

WEAK PRACTICE | ROMANS 14:2-4

- Verses 2-3 –
 - Note that this is not a matter of what a teacher is teaching, but a matter of what a weak brother is believing.
 - It would be a totally different matter if a local congregation was to allow one **who is weak** to teach their weakness to the congregation (to do so would violate Paul's doctrine of food in 1 Timothy 4:4).
 - It is sometimes challenging to discern what is weakness which can be excused and what is weakness which must be addressed. In general, the *person in the pew* doesn't need corrected for every weak belief, they need verse-by-verse Bible teaching that will, in time, correct those beliefs.
- Verse 4 –
 - It is wise (but difficult) to realize that weaker brothers are not our **servant**, but **he standeth or falleth** before **his own master** who is God Himself.
 - Note that this argues against the Roman Catholic papal system as well as all authoritarian systems of church government.

WEAK BELIEF | ROMANS 14:5-6

- Verse 5 - The Apostle, continuing the subject of religious rituals (whether Pagan, Jewish, or Christian), says that they are a matter of personal persuasion. However, personal persuasions should be well-thought, well-reasoned, so that one can be **fully persuaded in his own mind**.
- Verse 6 –
 - The word **regardeth** is also a thinking word, φρονέω [phroneo]. Paul is not talking about an *emotional persuasion* but a *logical, mental persuasion*.
 - **The day** could be a reference to the Sabbath or to certain holy days of religious observance. Whether it is a day of observance or a meat sacrificed to idols, the activities of a believer that are not expressly prohibited can be done with a good conscience if they can be done **unto the Lord**.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST AS THE CENTRAL POINT | ROMANS 14:7-9

- Verse 7 –
 - Notice the precise wording Paul uses. He does *not* say that *no man liveth to himself*, but rather **none of us liveth to himself**.
 - There certainly are those who are living with self as their own "King of kings and Lord of lords."
 - Paul does expand the view when he speaks of death, because **no man dieth to himself**.
 - The ESV adds "of us" to the second part of the sentence. This destroys the broader point Paul is making. The same or similar is done in NIV, NLT, TEV. *The Message* drops the portion about death altogether.
- Verse 8 - **We are the Lord's** (the *we* is presumably believers). Our decisions should be based on the will of the One to whom we belong (compare v. 4).

- Verse 9 –
 - This is a very important declaration. Why did Christ die? Was it to save the elect? Was it to provide salvation for everyone? NO! He died **that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living**. That is, *ruler of all things*.
 - Calvinists, Arminians, and so many other theologians get caught up on a well-meaning debate on why Christ died, but almost invariably connect His death's purpose to *man's salvation* rather than *God's restorative purpose*. Jesus did not die for us, He died for Himself. The possibility of salvation is a *by product* and not the *purpose* of His death.

PROHIBITION AGAINST JUDGING IN MATTERS OF CONSCIENCE | ROMANS 14:10-13

- Verse 10 –
 - It is important to take every passage in context.
 - Paul is *not* prohibiting a believer from judging his brother (an activity Paul encourages in 1 Corinthians 6:1-4).
 - The prohibition is *in context* of the matters of conscience in this chapter.
 - Not only is a judgment not in order, but the practice of disregarding / sidelining another for these matters is also condemned in the statement **why doest thou set at nought thy brother?**
 - As in v. 4 and Romans 12:19, the **judgment** belongs to Christ, in a future day at **the judgment seat of Christ**.
 - Concerning **the judgment seat of Christ**, see note on 1 Corinthians 4:5.
 - The church would do well to recognize that it is not our function to be "judge and jury." If a man's conscience doesn't convict him, we will probably not be able to do so either. The word of God is **piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit...and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**. When we teach Scripture, it does its own internal work in the hearts of those who hear it. We should **judge nothing before the time**, and in that day the Lord will be the Judge. In the day of judgment, **every man shall have praise of God**, that is, *let God praise every man when the time comes*.
 - The details of the **judgment seat of Christ** are not fully given. Is it at the rapture or the Second Coming? Is it only for believers? Is it part of the judgment of the nations? These questions and more cannot be fully answered. For additional study see Romans 2:16, Matthew 25:31-32, John 5:22, 1 Corinthians 4:5, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Jude 1:14-15.
- Verse 11 - Largely a quote from Isaiah 45:23.
- Verse 12 - The emphasis is on **of himself** (the emphasis being clear by Greek word order). The YLT retains the word order, "each of us concerning himself shall give reckoning to God"
- Verse 13 –
 - This is the important issue in matters of conscience, that we not **put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall** for another person.
 - In this passage, Paul refers to stumblingblocks for weaker believers. In 1 Corinthians 8 Paul speaks to stumblingblocks for unbelievers (see note on 1 Cor. 8:11). Unbelievers are also in view in Acts 15:20.