***Sunday is the Lord's Day
RO173-01***

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We are studying Romans 14:1-12. Our subject is "The Spirit of Toleration," and this is segment number five.

**The Christian Lifestyle**

Once a person is a born-again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, he must make a variety of choices about his lifestyle as a Christian. He must decide that he will not violate the moral principles which God has revealed in the Bible. He must decide that he will comply with the duties of the Christian life which are commanded us in Scripture. He must make decisions about his lifestyle relating to things which are not specifically mentioned in the Bible. Christians are free within the limits of Scripture in these matters, that the Bible has not specifically dealt with, to make their own choices. They are free to live their lives as they choose. And thus, there are social; religious; recreational; dietary; and, economic practices which differ widely among Christians. In these areas, the Bible gives some specific requirements; guidelines; and, principles, but it also leaves many areas wide open for the individual Christian to make his own choices, and to live his life as he chooses.

Where the Scripture is silent in these matters, there is not an absolute right or wrong way to do things. Christians, then, who are in temporal fellowship, may seek to follow the will of God for themselves as they understand it personally in these optional areas. Every Spirit-led believer will, of course, seek to live his life to the Lord's glory.

**The Judgment Seat of Christ**

Christians will someday, at the Judgment Seat of Christ, be judged as to how they made the decisions relative to all these areas of their lives, both those that are specific in Scripture, and the unspecified. And at that time, they will be judged by the Lord Jesus Christ, and their lives will be rewarded accordingly, or they will suffer loss accordingly. This decision will be made by Christ. It will not be made by other Christians. So, we stress that you live your life unto the Lord, because only He is the one to whom you are accountable.

The apostle Paul, here, in Romans 14, has pointed out the differences among Christians on the issue of diet, and of observing certain days as sacred, holy days. Some Christians will eat no meat, but only vegetables, because they believe that that pleases God. Other Christians will eat meat, providing it has not previously been used as an offering to an idol God. And some Christians avoid all foods which are listed as unclean in the old Mosaic dietary laws. Christians are motivated in all of these dietary practices by the desire to please God. They want to please God, either from legalistic reasons by which they think they will gain merit from God if they don't eat certain foods, or they do it because they consider it good health principles – that certain foods are just not good for you.

All these dietary practices, however, in the church age are non-moral issues. So, they are governed by your personal preference.

**Holy Days**

Paul also indicates that some Christians feel obliged to observe certain days as sacred to God. Other Christians, Paul says, view every day of the year in the church-age as equally holy before God.

**The Sabbath Day**

Some Christians take the holy Sabbath day of the Mosaic Law, and they try to impose it upon Christians in the church age. There, of course, is no such justification for doing that in the New Testament Scriptures. The Sabbath day, as we learned, was a special holy day for Jews only under Judaism. It never applied to Christians, and it never applied to gentiles. The Old Testament Sabbath day, as a matter of fact, when it was fully in force, had attached to it the death penalty for anybody who violated that day in terms of labor or other activities. There is no basis in Scripture for equating the Saturday Sabbath day of Judaism with the Sunday Lord's day of Christianity. That is a human viewpoint conclusion entirely. And yet, this is a big issue. And it is a prominent issue among Christians, and it creates a lot of friction. And while we do not seek to offend other people, and we don't want to be heavy handed, you, again, as a Christian, who is making your own decisions about your own life, should understand what the Bible teaches about the issue of Sabbath day-keeping and the Lord's day activities.

**Law vs. Grace as Lifestyles**

So, we come now to the relationship of the Sabbath and the church. There is a distinction between law and grace as lifestyles. These are two ways of life for believers. Both of these types of believers are going to heaven: the legal lifestyle; and, the grace lifestyle. This is not an issue about eternal destiny. But as we have indicated, we cannot ignore the fact that the Law, which included the regulation for Sabbath day observance, was given exclusively to the Jewish people, and not to gentiles or to Christians. We've already learned that here in Romans 9:4-5, which say: "Who are Israelites, to whom pertains the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises, whose are the Father's, and of Whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, Who is overall, God blessed forever. Amen." This makes it very clear that the covenants and the law, here referring to the Law of Moses, and all of the service attached to that, was exclusively given to Israelites. It was given to Jews.

