

**INTRODUCTION - ROMANS 14:1-23**

As Christian Jews engaged with Christian Gentiles in Rome, a source of conflict and dissension could be traced to long-held customs and understanding of the Law. Such customs and understandings informed the faith practices of Jews which they mistook as the only way for Christians to exercise their faith. In this chapter, Paul addresses the erroneous judgements and the unrestrained practices that created and reinforced stumbling blocks among believers. Paul wants believers to turn their attention to Jesus; the audience and authority for their faith.

**Keep up:** complete N.T. Wright, *Romans: 18 Studies for Individuals and Groups*, p. 80-83.

**Faith practices must not create or reinforce stumbling blocks for other believers.**

~ *The faith that you have, have as your own conviction before God. (Rom 14:22a: NRSV) ~*

**Romans 14:1-13 → Honor the sacred diversity of faith practices.**

*The way one practices their faith does not need to align with another's practices. Indeed, Christ saves all of us with these diversities in view.*

- 1-4: Acknowledge and welcome diversity in the exercise of faith.
  - ◆ Diversity of strengths: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ◆ Diversity of preferences: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ◆ Diversity of practices: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5-9: Accept that Jesus is the standard for faith.
  - ◆ Honor Christ, not the activities of custom.
  - ◆ Honor Christ, who makes the day holy, not the day.
  - ◆ Honor Christ's death and resurrection, not yourself.
- 10-13: Acknowledge that God is the only One who can judge rightly
  - ◆ We are unable to pronounce judgement on another.
  - ◆ We are unable to escape our own judgement.

**Romans 14:14-23 → Have regard for the developing stability of faithful adherents.**

*One's faith practices must not interfere with the development of another's faith. Salvation and its freedoms are not a license to neglect anyone else's maturation process or preferences.*

- 14-18: Don't permit your freedom to distract or lead to the downfall of another.
  - ◆ People have a right to determine what they will not participate in.
  - ◆ Practice love by refusing preferences that lead to harm.
  - ◆ Permit what is good to be perceived as such.
- 19-23: Pursue peace and mutual upbuilding as a means of countering judgment.
  - ◆ Exalt the work of God above all, including our thoughts.
  - ◆ Engage with each other for the sake of building one another.
  - ◆ Exercise your faith as a matter of your conscience before God.