***Observing Holy Days is Simply Irrelevant
RO172-01***

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Please open your Bibles to Romans 14:1-12. Our topic is "The Spirit of Toleration," and this is segment number 3.

**Legalism**

In Romans 14, the apostle Paul calls for a spirit of toleration among Christians over non-moral preferences. Some Christians are very poorly taught in doctrine, so they tend to be legalistic. They don't understand the grace orientation of the Christian life. So, their lifestyle is doing this, and doing that, and not doing this, and not doing that, in order to make points with God. They are hoping in this way to become spiritual. They're hoping in this way to gain God's favor and blessings.

The apostle Paul has illustrated his point using different dietary habits that Christians have. He has pointed out that some Christians feel that they are free to eat both meat and vegetables, while others think that that does not please God, so they are vegetarians. Some New Testament Christians, as a matter of fact, ate meat that was once used in worship of an idol God, while other Christians gagged over the practice. They just couldn't do it.

Now the apostle Paul declares that both dietary practices are non-moral issues. They're not like the ten commandments – that this is an absolute right or an absolute wrong. If you want to eat meat and vegetables, that's fine. If you want to eat vegetables alone, that's fine. It is irrelevant to God. God accepts both believers in fellowship with Himself, whether they are omnivores or vegetarians. Therefore, Christians in the local congregation should follow this same attitude and the same general principle.

No Christian has the right to pass judgment and to condemn what other Christians do on these non- moral issues. Now you may hate it. You may not like what some Christians do. You may think it is stupid, and mindless, and ugly, and offensive. But if it's a non-moral issue, they are free to live their lives as they choose. And it is no one else's business. The Lord Jesus Christ is the believer's Master. And He alone decides what is acceptable conduct for we, His servants. It is Jesus Christ who has saved all those who have believed the gospel, and those who are saved continue in that salvation on the basis of the merit of Christ alone, not on the basis of their works or their lifestyle.

**The Christian Priesthood**

Each Christian, therefore, is to handle his own priesthood before God, and he is to leave the priesthood of other Christians to the Lord. The issue of Christian liberty is a very serious matter. And those of us who live in the age of the church are living in this great and marvelous age of grace, the best dispensation of all-time to have ever lived in, to this point in time. So, we can appreciate indeed the freedoms that we have in Christ.

**Smoking**

There is a great deal of disagreement, however, between individual Christians, and even between churches, on what constitutes sinful conduct, and what is proper Christian freedom. In some Christian circles, things like smoking; the use of alcoholic beverages; men and women swimming together in the same pool; the use of cosmetics; recreational activities on Sunday; and, watching TV – all these are considered sinful, while for other groups of Christians, none of these things are any problem.

**What is Sinful?**

In the Bible, sin is something which transgresses the commandments of God. And it is very important that when we throw around the word "sinful," concerning what people do, that we understand that we cannot use that word unless the Bible itself says that what they do is sinful. We cannot make our own judgments as to what is sinful, and what is not sinful. When the Bible speaks about sin, it is very explicit and very clear. It is failing to do what God commands, or it is doing what God clearly forbids. One's conscience is not a reliable guide as to what is sinful, because our consciences are contaminated and deceived by our own sin nature.

Therefore, we may have a very firm conviction that something is right, as Proverbs 14:12 points out, but it is in fact not right. And in fact, to follow that course of action is to be following a way of death. The conscience must be given a frame of reference of viable doctrine in order to guide it so that it is indeed a reliable director. When you are trained in the knowledge of doctrine, and when you are filled with the knowledge of the principles of Scripture, then your conscience will be guided in such a way that you can obey it and depend upon it. It is only the Word of God that can guide one infallibly to what is sinful before God. You should be very careful about tossing the word "sinful" around loosely. There is no person, and there is no church organization which can declare something to be sinful unless God in Scripture Himself says, "That it is sin." Applying the principles of Bible doctrine to a situation under the guidance of the indwelling Holy Spirit will enable you to know what, in any particular circumstance, is sinful or not sinful.

