

Romans 14:7-9

- none of us lives to himself, but to the Lord -

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Introduction

- ❖ The apostle Paul urges the church (in Rome) to accept one another and not to look down or to judge in disputable matters (Rom 14:1). He has especially the weak in faith in mind. Weak in faith can imply lack of liberty of conscience because the believer is dependent on faith plus observing certain practices, the disputable matters.
 - The following is important:
 - (1) We must accept the other because God has accepted him (Rom 14:3) in his household (1 Tim 3:15).
 - (2) Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind (Rom 14:5).
 - (3) So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord (Rom 14:8).
 - (4) So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. (Rom 14:12).
 - Still, it is difficult to decide whether an opinion concerning doctrine or praxis belongs to disputable matters. The apostle Paul gives three examples: disputes about eating food, sacred days and drinking wine. This needs discernment based on faith, wisdom, love and patience (Gal 5:22, 23).
 - John Stott remarked: “There is a similar need for discernment today. We must not elevate non-essentials, especially issues of custom and ceremony, to the level of the essential and make them tests of orthodoxy and conditions of fellowship.”¹

¹ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 358).

- Dunn formulates the following pastoral advice: “The liberty of the Christian assembly should be able to embrace divergent views and practices without a feeling that they must be resolved or that a common mind must be achieved on every point of disagreement.”²

- ❖ The context, form and structure, theological, technical and hermeneutical notes given in this sermon outline overlap with other sermon outlines taken from the Letter to the Romans. This makes it possible to use this sermon outline as a “stand-alone”. You can also fit this outline into a series of sermons.

Context

- ❖ An overview of the Letter to the Romans. This overview serves also as a summary of the contents of this letter.

Greetings and Introduction (Rom 1:1-17)	
Romans 1:1-17	<p>Greetings, Thanksgiving and Prayer (1:1-10)</p> <p>Plan to visit the Romans and share the Gospel with them (1:11-17)</p>
The righteousness from God (Rom 1:18-8:39)	
Romans 1:18-3:20	<p>The wrath of God against all unrighteousness:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Of this world (1:18-32)</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Of the Jews (2:1-3:8)</p> <p>Conclusion:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Jews and the Gentiles are alike under sin (3:9-20)</p>

² Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 799).

Romans 3:21-8:39

The righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ (**Rom 1:16, 17**):

To which the Law and the Prophets testify (3:21-31)

Abraham was justified by faith (4:1-25)

Through faith, we have been justified and are reconciled with God (5:1-11)

The contrasts:

Death came through Adam, life came through Christ (5:12-21)

We are dead to sin, and alive in Christ under grace (6:1-14)

We are slaves not to sin but righteousness and to God (6:15-23)

In the mind a slave to God's law, in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin (7:1-25)

The children of God:

The Spirit has set us free from sin. He has made us children and heirs of God (8:1-17)

As his children, we share in the suffering of Christ and will share in his glory (8:18-30)

There is nothing that will separate us from the love of God in Christ (8:31-39)

What about Israel, the chosen people of God? (Rom 9:1-11:36)

Romans 9:1-11:36

Not all Israelites came to faith in Christ (9:1-29)

Because they pursued righteousness by works (9:30-10:21)

Did God reject Israel? By no means! (11:1-32)

Glory to God (11:33-36)

Live according to the Gospel (Rom 12:1-15:13)

Romans 12:1-15:13	Renew your mind (12:1-21) Submit yourself to the authorities (13:1-7) Clothe yourself with the Lord Jesus Christ (13:8-14) Accept each other in Christ (14:1-15:13)
Purpose, Plans, Greetings (Rom 15:14-16:27)	
Romans 15:14-16:27	Purpose of the letter, Paul's plans to visit Rome and Spain (15:14-33) Greetings to different groups and individuals (16:1-16) Final words and greetings from (16:16-27)

Form and structure

- ❖ The structure of Romans 14:1-15:13 is outlined below in detail. The whole text consists of four parts:
 - (1) Acceptance (14:1-3)
 - (2) Don't judge one another, because Christ is Lord (Rom 14:4-12)
 - (3) Therefore, make up your mind to do what leads to peace of the Kingdom
(14:13-23)
 - (4) Acceptance (15:1-13)
- ❖ (2) and (3) both show an ABA'-structure:
 - A = Don't judge (14:4-6) because God has accepted each one of us.
 - B = We live to Christ the Lord (14:7-9).
 - A' = Don't Judge (14:10-12) because we all have to give account to him.
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 - A = Make up your mind (14:13-16)
 - B = We serve Christ the Lord – the Kingdom of God (14:17-19)
 - A' = Make up your mind (14:20-23)

(1) ACCEPTANCE	
Acceptance	Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.

