

Lesson 31 – Romans 14 – Part II

As we started in on Romans 14 the topic of “judging” was in full view. Certainly, God intends for us to check ourselves when it comes to gauging differences between ourselves and others. From the text we saw the example of diets and lifestyles but were bluntly cautioned about taking a position of authority over someone by judgment. From the text we were able to introduce issues of the modern church era over which we may judge. The lesson is clear: do not judge one another. This theme is further developed in the remainder of the 14th chapter of Romans.

We are not to be judgmental, but considerate – vs. 13-19

Out of consideration for our brothers (and sisters) lives we must resolve to never: 1) put an obstacle in their way, and 2) put a trap in their way. The idea is spiritual. We live with a consistent consideration for behaviors or actions that may cause a brother to fall into sin, decline in righteousness, or fail in morality. This doesn't mean that he disagrees with it, nor that he may even judge you over it. Instead, it carries the idea of him violating his conscience or convictions because he excused himself based on your behavior.

Paul explains this point in verse 14, “I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but it is unclean for anyone who thinks it unclean.” We might illustrate this way: if I am convicted about my sugar intake and someone offers me a Hershey's bar, knowing that I am trying to limit my sugar, they are placing a stumbling block in front of me. The dilemma is easily overcome by searching the heart. A loving brother doesn't ever intend harm (vs. 15a).

Furthermore, our priority is on holiness with primary consideration for spiritual matters, not on happiness with a primary consideration on elements of the world. Paul develops this in verses 16-19.

We are not to be judgmental, but convicted – vs. 20-23

God wants us to evaluate our priorities. Which is more important, the types of food you eat, or the work of God? Certainly, all foods are religiously acceptable, but if someone has a problem with specific foods, then appeal to the higher ethic or priority.

In order to keep your life on track, walk closely with God. Verse 22a makes a simple yet profound point, your faith in God is between just you and God. If you develop that faith, you will live correctly before men, limiting your judgmentalism, and those occasions when you may be judged by weaker Christians.

So whether you enjoy your known liberty, or you are you have strong convictions that are personal, live by solid trust in God. Our faith in God is the key to the matter.