Now once you know it is sinful, don't sit around and say, "Well, someday I'm going to do something about that." Once you have established that this is condemned by the Word of God, or forbidden by the Word of God, then act accordingly, because that is the next thing that immediately is expected of the believer.

So, there are no rules or opinion that should be considered as binding on the Christian unless it is substantiated in Scripture. The Bible alone is the guide to what people should believe in spiritual matters, and how they should act.

**Material Things are not Inherently Sinful**

Now we must also immediately point out that there is an old philosophical fallacy from ancient times that material things are in themselves inherently sinful and that's not true. Sin begins as a mental attitude, and then it results in improper overt conduct. All sin begins in the mind. Many fundamentalist Christians are very hot and humid on external acts of sin that are obvious, and which the Bible condemns, but they're very indifferent toward what they think. The mind is where it begins. It is the mind that is the primary concern in Scripture. And the Lord Jesus upset the Pharisees when he said to them, "Oh, sure, you people aren't walking around this Pharisees. You're not running around sleeping with people that you're not married to. But your minds are so filled with lust and evil that you have committed adultery many, many times over." That leaned them back on their heels, because they didn't think there was any sin up in the head. They only thought it was overt. And they went around as Pharisees portraying themselves as very noble kind of people.

One of the things they were very proud of was that they were certainly not guilty of a thing like murder. And Jesus said, "Oh, sure, you've never stabbed anybody, and snuffed his life out. But you have done the thing that comes before that. You've hated people with a vengeance. And in that hatred, you have been guilty of murder."

So, here it is very clear in the Bible, and James emphasizes this: sin begins in the mind; and, then it has an overt expression. So, it is not within the material object that you're to find sin. God's rational creatures take a neutral material object, and they use it to sin. Therefore, a deck of cards; a glass of whiskey; a bottle of poison; the human sex organs; a knife; or, a gun are, in themselves, not sinful. It is the improper use of them that makes them sinful.

**What is Right and Wrong before God?**

So, this raises a very serious question for thoughtful Christians. Those of you who are interested in living above the common animal plain, and walking as those who are indeed the nobility of God in the royal family of God, and therefore you want to please God, this question of what is right and wrong for you to do before God is a serious question. You take it very seriously. You don't just muddle through life indifferently under the influence of the world; the sin nature; and, the devil. But you do consider the issue of sinfulness. Three things can guide you.

1. **Does the Bible Forbid it?**

Number one is: does the Bible forbid doing something? Whether the thing is sinful or not, you must answer that question. Does the Bible tell me that I cannot do this?

Many years ago we had a deacon in our church, and we were having a board meeting, and he was very upset because during the summer months, we had accumulated about 50 cases of empty Coke bottles. And they were all stacked up there in the corner, and they were in our way. And I found that the drink company men trained their men to take only as many empty bottles as you buy full bottles. So, if you want to get rid of 50 empty cases, you've got to buy 50 full cases, which will take you into the millennium with Cokes. So, you have to watch these guys, and catch them, and say, "We want you to take all the empties.

Well, anyhow, we're in summer camp, and we're doing something else. So, he brings this up, and he says, "Those Coke bottle should not be there. They should be taken. We should do something about it. 50 cases of Coke bottles – that's sinful." Well, maybe drinking 50 cases is simple, but piling them up was not simple. Because I am naturally a nice person, I did not ask him the Scripture for the sinfulness of 50 empty cases of Coke bottles.

**Things that the Bible Calls Sinful**

You can't call something sin unless the Bible explicitly says, "This is a moral evil." And the Bible does have specific commands. Therefore, it forbids acts of murder; or theft; of adultery; of lying; of getting drunk; of cursing; of idolatry; of dishonoring your parents; and, of coveting. All those are clear, explicit commands. And I'm not talking about the ten commandments. I'm talking about New Testament instruction to the body of Christ, the church. And you'll find every one of these. These are forbidden acts. Therefore, they are definitely sinful, and they must not be tolerated by Christians.