(Rom 14:1-3)	<p>One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.</p> <p>The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.</p>
(2) DON'T JUDGE ONE ANOTHER	
<p>Don't judge (Rom 14:4-6)</p>	<p>Who are you to judge someone else's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.</p> <p>One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.</p>
<p>Christ is LORD (Rom 14:7-9)</p>	<p>For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.</p>
<p>Don't judge (Rom 14:10-12)</p>	<p>You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'"</p>

	So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.
(3) MAKE UP YOUR MIND TO DO WHAT LEADS TO PEACE OF THE KINGDOM	
<p>Make up your mind (Rom 14:13-16)</p>	<p>Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way.</p> <p>As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself.</p> <p>But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean.</p> <p>If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love.</p> <p>Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died.</p> <p>Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.</p>
<p>Christ is LORD (Rom 14:17-19)</p>	<p>For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men.</p> <p>Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.</p>
<p>Make up your mind (Rom 14:20-23)</p>	<p>Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food.</p> <p>All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.</p> <p>So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.</p>
(4) Acceptance	
Acceptance	We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please

<p>(Rom 15:1-13)</p>	<p>ourselves.</p> <p>Each of us should please his neighbour for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me.”</p> <p>For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.</p> <p>May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.</p> <p>Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.</p> <p>For I tell you that Christ has become a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy, as it is written:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Therefore I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing hymns to your name.”</p> <p>Again, it says,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Rejoice, O Gentiles, with his people.”</p> <p>And again,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“Praise the Lord, all you Gentiles, and sing praises to him, all you peoples.”</p> <p>And again, Isaiah says,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">“The Root of Jesse will spring up, one who will arise to rule over the nations; the Gentiles will hope in him.”</p> <p>May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.</p>
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Technical, hermeneutical and historical notes

- ❖ Date of Writing

- “Romans was drafted in the winter of 56–57 c.e. or the early spring of 57”³ and was sent from Corinth or Cenchrea (Rom 16:1, 2) which was in the vicinity of Corinth. The letter was probably carried by Phoebe to the churches of Rome.
- ❖ The City of Rome and the Letter to the Romans.⁴
 - “An extensive building program paid by” Emperor Augustus “and his wealthy supporters transformed Rome into a gleaming city of marble that grew to house a million people. Under his loyal son-in-law Agrippa, a new aqueduct was built along with numerous public fountains; temples were restored; public gardens, baths, and theaters were erected; and the city administration was reorganized with fire brigades and police protection; enhanced grain deliveries to Roman citizens were also provided. All of these improvements served to demonstrate that the golden age of peace and plenty had finally arrived.”
 - “Of more direct relevance for the situation of Paul’s Letter to the Romans were the reigns of Claudius (41–54 c.e.) and Nero (54–68 c.e.)” “Claudius continued the process of urban development with the creation of a new harbor for the grain trade, the improvement of the roads and aqueducts, the reorganization of the court system, and the creation of an imperial bureaucracy consisting of slaves and freedmen/women who administered the affairs of the empire in areas where the emperor had direct control.”
 - “Nero came to power with the pledge to restore the role of the Senate and the rule of law, and was celebrated for ushering in a golden age.” “At the time Romans was written, the Nero administration was providing an exemplary form of government and law enforcement, despite the profligate personal habits of Nero himself—an aggressive bisexual who enjoyed stalking the streets of Rome with his crowd of sycophants demanding sexual services from passersby and ‘indulging in brawls and petty thieving.’ The combination of Paul’s denunciation of immorality (*Rom 1:25-32*) combined with the command to respect governmental agents as the source of law and order (*Rom 13:1-7*) may derive in part from these peculiar circumstances.”
 - “A crucial element in understanding the situation of Christian congregations in Rome is the crowded urban environment. At the time of Paul’s letter, most of the population in Rome lived in the upper levels of ‘multistory tenement houses’ or in the rears of shops, while the nobility and the wealthy citizens of Rome occupied lower floors of these buildings or in mansions in the better parts of the city.”⁵

³ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 18).

