

**HOW SHOULD WE ACT IN MATTERS OF INDIFFERENCE?
(Romans 14:1–12)**

I. The problem (Romans 14:1-2, 5).

- A. There were those in the congregations in Rome who held a position that one was to not eat meat and others who held that certain days were important, other than the Lord's Day.
- B. Paul tells those who had a better understanding to not hold those beliefs against them.
 - 1. Paul knew that it was not wrong to eat meat or think days besides the Lord's Day were not important.
 - 2. So did some in Rome.
 - 3. Sadly, some in Rome did not understand these distinctions and were causing problems.
- C. Paul considered those who had a problem with meat and certain days to be weak in the faith.
 - 1. More than likely this group was made up of converted Jews.
 - 2. They would see meat as having been offered to idols and certain days would probably still have been important to them.
- D. As we mentioned in the introduction, there are those today who believe certain things are simply not allowable and make them matters of fellowship.
- E. Paul says that those things which are matters of indifference should not be causes of division.
- F. In fact, those strong in faith should be received by those stronger in the faith or the gospel.
 - 1. This is vital to note because if it were about matters of doctrine, Paul would not command faithful Christians to receive or take part in a work, which is part of the meaning of this word, he who holds a false position on a matter of faith.
 - 2. We can't be an accessory, again, a part of the meaning of receive, to false doctrine.
- G. Paul tells us not to divide over matters of scruple, as some translations have "doubtful disputations."
- H. Matters such as one cup or multiple, red or green carpets, this song book or that one are matters of scruple.

II. The prescription (Romans 14:3-4, Romans 14:6-9).

- A. The remedy for this problem is to put up with one another.
 - 1. The ones that can eat meat should not look down on those that can't.
 - 2. The ones who can't should not hold it against those that can.
- B. The fact is, those that eat and those that don't view the days as special do so because they love the Lord.
- C. Also, those that don't eat meat and view the days as special love the Lord

as well.

- D. We can't judge one another in these matters because they are not of doctrinal consequence.
- E. Each one of us is the servant of God, and we have no right to judge one another in these areas of indifference.
- F. The only thing we can do is make sure that we are fully persuaded in our own minds.
 - 1. Though the word "conscience" is not used here, it is under consideration.
 - 2. We can't do anything that violates our consciences.
 - 3. The fact is, God has created in us a conscience and it serves a great purpose.
 - 4. Notice the words of R.C. Bell describing our conscience: "Not to ascertain the truthfulness of things, but to see that its owner is true to himself and follows his convictions; that, in violating his conscience, a man so destroys his moral integrity as to make moral, spiritual living impossible; and, therefore, the most deadly thing a man can do is to trifle with his conscience; for, in so doing, he is tampering with the compass of his soul."
 - 5. Of course, the conscience has to be trained correctly.
- G. We need to realize that our actions affect those around us.
 - 1. In a sense, we are our brothers keepers.
 - 2. We don't live in a vacuum.
 - 3. We live for the Lord and that involves doing everything we can to help our brothers grow and not harm their consciences or ours.
- H. Jesus died in order to allow us to live spiritually and we don't want to jeopardize that in any way.

III. The promise (Romans 14:10-12).

- A. Paul makes them a promise: we all are going to stand before the judgment seat of Jesus.
- B. We don't judge one another because Jesus is the Judge.
- C. Paul then quotes from Isaiah 45:23.
 - 1. On that great day, all are going bow to Jesus, both Christians and non-Christians.
 - 2. All are going to confess God as Ruler and Creator.
- D. We don't stand in judgment of our brethren in matters of opinion or in matters of the heart.
 - 1. We are fruit inspectors.
 - 2. We can judge by actions we see with our eyes.
 - 3. We can't judge someone's motives or in matters that are not doctrinal in nature.
- E. Each one of us is going to give account of our actions to the Lord on that great judgment day.
- F. We must make sure that we have treated one another with this great

courtesy or else we will be judged for it by the True Judge.