Romans 14 - In Matters of Judgment

Intro:

A. In the book of Romans - chapters 12:1-15:13 is Practical Living based on the Gospel
   1. In this the Gospel - Demands Unity in Matters of Judgment.
B. The Gospel of Christ is God’s power to Save Man. - this stated The Just shall live the faith.
   1. Romans 1:16-17 - 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."
   2. In Romans 12:1-15:13 - Paul is making practical application of the great principle of justification by faith established in Romans 1-11.
      a. We are no longer to be enslaved to sin (Romans 6-8), but now are to be “conformed to the image of God’s Son” (Romans 8:29).
      b. The larger context of the section before us: Describes the Conduct of one Justified By Faith – living a sacrificial life - (Rom. 12:1-15:13)
C. The Gospel Demands Unity
   1. Jesus willed it and prayed for it - (John 17:20-21 NKJV) - 20 “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.
   2. Paul commanded it in the name of Christ - (1 Corinthians 1:10 NKJV) - 10 Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.
   3. We are to endeavor to keep the “unity of the Spirit” - is not produced by accident, but only through hard work and humility (Ephesians 4:1-6 NKJV) - 1 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.
4. However, Absolute Uniformity Is Unrealistic
   a. NOT because the scriptures lack clarity or sufficient instruction - (Eph. 5:17; 2 Tim 3:16,17; Jude 1:3)
      (1) 2 Timothy 3:16 (NKJV) - 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,
      (a) 2 Timothy 3:17 (NKJV) - 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
      (2) Jude 3 (NKJV) - 3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.
   b. The reality of sin and bad attitudes - (1 Cor. 5; 2 Thess3:6-15; Phil 3:15-19)
      (1) 1 Corinthians 5 (NKJV) - 1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles—that a man has his father’s wife! 2 And you are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you. 3 For I indeed, as absent in body but present in spirit, have already judged (as though I were present) him who has so done this deed. 4 In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when you are gathered together, along with my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, 5 deliver such
a one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. 6 Your glorying is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump? 7 Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us. 8 Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. 9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. 10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world. 11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner— not even to eat with such a person. 12 For what have I to do with judging those also who are outside? Do you not judge those who are inside? 13 But those who are outside God judges. Therefore “put away from yourselves the evil person.”

(2) 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15 (NKJV) - 6 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you: 8 nor did we eat anyone’s bread free of charge, but worked with labor and toil night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, 9 not because we do not have authority, but to make ourselves an example of how you should follow us. 10 For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat. 11 For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies. 12 Now those who are such we command and exhort through our Lord Jesus Christ that they work in quietness and eat their own bread. 13 But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good. 14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed. 15 Yet do not count him as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

(3) Philippians 3:15-19 (NKJV) - 15 Therefore let us, as many as are mature, have this mind; and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal even this to you. 16 Nevertheless, to the degree that we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. 17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern. 18 For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: 19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame— who set their mind on earthly things.

c. The reality of false doctrine - (Rom 16:17; 1 Cor. 1:11,12; Gal 2:4-5)

(1) Romans 16:17 (NKJV) - 17 Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them.

(2) 1 Corinthians 1:11 (NKJV) - 11 For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe’s household, that there are contentions among you.

(a) 1 Corinthians 1:12 (NKJV) - 12 Now I say this, that each of you says, “I am of Paul,” or “I am of Apollos,” or “I am of Cephas,” or “I am of Christ.”

(3) Galatians 2:4-5 (NKJV) - 4 And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage), 5 to whom we did not yield submission even for an hour, that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

d. The reality of spiritual immaturity - (Rom. 14; 1 Cor. 8; Heb 5:12-14)
Hebrews 5:12-14 (NKJV) - 12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food. 13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. 14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

e. Not to be tolerated - Not under discussion in Romans 14

5. This Unity is based in the “Bond of Love”

a. To put off sin – and put on Christ – (Colossians 3:1-15 NKJV) - 1 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. 5 Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. 6 Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, 7 in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. 8 But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. 9 Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, 10 and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, 11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all. 12 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

b. See again Romans 13:8-14—(He who loves has fulfilled the Law; love does no harm; love walks properly)

