

Title: Glorifying God in Our Personal Convictions and Choices

Text: Romans 14:5-9

Introduction

Christian, you have a standard on how you are to live your life in Christ.

Do you know what that standard is? Do you understand that you have a responsibility to the Lord Himself on how you handle the Christian life God has entrusted to you?

What is this standard?

1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

This is our goal. To glorify God in all of our choices.

What does it mean to glorify God? It means to reflect His magnificence to the world around us.

Like the moon reflects the light of the sun, so we reflect the light of our God!

We make Him known. We make Him famous.

But what we see in the text we are dealing with today is when one Christian imposes on another Christian what it takes to glorify God. And when we start to believe we are the authority over another (unless that authority is given in the scriptures), we run the risk of playing God in the lives of another.

This is what was going on at the church of Rome, and Paul is continuing to teach them how they should relate to one another in the body of Christ.

Holman Concise Bible Commentary Relationships (14:1–23)

Harmonious relationships are important. Believers should live without judging others and without influencing others to violate their consciences. Not only should the mature not hinder the weak with their freedom, but the weak must avoid restricting those who have discovered Christian freedom. Mutual love and respect are the marks of true disciples of Christ.

So, how can the Christian get over being the Spiritual Police force in the lives of others?

That's what this passage is all about.

And what we must understand clearly about our brothers and sisters in Christ is this...

Main Idea: A Christian Belongs to the Lord

That's right! They don't belong to you or anyone else. Ultimately, they are responsible to the Lord, and the Lord is responsible for them and their growth.

There are three ideas Paul wants to get across in these verses that help us understand the main idea. And the first is...

1. Your Choices are made for the LORD (vs. 5-6)

Romans 14:5–6 ESV

⁵ One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. ⁶ The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Do you see the motivation of the individual, whether weak or strong, as characterized by Paul? Their desire is to honor the Lord!

Days for the Lord - *For Jews, the Sabbath referred not only to the seventh day of the week, the day of rest and worship, but to a number of other days and periods that were venerated and specially observed. Some pagan religions also venerated certain days or seasons.*

As with the eating of certain foods, the weak Jewish Christian remained strongly attached to the special days of Judaism and felt compelled to observe them. The weak Gentile, on the other hand, wanted to separate himself as far as possible from the special days of his former paganism because of their idolatrous and immoral character.

John F. MacArthur Jr., Romans, vol. 2, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1991), 281.

Colossians 2:16 ESV

¹⁶ Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.

In verse 16 Paul didn't say it was necessarily wrong to participate in these things, but they were a weaker version of the real deal - Jesus Christ.

Colossians 2:17 ESV

¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.

Eating for the Lord -

1 Corinthians 10:23–33 ESV

²³ "All things are lawful," but not all things are helpful. "All things are lawful," but not all things build up. ²⁴ Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbor. ²⁵ Eat whatever is sold in the meat market without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁶ For "the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof." ²⁷ If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. ²⁸ But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience— ²⁹ I do not mean your conscience, but his. For why should my liberty be determined by someone else's conscience? ³⁰ If I partake with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of that for which I give thanks? ³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. ³² Give no offense to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God, ³³ just as I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved.

Romans: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary The Lord Is Sovereign to Each Believer

In matters that are not specifically commanded or forbidden in Scripture, it is always wrong to go against conscience, because our conscience represents what we actually believe to be right. To go against our conscience, therefore, is to do that which we believe is wrong. And although an act or practice in itself may not be sinful, it is treated as sinful for those who are convinced in their own minds that it is wrong, and produces guilt.

It is also sinful, however, to try to impose our personal convictions on others, because, in doing so, we are tempting them to go against their own consciences. Paul is therefore giving a twofold command: Do not compromise your own conscience in order to conform to the conscience of another believer and do not attempt to lead another believer to compromise his conscience to conform to yours.

Whatever you do, you do it to honor and give thanks to the Lord -

The [1 Corinthians 10:31](#) principle

1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV

³¹ So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

When the Jews and the Gentiles live together under the same church roof, there is bound to be disagreements. I mean there were some very important days to the Jews and there were some very important foods to them as well. And they might be offended that their Gentile brothers and sisters didn't take what they took, seriously. And the Gentiles might become impatient with their weaker brothers who take things so seriously that they don't need to.

So, instead of imposing these beliefs on their brothers and sisters in Christ, beliefs that were no longer rooted in the New Testament Scriptures, they were to love and accept them.

