

**"The Doctrine of Consecration"**

**Part 18**

**Romans 12:1-15:7**

**Introduction:** We are submerged in a world that is struggling today. There is depression, discouragement, hatred, division, strife and above all there is little hope among the masses. We who are believers are to live in a way that others can see our HOPE and we are to seek after peace and righteousness.

**1 Peter 1:3**

*<sup>3</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively [living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,*

Our HOPE is not in this world, but our HOPE is in Jesus Christ. So, as this old-world plunges into the darkness of sin there should still be within us a HOPE and this is to be seen by those around us. Our HOPE therefore sets us apart from the masses of the world who have no hope.

**1 Peter 3:15**

*<sup>15</sup> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:*

If people are going to ask about our HOPE, then they will need to be able to see our HOPE in the way that we live.

There is yet something else which should set us apart and that is our love for one another in the body of Jesus Christ. Let us notice the Words of Jesus in His High Priestly prayer.

**John 17:20-23**

*<sup>20</sup> Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;*

*<sup>21</sup> That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*

*<sup>22</sup> And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one:*

*<sup>23</sup> I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.*

Our unity and our love for one another sets us apart from the world and so MUST endeavor to keep the unity.

**Ephesians 4:1-3**

*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called,*

<sup>2</sup> *With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;*

<sup>3</sup> *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*

Now, let us get our minds back to Romans.

In our study of Romans 14 we are looking the importance of unity within the body of Jesus Christ and what is needed to preserve the unity. There were different convictions among the church at Rome just as there are today. In the church at Rome the different convictions seemed to exist between foods and days.

There were strong believers who understood that in Christ they had the liberty to eat all food and they also understood that every day was holy not just Saturday or Sunday. Then there were also weak believers who were convicted about eating certain foods and they were convicted about working on certain days such as the Sabbath.

In the text where we stopped last week Paul was exhorting the strong believers not to exercise their liberty in Christ in a way that it would offend others or lead them to violate their conscience.

**Notice Romans 14:15**

To walk in liberty that offend another believer was not walking in love. To walk in liberty and to lead a weaker believer to violate their conscience was to lead them down a path of ruin and it would be to lead them into sin for if they were to violate their conscience it would be a sin to them.

**Notice Romans 14:16**

Notice the words of Newell on this verse.

*The "Good" here refers to the use of Christian liberty by those who are strong of faith, which is indeed good and delightful to God in itself; but in the use of which one must take heed that it be not judged and spoken evil of by the weaker brethren. We must always have the weaker in mind. You may have very blessed liberty in Christ; and that is good! But*

*watch, in using your freedom, lest someone not having your freedom calls your path wickedness! Don't lose your liberty but use it carefully."*

Not only might we offend a believer, but we also could offend an unbeliever and therefore lose the opportunity to share the Gospel.

Illustration:

*"The late Bible teacher, H. A. Ironside, was once at a Sunday School picnic in Detroit where a former Muslim from India who had come to know Christ was present. His name was Mohammed Ali (not the boxer!) and he ran his father's tea business in the States. As Ironside and he were chatting, a young woman came by passing out sandwiches. Ironside helped himself to several of them, but when Mr. Ali learned that they were all pork or ham, he refused to take any. The young woman laughingly said, "Why, Mr. Ali, you surprise me. Are you so under law that you can't eat pork? Don't you know that a Christian is at liberty to eat any kind of meat?" "I am at liberty to eat it," he said, "but I am also at liberty to let it alone. You know that I was brought up a strict Muslim. My old father, nearly eighty years of age now, is still a Muslim. Every three years I go back to India to give an account of the business and to visit the folks at home. Always I know how I will be greeted. The friends will be sitting inside. My father will come to the door and say, 'Mohammed, have those infidels taught you to eat the filthy hog meat yet?' 'No, father,' I will say. 'Pork has never passed my lips.' Then I can go in and have the opportunity to preach Christ to them. If I took one of your sandwiches, I could not preach Christ to my father the next time I go home." That converted Muslim was willing to limit his liberty in Christ for the sake of the gospel. Whether towards unbelievers or toward weaker Christians, out of love we should not insist on our rights if it would damage the testimony of Christ."*

#### **Notice Romans 14:17**

The idea here is that the Kingdom of God is not about me living out my liberty, but it is about allowing the Holy Spirit to bring forth fruit that will build up/edify the body of Christ. If I run my liberty out to the boundary and I offend others, then I am not building up the body of Christ, but I am leading others into a path of ruin. That is selfish living on my part.

Let us understand that to set our liberties aside does in no way hinder our service. It is an act of personal sacrifice for the edification of others. Jesus gave His life for us so we can at least be willing to lay our liberties aside so as not to hinder the Lord's church.

