

Does Romans 14 Allow for Acceptance of One Another in an Unlimited Way?

Does **Romans 14** allow for fellowship with those who engage in immorality and/or with those who teach false concepts? Many say yes. The studied answer is no! The immediate context of **Romans 14** forbids receiving (*to extend a welcome, receive into one's home or circle of acquaintances; accepting another into fellowship* – BAGD, et al) any who are immoral or any who teach falsehood. The context demands that **Romans 14:1-15:7** be limited to one's own God approved personal freedoms/opinions and how to handle said freedoms/opinions. Any other conclusion is at odds with scripture.

Let's now look at some of the verses in **Romans 14** and see just how off base those are who seek to place either moral or doctrinal issues into that section of text. I'm sure you will see just how wrong the innovators are in their abuse of scripture.

1. **14:1** – The apostolic command is that they were to receive each other in spite of their differences. If the innovators are right in their view, then Paul is saying “*Let your brother accept damnable doctrines (2 Pet. 2:1) and live anyway he wants to.*” No way! Their twisting of the text would have us accept just about anyone on the earth who has been baptized for the remission of sins, but then let him be lost in eternity for his conduct after baptism. Nonsense! The innovators would have us not condemn hardly anyone and would have us quit calling for authority. Is this God's will? No (**Isa. 58:1; 1 Thess. 5:21**). How do the innovators who abuse the text account for **1 Cor. 5:1-9; 2 John 9-11; Titus 3:10; Gal. 5:12; 2 Thess. 3:6**? These passages teach that we just don't accept everyone! Their use of the text does not fit. What does fit?
2. **14:1** – The apostle instructed them not to dispute over these matters. The NASB is really good here. How do the innovators who abuse the text account for **Acts 15:1-7; 19:1-9**? Was sin committed when these men disputed? Scripture teaches that we are to fight against things that oppose truth (**Titus 1:9-11; 1 Tim. 6:3-4; 1:3; Rom. 3:8**). But if, as some say, this chapter includes doctrinal error, then they must accept the following conclusions: (1) every brother engaged in sin and error is to be accepted, (2) how you live and what you teach are matters of personal opinion. The innovators' abuse of this text leads to no absolute right and wrong. Everything is a matter of opinion. The innovators' arguments end up not allowing us to preach against anything, except intolerance. Their use of the text does not fit. What does fit?
3. **14:3, 4, 10, 13** – The message: don't judge (condemn) each other over these matters. How do the innovators who abuse the text account for **1 Cor. 5:12-13; 2 Tim. 2:16-18; Rom. 16:17-18; Eph. 5:10-11; John 7:24**? These passages call for judgments to be made. Their use of the text does not fit. What does fit?
4. **14:3** – Paul here tells the saints in Rome that God has received/accepted all individuals with regard to these matters. How do the innovators who abuse the text account for **1 John 1:6-7; 2 Cor. 6:14-18; Gal. 1:9; 5:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:10-17**? These passages teach that reception is conditional on well-doing. The innovators' use of the text does not fit. What does fit?
5. **14:4** – God will allow for each to stand (approved) (at the final judgment). Paul is stating that with regard to the issue at hand both shall stand (at the judgment) for both stand (approved of God) now (**vs. 3**). First of all, doesn't this sound just a lot like “Once Saved - Always Saved?” Secondly, how do the innovators who abuse the text account for **1 Cor. 6:9-10; Ps. 1:1-5; 24:2-3; Jude 14-15; 1 Cor. 10:1-12**? These passages teach that standing before God (being approved of God on judgment day) is conditional. The innovators' argument allows for those who have transgressed God's will to be in heaven one day. Can this be true? Hardly. The innovators' use of the text does not fit. What does fit?
6. **14:5** – Paul tells them individuals are to decide these matters. First of all, if the innovators are correct in their view of the text then what we have here is Paul teaching that it's all right to be involved in sin and error, just as long as you are fully persuaded. How ignorant and dangerous! They overlook **2 Tim 2:15**. Do one's own feelings make what is wrong into what is right (**Prov. 16:25; 30:12; Acts 23:1**)? Secondly, if the innovators are right and this section of text either does include or can include matters of sin and doctrinal error, then Paul is encouraging people to continue to sin and error, as long as they can do it in good conscience. Doubly ignorant! Sounds a lot like the denominational jargon, “*It doesn't matter what you believe, just as long as you are sincere.*” Hogwash. One is free to decide matters that are immaterial to God (e.g. steak or salad; **1 Tim. 4:1-5**). When it comes to doctrine and morality, God has already decided (**2 Pet. 1:3; 2 Cor. 10:5; 2 Tim 3:16-17; Eph. 4:5**). If the innovators are right, what will they say about

2 Cor. 5:10-11? There we learn that Christians are to persuade men to comply with what God wants, not ask God to accept their perverted faith based on feelings! The innovators' view does not fit. What does fit?

