**Proper Application of Romans 14**

*Romans 14*

1. Rules of interpreting passages.
   * Context!
     + Immediate - within the chapter being considered.
     + Remote - all other passages parallel or contrasting.

* In other words, all scripture must be taken into consideration. Scripture harmonizes. If your understanding of one passage differs from your understanding of a passage parallel to it, your understanding of one of them is flawed (possibly both).

1. Three things we must consider in Romans 14.

A. Bible teaching of receiving and not receiving.

* + - "Receive one" (14:1) - In light of ALL scripture who can we receive and who are we to reject?
      * Is Paul contradicting himself? (cf. Romans 16:17-18)
        + No. (cf. 2 John 9-11)

God does not receive one in sin, neither can we.

* + - * The one Paul instructs to receive in 14:1 couldn't possibly be an individual in sin. It doesn't harmonize with other passages.

B. Bible teaching about disputing over doubtful things.

* + - "weak in faith"
      * Jude says contend (Jude 3), Paul says dispute not.
* Therefore, "the faith" in 14:1 cannot be the object of faith (word of God/doctrine of Christ). It is the persons own conscience toward the matter of Indifference (14:23).
  + - * Describes matters of Indifference, NOT sin/doctrinal error.
        + Eating meat vs. Not eating meat (14:1-3).
* Neither is sinful. No condemnation of a vegetarian diet. Commendation of eating meats (cf. 1 Timothy 4:3-5; Acts 10:11-16 - Peter's vision of animals in sheet like object; 1 Corinthians 10:25-32 - Meat offered to idols okay.)
  + - However, we must dispute/judge sinful things (cf. 1 Corinthians 5:3-5 - Man involved in sexual immorality.)

C. Bible teaching on the difference between indifferent matters and sin.

* + - Matters of Indifference to God - Matters which are not required by God, nor are they prohibited by God.
      * "for God has received him" - judgement shouldn't be placed on the meat eater because he is accepted by God.
        + God cannot accept sin (cf. 1 John 1:5-7). Therefore, the considered subject is not sin.
      * It is only God's right to judge in this circumstance (14:4).
        + He will be made to stand because God has already received him (14:3). He did nothing wrong by eating meat.
      * Esteeming days - indifferent.
        + Esteeming or not Esteeming - both okay. One requisite...

Be fully convinced! (14:5) - Is that the determining factor for sin? No!

* + - * + Either way is okay because it is observed to the Lord (14:6-9).

If it were sin it could not be "observed to the Lord."

1. God is the ultimate judge (14:10-12).
   * Either one is the Lord's because he observed it to the Lord (14:8).
     + God has already judged him. He received him. We have no right to reject him if God has received him.
   * We will all give account of our actions to God (14:10-12).
     + God will be the one to judge the one eating/not eating and observing/not observing.
2. Paul's application (14:13-23).
   * Mainly directed toward the one who understands God allows eating of meat.
     + Don't cause a stumbling block (14:13).
       - Matters of Indifference aren't unclean. But if an individual thinks it is unclean, or doubts it is clean, to him it is unclean (14:14).
     + Show love (14:15-18).
       - One isn't approved by God for eating (14:17).
       - You are approved by showing love, righteousness, peace, and joy.

* We shouldn't do it just because it isn't wrong. If it causes a brother to stumble it shouldn't be done. Only those things which edify and promote peace should be done (14:19-21).
  + - If you can eat in good conscience, great. If not, don't sin by doing it (14:22-23).