In Romans 10:4 we have this: "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." And He is speaking in this context about that Mosaic Law. So, specifically, on the one hand, we're told that the Law, and all of its Sabbath observance, was given to the Jews as part of the Mosaic code and the life under Judaism. On the other hand, we're told that Christians are totally free from that regulation in Christ Jesus.

In Deuteronomy 4:8, the exclusiveness of the Sabbath day to the Jews is again reiterated: "And what nation is there so great that has statutes and ordinances as righteous as all this Law which I set before you this day?" So, at the very beginning, when the Law was being given to the Jewish people, Moses observed specifically that they were specially chosen of God to receive that lifestyle, and it was not given to anybody else, or to any other nation.

In 1 Corinthians 9:20, we might add this: Paul says, "Unto the Jews, I became as a Jew." He says, "When I had to deal with Jews, relative to my missionary work, I came from the frame of reference that I too am a Jew:" "That I might gain the Jews. To them that are under the Law (under the Mosaic Law), I approach them as one who understood what it is to be under the Mosaic Law." And then notice that he says, "Not being myself under the Law." While that is not in the best manuscripts, somebody inserted that as an indication of a concept that really is true: "That I might gain them that are under the Law." Paul himself is not part of that Law system, and some copyist understood that.

However, the principle here is very clear. The Mosaic code, with its Sabbath day regulations, was given to the Jewish people. The grace way of life, which is given to the Christians in the church age, is never applied to gentiles or Jews. And all the New Testament is an explanation of how we have, as Christians, a different lifestyle.

**Keeping the Mosaic Law Doesn't get Anybody to Heaven**

People, of course, are not saved, and they are not made holy and sanctified, by keeping the Law. We learned that early on in Romans 3:19-20, where Paul says, "Now we know that whatever things the Law (the Mosaic Law) says, it says to them who are under the Law; that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the Law (by acts of human doing), there shall no flesh be justified in His sight. For by the Law is the knowledge of sin." Paul very clearly declares that nobody ever gets to heaven by keeping the rules of the Mosaic Law.

You understand that, but most of Christendom does not. Most people believe that if they do something that's of a terrible evil nature, they will immediately switch their destiny from heaven to hell. So, they are constantly fluctuating with going to heaven, and not going to heaven; and, they never know where they stand.

In Galatians 3:19, Paul says, "Wherefore, then, is the purpose of the Law?" Well, it was because of transgressions. "Till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one."

Then drop down to verse 24: "Wherefore, the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Paul says, "What good is the law?" He said, "The law was a mirror for you to look into." And when people looked into it, they saw how sinful they were. They were gross. They saw what their problem was. And God brings a mediator to bring to them a solution to this problem. And the law was our schoolmaster, like a teacher, who is going to lead us to the truth, which is in Christ for our eternal life. But the Law itself will not justify you, but it will lead you to the Person who can justify you.

So, in the Bible, there are many distinctions drawn between the Law and grace systems, and you will find that they are mutually exclusive. You cannot take the Old Testament Sabbath day, and impose it upon Christians who live under a grace lifestyle. The two are totally incompatible. They're always, in the Bible, totally separated from one another.

**Nobody Could Keep the Law**

Again, we have found that to be true here in Romans 6:14-15. We are told: "For the sin nature shall not have dominion over you, for you’re not under Law, but under grace." Paul earlier said that there was nothing wrong with the Law. It was a holy expression of the character of God. But the problem with the Law was that nobody could keep it. And the reason that nobody could keep it was that the only basis (the only power you had for keeping it) was your own self will. You had to grit your teeth; you had to be self-determined; and, you had to be motivated that you were going to do it. And sooner or later, you broke down.

So, Paul says, "Now things are different. The nature no longer has dominion over you for, you're not under the Law system – you're under grace." Grace gives you the power of the Spirit of God living within you to overcome the evil that the Law never gave you the capacity to do.