⁴ This paragraph is a summary of Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 47,48).

⁵ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 53).

- “The large Jewish community in Rome had played a major role in the formation of the Christian congregations prior to the time of Paul’s letter.”⁶
 - “Julius Caesar granted the right of Jewish communities to follow their own laws, which was confirmed by the Senate in 44 B.C.E. and later by Augustus and Claudius. The ‘right to live according to Jewish Laws and Customs’ included permission to have meetings for worship and meals together, to organize a communal life, the right not to give bonds on the Sabbath, to have kosher markets, and to send funds to the Jerusalem temple.”⁷
 - “Although there may have been others, there is solid evidence of at least eleven synagogues in Rome; the word συναγωγή (*synagogue*) may refer to congregations rather than buildings.”⁸
- ❖ The recipients of the letter:
- “To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints” (Rom 1:6). A distinction can be made between the primary recipients and the secondary. To these secondary recipients belong all those who are mentioned in Romans 16:
 - Individuals like “Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus” (Rom 16:3).
 - Members of one household, like “those who belong to the household of Aristobulus” (Rom 16:10).
 - Small groups like “Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas and all the saints with them” (Rom 16:15).
 - (Small) congregations like “the church that meets at their house” (Priscilla and Aquila; Rom 16:5).
 - “All this suggests that the Christian groups formed something of a spectrum (some more Jewish in composition, some more Gentile, most mixed).”⁹
 - The Letter to the Romans is dealing with the relationship between the Jews and the Gentiles. The (main) church of Rome had not been founded by Paul. It looks like they were still unaware of the decisions made by the Apostle Convent (Acts 15:1-21).
 - “Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: ‘Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved’” (Acts 15:1-7).

⁶ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 55).

⁷ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 56).

⁸ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 57).

⁹ Dunn, J. D. G. (1993, p. 839). *Romans, Letter to The*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

- The reaction of Peter was: “Brothers, (...) God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them (Gentiles) by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. (...) We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.” (See also Eph 2:8)
- Jews and Gentiles:
 - “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” (Rom 1:16, 17).
- ❖ The main theme of the Letter:
 - Righteousness from God
 - “In the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: ‘The righteous will live by faith.’” (Rom 1:17; Hab 2:4; Gal 2:16; 3:11).
 - Important note. There is no difference between the Old and the New Testament about “The righteous will live by faith.”
 - Genesis 15:6: “Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.” (See also Romans 4:1-25!).
 - How does the New Testament supplement the Old?
 - “But now (NT) a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify OT). This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:21-24).
 - This has consequences on the relationship between Jews and Gentiles. (See above.)

Exposition

Bear in mind

- ❖ The following key texts must be born in mind while studying and expound Romans 14:1-15:13:
 - ““The righteous will live by faith.”” (Rom 1:17; Hab 2:4). “But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.

This righteousness from God comes **through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe**" (Rom 3:21, 22).

- "Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom 12:1, 2).
 - "For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: **Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you**. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **so in Christ we who are many form one body**, and each member belongs to all the others" (Rom 12:3-5).
 - "**Be devoted to one another in brotherly love**. Honor one another above yourselves" (Rom 12:10). "Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law" (Rom 13:8). "Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom 13:10).
 - "**For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men**" (Rom 14:17, 18).