I wonder what your days would look like if every day you lived to please Christ and you prayed for your brothers and sisters in Christ to do the same. I wonder what would happen if the church spent more time cultivating our relationship with Jesus, and instead of judging our fellow Christians, we help them grow with us.

Are you active in these things? It will keep you from judging others and you will grow in the process!

Review - A Christian Belongs to the Lord

- Your Choices are made for the LORD, not YOU

2. Your Life Is Not Your Own (vs. 7-8)

Do you sense what Paul is saying? As a Christian, your life is not yours.

No Such Things as Hermits - Some people are extroverts, and some people are introverts. I categorize myself as a high-functioning introvert. I can do all the upfront and public stuff, but I really like my alone time to recharge my batteries.

So, just because I like my alone time, doesn't give me the right, according to this verse, to live to myself / by my own authority. A hermit, honestly, is a very selfish person because they are trying to protect themselves from being hurt. They are trying to control their circumstances so that they are the king of their little kingdom.

Paul is clear, "*none of us live to ourselves, and none of us die to ourselves.*" Especially as Christians, we are connected by the baptizing ministry of the Holy Spirit of God.

Christians are interlinked because we are all linked to God!

Why does Paul make this point? He answers it in verse 8!

Romans 14:8 ESV

⁸ For if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's.

Romans 14:8 LSB

⁸ for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

The Christian Belongs to the Lord - It's not all about you or me, it is all about Jesus!

Perhaps this concept is new to you. Perhaps you have had the notion that God's love, demonstrated in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus freed you from eternal condemnation in Hell prison and now you are free to do as you please. I'm free in Christ so life is now all about me and what I want.

This is not what the Bible teaches at all...

Verse 8 is clear that God has a claim on you. You are the Lord's.

You do not belong to you, you belong to God.

Romans 6:22 ESV

²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end, eternal life.

Galatians 2:20 ESV

²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

1 Corinthians 6:20 ESV

²⁰ for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

To be clear, before salvation you were a slave to sin and the devil

Romans 6:16–19 ESV

¹⁶ Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, ¹⁸ and, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness. ¹⁹ I am speaking in human terms, because of your natural limitations. For just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification.

1 John 3:8 NIV

⁸ The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

But you, if you are in Christ, are no longer a slave to sin, and you are no longer blinded by the devil.

Isn't that great news? You are free in Christ!

Galatians 4:7 ESV

⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

And being a son or daughter of God makes us an heir to all that God has created. And that, my friends, is a pretty good deal!

Belonging to sin brings physical, spiritual, and eternal death.

Belonging to Christ brings peace, joy, and eternal life!

"The dilemma of an unclear sense of personal identity was illustrated by an incident in the life of the famous German philosopher Schleiermacher, who did much to shape the progress of modern thought. The story is told that one day as an old man he was sitting alone on a bench in a city park. A policeman thinking that he was a vagrant came over and shook him and asked, "Who are you?" Schleiermacher replied sadly, "I wish I knew." - Source Unknown.

But Christian, you do know who you are! You are a child, a son or a daughter of the most high King! He is yours and you are HIS! And I would not want to be in any other promised position.

As you face life, realize that you are not your own. And when you face different challenges and temptations, ask yourself this question...

"Is this thought/word/deed pleasing to God? This one question demonstrates your understanding and loyalty to the one who owns you. This question will also help you avoid a lot of trouble because it will help you avoid a lot of sin!

Review - A Christian Belongs to the Lord

- Your Choices are made for the LORD

- Your Life Is Not Your Own

3. Your Lord is Lord of All (vs. 9)

Romans 14:9 ESV

⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

Paul understands well the scope of God's Sovereignty - it is ubiquitous and all-pervasive. And in this verse, Paul ascribes that same authority to Jesus Christ, who is God.

John does the same thing in the book of Revelations.

Revelation 1:8 ESV

⁸ "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

Revelation 22:12-14 ESV

¹² "Behold, I (Jesus) am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." ¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

And it is Jesus Christ, the one who died...

Why was His death necessary? Because He was your substitute on the cross.

What? Jesus Christ was sentenced by His government to the death penalty.

But it wasn't just His local government that sentenced Him to death. So did the triune God-head...

Isaiah 53:9-10 ESV

⁹ And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. ¹⁰ Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

God's plan was to crush God the Son - to put Him to death IN YOUR PLACE!

He substituted His Son in your place. And because of this, you didn't receive the punishment for your sin while Jesus, who never sinned, DID!