7. **14:6** – Paul informs them that both groups are doing what they do to the glory of God. All that we do is to be done unto the Lord; bringing glory to Him (**Col. 3:23; 1 Cor. 10:31**). Do self-serving, silver tongued teachers do so unto the Lord (**Rom. 16:17-18; Col. 2:4**)? Do they glorify Him? Do homosexuals practice what they practice unto the Lord (i.e. do so with His acceptance)? Do they glorify Him (**Rom. 1:21-27**)? What will the innovators say? Their view of the text does not fit. What does fit?
8. **14:13, 20, 21** – The instructions here are to place no stumbling blocks in the way of another brother. Yet when we preach properly we are supposed to “trip” people up in the proper way, not allow them to head down the broad road (**Rom. 9:33; 1 Pet. 2:8; 2 Tim 4:2; Gal. 4:16; Prv. 27:6**). We must be willing to set aside some things (things that do not matter to God one way or the other) for a brother's sake (until he comes to a proper understanding - **2 Pet. 3:18**). However, once again, the only things we can ever set aside are those things that God has authorized but not commanded (steak or salad). Again, steak is authorized but not commanded. Salad is authorized, but not commanded. However, shall we give up the Lord's Supper, qualifications of elders, authorized singing, etc? No! Shall we extend fellowship to carnival churches that focus primarily on social activities? Shall we begin to accept human institutions that do the work that God gave to churches and individuals to do? No! Can't you see that the innovators' view leads to sissy leadership and a host of unauthorized practices being accepted? The innovators' view of the text does not fit. What does fit?
9. **14:14, 20** – Paul stated that all things (choices that do not matter one way or the other to God) are clean and pure. Those who abuse the text have Paul saying that God deems false teaching and immorality clean and pure. Preposterous. If the innovators are right what will they say about **2 Cor. 6:14-18; Hab. 1:13**? The innovators' view of the text does not fit. What does fit?
10. **14:15** – The command here is: don't grieve your brother by pressing your personal convictions. Instead, love him. Notice that the text says “meat” not “any doctrine” or “any standard of living.” If this section does have reference to doctrinal/moral error, then are we actually to believe the apostle Paul is saying that we are to stand by while people are in error because you love them so much? This is a backward concept of love. True love rejoices in the truth (**1 Cor. 13:6**). The innovators' abuse of the text ends up making deity unloving (**Heb. 12:5-6; Rev. 3:19**). The innovators have Paul's writing here go totally against what he wrote elsewhere (**Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim 2:25**). Their concept is totally against what he practiced (**Gal 2:4, 11-14**). The concept is totally against how he felt (**Rom. 9:1-5**). Seriously, are we to overlook what people are teaching (**1 John 4:1**)? Are we to remain silent as they lead immoral lives (**1 Tim. 2:9-10**)? Get real. Also, if the innovators are right, what will they say about **Acts 4:1-2**? People are often grieved when they hear the truth. The innovators' view of the text does not fit. What does fit?
11. **14:19** – The answer to the disturbance in the church at Rome was to follow after peace. If this section has reference to matters of doctrine or morality (as they erroneously claim), then what will the innovators say about passages like **1 Tim. 1:18; Jude 3; Acts 5:29; Titus 2:15; etc**? Also, does falsehood lead to peace? See **Jer. 6:14**. The innovators' view of the text does not fit. What does fit?
12. **14:20-22** – Paul tells them you may have your faith (authorized opinion) but do not broadcast your view all over the place. If, indeed, the innovators are correct in their view of the text; i.e. that it allows for different views on matters of doctrine and morality, then what will they do with passages like **Mark 16:15-16; 1 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 3:1-2**?

Folks, here is the simple truth of the matter: the innovators are as wrong as they can be! They twist **Rom. 14** (**2 Pet. 3:16**) and attempt to make it say something it has never said. The whole context of Scripture informs us that **Rom. 14** is not an island out there in the middle of the Bible which allows for differing views over doctrine and morality. It is just that simple.