

Romans 14:10-12

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We all have to answer to God for the way we've individually lived our lives. If something we do in the freedom Christ gives us is going to harm someone's conscience, it's not worth doing. Don't look down on a believer who has weak faith. We'll all be judged by God for the ways we personally failed and succeeded.

Living righteously looks like living in harmony with one another through faith, not living in constant judgement over each other regarding petty rules. Paul points out the error in judging one another; we are not the true judges over righteousness and sin. *But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.* We are here to lift one another up. There is a warning in these verses: "Each one of us will give an account of himself to God." God is the ultimate authority. Indeed, verse 11 cites a prophecy detailing that everyone will one day be aware of God's sovereignty and give Him due praise (Isaiah 45:23).

For it is written,

*"As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall give praise to God."*

If we remember that we will have to answer to God for our lives, we are in a better mindset concerning how to treat each other. With patience and understanding, even in disagreements of faith, whether one day is better than another, or a type of food is bad or good for an individual believer, it's better to encourage each other in more important ways than to bicker over small things, things that might cause our brothers to fall into sin. Everyone will be judged one day by God. In light of that, we should minimize how often we judge other people's habits, and we should maximize living peacefully with one another.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 4:3-4 that he is not aware of anything he is doing wrong, so he does not judge himself. However, that does not justify him, because he will have to answer to God for what he did in his life. This is a consistent theme for Paul, that God has the job of being judge of the world and of believers, so we should not usurp His authority in that respect. 1 Corinthians 4 occurs just after 1 Corinthians 3 where Paul lays out the Judgement Seat of Christ, where every deed we do is judged by fire, to test to see if it is a work that endures. Matthew 7:2 tells us that one of the measuring sticks that will be used to judge us at that great event will be the measure by which we measure others. So if we want to be judgmental and hold people to a high standard, then we will be setting that standard for ourselves.

With this in mind, it is easy to see why Paul is adamant that judging other people is not in our best interest, instead *each one of us will give an account of himself to God.*

Now it is important to note that this is being expressed in the context where Paul has passed severe judgment on the false teaching of the competing Jewish “authorities.” Paul warns against judging others’ opinions. Truth is not opinion; Paul does not include truth here. The various verses where we are admonished to judge the fruit of others (such as Matthew 7:15-20) refer to judging teachers, spiritual authorities, so we know who to follow. In Romans 14, this chapter, Paul’s message applies to things that God leaves up to us to decide. But what God’s word says is not a matter of opinion.

Biblical Text

10 But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. 11 For it is written,

“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me,

And every tongue shall give praise to God.”

12 So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.