Substitution is the act of replacing someone or something with something else. Substitutions are common in sports. Coaches may take out a player and substitute that player with someone else. Substitutions are common in cooking. Maybe a recipe calls for butter, but you substitute margarine for it. Almost everyone grew up in school with an occasional substitute teacher. The substitute would teach on behalf of the permanent teacher. Substitutions are also common in the medical field as people donate their organs to others to help replace organs that are not

functioning properly. Everyone in society experiences the concept of substitution in various forms.

In the OT God spiritually used the concept of substitution in the realm of punishing sin. Because God is holy and because people sin, God's justice requires death for sin. However, God allowed His judgment of death to fall upon innocent substitutes in the place of guilty men and women. God allowed innocent animals to act as these substitutes. - Chris Norman: "Seeking God and Finding Him"

Leviticus 4:28–29 ESV

²⁸ or the sin which he has committed is made known to him, he shall bring for his offering a goat, a female without blemish, for his sin which he has committed. ²⁹ And he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering and kill the sin offering in the place of burnt offering.

Hebrews 10:1–4 ESV

¹ For since the law has but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never, by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year, make perfect those who draw near. ² Otherwise, would they not have ceased to be offered, since the worshipers, having once been cleansed, would no longer have any consciousness of sins? ³ But in these sacrifices there is a reminder of sins every year. ⁴ For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

So, why did Christ die? He died in your place as a substitute for paying the debt of sin you owe to God!

But He didn't stay dead, did He?

And it is Jesus Christ who rose again...

Why was His resurrection necessary?

The resurrection of Jesus is important for several reasons. First, the resurrection witnesses to the immense power of God Himself. To believe in the resurrection is to believe in God. If God exists, and if He created the universe and has power over it, then He has power to raise the dead. If He does not have such power, He is not worthy of our faith and worship. Only He who created life can resurrect it after death, only He can reverse the hideousness that is death itself, and only He can remove the sting of death and gain the victory over the grave (1 Corinthians 15:54–55). In resurrecting Jesus from the grave, God reminds us of His absolute sovereignty over life and death. - <https://www.gotquestions.org/resurrection-Christ-important.html>

These two activities proved that Jesus Christ is the God/man He is!

And friends, this Jesus is not only to be loved by us, but respected and feared.

Philippians 2:5–11 ESV

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human

form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus Christ is the King and LORD of the UNIVERSE! Whether you believe in Him or not, He is LORD!

And Paul's clear point in this passage is that you are responsible to Him as the Lord. You have a responsibility to submit to Him as LORD of your life and stop worrying about everyone else!

In [John 21:15-19](#), Jesus has a restorative conversation with Peter. Do you love me (3x). Feed my sheep (3x)

Then Jesus tells Peter that he will be crucified like the Lord (tradition bears this out to be true).

But then notice in chapter 21:20-24,

John 21:20–24 ESV

²⁰ Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who also had leaned back against him during the supper and had said, "Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?" ²¹ When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" ²² Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!" ²³ So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die; yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die, but, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?" ²⁴ This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.

And Jesus says to you regarding his other servants, what is that to you?

Okay, let's review how to apply the principle that Paul is teaching in this passage.

- 1. If your brother or sister is caught up in a sin, you have a biblical responsibility to come alongside them and help them be restored.** You cannot turn a blind eye to those in sin.

Galatians 6:1–2 NLT

¹ Dear brothers and sisters, if another believer is overcome by some sin, you who are godly should gently and humbly help that person back onto the right path. And be careful not to fall into the same temptation yourself. ² Share each other's burdens, and in this way obey the law of Christ.

- 2. In the area of non-sinful choices that you don't agree with - Leave it with their master, the Lord Jesus Christ.** You treat them with love and grace.

Most importantly, don't conflate the two. If you are going to call someone out - and sometimes you'll need to, make sure it is sin and not simply a preference.

Why?

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- Your Choices are made for the LORD
- Your Life Is Not Your Own
- Your Lord is Lord of All

Conclusion

What do you think is behind Paul's admonition in this passage?

UNITY!

By the way, unity doesn't mean we have to agree on everything - but we should agree on the big stuff and have a lot of grace for the rest.

Friends - Unity in the body is more important than ever. The time is coming faster and faster and our preferences will seem silly in comparison to the persecution we will receive for following Christ.

And do you know what persecution will produce in the Body of Christ? UNITY!

So, let's get started today!

Connection Group Reflection Questions

1. **Who are you praying for daily?**
2. **Who are you engaging with weekly?**
3. **Who are you sharing the gospel with monthly?**