

## THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – UNITY IN THE BODY – PART 3

--ROMANS 14:13-23--

### INTRODUCTION:

This morning we start a new section of Romans 14 and Paul continues to speak about the unity that must exist between strong or mature believers and weak or immature believers. Both types of believers have a mutual responsibility to love one another, to have fellowship with one another and to not judge one another for the convictions that each hold concerning issues that are not commanded nor condemned in the New Testament. Paul warns us in this new section to not use our liberty or freedoms in such a way that they affect our brothers and sisters in Christ adversely. In this new section he gives us six principles that should be guidelines for both strong and weak believers to follow to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

#### I. DO NOT CAUSE YOUR BROTHER TO STUMBLE (Romans 14:13)

- a. Paul begins this new section with the term “\_\_\_\_\_” which my Dad used to always say, “When you see the word “therefore” you must look to see what it is there for?” (Galatians 6:1)
- b. Paul in this passage is not talking about \_\_\_\_\_ in a believer’s life but about the maturity or immaturity of our faith which we are not to judge.
- c. It is not evident in the NASB but in Greek Paul uses a play on words in verse 13. The words translated “\_\_\_\_\_” and “\_\_\_\_\_” are the same Greek word. (1 Corinthians 8:9)
- d. What might be a modern-day example? The New Testament does not \_\_\_\_\_ the drinking of alcoholic beverages, at best it says we are not to drink in excess.
- e. This principle given here by Paul must be applied if we are to be a loving, \_\_\_\_\_ Christian.

#### II. DO NOT HURT YOUR BROTHER (Romans 14:14-15a)

- a. A second way in which we preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is to be careful in what we say or do so that we do not spiritually \_\_\_\_\_ or grieve a brother or sister in Christ. (Acts 10:15)
- b. Jesus had declared this same \_\_\_\_\_ during His earthly ministry. (Mark 7:18-19; 1 Timothy 4:3-5)
- c. Understanding this truth, the strong Christian is completely correct in his conviction that he has the \_\_\_\_\_ to enjoy anything that Scripture does not condemn as sinful.
- d. Paul explained it this way to the believers in Corinth, concerning this same issue of the freedom to \_\_\_\_\_ meat sacrificed to idols. (1 Corinthians 8:4-7)
- e. Paul uses food as his example, but it could be any other issue as well, if our brother is hurt by what we do or say we are no longer walking according to \_\_\_\_\_.
- f. Paul goes onto say in 1 Corinthians 8 where I quoted from earlier that a stronger brother who hurts a weaker brother by causing him to stumble by going against his conscience not only is unloving as Paul says here in Romans but has also \_\_\_\_\_ against that brother and against the Lord. (1 Corinthians 8:8-12)

### CONCLUSION:

Being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace truly is about loving one another with the same selfless love that Christ loves us. Unity in the body of Christ cannot exist without love. Do you love your brothers and sisters in Christ enough to sacrifice some liberties, to give up some of the freedoms that you have in Christ so as not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in their way, so as not to hurt and grieve their spirit because what you call freedom, they call sin because of their lack of understanding. Are you willing to give it up so that you walk according to love and to help them grow in the faith to the maturity that God wants for them?