**Sinfulness by Implication**

Certain things are sinful by implication from a general commandment. The Bible does not deal with some specific issue, but we know that that issue is sinful because it follows logically from a general principle. For example, the Bible tells us, as we have learned in Romans 13:1, that Christians are obliged to obey all legally constituted laws of civil government. They are not to violate the laws of civil government, unless those laws violate a biblical moral principle. Then you have civil disobedience, and you do not obey the civil authorities. But if their laws are within the confines of Scripture, you are obliged, as a Christian, to obey them. Therefore, it is sinful for you to drive 90 miles an hour through a zone that is posted as a 30 mile per hour zone. The Bible doesn't speak about that, but it is an implication from the greater principle of obeying civil authorities, and the laws they make.

These implications of sin, however, are areas that must be very carefully determined by an accurate interpretation of Scripture. If these are not verifiable by sound principles of Bible interpretation, a declaration of sinfulness is merely a personal opinion, and it is not binding upon the conscience. A matter has to be viewed as being indifferent until it is proven otherwise from Scripture. Don't begin by saying that something is sinful, and then you prove to me that it isn't. That not the way the Scriptures work. The Bible says, "We will tell you what is sinful, and that's where you go from." So, the burden of proof is upon the person who is declaring that something is sinful.

Now in cases of doubt, the matter has to be left to the individual conscience of each Christians. Don't try to be clearer about what is sinful than the Bible and God Himself is. It is not always possible to apply a general principle to establish clearly that something is sinful. But in the area where the Bible says that something is morally wrong, that is sin.

1. **Would it Lead Me into Temptation and Cause Me to Sin?**

The second principle to guide you is this: that although some act is not sinful in itself, the question should be asked: would it lead me into temptation and cause me to sin? This principle of avoiding temptation is stressed by the Lord Jesus Christ in a very strong analogy – an analogy which He does not mean for us to take literally, but which has such a visual mental effect to us, that it gets across His point that there are certain things you should steer clear of if they're going to cause you to be guilty of a moral evil.

We find this in Matthew 5:29-30. There, the Lord says, "If your right eye offends you, pluck it out, and cast it from you, for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be cast into hell. And if your right hand offends you, cut it off, and cast it from you, for it is profitable for you that one of your members should perish, and not that your whole body should be cast into hell."

Now, obviously, Jesus does not mean for this to be taken literally. Mutilation of the body does not remove temptation from sin, as Martin Luther learned when he was an Augustinian monk, who so abused his body in order to cause sin to leave him. He practically killed himself. Mutilation and abuse of the body will not cause you to stop sinning. What the Lord is saying here is: steer clear of the thing that's going to tempt you to do something sinful. No specific temptations are listed here because these differ from person to person. There are some of you that couldn't care less about certain things that are sinful. You simply are not attracted to them. You are revolted by them. They don't appeal to you at all, while others are just absorbed with it. They just cannot wait to be involved in that thing that you have no interest in.

**Things to Avoid**

So, each person has to judge his own weakness, and flee from the conditions that would entice you personally. Some things, of course, are in general degrading because they weaken your moral fiber. So, we may say that it is foolish for you not to avoid these. Pornography, clearly, is one of those things. Another one is going to immoral entertainments. Why would you, as a Christian, sit in a movie that is filled with foul language, and foul implications, and foul actions so that these visual images are created before your eyes and impressed upon your mind, so that your moral fiber is weakened? You should be aware of the fact that what you become acclimated to becomes easier for you personally to do. Many a Christian has discovered that some evil – some clearly defined moral evil that he thought he would never be guilty of, he played around the edges with it enough to become acquainted with it; used to it; acclimated to it; and, at home with it, and then it was easy to step across the line. Corrupt literature – why would anybody sit around reading some of the foul-mouthed literature that is published today? These are things that you should avoid just because they are unbecoming you as a human being, as one for whom Christ died, and as one who is being transformed day-by-day through the Spirit of God and the Word of God into the image of Christ.