Verse 1-3 Accept one another

- ❖ "Accept" = "**προσλαμβάνω**": **to extend a welcome, receive in(to) one's home** or circle of acquaintances.¹⁰ To accept does not mean to accept one's views but welcome him at your home and in the Christian community because God has welcomed (same verb) and justified him by his grace (Rom 3:24. See for hospitality: Romans 12:13. He or she is your brother or sister (Rom 14:10, 15, 21).
 - Accepting diversity in the community is an opportunity for love (Rom 14:15). "Love honors both the liberty which is the concern of the strong (for freedom comes to fullest expression in acts of love), and the law which is the concern of the weak" (for **'Love does no harm to its neighbor. Love is the fulfillment of the Law,**' Rom 13:10). to the praise of God (Rom 15:5–12).¹¹

¹⁰ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 883).

¹¹ Chamblin, J. K. (1993, p. 316). *Freedom/Liberty*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

- Paul means that the weak brother must be accepted and welcomed as a full member of the Christian community.¹²

❖ **“him whose faith is weak”**

- “to be weak” = “**ἀσθενέω**”: 2. **to experience some personal incapacity or limitation, be weak.**¹³ This faith seeks support in certain moral choices, such as not eating meat. See below. His “lack is not strength of self-control but **liberty of conscience.**”¹⁴ Although there have been made several proposals to identify the weak with certain groups, Paul did not. He only gave two or three examples of disputable matters.
 - Dunn comments: “In this case **the weakness is trust in God plus** dietary and festival laws, trust in God *dependent* on observance of such practices, a trust in God which leans on the crutches of particular customs and not on God alone, as though they were an integral part of that trust.”¹⁵

❖ **“disputable matters”**

- **“disputable matters” = “**διαλογισμός**”:** 2. **content of reasoning or conclusion reached through use of reason, thought, opinion, reasoning, design.**¹⁶
- Paul mentions three disputable matters:
 - (1) “One man’s faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, **whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables**” (Rom 14:2). All food is clean (Rom 14:20) but some regard something as unclean (Rom 14:14). See also **Acts 10:9-15**, the vision of Peter, and Acts 15:19, 20.
 - (2) “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike” (Rom 14:5).
 - (3) “It is better not to eat meat or **drink wine** or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall” (Rom 14:21).
- The weak and the strong:

“The weak”		“The strong”
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¹² Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 255).

¹³ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 142).

¹⁴ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 355).

¹⁵ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 798).

¹⁶ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 232).

<p>"Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom 14:5).</p> <p>"He does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God" (14:6).</p>		
Eats only vegetables		Eats everything
Regards one day more sacred		Regards every day alike
Drinks no wine		Drinks wine
<p>"So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God" (Rom 14:22). It is a matter of conscience.</p>		
Mutual responsibility		
Do not condemn the "the strong".		Do not look down on "the weak".
<p>The faith of "the weak" is vulnerable, because it is not firmly rooted in Christ alone. He has no liberty of conscience. He considers eating "only vegetables" necessary to be acceptable to God. When this brother is confronted with the behaviour of "the strong." This behaviour can become an obstacle (Rom 14:13) and cause him to stumble (Rom 14:20), and become distressed (Rom 14:15), and eventually his behaviour will destroy the work of God (Rom 14:20), because of sin (Rom 14:23).</p>		

❖ **"without passing judgment"**

- Newman and Nida present a short overview of different translations, which is helpful: *"But do not argue with him about his personal opinions* translates a noun phrase (literally "not for arguments of doubt"). Most translations render this phrase in essentially the same way as the TEV (Today's English Version), while the NEB ("without attempting to settle doubtful points"; New English Bible) and the JB ("without starting an argument"; Jerusalem Bible) appear to understand it in a more general sense. In some instances one may use a translation such as "do not argue with him about what he should or should not do" or "do not argue with him about what he himself should do."¹⁷
 - Compare Colossians 2:16: "Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day."

¹⁷ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 256).