Paul says, "What then? Shall we sin because we're not under Law, but under grace? God forbid." Paul understood that somebody would say, "Oh, well, great. If I'm not under law anymore, I can do whatever I please." And Paul says, "God forbid. That's not true." He doesn't expand on this. Other Scriptures expand and say, "Sure, you can do that. But if you choose to live like the devil, and willfully, as a Christian, violate the principles of morality, and of the will of God in your life, you will discover that he will take you out of this life, and you will suffer the sin unto death. And we have, over our experience (most of you), suspected that you have observed that happen in the lives of certain individuals who died at times when it was most unlikely, and most inopportune, and most out of order.

**The Lifestyles of Law and Grace are Mutually Exclusive**

Romans 11:6 says, "And if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise, grace is no more grace." So, the two systems have no compatibility. Law is a system of works to secure God's blessings, while grace is a system of freedom from works, because you already possess all blessings in Christ Jesus. The law was holy itself, but its limitations of human capacity to fulfill it caused it to break down completely. Grace achieves righteousness for us by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. So, indeed a Christian can do right. Anytime you do wrong, you've chosen to do it. You cannot fall back and claim what the Jew could claim (his frustration), as Paul himself expressed that in the book of Romans – the frustration of wanting to do right, and being whipped by the sin nature because that thing rules as king over you. Now we're told that it doesn't rule as king over you. You break down. You haven't been in church, feeding on the Word of God. You have been reading Scripture. You haven't been thinking about the Word of God. You haven't been living by the principles of the Word of God. You have invited the breakdown, and Satan has been able to get to you.

The apostle Paul says that we have a power now that is totally different. In Romans 8:3-4, Paul says, "For what the Law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh (human nature), God, sending His Own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin." Notice that is says, "In the likeness." Jesus was not sinful, but He looked like a human being. So, He looked like he was an ordinary person with a sin nature. Jesus came and: "condemned the sin nature (the flesh), that the righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Now that's a magnificent statement. Jesus Christ, to the Christian, places within him, at the point of salvation, God the Holy Spirit Himself. So, our bodies become His temple. He is there constantly present to give you the power to do what no Jew could do by trying to keep the Law. The Jew knew what was righteous. It was all spelled out. 613 points spelled it out in the Mosaic code. And for the life of him, the Jew couldn't do it.

The Christian comes along, and he breezes through like a hot knife through butter, because he has the capacity to move in, and to cut out the evil that's in his life. So, he doesn't have to walk after the grossness of the sin nature. He can really walk like a child of God.

In Romans 11:6, I remind you again, Paul says, "If it be by grace, then it is no more works. Otherwise, grace is no more grace." So, the two are mutually exclusive.

We may add to this Philippians 2:13 (our power base): "For it is God who works in you, both to will, and to do His good pleasure." And he's referring to God the Holy Spirit. He works in us to want to do what is right, and to want to do what is the will of God. And then He gives us the capacity to execute. Talk about being on a higher plain! That is so far above anything that Jews had under the legal system. You can see how dumb it is for anybody to want to still be attached to the Mosaic code, including the Sabbath.

The idea the law system had nothing to offer. Under the Old Testament system of Judaism, human merit was the basis of blessing. If you did right, then you got blessed. Under New Testament order of Christianity, it is the merit of Christ which is the basis of blessing for us. So, the Old Testament said, "Do right, and you'll be blessed." But the New Testament says, "Do right, because you've been blessed with all heavenly blessings in Christ Jesus. It is a 180-degree different opinion and appeal.

Notice Deuteronomy 28:1-2. Here's how it was in the Old Testament era: "And it shall come to pass if." The word "if" is a chilling word to a thoughtful person: "If you shall hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord your God, to obey and to do His Commandments, which I command you this day, that the Lord your God will set you on high, above all nations of the earth, and all these blessings shall come on you and overtake you, if you shall hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God." That says, "Do good, and you'll be blessed."

