unclean of itself." Who persuaded Paul concerning this truth? The Lord Jesus Himself ("I am persuaded by the Lord Jesus"). The word "unclean" occurs three times in this verse. It is the Greek word meaning "common" and it meant unholy or unclean. This word is used in Acts 10:14--"But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is **COMMON** or unclean." Here we see that the word is a synonym for the word "unclean." Peter, as a good Jew, observed the Levitical distinctions between foods which were clean and foods which were unclean. God's answer to Peter on that occasion was this: "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common" (Acts 10:15).

The Scripture clearly teaches that in this present church age there are no foods that are to be considered unclean by believers: "Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created **to be received** with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. **For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused**, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer" (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

God says that the food is not unclean and Paul agrees: "there is nothing unclean of itself" (Rom. 14:14). So then, what makes something unclean? *When a person considers something to be unclean, then to him it is unclean!* Consider for example a believing Jew who still thinks that he ought to follow the Levitical dietary regulations set forth in Leviticus chapter 11. "Should I eat pork? The pig is listed as an unclean animal in Leviticus 11. Thus my conscience tells me that I should not eat pork and to me pork is unclean. What happens if I eat pork? My conscience condemns me and tells me that I am wrong to eat what is unclean and common" (compare Peter's experience in Acts 10:14). If this believer were to eat pork, he would be going against his conscience and doing what he considers to be wrong. "Even though I know it is wrong to eat pork, I'm going to eat it anyway." This is SIN (see Romans 14:22-23). Why is it sin? Why is it wrong? Because it is wrong to eat pork? No! We have already demonstrated that in this present dispensation pork may be received with thanksgiving (1 Timothy 4:3-5). It is wrong for this man to eat pork because he is allowing himself to do what he believes is wrong.

If in my heart and conscience I consider something to be wrong, then I must not do it. In time I may need to rethink and relearn some things in light of God's Word and I will discover that what I thought was wrong was not wrong at all. But in this chapter Paul refers to the weak believer who does not understand these things at this stage in his growth in Christ.

Romans 14:15

If you are a stumbling block to your brother because of the food you eat, then you are not walking charitably. That is, you are not walking **according to love**. You are not walking according to the law of love. Remember, love edifies or builds up (1 Cor. 8:1). Love wants God's highest and best for the brother. Illustration of Romans 14:15-- You eat the pork and have no problem doing so. Your brother, who considers it wrong to eat pork, sees you doing it and says to himself, "If he can do it, why can't I do it?" He goes ahead and eats the pork, but then he feels guilty and his conscience condemns him for doing what he believes he should not do. You have thus encouraged him to do what he considers to be wrong. Compare the parallel passage found in 1 Corinthians 8:10-13.

The word "destroy" is a very strong word. It is used most often of the eternal destruction of unbelievers. It means "bring to ruin, cause to perish." It is the same word used in John 3:16 ("perish"). Paul is saying, "Don't ruin your brother." Instead deal with your brother according to the law of love as illustrated by God Himself in John 3:16-- "God so loved the world." God in Christ loved this brother so much that He was willing to make the greatest possible sacrifice so that he would not be eternally destroyed. In light of Calvary's cross, should not we be willing

to make a very small sacrifice (giving up some pork chops) for our brother's temporal welfare? Christ sacrificed everything so that this brother would not be destroyed eternally. Cannot I sacrifice a pork chop so that my brother will not be destroyed or ruined in his walk in time? This verse gives us an indication of how important the edification of believers is to God. God uses such a strong term ("destroy not") to describe the opposite of edification. This word is also used in 1 Corinthians 8:11 in a similar context. We should not take it lightly if a believer is not being built up. His temporal welfare is crucial, lest he be "destroyed" or "ruined."

Obviously the eternal ruin of a believer is impossible. John 10:28 says, "And I give unto them eternal life; and **they shall never perish**, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." Literally the Greek says, "forever they will never perish" or "they shall never, ever perish, no not ever"! God has made sure that the believer will not be ruined eternally. We need to do everything we can to make sure that our brother in Christ will not be ruined in his walk in time.

