

# THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS CHRIST

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*By the Book™* A Chapter by Chapter Bible Study Series from Jerry Vines Ministries  
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## Let's Begin

*The most neglected truth in the Bible today may be the Lordship of Jesus Christ. In fact, though so often missed, while Jesus is referred to as "Savior" some 24 times, He is referred to as "Lord" a whopping 747 times! If we're not careful, we'll miss it!*

*As we study Romans 14, we immediately see that a key to understanding the passage is Christ's Lordship. Eleven times "the Lord" is mentioned here, settling the matter once and for all concerning both significant issues and, as we shall see, debatable issues as well. With the Apostle Peter we should be able to confess, "He is Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). As one put it, if Jesus is not Lord of all, Jesus is not Lord at all.*

*One way some people skew the Lordship of Christ is by creating a false distinction between receiving Jesus as Savior and confessing Him as Lord. The Biblical reality is, one cannot use Him as Savior and refuse Him as Lord. Or, put another way, no person can receive Jesus as Savior and knowingly reject Him as Lord over his or her life. The Biblical call is to yield to Him as both the Savior and Lord He is.*

*Thus, as we make our way through Romans 14, let's follow the outline below:*

- I. The Lordship of Christ Illustrated (vv. 1-6)**
- II. The Lordship of Christ Illuminated (vv. 7-12)**
- III. The Lordship of Christ Initiated (vv. 16-23)**

## I. The Lordship of Christ Illustrated (vv. 1-6)

The Lordship of Christ touches every area of our lives, including those things over which Christians disagree. The fact is, Christians are raised in different cultures, which makes for different customs. Sometimes things are not right or wrong, just different. It could be dress, food consumption, living arrangements, or any number of differences. How do we know how to tell those things which are right and wrong from those things which are just different?

The Apostle Paul was no stranger to these everyday issues we face today. How do we get along with others who hold different opinions from us on the same matter? Paul offers three helpful principles that guide us.

*First, observe the consideration principle. We must be considerate toward others who may have different views than us on*

### Reflection Connection

*Do you think the church practices acceptable behavior in receiving others who are not like them? Why or Why not?*

certain matters. Paul writes, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him" (vv. 1-3). How does Paul explain consideration? He begins by exhorting believers to receive those who differ (v. 1).

The term "receive" means to "take to one's self." In doing so, Paul means Christians are to receive other Christians by granting access to their heart, offering them a warm welcome with arms wide open. The reason believers may do this is because of God's reception of both—"for God hath received him" (v.3). Concerning the reception of each other, Paul clearly refers to "doubtful disputations." In other words, Christians must not bash other Christians every time they do something disagreeable. The weakest believer is to be received in love.



Note further, Paul explains the consideration principle by exhorting believers to *respect* those who differ, “Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth...” (v. 3). Strong believers have a tendency to possess contempt for those who are weak (cp. 1 Cor. 8:8; Acts 10:12, 15). The term “despise” has the idea of judging to be of “no account,” similar to the Pharisee toward the publican about whom Jesus spoke (Luke 18:9).

On the other hand, weak believers are prone to condemn the strong. Paul’s counsel to them is to “not judge.” Finding fault with others can become a developed art among some believers. Christianity is reduced to a series of negatives. The fact is, we have no right or obligation to become another man’s judge. No Christian reports to us. Jesus Christ is both Lord and Judge.

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*Second, we must observe the conviction principle.* Paul writes, “Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea,

he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind” (vv. 4-5). A deeply embedded conviction must be the foundation of every Christian’s behavior. Particularly, two necessary elements are involved in developing personal conviction. First, moral conviction develops as it is *conveyed by our own Master*. Paul reminds us, “to his own master he standeth or falleth.” We are responsible to God alone. He must teach us right from wrong. Second, moral conviction develops as it is *convincing to our own mind*. Again, the apostle insists Christians must be “fully persuaded” (v. 5). Certainty must play a major role in our hearts if moral conviction remains deeply embedded within.

*Third, we must observe the consecration principle,* “He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks” (v. 6). Regardless of what decision is made on debatable issues, one thing must be kept uppermost: every activity must be completely consecrated to the Lord. Will the action please the Lord? Could you praise the Lord— giving Him thanks—in the action you’ve decided?

## II. The Lordship of Christ Illuminated (vv. 7-12)

Paul began the chapter by illustrating how the Lordship of Christ should affect even those things in life about which Christians differ. Now he throws the spotlight on the Biblical truth of Lordship itself by illuminating Christ’s Lordship in three different ways.

*First, the Lordship of Jesus is a simple truth,* “For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether



we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's" (vv. 7-8). No Christian can escape the simple truth of Christ's Lordship. Amazingly, some attempt to escape by creating a false distinction between Jesus as Savior and Jesus as Lord. Yet as we noted earlier, this distinction cannot survive Biblical scrutiny.

The fact is, while we live, His Lordship is real. Our responsibility remains with Him from cradle to grave. In addition, not only over our entire life are we subject to Christ, but also every area of our life is under the lens of Jesus' Lordship. No sphere of life is shielded from His rule. Whether it's home, business, education, vocation, hobby, or play, nothing is exempt from the simple truth: Jesus is Lord!