The Holy Spirit desires to produce righteousness, peace, and joy in our lives. When we are living lives of righteousness then we are right with God and the result will be peace between us and our fellow man and also an overflowing joy in our lives.

**Notice Romans 14:18**

"These things" refers to righteousness, peace, and joy. When we are living under the control of the Spirit and these fruits flow from our lives then we can be sure our service is accepted by God. We can also be sure our lives will be approved by our fellow man. When these fruits flow from the life of the believer then you can be sure that person is a joy to have around.

**Notice Romans 14:19**

Here we have a conclusion on this thought. The word "FOLLOW" is very strong here. It means *"to go after something with a great desire of obtaining it"*. It would be like a runner who has trained for a race and when the race begins, he gives everything he has to reach his goal. This is how we are to "FOLLOW AFTER" things which make for peace. In other words, we should be focused upon living in such a way that we are constantly striving to keep the peace in the body of Jesus Christ. **The bottom line is this should be our lifestyle.** Like a hunter that pursues after the wild animal we should be pursuing after all that contributes to peace in the church.

**Hebrews 12:14**

<sup>14</sup> *Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:*

**Psalms 34:14**

<sup>14</sup> *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.*

**Matthew 5:9**

<sup>9</sup> *Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.*

We can see an example of pursuing peace in the book of Genesis from the life of Abram as there was strife between Abram and Lot's herdsmen.

**Genesis 13:6-9**

<sup>6</sup> *And the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was great, so that they could not dwell together.*

<sup>7</sup> *And there was a strife between the herdmen of Abram's cattle and the herdmen of Lot's cattle: and the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land.*

<sup>8</sup> *And Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.*

<sup>9</sup> *Is not the whole land before thee? separate thyself, I pray thee, from me: if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left.*

#### **Notice Romans 14:20**

This could also read, "Don't destroy the work of God for meat!" In other words, "Don't allow something as simple as meat to destroy the work of God!"

All food is pure, but if you eat and it offends someone then what you have done is evil. Food here can represent anything that is allowed in liberty but would offend another. Let me help us to see what Paul is stating here.

Let us say that you buy a brand-new car, and you drive it here to church. Then after church you go out only to find that someone has gouged a sharp instrument in the side and scratched the paint from front to back. They broke all windows and flattened all tires. They sliced the leather seats, and the car is completely ruined. This would be appalling, and you would be very upset.

But how much worse is it to run your liberty to the boundary and tear down the work which God has done in a person's life as you offend them and cause them to sin by what you do?

The "WORK OF GOD" in this verse would be the man or woman whom God has saved.

#### **Ephesians 2:10**

<sup>10</sup> *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.*

When we offend others with our liberty, we are actually guilty of "overthrowing" them in their faith. God has worked and brought them to where they are and, in our liberty, we can set them back in their growth.

#### **Notice Romans 14:21-23**

Paul just told his readers in the previous verse that ALL THINGS ARE PURE, but the believer must not offend his fellow man as he lives out his liberty.

Notice the words of **Warren Wiersbe**.

*"Christians must not force their opinions on others. There are certain truths that all Christians must accept because they are the foundation for the faith. But areas of honest disagreement must not be made a test of fellowship. If you have a sincere conviction from*

*God about a matter, keep it to yourself and do not try to force everybody else to accept it. No Christian can "borrow" another Christian's convictions and be honest in his Christian life. Unless he can hold them and practice them "by faith," he is sinning. Even if a person's convictions are immature, he must never violate his conscience. This would do great damage to his spiritual life. For example, the mature Christian knows that an idol is nothing. But a young Christian, just converted out of pagan idolatry, would still have fears about idols. If the strong believer forced the new Christian to eat meat sacrificed to an idol, the younger Christian would experience problems in his conscience that would only further weaken it. Conscience is strengthened by knowledge. But knowledge must be balanced by love; otherwise, it tears down instead of building up. The truth that "all foods are clean" will not of itself make a Christian grow. When this truth is taught in an atmosphere of love, then the younger Christian can grow and develop a strong conscience. Believers may hold different convictions about many matters, but they must hold them in love."*

**Notice Romans 14:22 again.**

The believer who is strong in his faith must be careful because if he misuses his liberty he will be chastened by the Lord. This believer is HAPPY because he is aware of the convictions of others and he is careful to not offend another.

**Notice Romans 14:23 again.**

This verse is for the weak believer. He or she is NEVER to violate their conscience. The idea behind being "damned" is that the believer who violates his conscience will come under the condemnation of his own conscience.

**Conclusion:**

All of this leads us back the beginning of Romans 14.

**Notice Romans 14:1-3**

There are going to be people with different convictions and so we all must accept this fact, receive them, and pursue peace and unity in the body of Jesus Christ. God works with His children on many different levels.