Romans 14:16

To you it is "good" to eat. There is nothing wrong with it. There is no problem, for instance, eating pork **unless it causes a brother to stumble**. You are persuaded in your own mind that every creature of God is good and to be received with thanksgiving. You are free to eat, but do not abuse this good liberty of yours. You are not free to behave in a way that will hurt your brother. We must walk according to love. Compare 1 Corinthians 8:1--"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. **Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.**" Knowledge says, "I know that I am free to eat this meat because God has said so in 1 Timothy 4:3-5." Love says, "I will lay aside my right to eat this meat for the sake of my weaker brother. I don't want my actions to be a problem for him."

Romans 14:17

We must never lose sight of what is essential and what is not really important. If a believer does not eat a pork chop, out of love for a fellow believer, he has not lost or sacrificed anything essential. If a believer loses or sacrifices righteousness, then this is a serious problem. Whether or not you eat a hamburger is not important. However, if you are missing God's joy or God's peace, then this is a great concern to the person who is commanded to be constantly filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18 and compare Gal. 5:22-23). What is really important is not the FOOD that goes in but the FRUIT that is produced by God.

The "kingdom of God" in a general sense is wherever God reigns. In the future God will actually reign on this earth. At that time:

RIGHTEOUSNESS will be a reality in the world (Jeremiah 33:15).

PEACE will be a reality in the world (Isaiah 9:6-7).

JOY will be a reality in the world (Isaiah 65:18-19 and compare the hymn "Joy to the World the Lord is Come", which is really a second advent hymn, describing the second coming of Christ more so than the first coming). Also Matthew 25:21,23 addresses those about to enter the kingdom with these words, "enter into the JOY of the Lord."

Today where does God rule? He rules in the hearts of believers. Christ came the first time to set things right in the hearts of men. Christ will come the second time to set things right in the world. Today righteousness and peace and joy are not realities in our world, but they can be realities in our personal lives by way of the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23, "love, **joy, peace**"). Is **righteousness** a fruit of the Spirit? See Ephesians 5:9 and Philippians 1:11.

Romans 14:18

What do the words "these things" refer to? These words take us back to the previous verse and refers to

righteousness, peace and joy. How are we to serve Christ? We are to serve Christ by living unto righteousness (1 Peter 2:24), by claiming and appropriating God's peace (John 14:27) and by experiencing the fullness of God's joy (John 15:11). The word "acceptable" means "well pleasing." God is delighted and well-pleased when believers are filled with the Spirit (Eph. 5:18), manifesting the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). God is pleased by such conduct and even men approve such conduct. What else can they do but approve of such conduct? How can they disapprove of a righteous life? How can they speak against one who is at peace in the midst of trials? How can they object to the fact that a person is joyous with a joy that does not depend upon circumstances?

Romans 14:19

The verb "follow after" means to run after, pursue, chase after, even as a hunter would chase after the prey or as a runner would run for a prize or a medal. This same verb is used in such passages as 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; Phil. 3:12 ("follow after"); Phil. 3:14 ("press"). Let us pursue and chase after the things that pertain to peace. Compare Hebrews 12:14--"follow after peace" (same verb). As we are commanded in Ephesians 4:3, we are to make every effort ("endeavor") to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of PEACE. Paul also stresses the importance of EDIFICATION, as believers have a responsibility to edify one another. One of the key chapters dealing with EDIFICATION is 1 Corinthians 14. Read through this chapter and underline the expression "edify" or "edification" every time it is used. Then see the summary statement in 1 Corinthians 14:26 (end of verse).

Romans 14:20

Don't destroy the work of God for the sake of food! The term "destroy" means "tear down, demolish" even as a building would be demolished. This word "destroy" is a different word from the one found in verse 15. What is the work of God? God's work is to build up, to edify. Don't tear down, but rather edify. Love edifies (1 Cor. 8:1). All things are pure (v.14), and therefore I can eat anything. But I will lay aside my liberty and will choose not to eat something if it will make my brother stumble: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (1 Cor. 8:13). To eat and to cause offence (cause a brother to stumble) is EVIL. It is sin. The moment you use your liberty to cause a brother to stumble, you have sinned. You have sinned against your brother and you have sinned against Christ (1 Cor. 8:12).