The principle that we're talking about here was enunciated by the apostle Paul in 2 Timothy 2:22. The apostle Paul says, "Flee also youthful lusts, but follow righteousness, faith, love, and peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." Just steer clear of anything that's going to lead you into a sinful action.

1. **Would it Cause a Weaker Christian to Stumble?**

The third principle to guide in determining whether it's right or wrong for you to do something is the question: would doing something cause a weaker Christian to be offended and stumble into sin? The apostle Paul has already indicated to us in this chapter that we do have to be concerned for how our conduct affects that of Christians who are not as spiritually mature as you may be. The Bible declares that it is the Christian's duty before God to seek to avoid doing anything that causes a weaker Christian to stumble into sin.

Please notice Romans 14:13: "Let us not, therefore, judge one another anymore, but judge this rather: that no one put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall (that is an occasion to sin) his brother's way. Don't encourage another Christian, by your example, to do what violates his conscience, and therefore causes him to sin. And that's what Paul is stressing. No one should ignore his conscience. You do need guidance of the Word for your conscience, but nevertheless, conscience should be respected, and you should not do something that's going to cause some Christian to violate his own conscience, because he feels free to do something that you do, even though he personally feels that's not a right thing to do.

In Romans 14:20, Paul stresses this when he says, "For food (on account of food) do not destroy the work of God. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for that man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat, nor to drink wine, nor anything by which your brother stumbles, or is offended, or is made weak. There is nothing wrong with the Christian eating meat. There's nothing wrong with a Christian drinking wine. But if your doing that causes another believer to stumble into sin, then it's very wrong.

Suppose that you're invited to a meal, and the host serves wine with the dinner. One Christian has a background of alcoholic weakness. He knows that if he touches that glass, he's going to go down the tubes. He won't stop. The Christian on the other side of the table has no problem with that. So, what should the strong Christian do here in the presence of his brother across the table, who is a weak Christian? The course of action, is for the Christian to put the weak brother at ease, and say, "No, thank you – no wine for me. That is generally the safe course for people to follow. Now the scientists are getting closer to where they believe they can find a genetic identification for those people who will become alcoholics as they begin the social drinking pattern. You never know if you're one of them, but once you're hooked, you're hooked. And it's not worth it.

In this particular case, Paul's point is: don't do something that's going to cause that brother to do something that's going to make him feel free to follow a course of action that he knows is not good for him, or is not right for him. Before you do it (before you exercise your liberty), consider its effect upon other people.

**Christian Liberty is Limited**

So, Christian liberty is always limited to things that are not sinful before God. Drinking wine is not sinful, but drunkenness is. Don't make the mistake, therefore, of equating people who drink wine with drunkenness. That's unfair. It's not true. Drinking wine is not sinful. Drunkenness is sinful. But if your use of wine leads another into the sin of drunkenness, then don't use it in his presence. The guiding principle here is 1 Corinthians 10:31-32. If we remember this, we're home free: "Whether therefore you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no offense to the Jews, nor to the gentiles, nor to the church of God."

Now if the Christian ever in doubt about the propriety about doing something before God, then the principles to follow is to avoid it. If you're not sure whether it's right for you to do something, don't do it. If you're not sure that someone is going to be hurt because they see you doing this, don't do it. Romans 14:22-23: "Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he that does not condemn Himself in that thing which he permits himself to do. And he that doubts is condemned if he eats, because he doesn't eat of faith; for whatever is not of faith is sin." If you eat, and you're doubtful about whether you should eat this meat; or eat meat and vegetables; or, whatever, then it's wrong for you to do it. Why? Because you're violating the principle of conscience. Your conscience may need to get reoriented to reality better, but you don't ignore conscience. So, if you're in doubt, don't do it.

