

# Accept One Another Text: Romans 14

## How to Give One Another Grace in Areas of Opinion

Introduction:

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### **1. The year was 1968, one of most volatile and turbulent years of a generation**

#### **Not just in America but around the world**

- a. The Vietnam War Got Out of Control...with the Tet Offensive and Mai Lai Massacre
- b. Czechoslovakia banned censorship, their Soviet Overlords invaded crushing Prague Spring
- c. Martin Luther King was assassinated
- d. Robert Kennedy was assassinated by a Palestinian
- e. Violent Protests Across America, Paris, Prague, Mexico City, Berlin
- f. U.S. Sailors were taken Hostage by North Korea
- g. The Hong Kong Flu swept across the world
  - i. An **H2N2 strain** of influenza A virus, mutated to become H3N2 strain of influenza
  - ii. From HK and by Sept. it reached India, Philippines, Australia, Europe, America
- h. **Between 1–4 million people died globally from this pandemic.**
  - i. In Berlin, the excessive number of deaths led to corpses being stored in subway tunnels,
  - ii. In West Germany, garbage collectors had to bury the dead b/c of a lack of undertakers.
- i. **1968 was the Year I was Born—The Year My Whole Family caught the Hong Kong Flu**
  - i. Dad and Mom were so sick, they had to crawl to get from one room to another
  - ii. So bad, My grandparents had to drop supplies off at front door w/o going in

### **2. We Live in a Divided World—and in a Divided Time...**

- a. I don't have to list all the differences of opinions with us today...
  - i. Masks, Vaccinations, Lockdowns, Mandates... Vote or not to Vote
  - ii. Riots, elections, quarantines, pain killers, self-defense...

**God Got Us Through 1968—and He Has Gotten Us Through 2020!**

### **3. Disunity Has Always Been a Problem for God's People**

- a. The Corinthians were divided over human leaders and taking each other to court
- b. The Christians in Galatia were “biting and devouring” one another (5:15),
- c. Christians in Rome were Dividing over Feast Days & Meat Sacrificed to idols

**Let's Let God's Word Shows Us How to Handle Our Differences on “disputable matters”**

**Issues of Opinion, Conscience and Conduct (Romans 14:1, 15:7)**

**To ACCEPT One Another — Rather than BITE and DEVOUR One Another**

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## **I. NINE PRINCIPLES FOR ACCEPTING ONE ANOTHER**

### **A. ACCEPT ONE ANOTHER (14:1)**

#### **1. NKJ: Receive ESV: Welcome NASB, NIV: Accept (not Reject)**

- a) Greek (προσλαμβάνεσθε) “receive into fellowship” (Word Studies in N.T., Vincent)
- b) But Notice the Divine Instruction... **(14:1 ESV)**
- c) **“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”**

## 2. Most Divisions are not over Doctrine—but over Opinions

- a) Paul is Not Talking Here About Fundamentals of Christian Doctrine...  
There is Only One Lord, One Faith, One Spirit, One Baptism...
- b) We Must Stand Shoulder to Shoulder on the TRUTH...  
The Problem is we let the less important things divide us

## 3. The Instruction here is not just to receive them to Argue with them...

—but accept them with understanding

*“As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.”*

## B. DO NOT LOOK DOWN ON ONE ANOTHER (v.2–4)

- 1. Some Jewish Christians refused to eat anything “unclean” from OT Law
  - a) And in Pagan Rome—Nothing was Clean according to OT Law
  - b) Even Apostle Peter had a problem with this—because of OT Dietary Laws
  - c) But God told Peter to Eat and Not To Call Something Unclean that God made Clean
- 2. Gentile Christians Had No Problem Eating what their Jewish brethren detested
  - even meat sacrificed to Idols
- 3. Notice (**Romans 14:14–15**) It's OK to be a Vegetarian... or eat Pork,
  - b) What's Not OK is Despising One Another...
  - c) If were not careful—we see Christians as “Clean” or “Unclean” based on opinions
- 3. Do Not “Despise” One Another, over issues of opinion
  - a) Don't Despise Children (**Matthew 18:10**)
  - b) Don't Despise Your Brother or Sister in Christ
  - c) Don't Despise Visitors to the Church (James: Poor man sit here, rich man sit here)

