

"On the Way" 365 Bible Reading Plan**ROMANS 14****Romans 14**

Romans 14 deals with disputes about sacred diets, sacred days, and attitudes and behaviors that are destructive in our lives and the lives of others. In reality, none of us ultimately rises or falls before one another. We rise or fall before the Lord Jesus. We tend to judge others, not knowing all the facts and intentions behind behaviors. God sees it all and knows it all, and He is the only one who does. However, having said this, we do not live our lives in a vacuum, and what we do, and the choices we make, affect others. God knows.

Paul instructed the Romans to receive people into their midst and to do that without censorious judgment. He also instructed that when we receive them, we should not receive them in our lives and in the local body of believers merely so someone can argue about lesser things. Two things in particular that the Apostle deals with are sacred diets and sacred days. Both of these topics can cause arguments and cause division among followers of Jesus.

The Jewish people in the church at Rome honored the Sabbath and worshipped on that day, as did their fathers. The church did not have one Gentile, non-Jew, for nearly a decade. The early church and Apostles would have worshipped on Shabbat and also would have honored the first day of the week in order to remember that it was on the first day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead. There is no command to worship on the first day of the week for followers of Jesus, but rather, it is taught to us by the behavior of the early church. The principle is that the first day of the week is the day that Jesus arose, and just as Shabbat

had a teaching and purpose associated with it, so does the first day of the week. God commanded the children of Israel to worship Him on Shabbat and to keep it separate (Holy, set apart) so they would never forget that God is the Creator and Sustainer of all of life. He created everything in six days and set aside Shabbat to do no creative work and to cease from all He had done. So, the first day of the week (Sunday) is set apart to remember, not creation, but resurrection! So, the pattern of the New Testament believers were to assemble on the first day of the week.

The problem came when the Jews wanted everyone to worship on Shabbat and the first day of the week. The Gentiles did not want to meet on Shabbat, and that caused a rift, as those who were Jews felt they were superior to the Gentiles who were "Johnny come lately" to the household of faith. The Gentiles resented being looked upon as second-class citizens in God's Kingdom.

The same held true with dietary laws and "Kosher" diets versus non-Kosher diets. The end result was division within the local assemblies and the greater body of believers in the Greco-Roman world. Paul drew attention to a better principle to follow than looking at all of life through our individual lens. Others in our lives are important, and even if we are doing something that is not necessarily bad in itself, if we do something that truly offends someone, and we know that is the case, we should modify our behavior around such people, because those people are more important than any **"day or diet."**

Prayer and Action Steps

"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." (Romans 14:21) Dear Lord Jesus, thank You that You give me grace to give deference to those who do not see life as I do. Please help me never to cause a brother or sister to stumble simply because I feel entitled to... Amen.