**Sacred or Holy Days**

In Romans 14:5, the apostle Paul says, "Let me illustrate this problem of differences between Christians in another way. And he brings up a thing that is a big, big point of friction. And that is the issue of sacred holy days in a religious calendar. In verse 5, Paul says, "One man esteems one day above another." What he's contrasting here is: "one man esteems one day;" and, in the next phrase, "another esteems every day." One man is compared to another. He's contrasting two Christians. One man here is the strong Christian who is spiritually mature. The other man is the weak Christian who is spiritually immature. One man esteems one day above another.

The word "esteem" looks like this in the Greek Bible. It's the Greek word "krino." The word "krino" actually means "to judge." It connotes placing a value on something. So, it carries this idea of esteem. And what he is referring to is esteeming a certain day of the week. And he says that: "Some Christians have placed a value upon certain days of the week above." And the word "above" looks like this. It is the Greek preposition "para," which means "besides." So, what this verse is saying is that there are some Christians who judge one day beside another day. This is an idiomatic way in the Greek language of saying that some Christians compare one day with another day, and they give a higher status to certain days. Here the idea is that the Christian is judging certain days of the year to be more sacred to God than other days. Therefore, they are better or they are above. What he is saying is that: "One man esteems (or values) one day more sacred (above)." And the Bible doesn't say "above another," but it says, "above a day." It's actually: "above another day:" "For one man considers one day as being above a day." That is the way we would translate it.

So, some Christians consider certain days of the year as sacred with God, and, therefore, they should have sacred observances: such days as Christmas; Easter; and, not the least of which is Sunday. There are some people who never darken the door of a church on Sundays. You never see them: morning; or, evening. But come Christmas, there they are: on the front row – the front row gang. On Christmas Day, they're all there, with all their Christmas beauty and ornaments on them. Why? Because Christmas is a sacred and holy day. If you go to church on Christmas, God says, "50 points for heaven," and you have gained some great favor. Then they leave, and all the rest of us crank out Sunday by Sunday. We come in here to the feeding and training station with the Word of God. Then along comes Easter. And suddenly, here come these wonderful people, now dolled up in new clothes, and they're on the front row again. It is the holy day of Easter, and they're here, scoring points with God again.

I used to make cracks about that on Easter. I'd say, "Welcome to those of you whom we have not seen since Christmas." Then I found that they quit coming altogether. So, I figured that two holy days is better than none. So, I don't do that anymore.

However, the whole nonsensical idea here is that there are sacred days with God. Therefore, we have some church denominations who divide the church year into special sacred days. And they form the frame of reference for the ministry of that church for the whole year. Some of us grew up in churches like that, where we would see the pastor stand up and say, "This is the second Sunday after Epiphany; this is the third Sunday before Advent; this is Ash Wednesday; this is the beginning of Lent; this is the end of Lent;" and, it would go on and on. And every week, this Sunday was always viewed in proximity to some sacred, high, and holy day. These churches observe certain days of feasting, and certain days of fasting.

In the New Testament, of course, you did have a lot of Christians who have come out of Judaism. They were Jewish Christians in their background. And their custom was to gather for religious exercises on Saturday, the Old Testament Sabbath. This day indeed was a sacred day with God. This day, indeed, was a day that you must keep as a holy day. And it was a moral evil if you did not. As a matter of fact, if you worked on the Sabbath Saturday, it was a capital crime, and you could be executed for doing so. The Sabbath day meant total rest. The word means "total cessation." It was a day when you did absolutely nothing. You just quit functioning.

But those New Testament Christians, who came from that Jewish background, were certainly free to continue the Sabbath day, and they did. And then they would meet on Sunday as the Lord's day as well. The point that Paul is making is that only a weak Christian, spiritually immature, thinks that the system of Judaism, with holy days, has been brought over into Christianity. There were many holy days under Judaism that the Jews had to observe. There are none for the Christian. But the real world we live in is that you and I may have relatives, and we may have friends who belong to church groups, and are associated with people who do believe that there are certain high and holy days during the week.