## C. BE FULLY CONVINCED WITHIN YOURSELF (v.5–6)

- 1. This is not talking about the Divine command to Worship on 1st day week
  - a) Assembling for Worship, Observing Lords Supper and Free-will giving to Lord
  - b) Nor Do We Esteem Any day Just as good as First day for L.S. or Worship
- 2. This is about Some Brethren Observing Special Feast or Celebration Days
  - a) Jewish Christians probably Observed OT Feast Days as they had Growing up  
Greek Christians May have observed Traditional Days or Feasts of Greek Culture
  - b) **Lisa and I Celebrated Passover Once with a Christian brother and his wife...**
    - (1) (Leo and Chien) He was Jewish and She was from China.
    - (2) He wanted to show us what the passover was like & what it meant to Jews
  - c) **Some Celebrate Christmas as a Religious Observance... Others as a Holiday...**
    - (1) Some Celebrate Christmas as if it is a Religious Holy Day
    - (2) Some say Celebrating Christmas as a Religious Holy Day is adding to scriptures something God did not command.
    - (3) Others Celebrate Christmas as a Holiday to give gifts and be thankful
    - (4) Others Celebrate Christmas recognizing the birth of Christ was fulfilled prophesy but not observing it as a Holy Day that God did not command
    - (5) Growing up we celebrated Christmas as a Holiday, but not as a Holy Day
  - d) **But I Don't Judge My Brethren Who Disagree on this issue...**

### 3. But Paul Calls Us to Recognize Our Conscience on Such Matters...

- a) Atheists cannot explain consciousness or the inner voice of the conscience
- b) It is a Gift of God given to Humanity, and to no other creation on earth

**Quote:** [The conscience is] “not to ascertain the truthfulness of things, but to see that its owner is true to himself and follows his convictions; that, in violating his conscience, a man so destroys his moral integrity as to make moral, spiritual living impossible; and, therefore, the most deadly thing a man can do is to trifle with his conscience; for, in so doing, he is tampering with the compass of his soul.” (RC Bell, *Firm Foundation*, 1957, cited by JB Coffman, *Romans* p.469)

### 4. The man who violates his conscience, as well as the person who might have influenced him to violate it, are both guilty of sin

#### D. LET GOD BE JUDGE (v.7-12)

##### 1. You May Not Agree With one another on some issues...

- a) But they Aren't Your Servant and Your Not their Master...
- b) and Your Not Their Servant and they aren't Your Master

##### 2. Michael the Arch Angel Understood This Clearly... (Jude 9)

- a) Satan doesn't answer to us, or to Michael—Satan Must answer to God
- b) We All Belong to God—and Our Lives Are in His Hands

##### 3. God is Our Judge—and We'll All Stand Before the Judgement seat of God

- a) We are to Judge Righteous Judgement in matters of Salvation
- b) Paul said: Work Out Your **OWN Salvation** with **fear and trembling**
- c) But We Are Not the Judge of Issues of Opinion

**Speak Where the Bible Speaks and Be Silent where the Bible is Silent**

#### E. DON'T CAUSE SOMEONE TO STUMBLE (v.13–15)

##### 1. It is a Christian duty to think of everything, not as it affects ourselves only, but also as it affects others. (Barclay)

- a) This could include Music, or Movies, or Modesty that would offend the conscience
- b) It Might Cause a Stumbling Block or Cause Someone to Sin

##### 2. (Matthew 18:6-7) We Have a Responsibility for One Another

- a) It's Scary to Think of Being the One Satan Uses to Cause Another to be Lost

##### 3. (Mark 9:42) Causing Someone Weak in the Faith to Fall is a Bad Place to be

- a) Think About What You Post on Facebook...
- b) Are You Building Up the Faith of Others—or Tearing Down the Faith of Others?
- c) Q: Will Your Facebook Posts Be the Millstone Around Your Neck?

#### F. PURSUE THINGS THAT BRING PEACE & ENCOURAGEMENT (v.16–19)

##### 1. Blessed are the peacemakers, For they shall be called sons of God (Mt 5:9)

- a) There's times when we need to Let Some Things Go and Give them to God
- b) Stop Taking the Bait that Leads to Biting and Devouring One Another

##### 2. (v.17) Don't Confuse the Kingdom of God with What it is Not

- a) It is Not a Political Action Committee, Not a Charity Organization, or a Country Club

