**Romans 14 – Showing Grace To Those With Different Opinion**

**\*\* As we begin:**

* We may have dealt with “list makers.” These are the people who judge others based on their own manmade standards.
* Even within churches there are those who criticize and point fingers. We need to show some grace.
* In **Rom. 14**, the author talks addresses both those who may be more mature in their faith and understand the freedom they have in Christ, and those who were less mature.
* We are to use our freedom in Christ to serve others **(Gal. 5:13)**.
* **Point:** Our freedom in Christ is never a reason to sin **(Rom. 6:1)**. We must never take our liberty in Jesus too far.

**Three Thoughts For Showing Grace**

**We need to cut others some slack – vss. 1-4**

* The word “weak” in **vs. 1** describes someone who “doubts, hesitates, is unsettled.” They are unsure of what they should or should not be doing when it comes to things not specifically noted in Scripture.
* The more mature believers are too “welcome” **(vs. 1)** these weaker believers. We are to “receive them kindly and treat them with kindness.” We are not to ignore them. The word “welcome” is a command.
* We are not to “quarrel over opinions” **(vs. 1)**. The word “quarrel” has to do with passing judgement on opinions as to which is preferred or correct. It would be like arguing over music styles and songs.
* **Vs. 3** is a key. The more mature believer is not to “despise” the weaker one. It also tells us that the weaker believer is not to “judge” (judge unfairly, find fault) those who have different views.
* **Vs. 4** tells us to allow the Lord to lead us for He is the ultimate judge and director of our life.
* **Point:** It is very easy to become self-righteous regardless of where we are in our spiritual growth. Show grace to each other. Cut some slack and let God work in people’s lives.
* **Point:** Those who are less mature in their faith need to become stronger in their relationship with God. We are to grow in Christ and become strong in doctrine, belief, and action.

**Allow people to come to their own conclusions before the Lord – vss. 5-13**

* We are talking about things that are not “expressly forbidden in Scripture.” (J. Vernon McGee).
* In **vss. 5-9** we are told to show grace and allow people to come to their own decisions on things instead of trying to make up their minds for them.
* A key to all of this is found in **vs. 5**. Instead of pointing fingers at others, be sure that we are confident in our own thinking regarding issues that are open to different views. See **vs. 1**.
* We are to be persuaded of what we can and cannot do. Our goal is to honor Christ **(vss. 6-9)**.
* **Point:** If someone is sinning, we need to confront them. That is different than attacking someone who does not see things as we do.
* In **vss. 10-12** we are reminded once again to not pass judgment on each other.
* **Chuck Swindoll** notes some reasons why we are not qualified to judge as **vss. 10-12** remind us not to: (1) We do not know all the facts; (2) We are unable to read motives; (3) We are not totally objective; (4) We live with blind spots; (5) We are imperfect and inconsistent.

**We must with our freedom in Christ consider others – vss. 13-23**

* According to **vs. 13**, and both the weak and stronger Christians are noted, we are to consider that even if we are at ease with God in doing certain things, I am not to be a stumbling block to others.
* Our freedom in Christ is not to bragged or flaunted, but practiced quietly, with others who hold the same freedoms. An example might be card playing, or what music we listen to.
* In **vs. 14** Paul said he knew certain things were not wrong, but if someone else thinks they are wrong for themselves, then they should not do them.
* **Vs. 15** reminds us to not “grieve” (to make someone uneasy, offended, distressed) others by our freedom in Christ.
* **Point:** We walk a fine line. Some people are offended by everything. Others are bothered by stuff that the Bible does not say is specifically wrong. If is wrong to them, they should not participate in it. Those more mature need to consider others and the easily offended need to stop being that way.
* **Point:** Some offenses are nothing more than preferences. We must use wisdom. People need to show others grace on both sides of the aisle. The mature, the growing, need to work together.
* **Vss. 17-19** are pivotal in this chapter. Note three key words in **vs. 17**:
* **First**, note the word “righteousness.” Be people of integrity, trust, and reliability. Honor God in how we act, feel, and think and this is seen in interacting with others. See **2 Tim. 3:16-17**.
* **Second** is the word “peace.” This is peace with others. **Rom. 12:18** and **Col 3:12-17** gives us Biblical advice on living in peace with fellow believers. We forgive, are kind, and are willing to put up with each other.
* **Third** is the word “joy.”Joy is not based on circumstances but the realization that God is in control. As we interact with others, we consider others, enjoy our freedom in Christ that is proper.