

Lord of the Dead and the Living **Romans 14:5-9**

Four categories of differences in belief

1. Beliefs one must have in order to be saved

Examples

- a. Jesus is fully human and fully divine (1 John 4:1-3)
- b. Justification is by grace alone through faith alone (Gal 1:6-9)
- c. The necessity of repentance and submission to the Lordship of Christ for salvation (1 Cor 6:9-10)

How we are to relate to people who believe differently

- Treat them as unbelievers

2. Beliefs that divide believers into different churches

Examples

- a. Beliefs about the proper mode of baptism, and the people who should be baptized
- b. Beliefs about the proper form of church government

How we are to relate to churches who believe differently

- Have fellowship with them to the extent that we can do so without compromising our beliefs as a church

3. Beliefs about more minor areas of biblical doctrine

Examples

- a. Where OT saints went when they died
- b. Whether or not the soul and spirit are different parts of a human being

How we are to relate to fellow church members who believe differently

- Speak the truth in love for edification, while seeking to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace (Eph 4)

4. Issues of conscience in the use of Christian liberty

Examples

- a. The use of one's time on the Lord's Day
- b. Drinking alcohol in moderation without getting drunk
- c. Education of children (public school, Christian school, homeschool, etc.)

How we are to relate to believers with different convictions

- a. Welcome them but not to quarrel about it (Rom 14:1)
- b. Do not despise or pass judgment on them (14:3)

This is the category of differences that Romans 14:1-15:13 addresses

Question: Observe the titles used for God in this passage. How does this relate to something in the previous verses of this chapter?

Question: What does this passage teach should be our purpose and aim in all that we do? How does this relate to the subject of chapter 14?

In matters of conscience, be fully convinced in your own mind (5)

5 “One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike...”

“esteems one day as better than another”

1. **NIV** “more sacred”
2. Believes certain days are to be “observed” (6a)
3. The observance of days was important in the OT and in the Judaism of Paul’s day
 - The Sabbath
 - Feast days
 - Fast days (Day of Atonement, and weekly fasts [Luke 18:12])
4. It seems that at least the Sabbath was on Paul’s mind, since Sabbath observance was one of the key Jewish distinctives, and was a point of tension (**Colossians 2:16-17; cf. Galatians 4:10-11**)

“another esteems all days alike”

- Does not observe the special days, but sees every day equally as a day to worship the Lord

5b Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

1. By prayerfully seeking to apply the Scriptures to the issue and your life (12:2)
2. You are not to blindly follow others
3. To violate your own conscience is sin (14:23)

Each acts in honor of the Lord (6)

6 “The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord...”

1. Though Christians are not required to observe such days, he observes it because he sincerely believes it will honor the Lord
2. This is what matters—that he does it to honor the Lord!

6b “The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.”

1. Eating or abstaining from meat (2)
2. Both give thanks to God for what they do eat. And the intent of each is to honor the Lord.

Both have a godly attitude and are motivated by a desire to glorify the Lord. Neither is simply conforming to worldly practice or social custom.

Before God, such matters are not ones of observance or nonobservance, but of intent.

1 Cor. 10:31 “So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”

We live not to ourself but to the Lord (7-9)

7–8 “For none of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord...”

Paul uses the words ‘live’ and ‘die’ to make his point as comprehensive as possible

- The Christian’s ambition is not to please himself, but to please and honor his Lord in **everything** he does

Even as the believer approaches **death**, his ambition is to honor his Lord in his death.

1. Trusting Him
2. Praising Him
3. In faith, counting death to be gain
 - **Phil. 1:20–21** “as it is my eager expectation and hope that I will not be at all ashamed, but that with full courage now as always Christ will be honored in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

What matters in areas of Christian liberty is not that we use liberty or not, but that our ambition is to please and honor the Lord Jesus, as our ambition ought to be in everything we do.

8b “So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s.”

- He is our Lord and we belong to Him, in life and death

9 “For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.”

The believer’s soul does not fall asleep at death, but he continues to have a conscious relationship with the Lord Jesus.

The purpose of Christ’s death and resurrection was to form a people who would joyfully be subject to Him as Lord, to be Lord of all His redeemed ones.

2 Cor. 5:15 “and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.”

The apostle’s logic in this passage is that a Christian by definition is subject to Christ, and therefore is expected to seek to honor Him as Lord in all things.

Application

Be always mindful of Christ’s total lordship over our lives as His redeemed ones (8-9)

Examine if your ambition is to honor the Lord Jesus in all things (6-7)

Seek to be fully convinced in your own mind of how you are to please the Lord Jesus (5)

Do not quarrel with a brother over issues of Christian liberty and conscience, nor despise him, nor pass judgment on him (1-3), knowing that what matters is that each of you have a heart to honor the Lord Jesus.

When differences of conscience come up, rather than arguing about who is right, seek to understand what your brother’s ambition is—whether to please his Lord or his self. If it is to please the Lord, praise the Lord for this!