- ❖ “The man who eats everything **must not look down** on him who does not,
- ❖ and the man who does not eat everything **must not condemn** the man who does,
- ❖ **for God has accepted him.**”
 - Those who eat only vegetables might find support in the history of Daniel (Dan 1:8-12).
 - “**look down**” = “ἐξουθενέω”: This verb “is a very strong term and means ‘to count as nothing.’”¹⁸ – 1. **to show by one’s attitude or manner of treatment that an entity has no merit or worth, disdain.**¹⁹
 - “This likely refers to the feeling of superiority on the part of the majority toward a minority.”²⁰
 - “**condemn**” = “κρίνω”: *pass an unfavourable judgment upon, criticize, find fault with, condemn.*²¹ Dunn: “**The one who does not eat evidently regards not eating as of crucial importance in maintaining the relationship with God,** so that *eating* becomes an act unacceptable to God, an act, that is to say, which merits divine condemnation.”²²
 - This condemnation stands in sharp contrast to the acceptance by God. The one who eats only vegetables must not condemn the man who eats anything (everything):
 - “**for God has accepted him.**” God has accepted him (based on justification): “This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Rom 3:22-24; Rom 1:17).
 - And therefore: “Accept one another, then, **just as Christ accepted you,** in order to bring praise to God” (Rom 15:7). “It is inappropriate to reject somebody whom God has welcomed.”²³

¹⁸ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 256).

¹⁹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 352).

²⁰ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 838).

²¹ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 567); Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 802).

²² Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 802).

²³ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 361).

Verse 4-6 Don't judge one another

❖ **“Who are you to judge someone else’s servant?”**

- **“Who”** is the one weak in faith judging one who eats everything. It is applicable the other way around. “The weak in faith” might be afraid that one who eats everything will fall.
- **“servant”** = **“οἰκέτης”**: literally member of the household.²⁴ The household of God (1 Tim 3:15), who has accepted him, is implied. This servant functions almost as a member of the family.²⁵ He or she is a member of the household of God, "beloved of God" (Rom 1:7, a child of God (Rom 8:16, and therefore an heir of God (Rom 8:16, 17), chosen by God (Rom 8:29, 30, 33) who belong to the one body of Christ (Rom 12:5). See also Galatians 6:10.²⁶

❖ **“To his own master he stands or falls.”**

- **“Fall”** = **“πίπτω”**: in a transcendent or moral sense - fall from a state of grace.²⁷ (See Heb 4:11). Or more as an illustration: “stands or falls” “may be rendered in some languages as ‘has done well or not,’ ‘has done what he should or not,’ or ‘s approved or not.’”²⁸
- **“And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand,”** by his Spirit (Rom 8:15) and grace.
 - “Paul is announcing his confidence that the Lord of the community, having once received a member, can cause him to stand.... **Grace is stronger than human frailty.**”²⁹ Paul is not only writing about the weak but also about the strong.
 - The emphasis is on **the power of the Lord**. Human judgment will not do good but can become a stumbling block (Rom 14:20).
 - “It denotes perseverance in, or falling away from, faith and obedience.”³⁰

²⁴ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 694).

²⁵ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006), p. 841, 842.

²⁶ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, 842).

²⁷ Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 815).

²⁸ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 257).

²⁹Käsemann quoted by Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 843).

❖ “one day more sacred than another”

- Paul “may be referring to the tendency of the Jewish Christians to continue to observe the Sabbath day, but it is also possible that he is referring to special days which other groups felt must be observed for religious purposes. For similar passages see Galatians 4:10 and Colossians 2:16.”³¹ But we cannot be sure about which particular day or days he has in mind. If he has the observance of the Sabbath day in mind, this would raise several questions, because the observance of the Sabbath day is prescribed in the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:8-11). For instance, did some Christians abandon the observance of the Sabbath day?

❖ “consider” = “**φρονέω**”: 1. **to have an opinion with regard to something, think, form/hold an opinion, judge**; 3. **to develop an attitude based on careful thought, be minded/disposed**.³²

- “Being ‘convinced in one’s own mind,’ affects behavior (Rom 14:1–8) and issues in a life of holiness (Eph 4:20–32). Similarly the verb *phroneō* (consider) denotes an attitude of mind which finds expression in the will (Bultmann, 1.214). Once the believers’ “attitude” is like Christ’s (Phil 2:2, 5, where *phroneō* occurs three times), they will become obedient like him (Phil 2:6–11). When Christians “set their minds” on things above (Col 3:2), their conduct will become holy (Col 3:5–17). The “mindset” (*phronēma*) of the flesh or the Spirit (Rom 8:6–7) determines a whole way of life (Rom 8:1–17).”³³
 - See also Colossians 4:12: “that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured (convinced).”
 - Dunn aptly remarks that the pattern of conduct (for instance eating/not eating) is in accord with the will of God (Rom 12:2): “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by **the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is**—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”³⁴
 - See also Romans 12:3: “Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather **think of yourself with sober judgment**, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

³⁰ Cranfield, C. E. B. (2004, p. 703).

