

The Judgment Seat of Christ (Romans 14)

Everyone will give an account of their life to God.

Do not judge others.

Do not be a stumbling block to others.

Be a witness to others by following God's will.

1. Those weak in "the faith" refers to new believers.

New believers may carry old beliefs that are not consistent with the Bible.

New believers may carry old beliefs that are based on misguided biblical interpretations.

Innocent immaturities are to be patiently accepted by the mature believers.

Stubborn patterns of unbiblical controversy are not acceptable. (**Ro 16:17, 1Co 1:10, 1Co 3:3, Php 2:14, Tit 3:9-11**)

2,3. A strong parallel exists between these verses and **1Co 8:1-13**, and **1Co 10:21,27-30**.

They all involve a divisive issue involving food and drink. (**Ro 14:3,13,17, 1Co 8:1,8, , 1Co 10:21,27,28**)

The all involve passively influencing others to sin over this issue. (**Ro 14:13,15,20,23, 1Co 8:7,9-12, 1Co 10:29,30**)

The 1Co verses clearly indicate the topic to be the controversy over consuming food and drink offered to idols by others. (**1Co 8:1,4,7,10, 1Co 10:27,28**)

The similarities give reason to believe that the Ro 14 verses refers to the same controversy.

The sinful act is committed by those who offer anything to an idol. (compare **Ex 20:3-5**)

In an over exercise of caution, this sinful practice led some Christians to eat only vegetables, because they even feared the unknown previous use of purchased meat products.

Because clean food and drink does not switch its cleanliness simply because of its proximity to sinful practices (e.g., idol worship), they were considered to have weak consciences. (**1Co 8:7,10**)

Paul warns Christians not to do things which they suspect are morally wrong. (**Ro 14:23**)

Paul warns against needless judgmental polarizations. (**Ro 14:3,13, 1Co 8:8**) (compare **1Co 1:10** and **2Ti 2:23**)

The final decision was for all to reasonably avoid these controversial foods. (**1Co 8:13, 1Co 10:27,28**) (**Ac 15:25-29, Rev 2:18-20**)

4. God is perfectly able to sanctify and judge His servants.

It is arrogantly presumptuous for us to assume a judgmental role.

5,6. These verses are parenthetical within a larger context concerning the controversy over food sacrificed to idols.

Note that no mention is made of the Sabbath.

Another controversy (regarding or not regarding certain days) is mentioned.

Another eating or not eating controversy (fasting) is linked to these days.

Thus, Paul mentions fasting days as another needless controversy.

There is no command about regular fast days.

These days were based on the traditions of men. (compare **Lk 18:9-13**)

Note that the 4th commandment states that we are to work 6 days every week. (**Ex 20:8,9**)

If every day were a Sabbath, no work could ever take place.

7. How we live affects others, either directly or indirectly. (**Mt 5:16, Ro 14:13**)

8. In all circumstances of life, including our death, we are to witness that we belong to and follow the Lord Jesus. (**Eph 5:15-17, Rev 14:1,4,5**)

9. Our Lord Jesus' sacrificial death and His conquering revival from death compel a powerful witness from His followers, both before and beyond the grave. (**Jn 12:32,33, Rev 12:11**)
10. We all must stand before the judgment seat of Christ. (**Jn 5:22,28-30, 2Co 5:10**)
In light of this, we should focus on our own behavior and influence, rather than on judging others. (compare **Mt 7:1, Lk 6:37, 1Co 4:5**)
11. All will finally realize and recognize the exalted position of Christ. (**Php 2:10,11**)
12. With nothing hidden, each person must give an account of their life. (**Ro 2:16, 1Co 4:5, Heb 4:13, Rev 20:11-13**)
Those who follow Jesus need not worry. (**Isa 43:25, Ro 8:1,33,34**)
Those who do not follow Jesus will be utterly distraught. (**Lk 13:28, Rev 6:15-17**)
13. Again, we are advised to stop judging others and, instead, evaluate our own life. We must be careful to act in the best, spiritual interest of others.
14. Paul's statement that there is nothing unclean of itself does not mean that there are no unclean things.
In another letter, he states God's clear command to abstain from unclean things. (**2Co 6:17**)
The distinction centers on the phrase "of itself".
Anything that God separates (sanctifies) as being clean is clean.
Anything that God separates (condemns) as being unclean is unclean.
God specifically separates the clean and unclean foods in the Bible. (**Lev 11:46,47, Lev 20:25, Dt 14:3, Isa 66:15-18**)
God specifically condemns fermented drink (alcohol) as unclean in the Bible. (**Lev 10:8-10** compare **1Pe 2:5,9** and **1Co 3:16,17**)
God will never recommend a food or drink that is harmful to our health by falsely labeling it as clean.
15. Love is careful not to harm another through insensitive practices. (compare **1Co 13:4,5**)
16. Actions that seem innocent in themselves may actually be harmful when their effect on others is recognized.
17. God wants us to stay focused on the weightier matters of the faith: righteousness, peace, and spiritual joy. (compare **Mt 23:23,24**)
18. Pleasing God also contributes to a favorable regard by others. (**Ge 39:2-6, 1Sa 2:26, Da 1:8,9, Lk 2:52, Ac 2:44-47**)
19. The best course of action is one that lovingly considers others, that seeks peace and harmony, and that patiently instructs. (**Mt 5:9, Ro 12:18, Eph 4:29, Eph 6:15, 1Co 10:23,24, Heb 12:14, Jas 3:17**)
20. Obviously, "all things", taken literally, are not pure. (**Pr 15:26, Pr 30:12, Php 4:8**)
The implicit context for the meat and things that are pure is all foods which God has confirmed as being clean and pure.
Again, the evil referred to here is the indirect, harmful effect on others of, otherwise, innocent actions.
- 21,22. Again, we are advised to act in the best, spiritual interest of others.
23. Those who continue their course in spite of moral doubts about their actions do not have faith in God.
They are prompted to follow God's will by His inner voice, yet they stay their course. Their course is not of faith. (compare **Hab 2:4, Ro 1:17, Heb 10:38**)
Their seemingly innocent path actually leads to sin and death. (compare **Pr 14:12**)
Those who have true faith in God know and follow His will. (**Jn 17:3, Mt 6:10, Mt 7:21, Mt 12:50, Mt 26:39,42, Jn 4:34, Jn 5:30, Jn 6:38, Jn 8:29, 1Jn 2:6**)
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