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B’rit Chadashah Priorities
14: 5-9

B’rit Chadashah priorities DIG: The debate that Paul mentions in the passage over eating food offered to idols may not seem relevant today. But what timeless truths can be found in his words as it relates to doing anything that could cause another person to stumble?

REFLECT: How tolerant are you of other people’s weaknesses that are matters of conscience? Have you been hurt by unscriptural standards? How so? What standards or practices in your place of worship are traditional, but not necessarily scriptural?

Shabbat is Shabbat and kosher and kosher, but you are free to worship on any day of the week or eat anything you want. Don’t judge people if they don’t meet up to your standards. While we don’t have the right to judge, everyone will give an account to Messiah.



Paul continues to explain how people of different opinions or preferences can still live in harmony with one another. **He** knows how important it is to have harmonious relationships within the family of **God**. **Paul** knows that disunity is the surest way to destroy the work of **YHVH**. So, **he** addresses sacred **days** and **eating** meat, the subjects that were important to **his** readers, and urged each person to seek the will of **ADONAI** earnestly for themselves.[358]

Whether **weak** or **strong** (**to see link click Dg – Torah Questions**), a sincere

believer feels free or not free to do certain things out of the same motive: to please **ADONAI**. Neither one is more or less spiritual or because of his convictions about issues of conscience. Being **strong** in this sense is not synonymous with being spiritual and being **weak** is not synonymous with being carnal. The problem in the church at **Rome**, as in many churches since that day, was that some believers of both persuasions thought themselves to be more spiritual and the others to be more carnal. **Paul's** whole motive in these verses was to expose and get rid of those false, divisive, and destructive notions.[359]

Freedom in Messiah regarding days of worship: One person (the weak) considers some days more holy than others, while someone else (the strong) regards them as being all alike (14:5a). The reference is not specifically to **Jewish** holidays but to any day that any believer might have come to regard as especially holy. Therefore, **the weak** here are not specifically **Jewish** believers, but any believer who is attached to particular calendar observances.

What is important is for each to be fully convinced in his own mind (14:5b). In this context **mind** obviously includes the heart and conscience, our deepest convictions and motives. That is an amazing statement because we are seeing a lot of flexibility from a pretty orthodox rabbi. **Paul** tells **them** to learn to live with whatever **they** are **fully convinced** is true, but not to be the judge of those who disagree. The grace of **ADONAI** freed **Paul** to accept the differences between fellow believers without doing harm to the Word of **God**. And that was the lesson that both **Jew** and **Gentile** in the church at **Rome** had to learn if harmony was to exist between them.[360]

This principle for dealing with doctrinal and practical disputes applies to matters about which the Bible is indifferent and must be balanced against **Second Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is God-breathed and is valuable for teaching and truth, convicting of sin, correcting faults and training in right living."** Where Scripture gives a clear word, personal opinion must give way. But where the Word of **God** is subject to various interpretations, let each be persuaded in his own mind while at the same time **loving each other devotedly and with brotherly [and sisterly] love; and set examples for each other in showing respect (12:10).**[361]

He who observes a day as special does so to honor the Lord. Likewise, the weaker abstainer abstains to honor the Lord, and he too gives thanks to God (14:6). By citing examples of the behavior of both, **Paul** makes it clear that

his argument applies to both the **strong** believer and the **weak** believer. **They** are both motivated in their respective practices by a desire to glorify **the Lord**.[362]

To the **Colossian** church **Paul** wrote: **So, don't let anyone pass judgment on you in connection with eating and drinking, or in regard to a Jewish festival or Rosh Hodesh or Shabbat. These are a shadow of things that are coming, but the body is of the Messiah (Colossians 2:16-17).** Here again, we find **Paul** pointing to **Messiah**, whose coming caused a shift from the thinking during the Dispensation of Torah (see the commentary on **Exodus Da – The Dispensation of the Torah**), to the thinking during the Dispensation of Grace (see the commentary on **Hebrews Bp – The Dispensation of Grace**). If the believers in the church at **Rome** were successful at making that shift, they would leave their worthless legalism behind.[363]

Freedom in Messiah regarding which foods we eat: **Also, the stronger** believer **who eats anything, eats to honor the Lord, since he gives thanks to God.** But for that very reason, **he** has a greater responsibility because **he** has a more mature understanding of the Word. **Paul,** therefore, sternly warns **the strong** believer: **Watch out that your mastery of the situation does not become a stumbling block to the weak. You have this "knowledge"; but suppose someone with a weak conscience sees you sitting, eating a meal in the temple of an idol. Won't he be built up wrongly to eat this food which has been sacrificed to idols? Thus, by your "knowledge" this weak person is destroyed, this brother for whom the Messiah died; and so, when you sin against the brothers by wounding their conscience when it is weak, you are sinning against the Messiah!** Speaking for **himself**, **he** continues: **To sum up, if food will be a snare for my brother, I will never eat meat again, lest I cause my brother to sin (First Corinthians 8:9-13).**

For none of us lives only in relation to himself, and none of us dies only in relation to himself; for if we live, we live in relation to the Lord; and if we die, we die in relation to the Lord. What we do for other believers, we do not only for their sakes, but for **the Lord's** sake, because **whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord (14:7-8)**

Paul is still concerned with the spirit of judgment that existed in the church at **Rome**, and continues to discuss it with them. **He** has let them know that both groups will answer to **YHVH** one day? **Indeed, it was for this very reason that the Messiah died and came back to life, so that he might be Lord of both**

the dead and the living (14:9). There is a huge difference between discerning what is right and wrong for oneself, and imposing those standards on others. It is **Yeshua's** responsibility to be our judge: **The Father does not judge anyone but has entrusted all judgment to the Son (John 5:22).** Our **Lord's** death and resurrection makes **Him both the Lord of the dead and the living. His** qualifications are impeccable and eternal. **Messiah** is **God's** measuring rod. **Paul** says to all believers, "How do you measure up? Are you really qualified to be a judge?"

As we grow in grace and in the knowledge of **Messiah**, we will discover from time to time that we need to reevaluate our position. We need to be humble when such times come because we serve **One** who is in infinite **love**, knowledge, wisdom, and holiness. **He** demands growth.[364]

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for wisely rewarding and judging not based on outward observance of some law or rule, nor on if they say **You** are **Lord**. What **You** see as important is if their heart attitude says that **You** are their **Lord**. How good it is that **You** see the thoughts and intentions of the heart and that is what **You** based **Your** judgements on.* ***Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord!" will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, "Lord, Lord, didn't we prophesy in Your name, and drive out demons in Your name, and perform many miracles in Your name?" Then I will declare to them, "I never knew you. Get away from Me, you workers of lawlessness" (Matthew 7:21-23)!***

You** are so good to **Your** children. **You** graciously give the huge gift of eternal life to those who **love** and follow **You**. **For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves – it is the gift of God (Ephesians 2:8). You** also put the **sins** of **Your** children **as far as the east is from the west**. **For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His mercy for those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us (Psalms 103:11-12).** To top it off, **Your** fantastic **love** gives **Your** children **Messiah's righteousness (Second Corinthians 5:21)** which allows **Your** children entrance into your holy heaven where they will live with **You** in eternal peace and joy forever. **Do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in Me. In My Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? If I go and prepare a place for

you, I will come again and take you to Myself, so that where I am you may also be* (John 14:1-3).** *It is a joy to serve* ***You *from a loving heart. In* ***Yeshua’s*** *name and power of* ***His*** *resurrection. Amen*