Notice Deuteronomy 28:15: "But it shall come to pass, if you will not hearken unto the voice of the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes, which I command you this day, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you." And for the Jew, that was all he had: doing the best he could; trying; muddling through; and, failing. And he ended up with nothing. I mean, if he didn't make it, he went out into eternity with nothing.

Ephesians 2:4, in contrast, says this concerning Christians under the grace lifestyle: "But God, Who is rich in mercy for His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in sins, has made us alive together with Christ. By grace you are saved. And He has raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

So, what do you have as a Christian? You have it all. Positionally, you are now in heaven in Christ Jesus. In your state (your actual state), you're still down here. But as far as God is concerned, you are all in heaven, and you have all the rights and privileges of full-grown, adult sons adopted into the family of God through Christ Jesus. You already have it all. You can never blow it. You can never dissipate it. You can never squander that inheritance. The reason God is doing this is so that: "In the ages to come, He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus." So, we will be God's trophies of grace when God says, "Let me show you what I was able to do." And He'll hold up one of you and say, "Just look at this – this crumby, no-good character. Look what I've made of him. And He didn't do anything to deserve it. And he didn't do anything to help Me do it. And he didn't do anything to keep himself in that destiny of becoming a trophy of my grace."

For the Jew, if he didn't stay on line, he ended up with nothing. The law system will bring one thing. It brings death. The grace system is what brings life. In 2 Corinthians 3:6, Paul points this out: "Who has made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit – for the letter kills; but, the Spirit gives life." All the Old Testament ever supplied was death. It is the Spirit of God for the Christian that supplies life.

Now here's an interesting verse. Turn over to 2 Corinthians 3:7-8. Here's a statement for those people who love to be under the Law, which tells us that the Law has been entirely abolished during the age of grace: "But if the ministration of death." Now verse 6 says that the Law, which is the letter, brings you death. Then he says, "But if the ministration of death (referring to the Mosaic Law) written and engraven in stones." Is there anybody in this room that cannot tell me what was specifically written and engraven in stones? That was the ten commandments: "Now if that which was written in stone was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance, which glory was to be done away." Moses, when he received these ten commandments engraved in stone, had a glory – a glory which was reflected by this Mosaic Law system, but which was a glory, he says, "That was to be done away." "How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be more glorious?" If what was written on those tablets of stone was to be done away with: "How much more glorious is the ministration of God the Holy Spirit to the individual believer?"

Now notice verse 11: "For if that which is done away is glorious, much more that which remains is glorious." Now tell me: what was done away, in this context? Obviously, verse 11 says that the thing that was done away was the Mosaic Law, with all that it contained, including the Sabbath day. And the thing that is more glorious is the lifestyle of grace of the Christian of the church-age.

So, we're specifically told here in this verse that the ten commandments have been set aside as a code for guiding Christian conduct, because it is part of a system which has been abolished, the Mosaic Law. This is not to say, of course, that the moral requirements which proceeded from the very essence of God, and which were expressed by those ten commandments – that that moral base has been discontinued. And that's what people want to say when you say, "We're not under the Mosaic Law." They say, "Well then how do you know what to do right? What are the rules?" The Mosaic Law, with its ten commandments, has been supplanted (has been replaced) by another code of rules and guidance for the Christian. And that is that we have been given all of these principles of God's righteousness, and all the moral code, in the New Testament Scriptures. But we are not under Law. We're under the rule of grace. And the rule of grace expresses all the principles of the ten commandments. These are absolute principles of morality, and they are all repeated in the New Testament epistles, except for the one about the Sabbath day.

So, we're right back to the very thing that we're talking about. The Mosaic Law has been dismissed. The principles of morality have been repeated in the New Testament. But the one thing that they get to is that there is no Saturday worship.

Now one of the areas of the New Testament church that was terrible about this was the churches in the area of the Roman province of Galatia. For some reason, the legalists followed Paul, and I'm talking about Christians who are doing just what people do today. They were going to hang onto the Mosaic Law, and they did not understand that that system was dead. So, Paul had to write this letter to the Galatians, and it's one of his more condemning letters, where he is chastising them in words. He uses strong language. It's a letter where he gives strong rebuke to the one thing. What are they doing? They're violating the grace lifestyle.

