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## Romans 14 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

## Romans 14 Paraphrased

### Introduction

† Paul is dealing with real tensions between believers who were still holding onto parts of the Law and those who had fully stepped into the freedom of the new covenant (Colossians 2:16-17)

† This chapter only makes sense in that transition period before the destruction of Jerusalem, when those old covenant practices had not yet fully passed away (Hebrews 8:13)

† The issue is not sin vs righteousness, but conscience and

maturity during the overlap of the covenants

### **Romans 14:1**

Accept the one whose faith is weak, but don't get into arguments over opinions

† The "weak" are those still holding onto dietary laws and customs from the Law (Romans 14:2)

† This is about disputable matters tied to the fading covenant system, not moral commands

### **Romans 14:2**

One person believes he can eat anything, while another who is weak eats only vegetables

† This reflects Jewish dietary restrictions vs freedom in Christ (Mark 7:19)

† The weaker conscience still felt bound to the Law

### **Romans 14:3**

The one who eats must not look down on the one who doesn't, and the one who doesn't must not judge the one who does, because God has accepted him

† Both groups were accepted in Christ during this transition period

† Unity was more important than enforcing personal convictions

### **Romans 14:4**

Who are you to judge someone else's servant, to his own master he stands or falls, and he will stand, because the Lord is able to make him stand

† Christ is the master, not fellow believers (James 4:12)

† Judgment belongs to God, not to those still growing

### **Romans 14:5**

One person values one day above another, another sees every day alike, each person must be fully convinced in his own mind

† This refers to Jewish feast days and Sabbaths (Galatians 4:10)

† These were shadows that were passing away

### **Romans 14:6**

The one who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and the one who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God, and the one who doesn't eat, for the Lord he doesn't eat, and gives thanks to God

† Motive matters more than the practice itself

† Both were acting out of devotion, even if their understanding differed

### **Romans 14:7**

None of us lives for himself, and none of us dies for himself

† Believers belong to Christ, not to personal preference

† This reinforces unity in the body

### **Romans 14:8**

If we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord, so whether we live or die, we are the Lord's

† Christ's authority covers all aspects of life and death

† This removes the need to judge others over secondary matters

### **Romans 14:9**

For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living

† His resurrection established His authority over all

† This includes both groups in the church

### **Romans 14:10**

But you, why do you judge your brother, or you again, why do you look down on your brother, for we will all stand before the judgment seat of God

† This is not future end-of-the-world judgment, but accountability under Christ's rule

† Paul is correcting their behavior in that present time

### **Romans 14:11**

For it is written, as I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to Me, and every tongue will give praise to God

† This was being fulfilled in the first-century submission to Christ (Philippians 2:10-11)

† Christ's authority was already being established

### **Romans 14:12**

So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God

† Personal responsibility replaces legalistic judgment of others

† Each believer answers directly to Christ

### **Romans 14:13**

Therefore let's stop judging one another, but instead decide this, not to put a stumbling block or obstacle in a brother's way

† Love limits freedom when it harms another

† The focus shifts from rights to responsibility

### **Romans 14:14**

I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself, but to the one who thinks something is unclean, to him it is unclean

† Food laws were no longer binding (Acts 10:15)

† Conscience still mattered during the transition

### **Romans 14:15**

For if your brother is hurt because of food, you are no longer walking according to love, don't destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died

† Freedom must be guided by love

† The value of a person outweighs dietary freedom

### **Romans 14:16**

Therefore don't let what is good for you be spoken of as evil

† Misuse of freedom can damage the testimony of the gospel

† Wisdom is needed in how freedom is exercised

### **Romans 14:17**

For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit

- † The kingdom is not about old covenant practices
- † It's about spiritual realities already present

### **Romans 14:18**

For the one who serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and approved by men

- † Living in love brings approval from God and others
- † This defines true service

### **Romans 14:19**

So then let's pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another

- † The goal is unity and growth
- † Not division over fading practices

### **Romans 14:20**

Don't tear down the work of God for the sake of food, all things are clean, but they are evil for the person who eats and causes offense

- † Again, food is not the issue, love is
- † Misuse of freedom can harm others

### **Romans 14:21**

It is good not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything by which your brother stumbles

- † Voluntary restraint is part of love
- † This reflects maturity in Christ

### **Romans 14:22**

The faith which you have, keep between yourself and God, blessed is the one who does not judge himself in what he approves

- † Personal convictions don't need to be forced on others

† Confidence before God matters

### **Romans 14:23**

But the one who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith, and whatever is not from faith is sin

† Acting against conscience is sin

† Faith must guide actions, especially in this transition period

### **Historical References**

† Josephus describes the ongoing tensions between Jewish customs and broader society in the first century, showing why these issues were real and pressing

† Irenaeus wrote about early believers moving away from the Law as fulfillment came, confirming this transition

† Eusebius records how the early church gradually separated from Jewish ceremonial practices after Jerusalem fell

### **How It Applies To Us Today**

† We don't live under the Law, but we still must walk in love toward others

† Not every disagreement is worth division, especially on non-essential matters

† We should prioritize unity, peace, and edification over personal rights

† Mature faith considers how our actions affect others

† The kingdom is about righteousness, peace, and joy, not outward rituals

### **Q & A Appendix**

**Q:** Is this about food today?

**A:** No, it's about first-century covenant issues like dietary laws and feast days (Colossians 2:16-17)

**Q:** Who were the weak?

**A:** Those still holding onto the Law and its restrictions (Romans 14:2)

**Q:** Are we under these laws now?

**A:** No, they were fulfilled and passed away (Hebrews 8:13)

**Q:** What is the main principle here?

**A:** Walk in love and don't cause others to stumble (Romans 14:13-15)

**Q:** What defines the kingdom?

**A:** Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Spirit (Romans 14:17)

**† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †**

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## Source Index

† Romans 14

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

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