(1) Romans 13:8-14 (NKJV) - 8 Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. 9 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “You shall not covet,” and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. 11 And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. 12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. 13 Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

c. "In matters of faith, unity; In matters of judgment, liberty; In all things, charity” – (Thomas Campbell 1809)

II. IN ROMANS 14 - it is in Matters of Liberty - Not Matters of Faith

A. Matters of Indifference are those beliefs or practices which are not specifically regulated by Scripture:

1. They are things that are neither commanded nor forbidden. - 1 Cor. 9:5

a. 1 Corinthians 9:5 (NKJV) - 5 Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also
2. They are things that are authorized and allowed – Rom 14:5,6 (Matters Clean, Good, Pure v. 14, 16, 20)
   a. Romans 14:5 (NKJV) - 5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 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.
   b. Romans 14:14 (NKJV) - 14 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.
   c. Romans 14:16 (NKJV) - 16 Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil;
   d. Romans 14:20 (NKJV) - 20 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.

3. To engage in an authorized liberty one is neither the better or worse - 1 Cor. 8:8
   a. 1 Corinthians 8:8 (NKJV) - 8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

4. Just because a thing is an authorized liberty doesn’t mean that it is always expedient - 1 Cor. 11:17
   a. 1 Corinthians 11:17 (NKJV) - 17 Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse.

B. Understanding the Problem
1. During the reign of Claudius (41-54 AD), the emperor ordered all the Jews to leave Rome (Acts 18:2)
   a. Acts 18:2 (NKJV) - 2 And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome); and he came to them.
2. After the death of Claudius in AD 54, the edict became void, and the Jews returned to Rome.
3. There was a tension in the Roman church between those who are called the “strong” and “weak.”
4. There were two views amongst the Roman Christians:
   a. “In the liberty of Christ food laws are no longer binding, and one day is no more important than another.” (Matters of liberty - 14:14, 20; Acts 10:10-16; 1 Tim 4:3) THE STRONG
      (1) Romans 14:14 (NKJV) - 14 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.
      (2) Romans 14:20 (NKJV) - 20 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.
      (3) Acts 10:10-16 (NKJV) - 10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance 11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. 13 And a voice came to him, “Rise, Peter; kill and eat.” 14 But Peter said, “Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.” 15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, “What God has cleansed you must not call common.” 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.
      (4) 1 Timothy 4:3 (NKJV) - 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.
   b. “In the law of the Lord it is wrong to eat certain meats, and certain days should be observed
III. THE WEAK AND THE STRONG - Romans 14:1 (NKJV) - 1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things.

A. THE WEAK
1. Weak in understanding but not in commitment - Uninformed, unable to practice, poor understanding, doing it not to the Lord, convinced in own mind, gives God thanks.
2. Danger: Judge his brother, violate his own conscience.

B. The STRONG
1. Mature understanding: Informed, able to practice, right understanding, doing it to the Lord, convinced in own mind, gives God thanks.
2. Danger: Cause weak to stumble; set brother at nought. (Lifted up with pride, 1 Cor. 8:1)
   a. 1 Corinthians 8:1 (NKJV) - 1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies.

C. Disputes Over Doubtful Things
1. “without passing judgment on disputable matters (lit., “but not unto quarrels about opinions”). A believer with certain scruples is not to be welcomed into the fellowship with the intent of changing his views or opinions by quarreling with him about them.” — Bible Knowledge Commentary

D. Principles Governing Personal Faith Convictions and Conscience
1. One's mistaken concept of what is included in "The Faith" does not change a matter of indifference into "The Faith.”
2. We must come to the absolute certainty in our mind that a thing is a matter of faith, and this certainty must be the result of an objective and diligent study of God’s word.
3. God has not left "The Faith" in Doubt: (Eph. 3:4; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:5,21)
   a. Ephesians 3:4 (NKJV) - 4 by which, when you read, you may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ),
   b. 2 Timothy 3:16-17 (NKJV) - 16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.
   c. 2 Peter 1:5 (NKJV) - 5 But also for this very reason, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge,
   d. 2 Peter 1:21 (NKJV) - 21 for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.
4. In Comparison with 1 Cor 8
   a. Love should govern our knowledge (8:1-3).
      (1) 1 Corinthians 8:1-3 (NKJV) - 1 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. 2 And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. 3 But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.
   b. The “weak” are those who do not have an accurate “knowledge” regarding liberties (8:4-7a)
      (1) 1 Corinthians 8:4-7 (NKJV) - 4 Therefore concerning the eating of things offered to idols, we know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one. 5 For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), 6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live. 7 However, there is not in everyone that knowledge;
c. The “weak” are those whose conscience has not comprehended the liberties in Christ (8:7b-8).

