

Parson to Person
ROMANS 14 PART 4

“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.

I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin” (Romans 14:1–23 NKJV).

Without hesitation Paul instructed those in Rome (and by extension all of us) not to pass judgment upon others regarding “matters of conscience.” Herein the specific “matters” he addressed were the eating certain foods, drinking wine, and the observance of a Sabbath day. There is no question about the fact that there are other behaviors that could be added to the list—but Paul said enough. There are “sins” that must be addressed, but here we are instructed concerning behaviors we leave to the Lord.

That said, a focus for special interest is an insight provided within this chapter: a truth found in verse 4, where Paul wrote, *“God is able to make him stand,”* and in verses 7–8, where we read, *“For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s.”*

These two important truths interrelate and should not be missed. They concern God’s ability to hold up and sustain the believer, and secondly, the fact that we (as believers) have been purchased by the Lord. We are not our own! Let’s take these in reverse order.

First of all, the Scriptures clearly communicate that we have been purchased by the Lord. We were once slaves of sin, death, the world, the flesh and the devil. But now, *“...you are not your own? For you were bought at a price...”* (1 Corinthians 6:19b–20a NKJV), for *“you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot”* (1 Peter 1:18–19 NKJV). Therefore, as believers we are no longer owner, lord, master or king. Furthermore, we are no longer slave to this world, sin, death, or the devil. This has manifold consequences—one of which relates to our second point: God’s ability to hold up and sustain the believer.

If God is Owner, Lord, Master and King, then it is God Himself who molds and shapes our lives. Furthermore, it is the Lord who initiates the relationship with us, saves us, seals us, and will therefore keep us. This is the meaning of Paul’s expression: *“God is able to make him stand.”* It is God who, by His Spirit, is working within us, and is likewise working on us and through us from without—by circumstances, trials and yes, joyful victories. Nothing can steal us away from Him. He is greater than any “sin.” For the sins of the believer have been dealt with at Calvary—and have no more power over the redeemed. This includes even those sins thought deadly. God can easily deal with all our shortcomings and weaknesses—even if it means taking our earthly and temporal lives. He will not lose those He purchased. We (as believers) are not our own. God owns us, is able to deal with us, shape us, mold us, and keep us. He cannot be thwarted in His purposes and plans.

I Love you all,
Pastor Paul