

Am I my Brother's Keeper?

Lesson 13: Romans 14:14-23,

1 Corinthians 8

August 27, 2017

Yes, I am my brother's keeper

Outline

- Who is my brother
 - Unbelievers
 - Believers
- How am I my brother's keeper
 - In regard to sin
 - Unbelievers
 - Believers
 - In areas of Christian liberty
 - Unbelievers
 - Believers
- Why am I my brother's keeper

Who is my brother?

- Who is my neighbor?
- Unbelievers
 - As humans
- Believer
 - In Christ
 - In relation to salvation

My brother's keeper: sin

- Unbelievers
 - Show them their sin
 - Share the Gospel
 - Pray
- Believers
 - Show them their sin
 - Forgive
 - Pray

Non-debatable areas

- Not signaling
- Lying
- Stealing
 - Physically
 - Temporally
 - Emotionally
- Coveting
- Gossip
- Bad language
- Addiction

My brother's keeper: areas of liberty

- Unbelievers: 1 Corinthians 10:23-33
 - Don't offend for the sake of their conscience
 - If there is no choice, offend an unbeliever rather than a believer
- Believers: 1 Corinthians 8, Romans 14:1-15:7
 - Weak: don't judge the strong
 - Strong
 - Don't show contempt for the weak
 - Bear with the weak

Debatable areas

- Music
- Movies
- Alcohol
- Cards
- Dancing
- Clothing
- Smoking
- Food
- Sunday/holiday activities
- Technology
- Home/Christian/public school
- Bible translations
- Tattoos

Who is weak and who is strong?

Weak

- Accepted by Christ
- May not have knowledge
- Restrictive conscience
- Weak faith
- Thinks some things are unclean
- May avoid things because of their life as an unbeliever
- Children
- Young Christians

Strong

- Accepted by Christ
- Has knowledge
- Clear conscience
- Strong faith
- Knows nothing is unclean in itself

Introduction

Romans 14:1

Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

- Starts addressing the strong
- This is a command
- Someone isn't accepted in order to be judged
- The weak have their own reasons for their views
- Are we judging by our rules, or God's?

Food

Romans 14:2-3

One person has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. The one who eats is not to regard with contempt the one who does not eat, and the one who does not eat is not to judge the one who eats, for God has accepted him.

- First example: food
- The strong: don't disdain
- The weak: don't judge
- Why: God has accepted both
- This is a command for the strong and the weak

Food

Romans 14:4

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

- Servants are responsible to their masters, not another
- This is a spiritual stand/fall
- Not just stand, but be steadfast

Special Days

Romans 14:5-6

One person regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Each person must be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.

- Second example: days
- Probably a festive day
- Jews and Gentiles had special days
- Do all to the glory of God
- “for the Lord”
- Both have the same attitude and purpose

Special Days

Romans 14:7-9

For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.

- Life isn't lived in isolation
- We live for the Lord and to please Him
- The purpose of Christ's death
- He didn't just die, but lived again
- He is Lord over all

**Judgment belongs to God,
walk in love
Romans 14:10-11**

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. For it is written,

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

- Have we forgotten these are brothers and sisters?
- Addressing the weak and the strong
- God is giving an oath

**Judgment belongs to God,
walk in love**

Romans 14:12-13

So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a **brother's** way.

- This includes judging and showing contempt for believers
- Remember who the judge is
- Negative “one another” command
- Obstacle – for the strong
- Stumbling block – for the weak
- Don't tempt other believers

**Judgment belongs to God,
walk in love
Romans 14:14-16**

I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your **brother** is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let what is for you a good thing be spoken of as evil;

- Mark 7:19
- “unclean” – common
- Returns to first example
- We are commanded not to destroy fellow believers
- Destroy is the same root as Apollyon

Life as a Christian
Romans 14:17-18

for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.

- Kingdom of God
 - Righteousness
 - Peace
 - Joy
- “This way”
 - Not letting liberty being spoke of as evil
 - Living as a citizen of the Kingdom of God
- Serving Christ pleases God

Life as a Christian Romans 14:19-20

So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the **building up** of one another. Do not **tear down** the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense.

- Be diligent in seeking peace
- Help all believers become mature, especially the weak
- Build up vs. tear down
- We are a spiritual house
- Are we fighting against God?

Life as a Christian Romans 14:21-23

It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your **brother** stumbles. The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

- Paul doesn't limit the list of what to avoid
- Our convictions on liberties aren't necessary for others
- Be sure something is a liberty
- Faith goes back to 14:1
- Two options in areas of liberty
 - Faith
 - Sin

**The strong need to imitate
Christ
Romans 15:1**

Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just **please** ourselves.

