

# The University Heights Messenger

May 22, 2011

## Romans 14--4

In this concluding article on Romans 14 we wish to consider some modern misuses of the chapter. There are those who teach that two individuals can be married, divorced for reasons besides sexual immorality, marry different people, and remain in that state after becoming Christians for they were not subject to God's laws before becoming Christians. Others are teaching that a guilty adulterer who has been put away by his or her spouse because of that sin can remarry. It is said that the teaching of Romans 14 should be applied to those teaching these errors as long as they are honest, sincere, and non factious in what they are doing. But we have seen that Romans 14 cannot be made to so apply. It deals with matters of indifference, not sin.

Take a moment to read **Matthew 5:31-32** and **19:8-9**. Having read those verses ask yourself this question: Is adultery a matter of indifference to God? What about divorce? Does God receive the adulterer who will not repent of their adulterous lifestyle? Does God receive those who have divorced and remarried contrary to His command? Not if Scripture means what it says.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 says, "**Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.**" It would seem to me that Paul settles the issue in these verses. Whether a couple continues an adulterous relationship in no way fits into Romans 14.

I have wondered why those who place adultery in Romans 14 have not also placed homosexuality there? It will not work to say that they do not compare for they do. Both of them are clearly condemned in God's Word from passages like 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. Why can those who have no right to be married continue in that state after becoming Christians, committing adultery every

time they engage in sexual activity, while those who are homosexual before they become Christians cannot continue in that lifestyle afterward? What is the difference? If Romans 14 can be used to justify one case it can just as easily be used to justify the other.

Let's see if we can determine whether some practices that brethren occasionally seek to justify by appealing to Romans 14 really fit there. Let's think of such things as gambling, attending movies that worldly people tell us are not fit for people under seventeen, mixed swimming, social drinking, and anything else that would fit with these things. To make the determination of whether they rightly fit into Romans 14 we must be very honest with ourselves.

First, can something really be called a matter of indifference to God, thus fitting into Romans 14, if it makes me appear worldly and damages my identity as a Christian? In Romans 12:1-2, Paul said, "**I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.**" Put any of the above list here for consideration. Are they really matters of indifference to God? Honestly, I don't think so.

Second, can something be called a matter of indifference to God, thus fitting into Romans 14, if it will harm my influence for good with others? Our Lord Himself, in Matthew 5:16, said, "**In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.**" Put any of that above list here for consideration. Do we really believe that those things can in no way lessen our influence for good? Do we really believe that they are matters of indifference to God? Honestly, I don't think so.

Third, can something be called a matter of indifference to God, thus fitting into Romans 14, if

it can cause damage to my body and even lead me to an addiction? Paul, in 1 Corinthians 6:12, said, “**All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be enslaved by anything.**” Such things that could lead to this enslavement simply cannot be considered matters of indifference to God.

To misuse a passage to justify an action is wrong. To take a vital passage like Romans 14, a passage designed to help strong and weak Christians alike to deal with matters of indifference, and press it into uses far beyond its intended scope, justifying actions that are at best questionable and at worst just plain sinful, is reprehensible. To take moral issues and place them in Romans 14 to justify participation in them is to open the door to corrupted morals and false teaching and what may have once been a faithful congregation of the Lord’s people will not be so for long.

So let’s just let Romans 14 be what God intended it to be--a beautiful chapter meant to show brethren how to settle differences between them in matters of total indifference to God.

**IN NEED OF PRAYERS:**

Let’s keep **Jenilee Daniels** and **Jackie Litmer** in our thoughts and prayers as they progress throughout their pregnancies. Let’s also keep those unborn little one’s in our prayers as well!

**Keia Burton** (Ann Chrusciel’s great-niece) is pregnant and has been diagnosed with placenta previa, which can be a life-threatening condition. Let us pray for her and the baby.

Our members: **Jeff Howerton, Janice Parsons, Glenn Davis, Glenn Kimberlin.**

Others: **Edith Tirey, Tom Curtis, Rita Pagan, Linda Hill, Robin Miller, Vina Krassow, Tom Curtis, Courtney and Aubree Reeves, Tabetha Lynn, Tom Curtis, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Donald Dawson, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Gail Stein**

**BIBLE READING SCHEDULE**

- Sun:** Josh 14-15, Ps 103, Acts 28
- Mon:** Josh 16-18, Ps 104, Rom 1
- Tue:** Josh 19-20, Ps 105:1-25, Rom 2
- Wed:** Josh 21-22, Ps 105:26-45, Rom 3-4
- Thu:** Josh 23-24, Ps 106:1-23, Rom 5-6
- Fri:** Judg 1, Ps 106:24-48, Rom 7
- Sat:** Judg 2-3, Ps 107:1-22, Rom 8

**SERMON TOPICS:**

Sunday AM. The central message of the Bible 5 (John 1:29)

Sunday PM. The companion sins of immodesty and lust (1 Timothy 2:9-10; 1 Corinthians 6:17-20)

**Elders:** David Collins, Garry Banks, John Thompson