

# Romans (14:10-13)

## *Accounting We Will Go*

Part 81 - September 10, 2006

### DIVERSE BELIEVERS

Q: Remember the first word in Romans, chapter fourteen?

Accept ... - *Romans 14:1*

It's the thrust of the *entire* chapter:

- We must not pass judgment on disputable matters. (14:1b)

I must be "fully convinced" that what I eat or avoid, what I enjoy or abstain from, whatever I watch, wear, or pierce, must be a choice that is God-centered and gratitude-based. Yet, I must not allow my *personal preferences* to become a gauge for measuring the spiritual validity of another believer.

Unity is important uniformity is impossible. Therefore, we must agree to disagree agreeably. We may have all things common in Christ, but we are a *very* diverse group.

In this room, there are: Followers & Leaders; Organized & Disorganized; Patient & Anxious; Inhibited & Outgoing; Curious & Unconcerned; Emotional & Controlled; Readers & Non-readers; Dignified & Casual; Serious & Humorous; Expressive & Non-verbal; Planners & Drifters; Relational & Task-oriented; Structured & Spontaneous; and Economical & Extravagant.

That's nowhere near a complete list, but even with *just* those fourteen variables, there're over 17,000 combinations. And it's exponential ... with 25 variables, there're 33 million combinations! With this in mind, let's read:

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "'As surely as I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.'" So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. - *Romans 14:10-13 NIV*

When Paul says: "Why do you judge your brother?" He's not talking about using wisdom and prudence to evaluate right from wrong, or good from bad, or healthy from unhealthy. That's judgment as discernment.

He clarifies his meaning: “Why do you look down on your brother?” That’s judgment as disrespect. Paul’s reminding us that a condescending, scornful, gossiping, tongue will be called into account on the Day of Judgment.



“For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat” (14:10c)

Most gossip is condemnation as entertainment. He’s talking about those careless words of condemnation.

Q: Remember the warning Jesus gave to His followers?

In the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. – *Matthew 7:2 NIV*

If ever there was a reason to lower our expectations and demands on those around us – this is it!

Q: So, when a *believer* stands before the judgment seat, what exactly will be evaluated, and what will be decided? It won’t be sin or salvation ... that was judged at the cross. Look at what Paul wrote to the Corinthians:

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. – *1 Corinthians 3:11 NIV*

But this passage goes on to say that as believers, we build on that foundation; and the quality of our work will be tested.

... the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames. – *1 Corinthians 3:11-15 NIV*

So, the thing that’s being *decided* is to what degree we will receive or suffer a loss of our eternal rewards. But what exactly is being tested and evaluated?

Do you ever watch “The Antiques Roadshow”? People bring in dusty old Tiffany lamps, oil paintings, and bric-a-brac in order to have it appraised by experts on camera. The antique authority will carefully examine the lamp (or whatever) in order to determine one thing: authenticity.

This is what’ll happen when we stand before God’s judgment seat.



- *Our* authority will determine *our* authenticity.

And when the Roadshow expert declares an item to be authentic, we sit on pins and needles waiting to hear what the reward will be for this fortunate discovery.

And there are two factors that will be determined:

1. Did my outer appearance match my inner self?

We have a fundamental, God-given need for harmony between who we are inwardly and how we act outwardly. Joy and peace elude us if we successfully delude everybody about who we really are, what we really think, and how we really feel.

But there's a deeper factor of authenticity yet to be determined:

2. Did my inner self match my ultimate purpose?

It has been written on our hearts, that we are inauthentic beings, until what we are inside our soul corresponds to the eternal reality that gives meaning to all things. We were not created to be self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-sustaining people who simply do what is right in our own eyes.

It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God." (14:11)

We were created to live for the Lord's honor - to trust Him, to love Him, to obey Him and display Him. And we can have no sense of authenticity as long as we struggle against the submission we were created for.

So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God (14:12)

Q: What account (statement, testimony) can I offer to show that I trusted, loved, obeyed, and displayed Jesus as Lord? What account can I report that will triumph over judgment?

A: MERCY!

For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment. - *James 2:13 NAS*

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. - *Matthew 5:7 NIV*

Do not judge, or you too will be judged. - *Matthew 7:1 NIV*

Could He make it any clearer?! When someone is driven to *extend* His forgiving grace, it's obvious that they've *received* His forgiving grace! The merciful receive mercy - not because mercy earns mercy - but because treating others with His mercy demonstrates that we've received it, trusted it, and appropriated it into our lives.

Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another (14:13a)

Mercy triumphs over judgment!

## DRESS REHEARSAL

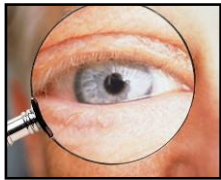
Okay, I think you're ready. We're going to have a dry-run - kind of a dress rehearsal standing before God's judgment seat.



I couldn't get a picture of the actual judgment seat (obviously) ... best I could do was the world's largest *office* chair, from Anniston, Alabama! But it'll work just fine for a practice.

For the sake of the exercise, I'll assume you're saved.

Q: Ready to have the quality of what you've built on the foundation of Christ put to the test? Ready to be judged the way you've judged others?



Okay, it's time to have our authenticity scrutinized. "Hmm, let's see here; has your outer life revealed a heart that bows the knee to the Lordship of Christ? Stick out your tongue, and say, 'ah'. Very interesting; does your tongue consistently profess the Christ-like quality of mercy, or the Christ-contradictory condition of condemnation and condescension?"

- "Has your tongue misrepresented My grace and mercy?!"
- "You will now be rewarded or penalized by the measure you've used!"

Okay, you can sit down! That was just practice. Phew!

Q: Can you feel the weight of Paul's words?

You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. - *Romans 14:10 NIV*

It's our choice, work with Him or work against Him.

Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way (14:13b)

Q: What's it going to be: stumbling block or stepping stone?