

THE BOOK OF ROMANS

16. Living Right



Introduction

Perhaps there are areas in our Christian lives where we are not sure what is right or wrong. Some things are clear in God's Word, while others are not. There are what we might call, 'grey areas'. Some would simply like a list of rules, but the Christian life is not a religion of rules, but a relationship with a loving God who gives us two main rules: to love him with all our hearts, and to love our neighbour as ourselves. However there are guidelines or principles that we are given to help us know what to do in situations that are uncertain.

Scripture Reading: Romans 14:1 – 15:7

1. 'Do not Judge Others' Romans 14:1-12

- ☉ The first guideline is that we are not to judge others. In what areas are we to be careful not to judge others? Romans 14:2, 5, 6, 21

(In the areas of food, vegetables and meat, special days, drinking wine, etc.)

- ☉ Why does the Apostle Paul say it is wrong to judge others on such things? Romans 14:3, 10, 12

(The reasons are that God has accepted the other person, and the other person is a servant of God and accountable to him, not to us.)

- ☉ Paul is writing to Christians who are both Gentiles and Jews. They had different cultural backgrounds. We also come from different cultural backgrounds. What are some of the things in the place where we live that we need to be careful not to judge others about?

2. 'Be Convinced Yourself of what is Right'

- ☉ How do we know what we should do in areas that are not so clear? Look at verses 2, 5, 6, 8. How do we know what is right?

(We know it is right for us to do if we have the faith to do it, we are fully convinced that it is right and we know we can do it as to the Lord.)

- ☉ What does it mean in verse 2 when it says, 'one man's faith allows him'? Also look at verses 22 to 23.

(In a situation where there is no clear guideline in scripture, and you believe something is acceptable before God, then it is not wrong to do it. However we will soon see that we need to also consider the affect our actions will have on others.)

3. 'Consider how Others Feel' Romans 14:13-23

The second guideline is that we need to be convinced ourselves of what is right or wrong and follow our own conviction. Paul now writes another guideline to help us, and that is we need to consider others. Many would say, "Consider others! It is up to me what I want to do, it is between me and God!" This is a common attitude, but is it right?

- ☉ What are we to do if we are with another Christian who thinks differently to us? v13, 20, 21

(v13 – we are not to put a stumbling block in their way.

V20 – we are not to destroy the work of God for these things.

V21 – we are not to cause another person to stumble.)

- ☉ What are the reasons Paul gives for being careful not to cause another person to stumble? V15-17, 19, Romans 15:2.

(v15 – we are not acting in love and our actions may destroy our brother.

V16 – we should not allow something we think of as good to be spoken of as evil.

V17 – the Kingdom of God is not to do with outward things.

V19 – we are to do what leads to peace and mutual edification.

15:2 – we are to please our neighbour and build him up.)

4. 'Follow the Example of Jesus' Romans 15:1-7

- ☉ What two examples does Paul give from the life of Jesus and how do these apply to what we have been studying? Romans 15:1-7

(The first example is that just as Jesus did not please himself, neither are we to please ourselves. The second is that we are to accept others just as Jesus accepts us.)

As we follow Jesus he will show us what to do in these unclear or 'grey' areas. The Word of God gives us guidelines to help us make wise decisions about what to do. First of all we are not to judge others, but to be convinced ourselves of what is right. Secondly we are to consider others and the impact that our actions may have on them. By doing this we are obeying the commandment that God has given to us, to love him and to love others.

