

QUESTIONS THAT NEED ANSWERS

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Romans 14:1-12

1. We have been stuck on chapter 14 for several weeks.
2. Two weeks ago we answered the question, "To judge or not to judge?"
3. We saw that the New Testament clearly teaches that we are to exercise judgment in the areas of morality, doctrine, and some forms of behavior.
4. Last week we established the fact that we are to accept people as brothers and sisters in Christ based on whether or not God has accepted them.
5. This morning I want to look at the passage before us by asking three questions that each of us needs to answer; all of which are suggested by this passage of Scripture.
 - a. Who do I belong to?
 - b. Who am I living for?
 - c. Who do I answer to?
6. Probably everyone here knows that our answer should be, "Jesus Christ," but what should be is not always a reality in our lives.

I. Who do I belong to? 1-4

A. Some might be bold enough to answer, "I don't belong to anyone."

B. But the Bible declares that every human being belongs to the "Domain of Darkness" or the "Kingdom of God's Beloved Son." Col 1:9-14

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously 12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light. 13 **For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, 14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

C. In this passage Paul is dealing with an issue that divided Jewish and Gentile Christians in the early church, and that issue was whether or not the Old Testament dietary laws were still in effect.

D. They were not, but many Jewish converts to Christianity were conflicted, and this led to Jewish Christians judging Gentile Christians, and Gentile Christians judging Jewish Christians.

E. Paul stated that we were not to pass judgment on the opinions of our fellow believers for God has accepted us all, and we belong to Him. 4

1. We are God's servants. 1 Cor 6:19-20

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that **you are not your own**? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

2. We are either pleasing or displeasing to Him.

3. He is able to deal with these matters of disagreement.

NOTE: We should not look down on our brothers and sisters in Christ who have non-essential opinions and personal preferences that differ from ours. These matters can be, and in some instances should be, discussed, but they do not rise to the level of questioning the genuineness of someone's relationship with Jesus Christ.

II. Who am I living for? 5-9

A. In these verses Paul raised another issue that divided the church, and that issue had to do with elevating certain days above other days.

B. Some believers elevated one day above another, and others insisted that in Christ all days are the same.

1. Jewish Christians may have applied Sabbath principles to what became known as the Lord's Day.

NOTE: The Sabbath will always be the last day of the week, and the Lord's Day will always be the first day of the week.

2. Every church has the right to designate when, where, and why it will meet, and every member of the church should respect, honor and be faithful to participate in corporate worship, Bible study, prayer, fellowship and ministry.

C. Paul's admonition to the Colossian Christians should settle this matter, but unfortunately many try to impose Law where Grace and Freedom are to be the rule.

Col 2:16-23

Therefore no one is to act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day — 17 things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ. 18 Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the worship of the angels, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the head, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God. 20 **If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,** 21 **"Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!"** 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use) — in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in **self-made religion** and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.

D. **In these matter we must be fully convinced in our own minds, and whatever we do we must do for the Lord because we are the Lord's, and because He is the Lord.**

E. Are you living for the Lord Jesus Christ, and is He intimately involved in every area of your life, and every day of your life?

III. Who do I answer to? 10-12

A. Paul asked two questions that must be understood in the context of this passage.

1. Why do you judge your brother negatively in matters related to non-essential issues?

2. Why do you regard your brother with contempt because his views and opinions differ from yours?

B. When all is said and done every follower of Jesus Christ will give an account of his or her life to Him.

1. John 5:21-24

"For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. 22 **"For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, 23 so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father.** He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. 24 "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life."

2. 2 Cor 5:9-10

Therefore we also have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him. 10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

C. Many people are more concerned about pleasing themselves or pleasing other people than they are about pleasing God, exalting the Lord Jesus Christ, and obeying the Holy Spirit.

APPLICATION

1. William Newell wrote, "Let those with legal tendencies mark this: that a man may not regard what we regard, and do so **unto the Lord!**"

2. Sadly there are things that needlessly divide us as followers of Jesus Christ.

NOTE: Not every church is going to appeal to every Christian, but we should prayerfully seek to find out where God wants us, unite with that church, and invest ourselves in the life and ministry of that church.

3. If we really belong to the Lord, are all living for the Lord, and understand that we answer to Him we ought to be able to accept one another, grow and serve together, and love and support one another.

4. One final thought. Self-made religion is usually restrictive and legalistic, while Christ-centered religion sets us free to serve God with a clear conscience and because we want to; not because we have to.