

GOD'S RIGHTEOUSNESS FOR MAN FROM START TO FINISH

Part VI: God's Righteousness Applied To Practical Living, Romans 12:1-15:13

F. God's Righteousness Applied To Not Judging Believers Of Diverse Maturities (Romans 14:1-12)

I. Introduction

- A. Having been positionally made perfectly righteous in Christ through belief in the Gospel, the believer must live a righteous life, what is holy and acceptable to the Lord, cf. Romans 12:1-2.
- B. Righteous living includes relating well to believers of diverse maturity levels, what leads to differing views, values and actions among various believers, and Paul addressed this subject in Romans 14:1-12:

II. God's Righteousness Applied To Not Judging Believers Of Diverse Maturities, Romans 14:1-12.

- A. Paul dealt with mature versus immature views believers have regarding diet, Romans 14:1-4:
 - 1. In Romans 14:1-4, Paul focused on handling the believer who is weak or immature in the Christian faith, for the phrase, "the one being weak in faith" appears in the emphatic first position in the sentence at Romans 14:1; Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 492.
 - 2. Accordingly, Paul directed that mature believers were to "keep on taking to yourselves" (present middle imperative form of the verb, Ibid.) believers who were immature in the faith without passing judgment on them over matters of dispute to to Christian maturity, Romans 14:1.
 - 3. To illustrate, Paul mentioned the issue of diet where an immature believer, possibly out of a desire to guarantee that he avoid all meats that had been offered to idols, simply became a vegetarian, refusing to buy any meat from the marketplace, Romans 14:2; Ibid. In that case, the mature should not "despise" or "reject with contempt" the immature believer and the weak should not condemn the mature as being guilty of sin, for God had accepted both in accord with their dictates of conscience, Romans 14:3; Ibid.
 - 4. In addition, every believer answers to his Master Who is the Lord, not to fellow believers, so no believer has the right to pass judgment on another believer over an issue of conscience, for God is able to make every believer who follows Him in good conscience stand uncondemned of sin, Romans 14:4.
- B. Paul then dealt with mature versus immature views believers have regarding special day observances, v. 5:
 - 1. The Apostle noted that one believer esteems one day above other days where another views every day as being of equal importance before God in his walk, Romans 14:5a.
 - 2. In this matter, every believer is to be fully persuaded in his own mind of the correct belief, Romans 14:5b.
- C. Paul then drew conclusions on how believers are to handle all such cases affected by maturity levels, v. 6-12:
 - 1. First, whether one regards one day as special or whether he regards every day as equal in value, he should hold to his belief on the matter out of respect for the Lord, Romans 14:6a.
 - 2. Second, on the issue of diet, where one may believe he can honor the Lord by eating a certain food or whether he abstains from it in honoring God, he is to do so in either case in honor of the Lord, Rom. 14:6b.
 - 3. Third, Paul noted that in every matter, no believer lives to himself and no believer dies to himself, for whether he lives or dies, he lives or dies unto the Lord, for every believer is God's possession, Rom. 14:7-8. To this end Christ both died and rose that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living, Rom. 14:9.
 - 4. Fourth, no believer has the right to judge another believer on matters of conscience, for each of us will stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and shall bow to Him and confess He is God, Romans 14:10-11. In other words, every believer will give an account of himself to the Lord, not to other believers, so no believer has the right to pass judgment on another believer in a matter of conscience, Romans 14:12.

Lesson: *On matters of conscience where differences in maturity affect what believers genuinely think is right or wrong, mature believers should not judgmentally look down on the immature for their abstinences from what they perceive to be wrong and the immature should not stand in condemnation against the mature for exercising what they believe before God they have the liberty to express, for every believer should live for the Lord, and the Lord alone has the right to judge each believer who is His servant.*

Application: *(1) On matters outside of clear Scriptural direction where conscience and one's spiritual maturity level affects what he either thinks is wrong or is right in Christian liberty to pursue, each of us must refuse to pass judgment on those who differ from us. (2) We must always realize that God alone is the Master to whom every believer must answer, not some other believer, that we thus respect God's sovereignty over every one of us. (3) It only follows that we should make SURE that ALL we believe and do or not do comes from a clear conscience.*