- The obligation is on the strong
- Bearing is hard work
- The weak can't bear their own weakness without the help of the strong
- Who are we trying to please?

The strong need to imitate Christ

Romans 15:2-3

Each of us is to **please** his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not **please** Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me."

- We are to please our brothers and sisters
- There is a purpose
 - Good
 - Edification
- Christ is our example of not pleasing ourselves
- Psalm 69:9
- When we reproach our brothers and sisters that falls on Christ

**The strong need to imitate
Christ**

Romans 15:4

For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.

- Why would we need hope?
- Hope in what?
- Bearing with the weak can be difficult for the strong
- Christ is our example

Unity in Christ **Romans 15:5-7**

Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus, so that with one accord you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, accept one another, just as Christ also accepted us to the glory of God.

- What God asks of us He provides
- Our unity is in Christ
- Mentally and audibly
- Unity in glorifying God
- This is the ultimate purpose of unity
- A final command
- Christ accepted us to the glory of God

Why am I my brother's keeper?

- God has entrusted fellow believers into our care
- We are all part of the body of Christ
- God didn't create humans to live by themselves
- We are to help fellow believers mature in the faith

Using wisdom

Personal

- Will it tempt me to be led into sin (1 Cor. 10:13-14, Rom. 13:14)
- Will it subject me to demonic attack? (1 Cor. 10:14-22)
- Will it prevent me from being able to thank God? (1 Cor. 10:30, 1 Th. 5:18)
- Will it tempt me to become addicted? 1 Cor. 6:12
- Will it harm my physical or emotional health? 1 Cor. 6:19-20

Relational

- Will it do spiritual damage to me or others? (1 Cor. 8:9-13, 10:23-24, 32-33)
- Will it be discovered and condemned by another person's conscience? (1 Cor. 10:27-29, Rom. 14:16)
- Will it bring dishonor to God? (1 Cor. 10:31, Col.3:17)
- Will it violate the pattern of a Christ-like role model? (1 Cor. 11:1, Eph. 5:1-2, Heb. 13:7)
- Will it bring dissension or disunity to the body of Christ? (Rom. 14:19-20, 15:2, 5-6)

Summary

- Accept each other as Christ accepted you
- Do not judge or regard a believer with contempt over an area of liberty
- Don't put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a believer's way
- Seek the kingdom of God in righteousness, peace, and joy
- Be willing to give up anything for another believer
- Walk according to love

Knowledge versus love **1 Corinthians 8:1-3**

Now concerning things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge makes arrogant, but love edifies. If anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know; but if anyone loves God, he is known by Him.

- “Now concerning” another point Corinth asked about
- Don’t esteem knowledge too highly
- Knowledge isn’t enough
- Our knowledge is limited
- It is better to be known than to know
- Love leads to knowledge, knowledge doesn’t always lead to love

The implications of knowledge

1 Corinthians 8:4-6

Therefore concerning the eating of things sacrificed to idols, we know that there is no such thing as an idol in the world, and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods whether in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, **by** whom are all things, and we exist **through** Him.

- First idols, now sacrifices
- An idol is nothing in quality
- Idols represent gods
- There is only one God
- Saying something doesn't make it true
- False gods have been multiplied
- All things are from God
- All things are by Christ
- By and through are the same word

The use of knowledge in love

1 Corinthians 8:7-9

However not all men have this knowledge; but some, being accustomed to the idol until now, eat food as if it were sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.

- Knowledge isn't universal
- Previous experiences can influence our thinking
- Former sin can still affect our conscience
- What (who) commends us to God?
- Food is not eternal
- Food is not salvific
- Liberty is not to be exercised freely
- Our liberty can hurt others

**The use of knowledge in
love**

1 Corinthians 8:10

For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols?

- An example of 8:9
- Knowledge can have a negative impact
- Weak consciences can draw the wrong implications from knowledge
- The strong know an idol is nothing
- The weak think eating idol sacrifices is ok

**The use of knowledge in
love**

1 Corinthians 8:11

For through your knowledge he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died.

- Strengthened (v. 10)
- Ruined (v.11)
 - Same root as Apollyon
- Knowledge can be the mean of destruction
- The weak is a brother
- The weak is one Christ died for

The use of knowledge in love

1 Corinthians 8:12-13

And so, by sinning **against** the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin **against** Christ. Therefore, if food causes my brother to stumble, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause my brother to stumble.

- Switch to plural: brethren
- Causing one believer to stumble = sinning against the believers **s** = sinning against Christ
- Strong negative
- “never... to the age”
- Causes of stumbling
 - Food
 - Me