³¹ Newman, B. M., & Nida, E. A. (1973, p. 258).

³² Arndt, W., Danker, F. W., Bauer, W., & Gingrich, F. W. (2000, p. 1065, 1066).

³³ Chamblin, J. K. (1993, p. 770). *Psychology*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

³⁴ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 806).

❖ **“does so to the Lord and give thanks to the Lord”**

- “With the intention and desire of serving the Lord by so doing.”³⁵ Giving thanks is only possible when the thanksgiver is fully convinced.
 - “Eating and drinking are an occasion for the attitude and expression of gratitude to God.”³⁶ See also Mark 8:6; 14:23.
 - “For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer” (1 Tim 4:4, 5).

Verse 7-9 Christ is Lord

❖ **“If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.”**

- This is the central passage. **“Live to the Lord”** means serving him in his Kingdom with joy and thanksgiving and peace (Rom 14:17)
- **“We belong to the Lord.”**
 - “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Rom 10:9).
 - “Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus” (Rom 6:8-11).
 - “And he (Jesus Christ) died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again” (2 Cor 5:15).
 - “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed” (1 Pet 2:24).
- “The lordship of Christ is all-important.”³⁷
 - “The important behavior patterns of both groups (Rom 14:5, 6) appear small and unimportant in face of the fundamental lordship of Jesus Christ over the life of every single one,”³⁸ and in the light of life and death.

³⁵ Cranfield, C. E. B. (2004, p. 706).

³⁶ Meye, R. P. (1993, p. 914). *Spirituality*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

³⁷ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 848).

❖ **“the Lord of both the dead and the living”**

- Rom 8:38, 39: **“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**
- **See also Mt 28:18, Acts 2:36, Eph 1:20-23, Phil 2:9-11, Rev 5.**³⁹
 - **“If Christ rules over everything from life to death, he certainly is the final arbiter in matters of calendar and diet.”**⁴⁰ And: **“Because he is our Lord, we must live for him. Because he is also the Lord of our fellow Christians, we must respect their relationship to him and mind our own business. For he died and rose to be Lord.”**⁴¹

Verse 10-12 *Don't judge one another*

❖ Paul is asking two rhetorical questions.

- **“You, then, why do you judge your brother?”**
- **“Or why do you look down on your brother?”**
 - **“You”** is emphatic. Paul is addressing the people mentioned earlier in verse 3.
- **“Who are you to judge someone else's servant?”** (Rom 14:4).
 - Someone else's servant (Rom 14:4) is also your brother (Rom 14:10)!
- These questions don't need an answer:
 - **“For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.”**
 - Note the sequence: **“you” – “you” – “we.”** Nobody will be excluded.
 - **“all”** is emphatic. See also 1 Pet 4:5.
 - **“So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad”** (2 Cor 5:9, 10).

³⁸ Michel quoted by Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 848).

³⁹ Smith, J. H. (1992, p. 1317).

⁴⁰ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 849).

⁴¹ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 362).

- ❖ Standing before God’s judgment seat, as **“it is written”** in the Old Testament, the Law and the Prophets.
 - **“As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,”** (Isa 49:18):
 - 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'"
 - **“This a typical prophetic oath formula.”**⁴²
- ❖ **“every knee will bow”** and acknowledge God as Lord and Creator. See also Philippians 2:10.
- ❖ **“So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.”**
 - Account of himself, his faith, his conscience, his moral choices, and his love towards his brother and sister in the Lord.