(1) 1 Corinthians 8:7b-8 - “for some, with consciousness of the idol, until now eat it as a thing offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled.8 But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse.

d. The “strong” are not to use their liberties to destroy the “weak” (8:9-13).

(1) 1 Corinthians 8:9-13 (NKJV) - 9 But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. 10 For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? 11 And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? 12 But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. 13 Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.

E. Instructions for the WEAK

1. Do not condemn another based on your lack of understanding – (bind where God did not). (vrs 3,4)
2. Be fully convinced (vrs 5)
3. To practice or not is your choice, but whether you do or not – make sure it is for the purpose of serving the Lord (vrs 6)
4. All will stand before the Lord, He is the judge (vrs 7-13)
5. Nothing is unclean in itself (vrs 14,20)
6. Pursue peace (vrs 19)
7. Not to violate his conscience (vrs 23)

F. Instructions for the STRONG:

1. Do not judge i.e. condemn the weak brother because of his lack of understanding. (Vrs 1,13)
2. Do not despise. (Vrs 3)
3. What you do – make sure you are convinced it is right & do it to the Lord - You will give account to God (vrs 5-12)
4. Not to put a stumbling block in your brothers way – (vrs 13,21,22)
5. Not to destroy your brother with your food (vrs 15,16)
6. Pursue peace – teaching the weak brother the truth – (vrs 19)
7. Why The Strong and the Weak should receive one another
   a. God receives them - 14:1-3
   b. The Lord sustains all believers - vrs 4
   c. The Lord is Sovereign to each - vrs 5-9
   d. The Lord Alone will judge - vrs 10-12
   e. Do not cause your brother to stumble - vrs 13
   f. Do not grieve your brother - vrs 14-15a
   g. Do not devastate your brother - vrs 15b
   h. Do not forfiet your example - vrs 16-19
   i. Do not use your freedom in Christ to pressure the weak to violate their conscience - vrs 20-21
   j. Do not denounce or flaunt your liberty - vrs 22-23

IV. In Conclusion: Making Application

A. Biblical Unity in Diversity

1. Different Races
2. Different Cultures
3. Different family history
4. Different educational backgrounds
5. Different religious backgrounds
6. Different professions
7. Different knowledge
8. Different abilities
9. Eating of meats
10. Observing holidays non-religiously
11. Family customs
12. Marriage
13. Women wearing pants
14. Women working
15. Bible classes
16. # of cups
17. Circumcision

B. Making Application
1. Authorized Liberties - Romans 14
   a. Receive
   b. Pure, Clean, Good
   c. God accepts both (Practitioner and non-Practitioner)
   d. Continue in Practice
   e. Keep “faith” to self
   f. Do not contend
   g. Continue in fellowship
2. Sinful Doctrinal Differences
   a. 1 Thess 5:14; Jude 22; Matt 18
   b. Have no fellowship - Eph 5:11
   c. Sinful, violation of God’s Will
   d. God does not accept - 2 Cor 6:14-18
   e. Cannot continue - Rom 6:1,15
   f. Preach the faith - Gal 1:23
   g. Contend - Jude 3
   h. Withdraw fellowship - 2 Thess 3:8

C. An Attempt to Put Sinful Doctrine or Practices into Romans 14
1. Violates the Context
2. Puts God in Fellowship with Sin
3. Brings Sin into the Church
4. Provides Basis for Open-Ended Fellowship with Sin

D. Cannot draw lines of fellowship narrower OR wider than God has!
1. All matters of liberty or indifference emanates from authority.
2. Must recognize the need to abide in the doctrine of Christ which includes proper attitudes.
3. Romans 1:16-17 (NKJV) - 16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith."