

“THE ROOTS OF A CRITICAL SPIRIT”
ROMANS 14:1-12
September 10, 2006

INTRO

1. Paul wants to take the gospel to Spain. It will take a united Roman church to send him there.
2. The issue being dealt with—each other’s differences and preferences—is the heart of most Jewish and Gentile Christian relationship conflict.
3. Paul wants to teach them how to deal with their differences so that they can be a united church. If they have love (John 13:34-35) and unity (John 17:21) they will be powerful in evangelism.

MESSAGE Judging one another on non-moral issues – opinions and preferences – is inappropriate. Here’s why! Speaking of your brother or sister in Christ...

- ◆ You are not his master. He serves Christ’s purposes, not yours. (1-4)
- ◆ You are not his conscience. He follows the Holy Spirit’s leading, not yours. (5-9)
- ◆ You are not his judge. He responds to the Father’s discipline, not yours. (10-12)

LIFE RESPONSE

- ◆ Learn the difference!

The moral will of God	Non-moral issues
Commands & principles	Opinions & preferences

- ◆ Be alert to the three dangers of a critical, censorial, judgmental spirit!
 1. that the fellowship will become so divided over inconsequential issues that the unity of the Spirit will be disrupted.
 2. that the Lord Jesus Christ will be set aside as the head of the church.
 3. that someone will set up a list of do’s and don’ts to govern behavior and usurp the ministry of the Holy Spirit in the believer’s life.

Four positions on debatable issues

1. Professional weaker brother -- the legalist.
2. Susceptible weaker brother – the immature believer of Romans 14:1-12.

3. Nonparticipating mature brother – the mature believer who chooses not to participate in some practice or activity.
4. Participating mature brother – the mature believer who chooses to participate in some practice or activity. (both C and D represent the mature believer of Romans 14:1-12)

Four positions illustrated

	<u>Evaluation</u>	<u>Conclusion</u>	<u>Danger</u>
Professional weaker brother	wrong for everyone	all participants guilty of sin	critical of Christians who disagree
Susceptible weaker brother	probably wrong for him	not wrong for every Christian	participation without full freedom of conscience
Non-participating mature brother	either: 1. sin for him, therefore, he cannot participate 2. not sin for him, but chooses not to participate	can be sin for one believer but not sin for the other	concluding that the mature believer would be "more spiritual" if he would only limit his liberty
Participating mature brother	believes he has freedom to participate	it is okay for him, but may be sin for others	1. succumb to the legalist 2. cause the susceptible weaker brother to stumble 3. abuse liberty