Romans 14:21

In this verse we have the conclusion of the matter. I have the right to eat and drink but I will gladly lay aside this right for the sake of my brother. I refuse to do anything that will cause my brother to stumble. Building up my brother is more important to me than eating or drinking. Compare 1 Corinthians 8:13. Notice the word "anything" ["nor do anything"-NKJV] in Romans 14:21. This shows us the universal application of the stumbling block principle. Paul used the example of eating and drinking, but it could be anything. Today believers do not normally face the problem of meats sacrificed to idols, but they do face the problem of causing a brother to stumble. No sacrifice is too great if it will provide a fellow believer with a stepping stone to growth and cause him to be strengthened in the Lord.

For further study on the law of love and the stumblingblock principle see 1 Corinthians chapters 8 and 10.

Romans 14:22

This verse pertains to the strong believer. "Faith" in this context is defined as that firm belief and conviction that what I am doing is right. The person who has faith is contrasted with the doubter (v.23) who is not sure that what he is doing is right. The strong believer has a strong conviction that he has full liberty to eat: "I know and am persuaded that I can eat this food" (compare verse 14). The strong believer is told not to flaunt this liberty before others but to have it to himself before God: "Lord, you know that I am free to eat this food, but in my eating and drinking I want to do all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31), not being a stumbling block to anyone, saved or unsaved (1 Cor. 10:32)." Hendriksen explains the last part of this verse as follows:

Happy is that person—namely, that "strong" believer—who *avoids* bringing God's

judgment upon himself by insisting on the exercise of his "liberty" even though such insistence results in harming his "weak" fellow believer.

Romans 14:23

This verse pertains to the weak believer. The conscience is like an inner moral judge: "What you are doing is wrong. You are guilty" or "You have done what is right." The believer should never allow himself to do something which his conscience will condemn. In other words, the believer needs to be convinced of the rightness of his action. We must have a good and clear conscience in what we do. If we have doubts about a course of conduct, it is not safe to indulge in that course of action, and it should be at once abandoned. "He that doubteth is damned (condemned) if he eat." The doubter is like the weak believer described in 1 Corinthians 8:7,10,11. He personally feels that it is wrong to eat meat sacrificed to idols but he sees the strong believer eating and he is confused: "Well, maybe it is permissible to eat," and yet he still questions whether it is right. Whatever is not done with a full conviction that it is right is sinful. The believer must never do what he thinks is wrong or what he thinks might be wrong. If a believer does a thing which he does not believe to be right, it is a sin. If a believer goes ahead and does what he believes to be wrong, this is rebellion. We must not pursue a course of action that we believe to be wrong or that we think might be wrong.

If a man is convinced that something is wrong and he does it, then that is sin. The converse is not true. If a man is convinced that something is right and he does it, then that is not necessarily right. See John 16:2 where certain Jews were convinced that it was right to kill believers. See also Acts 26:9 where Paul (Saul) was convinced that he ought to do many things which were contrary to the Name of Jesus of Nazareth.

The voice of conscience must not be ignored. As we grow in the knowledge of the Word of God our conscience will no doubt need to be corrected. The weak believer in 1 Corinthians 8:7,10,11 will hopefully learn in time that it is not a sin to eat meat sacrificed to idols (unless it causes a brother to stumble). If we do something that is not of faith (that is contrary to what we believe is right and permissible), then that is sin.

Thought question: **How often do we do things with that absolute certainty that what we are doing is right and pleasing to the Lord?**

"For whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

True faith is anchored upon Scriptural facts, not upon our personal impressions (the way we might feel about something). George Muller once said, "Impressions have neither one thing nor the other to do with faith. Faith has to do with the Word of God. It is not impressions, strong or weak, which will make the difference. We have to do with the Written Word and not ourselves or our impressions."

Faith is not based upon probabilities ("I'll believe it because it will probably take place"). Again Muller replied: "Many people are willing to believe regarding those things that seem probable to them. Faith has nothing to do with probabilities. The province of faith begins where probabilities cease and sight and sense fail. Appearances are not to be taken into account. The question is **whether God has spoken it in His Word.**"

“For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living” (Romans 14:7-9).