

A. GETTING ALONG BEGINS WHEN WE UNDERSTAND A FEW BASIC FACTS (:1-4)

1. (:1) We've Got To Learn To Accept One Another & Stop Making Judgments Based On Doubtful Things (i.e. Opinions ESV)
 - a. Receive (*proslambano*) = to take hold of, as a companion; to lead (eg. holding hands) • implied: graciously, as the Lord does • i.e. w/open arms, in spite of anything that may offend us personally
 - 1) is the person saved by grace thru faith? then accept them & don't even get into it over issues, opinions, positions, that don't effect salvation
 - 2) KJV = doubtful disputations / arguments over personal positions & preferences
 - 3) not talking about obedience to the clear commandments of God: that's a given: we're talking about differences of opinion
 - 4) drinking, smoking, movies, dancing...
 - b. The example here has to do with food (:2-3)
 - 1) apparently a conflict between Jewish dietary laws & Gentiles (eg. eating pork)
 - 2) similar to the hassle in Corinth (8) over meat that had been offered to idols
 - c. The word here to the mature believer is this:
 - 1) don't look down on the spiritually immature
 - a) the sufficiency of God's grace hasn't sunk in yet
 - b) they still think they need to do something (or not do something) to deserve God's mercy
 - 2) give them the time to grow up in Lord so that they can know what you know;
 - a) that a rel. w/God can't be earned or achieved—it can only be received as gift
 - b) & that obedience is a response to God's love, not a requirement for it
 - d. the word to the younger believer is that the Lord has accepted the older one;
 - 1) don't mistake their freedom for lack of reverence
2. We All Serve The Same Lord & Only He Has The Right To Judge His Servants (:4a-b)
 - a. Remember that we're not talking about essentials of salvation, or the direct commands of scriptures
 - 1) recognizing heresy is not judging one another - in those cases we have a duty to take a stand for the truth - we're talking about matters of personal preference
 - b. We are not fruit inspectors
 - 1) first of all, we all have planks in our eyes • we can't see thru our own sin well enough to see someone else's
 - 2) secondly, realize what a dangerous position you put yourself in
 - a) Jesus said: (Matt. 7:1-2) "*Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, & with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.*"
 - b) He also said: (Luke 6:37) "*Do not judge, & you will not be judged. Do not condemn, & you will not be condemned. Forgive, & you will be forgiven.*"
 - c. We all serve the same Lord & only He has the right to judge His servants
3. Also Notice The Reminder At The End Of :4 - We ALL Stand 'Cuz The Lord Makes Us Stand
 - a. When you put your faith in Jesus Christ you qualify - you stand - you pass the test:
 - b. 'cuz that IS the test - not what you eat, or which day you go to church

B. VS. 5

1. (:5) There Are Some Who Would Make An Issue Of Which Is The Right Day To Worship
 - a. Some say it should be on the sabbath / Sat.
 - 1) there was a time when the 7th Day Adv. were so rigid about this, they said that anyone who doesn't observe the Sabbath is condemned to hell (they have since softened their position)
 - 2) there's no question that Saturday is the Sabbath
 - 3) if you're going to observe the Sabbath do it on Sat. (Fri. eve - Sat. eve)
 - b. Others are just as adamant that Sunday (aka the Lord's Day) is the day to worship
 - 1) goes back to resurrection - no doubt Sunday

2) in Acts & 1st Cor. we see evidence of the tradition that Sunday was the day the early church gathered (as we do)

a) it's possible that they chose Sunday 'CUZ it was after the Sabbath

c. But the day of the week shouldn't be an issue (Galatians 4:8-11)

1) if we're hung up on days, we've missed something somewhere

2) personally, everyday is the same in my walk w/the Lord

2. It's The Motive That Matters (:6)

a. Whatever you do, do it for/unto the Lord

1) observe the Sabbath? worship on Sunday? all days same? - do it for the Lord

2) eat meat/don't eat meat, drink wine/don't drink wine

b. The decisions we make about issues such as these is a personal thing that has no effect on our standing before the Lord; but, we don't live in a vacuum

1) (:7) the choices we make can't undo God's grace - but they can & do have an effect on others

c. (:8) The essential nature of salvation is that we've committed & entrusted our lives to the Lord completely

1) we belong to Him, dead or alive (dead AND alive)

2) it's the Lord we're all answerable to, not each other & that's a relief!

C. :9-12

1. (:9) Jesus Died & Rose To Deliver Us From The Tyranny Of One Another

a. HE's our Lord, HE's our Master, HE's our judge

2. (:10-12) Judgment Seat = Bema = Eg. Olympics / Rewards

3. Each Of Us Will One Day Give An Account Of Ourselves (i.e. What We Did With What We Were Given To Work With) To The Lord

a. He's got that covered - so we have no justification for holding each other accountable for every fine detail of how we live out our faith

D. HERE'S THE CONCLUSION (:13-18)

1. (:13) If You Want To Examine Someone's Walk W/The Lord, Examine Your Own - To See If You're Doing Anything That Would Cause Someone To Stumble

• Boy, I learned this one the hard way - Schnapps story

- I'll never know the damage that may have done, but I learned my lesson: I belong to Jesus Christ & everything I do reflects on Him

- Even tho that shot of Schnapps couldn't undo my salvations, & even tho I had the freedom in Christ to have a shot if I wanted to, I have a higher responsibility to avoid anything that would confuse or complicate things for someone who doesn't understand that freedom

a. (:14-15) In other words, the mature believers should make the sacrifice for the sake of the weaker one

1) say a believer comes to the conclusion that guzzling a six-pack every night after work probably isn't the best way to grow in their rel. w/the Lord; in fact they decide to just give it up altogether (good decision). But you, a mature believer, are comfortable having a beer now & then • it would be an abuse of your freedom to cause him/her to question the decision they've made

2. (:16) It's Possible To Flaunt The Freedom We Have In Christ & In Doing So Cause Good Things To Be Spoken Of As Evil

a. eg. Demonstrative worship - OK at home, but visiting: disgraceful : lifting hands

b. The right attitude is to surrender your freedom for the sake of those who would be upset / bothered by it

3. (:17-18) The Same Xian Maturity That Allows Liberty, Is Also A Maturity That Sacrifices It's Liberty For The Sake Of Others • And That Pleases God & Men

E. :19-21

1. Pursue (NIV=MAKE Every Effort) = Others Centered
 - a. sometimes the weak person has to grow up
 - c. But, whether you're weak or strong, you MUST allow everyone the right to make their own decision - even the right to be wrong - when it comes these matters of personal choice

F. :22-23

1. If It's OK For You, Then It's OK (so Long As It's Not Sin)
 - a. If it's NOT OK for you, then that's OK too • the only thing that's not OK is when it's not OK
2. If You Can Do It In Faith, Go For It • If It Causes Another To Stumble, Give It Up • If Some Else's Personal Decision Gives You Trouble, Grow Up