Notice Galatians 4:9-10, where Paul says, "But now, after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how do you turn again to the weak and beggarly elements unto which you desire again to be in bondage?" Do you know what he's talking about? He's talking about the Mosaic Law: weak and beggarly elements. Verse 10 makes it more specific. He said, "You observe days and months and times and years." Well, why does he say that? Because there are no holy days. There are no holy months. There are no holy times of the year: neither Christmas; nor Easter; nor anything else is a holy day in the church-age – including the Sabbath day. That's not holy.

Notice in Colossians 2:16-17: "Let no man therefore judge you in food or in drink, or in respect of a feast, or of a new moon, or of a Sabbath day, which are shadows of things to come, but the body is Christ." All of these were shadows of what the person and work of Christ would do. And Paul says, "Don't let any joker come along and impose upon you Sabbath day-keeping (holy day observation)." In the church-age, every day, Paul points out, is considered by some Christians as equally sacred. And he says, "Those are the strong Christians. The weak Christians think that there are sacred days that are special with God." There is no such thing as a Christian Sabbath. It is false and misleading terminology that has been created by Satan who hates grace. The only relationship between the Sabbath day and the Lord's day is that they are quite properly days off from our usual routines, so that we may step aside for physical and spiritual refreshment.

The Jews were warned about part of the divine discipline that would come on this nation, if they persisted in their evil ways. God said, "One of the things that's going to happen to you is that I'm going to take away from you your wonderful Sabbath day commemoration. I'm going to destroy everything that was associated with it. You won't be able to observe it.

In Hosea 2:11, this prophet points this out: "I will also cause all her mirth to cease: her feast days; her new moons; her Sabbath; and, all her solemn feasts." Some of these holy days were social events. Some of these holy days that Israel had to observe were really party days. So, they were things that they looked forward to. And God said, "I'm going to destroy not only the Saturday Sabbath day, but all these other Sabbath festival days. They're all going to be gone." And that is the case of the Jew today. He no longer has these happy occasions. During the tribulation and the millennium, after the church is terminated, the Bible tells us that the Sabbath day is going to be reinstated. Matthew 24:20 observes that, as well as Isaiah 66:23 and Ezekiel 46:1. And the Bible observes that it will be difficult to travel on that day during the tribulation, and that they should pray that they won't have to do that in order to escape the wrath of the antichrist.

**God Rejected the Jewish Traditions**

Now the Lord Jesus, of course, lived as a Jew under the Mosaic code. Therefore, it is true that He observed the Sabbath day. He did it because He was a Jew. But we remind you that there were occasions when He had to rebuke the Jewish leaders for the way they were carrying on the Sabbath day, and imposing things upon people that God had not added to the Sabbath day. He rejected the traditions.

So, there was this poor man who had a paralytic limb, who came to Jesus to be healed. Jesus healed him, and the religious leaders criticized Jesus for doing work on the Sabbath day. And Jesus points out to them, "You'd go out and take one of your animals who fell into a ditch, and if you didn't get him out, he'd die. Whether it's Saturday or not, you'd get down there, and you'd get that animal out. And that's a lot of work, because you are saving life." And Jesus pointed out to them that the Sabbath day was made for man's blessing, not as a burden. So, the Sabbath was not understood even by the rabbis themselves.

The one thing, however, that I want you to understand is that Jesus Himself, while He lived as a Jew under the Sabbath day, never implied, at any point, for one moment, that the Sabbath day of the Jews was to be continued as the Lord's day of Christianity. The two ways of life are never mixed.

**Sunday – the Lord's Day**

So, what do we have today? We have a new age and a new day for commemorating the new age of grace. The special day of the church era under the grace system is Sunday, the first day of the week. The reason the Christians began observing this as a day of worship is simply because it was the day on which Christ was resurrected. Sunday worship practices are everywhere confirmed in the New Testament Scriptures. They are confirmed by the writings of the early church leaders outside of the Bible. And church history consistently records for us that Christians understood that there was a united tradition from earliest times that Sunday should become the day that marked Christianity, as Saturday had been the day that identified Judaism. The Lord's Day celebrates the new creation of believers in Christ Jesus. The Sabbath day commemorated the old creation that God made, and then had a day of rest.