##### 3. It is the Kingdom That Will Never Be Destroyed—and Jesus is King!

## **G. DON'T DESTROY THE WORK OF GOD IN ANOTHER PERSON (v.20–21)**

- 1. As Jim used to say: If your brother is offended by meat sacrificed to idols, don't invite him to Baal's BBQ**
  - a) Don't have a Jewish person over to eat pork
  - b) Don't Invite a child of God to a Bar or to Drink Alcohol etc. (v.21)
- 2. Lets Have a Proper Understanding of This Word “Offended” in v.21**
  - a) There is a Whole Political Industry Built on Being OFFENDED.
  - b) It is the IDENTITY Politics of Grievance Groups. They MAKE \$ By Being Offended!
  - c) So it is Practically Impossible NOT to offend Easily Offended People
  - d) But Paul is Talking About Something More Important than Hurt Feelings
  - e) The English dictionary defines the Offended: “to cause somebody anger, resentment, or hurt.”
- 3. The Greek Word Here is *skandalízo* (σκανδαλίζεται)**
  - a) “to entrap, trip up; or entice to sin or apostasy.” To Lure Someone to Destruction.
  - b) One Greek Scholar Notes: “The classical equivalent is *skandalēthron*, which means ‘the bait-stick in a trap’. The *skandalēthron* was the arm or stick on which the bait was fixed. The animal for which the trap was set was lured by the bait to touch or step on the stick; the stick touched off a spring; and so the animal was enticed to its capture or destruction. In classical Greek the word is used by Aristophanes for ‘verbal traps’ set to lure a person in an argument into defeat.” (Barclay, N.T. Words)
- 4. Notice Jesus uses this word (Matthew 13:41)**
  - a) (1 John 2:10) ‘He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is no *skandalon* in him.’ That is to say, ‘He would never entice and seduce anyone into sin.’
  - b) (Matthew 18:6) the sense of luring and enticing the younger and the more impressionable people to sin.
  - c) (Matthew 5:29-30) If Your Right Eye Causes You (*skandalon*) to sin...

*A skandalon is that which trips us up or that which lures us into sin. It must be rooted out of our heart; and God will not hold us guiltless if we bring such things into the lives of others.*

## **H. DON'T PARADE PERSONAL OPINIONS ON DISPUTED MATTERS (v.22-23)**

- 1. Don't Be the Bait Satan Uses to Spring the Trap**
  - a) To avoid being a stumbling block... or the Bait to entrap one to sin
  - b) Don't Flaunt Your Opinions on Issues That Can Harm The Weak
  - c) A Lot of Problems Are Avoided When We Think Before We Speak (James 1:19)
- 2. Keep it Between You and God**
  - a) WHY? Because You May Cause a Brother to Doubt which leads them to sin
  - b) And By Causing Your Brother to Sin—You've Committed a Greater Sin
- 3. Don't Take the Bait of Satan and Don't Be the Bait of Satan**

## **I. YEILD YOUR PREFERENCES FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS (15:1–3)**

- 1. Exactly what Paul tells the Church in Corinth (1 Corinthians 10:23–33)**
  - a) This was a Real Issue Dividing Brethren, So Paul gives some instructions.

- (1) **If You Buy Meat in the Market—Don’t Ask—Don’t Worry About it**  
Don’t Make an Issue Where There Isn’t One.
- (2) **If You Go to Someone’s House—Eat What They Give You**  
without Asking or Worrying.
- (3) **If Someone has a problem with it, then Don’t Make the Problem Worse...**  
Don’t eat it, for their Conscience sake or yours

**b) The Whole Point is to Consider What is Best For One Another**

- (1) **EXAMPLE:** Jim told story of having dinner with the All the Whaley family
- (2) Larry’s mother would bring a casserole she made but she picked her own mushrooms and Larry asked her not put mushrooms in her food (afraid someone might get sick)
- (3) Jim is sitting next to Larry’s mother & she insists he eat some of her casserole!
- (4) And as she hands it to him she leans over and says, “Larry doesn’t want me to put my mushrooms in, but I cut them up so small he can’t see them!”

**Augustine: “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”**

## 2. Yield Your Preferences for the Good of Others...

### This is what Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane

- a) He Had the Divine Power and Authority to Call Down 12 Legions of Angels
- b) Jesus Could Have Pulled the Plug on This Sick and Dying World!
- c) The Way You or I Could Pull the Plug on a Relationship
- d) I’m Tired of Being Treated this Way, I’m DONE! See ya, Bye

## 3. Jesus Could Have Ended the Misery of this Sick World and He would’ve Been Right to Do So

- a) But He Did Something Better!
- b) He Gave Us Mercy by Dying on the Cross for Our Sins (**Romans 5:6–8**)

## CONCLUSION:

- 1. **Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. (Romans 15:5–7)**
  - a) This is How We Remember:  
The Main Thing, is to Keep the Main thing, the Main Thing.
  - b) Let’s Stand shoulder to shoulder on Biblical Truth
  - c) And Not Let Our Opinions on Less Important Issues Divide Our Unity on the Truth
- 2. **(1 Corinthians 16:13–14)** <sup>13</sup> Watch, stand fast in the faith, be brave, be strong. <sup>14</sup> Let all *that you do* be done with love.