Application

- ❖ Praise God.
 - He is the Creator and Judge of this world (Rom 1:20; Rom 2:3, 16 14:10-12).
 - He has revealed his righteousness through faith in Jesus Christ (Rom 1:16, 17; Rom 3:21, 22; Rom 10:4-6).
 - He has accepted sinners in his household (Rom 14:3).
- ❖ Christ is Saviour and Lord:
 - **It is the completeness of the lordship.**⁴³
 - “And for Christians (vv 8–10 show that Paul only has Christians in view) Christ is the model to be followed (2 Cor 5:14–15; Phil 2:5–11); the ‘we’ is ‘the we of the community’ (referring to Nababan). The saying underlines the impossibility of a genuine or complete autonomy. In practice even the most “free” are caught in and dependent on a network of relationships, not to mention things. Christian liberty should certainly never be classified as a kind of autonomy.”⁴⁴
- ❖ Don’t pass judgments on disputable matters.
 - What are disputable matters? This is not easy to determine! What seems to be for one a disputable matter, seems to be for the other a matter of principles.

⁴² Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 851).

⁴³ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 808).

⁴⁴ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 807).

- Dunn comments: “What was at stake was nothing less than the whole self-understanding of the new movement of which Paul was a chief apostle, in other words, the definition of Christianity itself.”⁴⁵
 - This needs love, wisdom and discernment. Stott wrote: “There is a similar need for discernment today. We must not elevate non-essentials, especially issues of custom and ceremony, to the level of the essential and make them tests of orthodoxy and conditions of fellowship.”⁴⁶
 - Judging one another will take away joy, peace and righteousness (Rom 14:17).
 - Be therefore impartial: “But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere” (Jas 3:17).
 - “The liberty of the Christian assembly should be able to embrace divergent views and practices without a feeling that they must be resolved or that a common mind must be achieved on every point of disagreement.”⁴⁷ “the overarching concern and priority in what follows is that a church should be able to sustain a diversity of opinion and lifestyle as an integral aspect of its common life.”⁴⁸
 - Not judging: “This goes against the grain of the Greco-Roman culture, whose educational system aimed to encourage informed, critical judgments of issues and persons; it seems to counter the need to judge people who have done wrong or judges in athletic or musical contests.”⁴⁹ But not only in the Greco-Roman culture, but also in modern cultures people continuously judge and condemn each other.
 - Jewett and Kotansky note: “Given the intense competition for superior status in the Roman world, whose class system relegated the vast majority to the position of despicable nonentities, Paul’s admonition is strikingly countercultural. The disdainful smile of social and theological contempt is no longer to remain in the repertoire of Christian group life.”⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p .811).

⁴⁶ Stott, J. R. W. (2001, p. 358).

⁴⁷ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 799).

⁴⁸ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 799).

⁴⁹ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 839).

⁵⁰ Jewett, R., & Kotansky, R. D. (2006, p. 839).

- Who are you, to judge or look down on your brother? "**For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.**" See also Matthew 7:1-5.
- "Life and death are much more important differences than disagreement over diet and days; and not even they disturb the relation between believers and their Lord."⁵¹
- ❖ Be convinced in your own mind.
 - "It is a reminder to each member that, whether his faith leads him to adopt the practice of the strong or the practice of the weak, it can, and must be allowed to, set him free for an obedience which (according to his own particular way of faith) is firm, decisive, resolute, courageous, joyful."⁵²

Conclusion

- ❖ Chamblin aptly concludes: "It is most significant that Paul, himself one of the strong (Rom 15:1), does not employ his apostolic authority to impose his personal convictions upon the weak.
- ❖ Nor does he counsel the strong to try by whatever means to convert the weak into the strong.
- ❖ Not for a moment does he ask the strong to renounce their liberty (which would be to repudiate their very being as Christians), but he does challenge them to practice it in a certain way.
- ❖
- ❖ They are free both to exercise and to restrict their freedom, for they are enslaved to Christ and not to the liberty he has granted them. The strong are free to defend expressions of the very weakness from which they themselves have been liberated. More than that, they are strong enough and free enough actually 'to bear the infirmities of the weak'⁵³

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⁵¹ Dunn, J. D. G. (1988, p. 808).

⁵² Cranfield, C. E. B. (2004, p. 705-706).

⁵³ Chamblin, J. K. (1993, p. 315). *Freedom/Liberty*. In G. F. Hawthorne, R. P. Martin, & D. G. Reid (Eds.).

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