There are certain reasons why Christians meet for assembly on Sunday, and not Saturday. Actually, the Bible predicted, even in the Old Testament, that God was going to establish a new day of worship. They didn't fully understand this, because they didn't have all the details that he was talking about the Sunday worship. Psalm 118:22-24 indicate that: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner." The psalmist is talking about Jesus Christ: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes. The very person who is the cornerstone of the whole structure of the religious life of the Jews – they have thrown out. And when you throw the cornerstone out, the whole structure comes down. And the psalmist says, "God has sent His Messiah Savior, and He has made Him the cornerstone – the very One that the builders have refused." God has done this, and it is a marvelous thing.

Then verse 24 says, in connection with this rejection: "This is the day which the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it." What is he talking about? He's talking about the day upon which the Jews rejected the cornerstone, which was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and the day that God responded to that rejection, which was Sunday morning, the resurrection day. And that was the new day that the psalmist was speaking about that was going to come. And in that day, we're going to rejoice, and we are going to be glad.

In Acts 4:10-11, we read, "Be it known onto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Whom you crucified, Whom God raised from the dead;, even by Him does this man stand here before you well. This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which has become the head of the corner." Here Peter, addressing the Sanhedrin concerning the healing of this man, indicates to them, using this very Scripture, to say: "This is talking about Jesus Christ." And the new day is the day of His resurrection. On that day, He was made the headstone (the cornerstone) of what God is doing for the salvation of the human race. For that reason, it is a day on which we rejoice. It is a day when people greeted one another, "All hail," meaning, "O joy."

In the New Testament, there are many indications of Sunday as a special day with Christians, which led them to observe that instead of the Sabbath day. Christianity needed a new day. There were many reasons of events happening on Sunday that confirmed that new day from God.

**Scriptural References for Observing the Lord's Day**

Notice that Matthew 28:1 tells us that Christ arose from the dead on Sunday. John 29:10 tells us that Jesus first met the disciples in their new fellowship after His resurrection on Sunday. Luke 24:13-45 tell us that Jesus instructed His disciples on Sunday on the road to Emmaus. Leviticus 23:10-12, John 20:17, and 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 indicate to us that Jesus ascended into heaven on Sunday, fulfilling the principle of the Old Testament first fruit feast. In John 20:22, Jesus breathed on His disciples to receive the Holy Spirit on Sunday. In Acts 2:1-4, the Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost to form the church on Sunday. In Acts 20:6-7, Paul had an extensive ministry to the believers on Sunday.

**The Lord's Supper**

In Acts 20:6-7, Christians gathered also to observe the Lord's Supper on Sunday. And incidentally, they gathered in the evening, which is why we do that here. We do it in the tradition that it was an evening gathering. That's why we have no use for Christians who have the Lord's Supper on Sunday morning. If we're in a church that observes the Lord's Supper on Sunday morning, we will not participate. These people are out of line.

**Irrelevancy**

You don't seem comfortable with that idea. Here is the principle of irrelevancy. If you want to have it on Sunday morning, fine. The Bible does not give a rule about that. But you would be surprised how many people will take issue. They come and they say, "You have the Lord's Supper on Sunday evening? I've never heard of that." Then they go talk to their old sainted grandmother – the one who doesn't have any hair on her knees from kneeling in prayer, and they ask her about that. And she tells them, "No, you shouldn't do that on Sunday evening. Sunday morning is the time to do it.

So, you get a lot of friction that people have on these subjects. Some Christians have the Lord's Supper every Sunday. That's fine. Do it as often as you do it. That's the principle. And you are free to make your choice.

In 1 Corinthians 16:2, we are told that Sunday was the day to set aside your sacrifice of your substance to bring an offering. In Revelation 1:10, John is on Patmos on a Sunday morning in prayer when Jesus appears to him to give him the contents of the book of the Revelation. Big things happen on Sunday regularly throughout the New Testament era, indicating that that is the day that God also looks upon with special respect.