What is more, when we die, His Lordship does not end. In death we are accountable to Him. All of us will stand before Him at the judgment seat (cp. 2 Cor. 5:10).

*Second, the Lordship of Jesus is a sensible truth.* Paul writes, "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (v. 9). Not only is Jesus' Lordship simple, it also makes perfect sense. Christ died to purchase us. Elsewhere Paul says it like this, "Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men" (1 Cor. 7:23). Adam sold us out through disobedience, making us slaves to sin (cp. Rom. 5:12). The blood of Christ freed us from sin's bondage! Because of this, our rightful owner is Christ (cp. 1 Cor. 6:19-20). Moreover, Christ's resurrection assures His Lordship is eternal.

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### Reflection Connection

*Suppose someone were to say, "Jesus may be your Savior. Why not make Him Lord?" How would you respond? Perhaps this would be a good time to ask your pastor to lead a few minutes' discussion on this issue.*

*Third, the Lordship of Jesus is a solemn truth.* Paul unashamedly speaks of the future aspect of Jesus' Lordship, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (vv. 10-12).

When Jesus comes again, it will be a *solemn appearance* (v. 10). He will be seated upon the examination throne, being the only one qualified to judge us (cp. 1 Cor. 4:3-5; 14:4). In addition, when He comes there will be a *solemn accounting* (v. 12). All will stand before God; all will give account. And, it will be a meticulous rendering, even assessing every "idle word" we speak (Matt. 12:36).

### III. The Lordship of Christ Initiated (vv. 16-23)

The apostle has moved from establishing convictions concerning the Lordship of Christ over every aspect of our life to dealing squarely with the area of Christian liberty. Just how does our freedom in Christ operate? Since Christians are to avoid moral legalisms, how do they do so without succumbing to the temptation of living as they please? Paul answers with three broad principles.

*First, remember things are neutral.* He writes, "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth



any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died” (vv. 14-15). For people living in Paul’s day, more likely than not, the meat sold in the market was dedicated to an idol. No form of food is unclean of itself, however (cp. v. 20). What one eats has nothing to do with one’s heart or faith. The chunk of meat, in and of itself, is morally neutral. Therefore, one must be personally convinced, or, as Paul says, “I know, and am persuaded.” Nevertheless, personal conviction slices both ways. In other words, not only should one be thoroughly convinced meat is morally neutral, “to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”

In addition to our convictions being *personal*, they are also *influential* (v. 15). Just because a Christian may be convinced an act is not wrong for him or her in and of itself does not mean the act is perfectly legitimate to do. We do not live in a vacuum, “if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably.” Understand: Paul is not speaking about a legalistic Pharisee. Rather he is addressing sincere believers!

The term “grieved” means “to hurt,” or “to cause pain.” Paul judges this action flatly as loveless behavior, doing harm to the family of God. Love always thinks of others, not just itself. Paul further admonishes Christians not to “destroy” one’s brother for whom Christ died. Again, a strong word is used translated “destroy,” indicative of undermining the foundation of a building. Our convictions *influence* others. Thus, we should avoid those practices—even if Christian liberty affirms them—which hinder another Christian in his or her walk. Rather than being stumbling blocks causing failure, we should be stepping stones promoting moral and spiritual health in the body of Christ.

*The second broad principle is to remember Christianity is spiritual.* Paul explains, “Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men” (vv. 16-18). Our faith possesses primarily an *inward* dimension. Kingdom life is not about “meat and drink”; instead it is about “righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

It is not what we consume in our bodies but what abides in our heart. God inwardly works on the heart prior to our outward actions before men. In addition, Christianity is thoroughly positive more than negative. Positive blessings from our Lord Jesus bring to us an exciting life which overshadows the negative.

*Finally, the third broad principle is to remember Christian liberty is practical* (vv. 19-23). How does our liberty in Christ affect our daily life? As we practice Christian liberty, we will be *considerate in our conduct*. Paul implores us to “follow after the things which make for peace” in order to “edify” one another (v. 19). Hence, we will unlikely “destroy” God’s Kingdom work (v. 20).

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### Reflection Connection

*Reflect on some things which you may feel free to do but avoid doing them because of the negative impact the action is likely to cause toward others. If you feel comfortable, share with the entire study group.*



Next, we will also be *consistent in our convictions* (vv. 22-23). We will “have [faith] to thyself before God” (v. 22), avoiding condemnation for our actions. On the other hand, “he that doubteth” risks judgment of God because faith is absent (v. 23).

### Golden Greek Nugget

In verse 13, Paul cautioned those who practiced Christian liberty not to put a “stumblingblock or an occasion to fall” into their Christian brother or sister’s path. Two words are in the Greek: “*proskomma*” and “*scandalon*.” The former has the idea of “hitting against” or “striking” and the latter was used similarly of the cheese we place on a mouse trap. Paul used both words as strong deterrents to unwise actions—even if fully compatible with Christian liberty—which potentially cause our brother or sister spiritual harm.

### Wrap Up

*Romans 14 challenges Christians to both embrace and practice the Lordship of Jesus Christ. His Lordship touches every sphere in which we live, including the thorny areas where Christians disagree about behavior. Paul does not disappoint. He gives the believer hope that, despite our differences, the body of Christ loves and edifies each of its members.*

