

Accept One Another

Romans 14:1-13

Introduction

Christian Freedom is the ability to live a life without bondage enjoying the rights and privileges of a wonderful relationship with the Lord Jesus. Because we are accepted and loved in Christ (Romans 15:7) we are free to live out His divine design for our lives. It is Christ who died to give us this freedom (Galatians 5:1), but many Christians choose to keep their brothers and sisters in Christ in bondage. They do this by judging other Christians according to personal preferences or opinions in areas where God's Word does not establish an explicit precept or principle. Many believers, in an attempt to validate their own spirituality, seek to use a list of rules or acceptable behaviors to measure the spiritual maturity of another (Romans 14:3). As a result, many people live their lives by spiritual duty rather than in spiritual delight.

God is a loving Father to Christians who come from different backgrounds, start from different places, and who have different perspectives and opinions. God does not have a cookie cutter experience for spiritual growth. In order for us all to experience the freedom that Christ offers us, we are encouraged in Romans 14 to accept one another granting freedom to each other as we individually respond to the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. If God doesn't condemn it, then we are to live by the freedom of our conviction and our conscience (Romans 14:4).

We are also called to promote the spiritual growth of others by making sure that we are not a stumbling block. Our choices should not be a spiritual disruption in the faith walk of another. We are never to let our freedom in Christ cause another believer to regress in their faith. Accepting one another therefore requires a Christ-like act of love and service whereby we grant freedom to others while willingly restricting our own freedom if it benefits the walk of a fellow believer.

Getting Started

1. *What one point resonated with you from this week's sermon?*
2. *What are some of the personal preferences that Christians use to hold others hostage and judge them illegitimately?*

Let's Get Personal

1. *Do you find your Christian life to be more of a duty or more of a delight? Why do you feel this way?*
2. *While God does give us room as Christians for personal preferences, His Word also gives a standard in many practical areas. What are some areas where God's Word sets clear boundaries and guidelines for our Christian walk?*
3. *Has the behavior or choices of another Christian ever created a stumbling block for you? Have you ever become a stumbling block to others? Share these experiences with your group.*

Take the Next Step

1. *Do you tend to hold others in bondage to your own personal preferences in areas where God's Word does not specifically give boundaries or guidelines? If so, how will you begin to release others?*
2. *God has given you a conscience that is regulated by the Holy Spirit. In what areas of your life have you sensed the conviction of the Holy Spirit? How will you respond this week to the Spirit's prompting in your life?*

Renew Your Mind

"It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yolk of slavery."
Galatians 5:1