

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE – UNITY IN THE BODY – PART 4

--ROMANS 14:13-23--

INTRODUCTION:

In this passage which we began last week, Paul gives us six principles that should act as guidelines for all Christians to follow if they are desiring to be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace as we are commanded in Ephesians 4.

Last week we looked at the first two of the principles: The first, do not cause your brother to stumble. The second, do not hurt your brother. This morning we will look at the last four that Paul gives us.

I. DO NOT DESTROY YOUR BROTHER (Romans 14:15b)

- a. The third principle that Paul gives us as a guideline to being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace is not to _____ your brother.
- b. Paul is calling the strong believer to the surrender and self-sacrifice of his _____ for the sake of a brother.
- c. Now I want you to understand that the death of the Lord Jesus Christ was sufficient to pay the penalty for _____ the sins of the world. (John 1:29; 3:14-16; Romans 10:13; 1 Timothy 2:3-6; 1 John 2:1-2; 4:14)
- d. Not only do we see this truth in the New Testament, but it was _____ for us in the Old Testament. (Leviticus 16)

II. DO NOT SACRIFICE YOUR TESTIMONY (Romans 14:16-19)

- a. The fourth principle that Paul gives in this passage has to do with our own _____ and testimony to the rest of the world.
- b. The freedoms that we have in Christ can and should bring us great _____ and enjoyment when they are understood and used as they are intended to be used.
- c. It is especially important that we use these freedoms carefully to maintain the _____ of the church and to _____ the church's witness before and to the unbelieving world.
- d. Our lives should be characterized by _____ living, a constant striving to daily live righteously. (Philippians 1:9-11)

- e. Peace as I have already mentioned is a by-product of the _____ of the Spirit. (Romans 12:10-13)
- f. _____ is also a fruit of the Spirit. It too is a product of the unity of the Spirit and of righteousness.
- g. Paul writes, "*For he who in this way _____ Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.*" (Romans 14:18, NASB95)
- h. Paul finishes this principle by writing in verse 19, "*So then we pursue the things which make for _____ and the building up of one another.*" (Romans 14:19, NASB95)

III. DO NOT TEAR DOWN THE WORK OF GOD (Romans 14:20-21)

- a. Paul's fifth principle that we need as a guideline in our life is "*Do not _____ the work of God for the sake of food.*" (Romans 14:20a, NASB95)
- b. When Paul writes do not to tear down the work of God the work of God that he is speaking of is _____.
- (Ephesians 2:10, 1 Corinthians 8:12-13)
- c. Paul goes on in this verse to remind us that he is not talking about sinful or unholy things, but about those _____ that we have in Christ.
- d. Paul writes, "*It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother _____.*" (Romans 14:21, NASB95)

IV. DO NOT CONDEMN YOURSELVES (Romans 14:22-23)

- a. In the last two verses of this chapter the Apostle Paul gives us the final principle and he does it by writing first to those _____ in the faith and then those _____ in the faith.
- b. In verse 22 Paul first writes to the strong believer, the one who is _____ in his faith and understands and appreciates the freedom that he has in Christ.

- c. Verse 23 Paul directs to the weaker believer, the one whose _____ is still offended due to certain religious restrictions that we have carried over or relinquished from their life before coming to faith in Christ.

CONCLUSION:

In this passage, Paul gives us six principles that are to be guidelines for every Christian to follow in regard to being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The principles are:

1. Do not cause your brother to stumble.
2. Do not hurt your brother.
3. Do not destroy your brother.
4. Do not sacrifice your testimony.
5. Do not tear down the work of God.
6. Do not condemn yourself.

If we follow these principles diligently, we will preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. When there is unity of the Spirit in the local assembly and the world sees that we practice what we preach, they will be drawn to the peace and the joy in the Spirit that they see in the church. The world desperately wants peace in a world that is in turmoil, the world desperately wants joy that overcomes the misery of life. If we can show that both these can be found in Christ as we serve one another, this will be acceptable to God and it will be approved by men.