**Every Day is a Holy Day with God**

So, in verse 5 Paul is saying that: "One man chooses to elevate (to esteem) one day as more sacred than another day, while another man judges every day." The word "alike" is not in the Greek text. You see that it's in italics. He just judges every day. And what this means is that another man considers every day as being the same. It means that he puts every day of the year on the same high plain as sacred to God. For him there is no special spiritual significance to any day during the year. So, you have one Christian who judges something to be true of only certain days of the year (holy days), while another Christian judges something to be true of every day of the year. Every day is holy day with God.

**Let Every Man be Fully Persuaded in his own Mind**

The issue here is that one Christian judges certain days to be more sacred than others, while another Christian judges every day to be of equal sacredness to God. So, what should we do? Paul says, "Here's how we have to handle that. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Every man (every individual Christian) should be fully persuaded. The word "fully persuaded" looks like this in the Greek Bible: "plerophoreo." The word "plerophoreo" means "to be filled to the brim." This is what you do with a cup of coffee when you bring it all the way up to the brim. You have "plerophoreo: the thing. It connotes a condition, furthermore, of full personal conviction about a matter. And this personal conviction, he says, is something that a Christian is to arrive at. This is in the passive tense, which tells us that this is something that happens to you as the result of information from Scripture and the guiding of the Holy Spirit.

**The Mind**

It is in imperative mood, which means it's a command. God says, "Don't do anything that you are not absolutely fully persuaded about. Don't let some church tell you that this is a holy day, and that you must act in this way. Don't let some church tell you that certain things are sinful when the Bible doesn't say they're sinful, and that you must act in a certain way. You must be fully persuaded in a specific place." And he says, "That has to be in your mind." The word "mind" here is the Greek word "nous." This refers to that function of the mind where we learn things. We call that the perceptive mind function. Here you get information, and on the basis of that information, you make a decision. This word indicates a decision which is based upon serious mental examination of Scripture, resulting in a settled conviction.

A lot of religious activity, and a lot of religious beliefs – people just absorb them because somebody told them. It is absolutely amazing how mindless human beings are about what God thinks. And they simply believe what some preacher has told them; some priest has told them; or, some authority has told them, and they accept that. They never ask themselves: is it possible that this human being has himself been taught something that is not true – that he is mistaken, so that you realize that, unless you go back to the Bible, you cannot say that God has spoken on this subject.

**Fully Persuaded**

When Paul uses this word "fully persuaded," he means that you are, in your own mind, absolutely convinced, without any shadow of a doubt, on a reliable basis of something more than somebody has told you. Now this does not mean that you are assured that a day has special sacredness, but you are only assured that God wants you to keep that day holy no matter what others may do. That's what he means by being persuaded to the brim – persuaded about what you should do. Now you may be wrong. You may be wrong about calling Christmas a holy day, or calling Easter a holy day. Many of us believe you are wrong if you do that, and you treat it as some kind of a sacred day that's going to make points with God. But if you do it, you better be sure that you're doing it on the basis of the fact that, in your own mind, you are convinced that this is what God wants you to do – not because your parents taught you to do this.

**Judaism**

The veneration of religious holy days is not a moral issue. Therefore, it is a matter of your personal preference as per your conscience before God. Some Christians impose upon the church the system of days which are required under Judaism. There is no authorization in the New Testament for such a requirement of observing holy days upon Christians in the church under Christianity. That was true under Judaism. It is never true under Christianity.

In fact, I must point out to you that not only is there no imposition of holy days upon us as Christians, but the Bible warns us not to be enslaved to observing holy days and special feasts. The apostle Paul, in dealing with the Christians in the territory of Galatia, was just absolutely indignant with how legalistic those Christians had become. They were living as if they were back in the Old Testament system. They were trying to impose all the legalistic lifestyle upon Christians. And on that occasion, Paul, in writing to them, makes this point – that not only are we not required to observe holy days, but you shouldn't do it.

**The Mosaic Law**

Galatians 4:9-10: "But now," Paul says, "after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how do we turn again to the weak and beggarly elements into which you desire again to be in bondage." Do you know what he's talking about when he says, "weak and beggarly elements?" He's talking about the Mosaic Law, and all those rituals, and all those holy days, and all those systems of life. He says, "That a crummy setup." It was a picture that God gave us of how we stood in sin, and needed righteousness, and what God was going to do.

Verse 10 says, "You observe days, and months, and times of years." And Paul says in verse 11, "I'm so afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." He said, "I have taught you grace until it's coming out of your ears. I instructed you. And now, by the things I hear about you, I think I wasted my time even talking to you."

In Colossians 2:16-7, there was a similar problem in the church at Colosse, where Paul says, "Let no man, therefore, judge you in food, or drink, or in respect of a feast day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath day, which are shadow of things to come. But the body is of Christ." All of these special religious holidays, and all the special eating of foods was a portrayal of the person and the work of Christ, which was to come. Christ, having arrived, that whole system is dead. You don't need it anymore.

**Spiritual Weakness and Immaturity**

So, the observance of special holy days as pleasing to God is in fact a sign of spiritual weakness and immaturity. When you become a mature Christian, you will abandon the observation of holy days.

**Legalism**

Holy day observance is also bad because it tends to incline you to be legalistic. The observance of holy days was part of the legalistic system under the Mosaic Law. And for Christians to do that causes them to deviate from grace orientation. It causes them to get into the habit of living as if God is going to take them to heaven on the basis of what they do, and keep doing; or, that they are going to be spiritual Christians on the basis of what they do or they don't do: "I don't smoke and I don't chew. And I don't go with girls that do." Does that make you holy, and godly, and spiritual? It does not. All it makes you is a nice moral person. What makes you spiritual is learning doctrine; confessing your known sins to God the Father; and, living according to the Word of Truth. That is what makes you a spiritual Christian.

**The Sabbath Day vs. the Lord's Day**

Some Christians have even tried to impose the Saturday Sabbath day of Judaism upon the Sunday Lord's Day of Christianity. Some church groups even hold religious services on Saturday instead of Sunday, like the Seventh Day Adventists. There's a very popular program on Saturday mornings now. It's a Seventh Day Adventist preacher who is pretty sharp in prophetic matters, as Seventh Day Adventists tend to be. And he repeatedly came back to pounding the pulpit about people being in church on Saturday because it is God's Holy Sabbath day. And to violate the Sabbath day is a very serious moral evil.

Well, he's quite wrong. He does not get that from the New Testament Scriptures. He imposes that upon the Scriptures because of his personal preference. Now some Christians indeed hold church services on Sunday, but they call it the Christian Sabbath day. And there's no such thing, in fact. It is wrong to call Sunday the Christian Sabbath day, because the days are so totally different. On the Sabbath day, it was a no-activity day. You could not do anything with. Whereas, Sunday is a hail, joyful, welcome of freedom to do-what-you'd-like day. It's a day of spiritual refreshment and of physical refreshment. Therefore, you can go to the lake on Saturday and swim. Therefore, you can go out and play tennis on Saturday. You can even wash your car. You can go out and play tennis on Sunday. You can even wash your car on Sunday. Yes, you can cut your lawn on Sundays. Why anybody would want to cut his lawn, I don't know – on any day, but you may want to cut your lawn. Whatever it is you want to do, you are free to do on Sunday. It is not a moral evil. It is not that kind of a no-activity days.

So, it is wrong to call Sunday the Christian Sabbath day. The people who do that are those who are trying to carry over a lot of Old Testament things into Christianity. You will notice that the people who call the Lord's Day the Christian Sabbath day also have an altar in their church, and they have a priest up there behind the rail, and they're giving people the impression that their approach to God is through this priest, and what he does at this altar. It's a whole Old Testament dead system brought into Christianity. And that's what Paul says to the Galatians: "You're dealing with a bunch of dead-dog beggarly elements. What's wrong with you? Why do you continue with those things?" You should be humiliated to see a minister up there with his robe on, before his altar and his candles, and going through his rituals. Don't you know that Christ, the reality, is here? Why do you look at the picture any longer?

Grace-oriented Christians know that Sunday has no relationship to the Sabbath day of the Mosaic Law. So, they enjoy the day for spiritual refreshment and physical activities. Sabbath day-keeping, you should be aware, is the one commandment of the ten commandments of the Mosaic code that was never carried over into the New Testament teachings. You'll find all the other nine commandments taught to the church in the New Testament epistles. But you will never find the commandment of keeping the Sabbath day holy. That in itself answers the question about whether we should be worshiping on Saturday or observing a day of inactivity.

Once the Mosaic Law was terminated as a system of life by the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, Christians, under the new order of the church and Christianity, very naturally needed a new day befitting their new position with God in Christ. Christians gravitated just on their own (no doubt, under the leading of the Spirit of God) to using the first day of the week, Sunday, the day upon which Christ was resurrected – to use that as the memorial day on which they would gather for special times of corporate worship. There is no direction in the New Testament for Christians to meet on Sunday, but there is very clear direction in Scriptures, as I have shown you, that we should not meet on the Sabbath day of Judaism. There's no direction to Christians to meet for worship on Sunday, but there is clear direction that Christians should not meet on the Saturday Sabbath of the Jewish order. The Saturday Sabbath day was simply gradually dropped out of the experience of Christians. It was gradually phased out as the day of worship. There never was any legal action about the matter. Christians just quit gathering on Saturday.

**Observing Holy Days is Simply Irrelevant**

So, Paul's point is that whether a Christian observes a holy day, it is irrelevant spiritually – just as irrelevant as whatever diet he follows. Since Paul indicates that it's OK for Christians not to observe holy days, it is clear that there is no such requirement on Christians in the church age. Don't miss that point. The apostle Paul tells us that one Christian person esteems a certain day like Sunday as a holy day, and he treats it in a special way; and, another considers it like any other day, and he acts in a certain way to it. Everybody can be persuaded in his own mind how he wants to treat the days of the week, and whether he wants to have sacred days or no sacred days. Paul couldn't have said that if God had requirements on that matter. His point is that there are no requirements. You may do as you choose.

**We Shouldn't Break Fellowship over Holy Days**

So, Christians who observe special days as sacred do so by their choice only. If you force people to observe a holy day, or if you force them to not observe a holy day that they want to observe, you have violated the principle of grace for them. Christians are not to break fellowship, of course, over the issue of holy days. This is not a ground for quarrel.

So, when you're visiting your relatives, unless they are in some pagan system, and they go to church on some high and holy day, go with them, and don't make any big issue over it, because it's an irrelevancy. Christians are not to break fellowship over this issue. Each day in the church age is equally holy before God, so each of us can follow his own conscience, and not be condemned for it. Christians do not have to behave exactly alike on non-moral issues. Our unity is not based upon these issues. Our unity is based upon true doctrine and our relationship to Christ. Now when true doctrine is violated, or the person of Christ is violated (if we have false teachings on that), there we draw the line.

So, I guess to sum this all up, you should be aware that there are many doctrinally untaught Christians who are both weird and dumb in their attitudes. And we must tolerate them with tenderness for the Lord's sake, while we quietly go about enjoying our own grace orientation. These are irrelevancies with God. They must not be made points of friction among us as Christians. But for those of you who have come to maturity, you'll never go back to the enslavement of the legalistic system. You will stand in grace orientation. You'll be delighted that you are free to breathe the air of the liberties and the joys that we have of being released from all those human efforts to please God that is ours in Christ. Stay with freedom. Abandon the enslavement of the legal system.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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