Actually, in the Old Testament, circumcision took place on the male child on the eighth day after a completed week – the eighth day after his birth, signifying a week of new beginnings (Colossians 2:11).

This Lord's Day, Sunday, is a day signifying God's grace. The Sabbath of the old creation was a day of rest after a week of toil. It was a day that you try to get a breather after your human capacities did the best you could. And it was a day where you looked back. Sabbath day always looked back to the end of the week, as God looked back upon His creation week and said, "What I've done is really very good."

The Lord's day is totally different. It's a new creation, and therefore, it precedes, and sets the tone for, the week ahead. It is a day that always looks forward to the coming week of work and of service. It's a divine viewpoint start for your week. It's a week where the Holy Spirit recharges your batteries through physical rest and through feeding upon the Word of God with the assembling of the saints.

Those of you who still haven't caught on to the fact that it is serious business not to be in these church services, might want to consider the fact that there is great significance that Sunday, the Lord's Day, is clearly a day for us to look forward to what's coming. Why look forward to what's coming when you're not prepared to do it? The Jew always had Saturday to look back on all of his failures, and all of his weaknesses, and all the tragedy, and said, "Boy, I hope next week I can look back, and it's better than this one."

The Christian can look forward with great power, and with great zeal, to great accomplishments, and to great victories. The Christian is to live all week in the blessings of the study of the Word of God on the Lord's day. And when you are absent from church, whether you like it or not, and whether you believe it or not, you are offbeat. You have thrown yourself offbeat and off-step for the whole week. You have a start in the wrong direction.

It is the daily intake of the Word of God that keeps our divine viewpoint on course. And that begins on Sunday, that God has set aside for the gathering of the saints to be fed upon the Word of God. Sunday is the day we forget the past – we forget all that past week, and all of its failures. And we look forward to a new beginning, and to new accomplishments in the week ahead.

The Lord's Day, of course, is not a cessation of activity as the Sabbath day was. It's an active day, and it's properly an active day because it's the day which represented Christ finishing His work. It's all done. And what we do is to now enjoy what He has completed for us.

The Sabbath day carries penalties for violations. There are no penalties for violating Sunday because there are no rules.

The Sabbath hoped to gain God's blessing, but the Lord's Day recognizes you already have those blessings. The Lord's Day, of course, is for believers only. They are not for unsaved people. Therefore, you cannot impose anything. You could not impose any Sabbath rules upon unbelievers. People who try to treat the Lord's day as the Sabbath day want to impose rules upon unbelievers – whether they conduct business, or whatever else they may do. You cannot do that upon unbelievers. The Lord's days is for believers only, to be used as they choose. It provides a rest for the one day in seven. There is no prescribed manner. The feeling of the Holy Spirit is to be your guide on how you observe it. And it's nobody business as to how you treat and use Sunday. You should give some thought to doing it in a way that honors the Lord, and that achieves the goal of your own personal wellbeing. But it is not different from Monday through Saturday. However, it does set the tone for all those days. It's a day of joyful activity rather than a cessation. The Mosaic Law cannot tell us anything about how to keep this state.

So, getting back to our passage in the book of Romans, with this as background, perhaps you will understand Romans 14:6 a little better. In verse 5, Paul told us that one person looks at a day and thinks it's a special day, and another person does not. He says, "Let everybody be decided about this in your own thinking." Then he explains, in verse 6, why this is. He said, "He that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord." The word "regards" is the word "phroneo." "Phroneo" means "to observe." The word implies that there's a word of approval here: "He who observes a special holy day, observes it onto the Lord" – observes it to the "Kurios," which is the word for the Lord Jesus Christ here.

So, the Christian who chooses to observe some days as sacred (as sacred to God) above other days, does so to honor the Lord. He does it out of a spiritual conviction. And that's the way he should do it. The question of what one thinks is fitting for one who is joined to Jesus Christ in salvation is the issue. You do what you think is fitting on that day. Many Christians do not govern their lives by what is proper for a Christian to do. I agree. And they are not approved for that by the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Christians simply follow with the old sin nature; the world; and, the devil. I mean, they will find any reason that they can not to get up and get out here to the worship services on Sundays. They will find any excuse and any justification. Whereas others do come to our worship services.

Here we have a noble brother who is sitting here this morning, who had an operation on his knee this past week. I was sitting up here looking at this crowd, going over your faces one-by-one, to make a decision whether you would have come here the very week of your surgery, or whether you would have been home enjoying getting your stuff together for the game this afternoon, and being sure that you had plenty of time to get all the snacks and the goodies together. And you needed all Sunday morning for that. And I suspect that a lot of you said, "Boy, I just wish I had an operation on my knee. I could stay home for three weeks in a row with that." But everybody does his choice, and the Word of God says that some Christians, unfortunately, do flow with the sin nature. They do not govern their lives for what is proper for them as Christians. That's the guiding point. We don't have rules, but we have propriety to consider.

The weak Christian observes holy days, Paul indicates, while a strong Christian ignores them. But they're both motivated by the purpose, he says, "Of doing it onto the Lord." If you have a King James translation, then you have the next words: "And he that does not regard the day to the Lord." But that's not in the Greek text. That was inserted in some manuscripts. But again, this principle is nevertheless true. If somebody does not do it, he does it because he thinks that honors the Lord.

Then he deals with the matter of eating, to tie this up: "He that eats, eats unto the Lord." The word "eats" is the Greek word "esthio," which simply means "to eat." And he's referring here to the person who eats meats and vegetables. This person eats, again, in honor of the Lord. The Christian follows this diet because he believes it's honoring to the Lord. Some Christians are very serious about keeping in physically good condition. Some Christians are very serious about eating foods that maintain good physical health. Why? Because they think that's an implication, and I would agree, with the fact that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. You keep God's temple in good condition. You cannot serve the Lord very well when you're physically incapacitated. So, some Christians indeed follow certain dietary practices because they consider them healthy, not because they're legalistically required to do that.

**Express your Gratitude to God for the Food you Eat**

Furthermore, we're told that these Christians who will not eat certain things, or these who eat vegetables and meat both, do it with the addition of Thanksgiving. The Greek word is "eucharisteo." "Eucharisteo" means "to express your gratitude to God for the food you eat." And this is present tense, which indicates that this person does it every time. He is careful to observe, before he eats, a word of thanksgiving to God, and to dedicate that food to God's use. We have scriptural patterns for this. You will find this in Mark 8:6-7, Acts 27:35, and 1 Timothy 4:4-5, where we are told that we do not jump into a meal like pigs. We stop before we hop into the trough, and we thank God for both the trough and what's in it. The act of Thanksgiving is an act which, in itself, indicates you believe that what you are about to eat is OK with God. You would not be thanking Him, and asking Him to bless something that you are about to do which is wrong.

So, the Christian that eats both vegetables and meat, does it in honor of the Lord, and he gives God thanks. And the person who does not eat meat, or meat offered to idols, but only eats vegetables, he does not eat to the Lord, but he too gives thanks to God. He is grateful for what he has.

So, whatever your diet is, whether you eat things that other Christians would not eat, or they eat things that you wouldn't eat, that's a decision for you to make. The Christian who does not eat meat, but only vegetable, or the Christian who eats both – both are doing it to honor the Lord Jesus Christ. The thing that's important is to know that God has given you that food, and you are grateful to Him for it.

So, Christians will use sacred days and diet in opposite ways. Some will do those things to praise God. Others will not do it in order to honor Him. There is no merit or demerit, or approval or condemnation in any of these practices. They are strictly up to you.

Now a Christian may be mistaken on what conduct honors the Lord, but the Christian himself should not be rejected or ridiculed for it. You just let the Lord straighten him out. And Christians do have some peculiar ideas on observing days, and on foods, and so on. Just leave them with the Lord. That is not an issue. Christians do not have to have a uniformity of practice to have a unity of spirit in Christ Jesus. Mutual forbearance is the rule.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1988

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