

## **Overcoming a Critical Spirit Romans 14:1-13**

### **Introduction:**

1. One of the easiest things to do is to be critical of other people.
  - It gives us a feeling of superiority. We don't feel quite so bad about ourselves when we are tearing someone else down.
  - Rather than by grace looking for good in people, we see the bad and pounce on it.
2. The devil is called "*the accuser of our brethren*" in **Revelation 12:10**. The devil is in sheer delight when he sees believers accusing and condemning one another.
3. Romans 14 deals with this very issue. It gives the believer some very practical advice in how to overcome this wicked tendency.
4. A critical spirit accomplishes nothing at all.
  - It displeases the Lord.
  - It defiles you and makes you feel dirty.
  - It defiles others.
  - It destroys relationships and friendships. It doesn't solve problems.
5. So what are some principles that will help us in overcoming this sin of judging, condemning, and being critical of other believers?

### **First, we must remember that every Christian has not progressed to the same point. vs. 1**

1. Oh, how we forget this. We want everybody to be right where we are, and they aren't, and never will be. We are all on a journey and we are all at different places.
2. Paul refers to those who are "*weak in the faith*" in verse 1. What does he say to do to them? Rebuke them, criticize them, rail on them? Paul says to "receive them."
3. Some Christians are babes in Christ (**1 Corinthians 3:1**), others are of full age (**Hebrews 5:14**).
4. Even mature Christians may have areas of their lives where they struggle and where they need to grow. We have to give people room to grow, and not beat them down. Do your words speak grace or condemnation? **Ephesians 4:29**

### **Second, we must realize that some areas are matters of personal liberty. vs. 2-4**

1. Paul uses dietary preferences as an example in verse 2. Here we have two Christians with radically different views, yet neither one is right and the other wrong. vs. 3, 6
2. This can apply to so many different areas of life. Paul teaches that instead of nit-picking each other and condemning each other and judging each other, just relax and be who God has made **you** in Christ.
3. Notice that word "despise" in verse 3. Christians can get this "holier than thou" attitude and look down their noses at another Christian over non-essential items.
4. They can literally grow to despise another Christian, and it has nothing to do with blatant false doctrine. It has to do with matters of personal liberty that you disagree on.
5. What a liberating day it is when verse 4 sinks into our mind and spirit. All of a sudden, I realize that I don't have to be the Holy Spirit in everybody else's life. I can

be who God made **me** in Christ, and allow you to be who God has made **you** in Christ.

- I don't have to go around trying to change everybody to be just like me.

**Third, we must allow others to develop their own convictions. vs. 5-9**

1. I like what Paul says when he says, "*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*"
2. In verse 6, we see two believers with two completely different convictions, but both love the Lord with thankful hearts.
3. Most of the time, we don't judge people because of false doctrine. We judge people because of personal convictions that we have that they don't have.
4. Did you know that you cannot force your convictions on people? Even if you are successful, it won't last (**Illustration:** children). At some point it has to become their own conviction.
5. We must give people room to develop their own convictions. We must give people room to relate personally to the Lord. vs. 7-9
6. What a wonderful day it is when you realize that people don't have to be just like you in order to love the Lord.

**Fourth, we must remember that every believer will give personal account to the Lord. vs. 10-13**

1. Paul asks two great questions in verse 10. One of the silliest things for a Christian to do is to point at some area of another believer's life and stand in judgment of them.
2. It is absolutely ridiculous because, in essence, we are trying to do Christ's job for Him. Paul says in verse 10 "*...for we shall all stand...*" cf. vs. 12
  - When we judge others and judge their hearts and motives, we are saying that we don't believe that Christ will really have a judgment day, or we are saying that we don't believe Christ will deal with things adequately. He needs our help.
3. In verse 13 Paul commands, "*Let us not therefore judge one another any more.*"
  - The Bible is clear - we aren't to be judging in another person's area that is not our area.
  - Most judging that is done happens outside of your area of responsibility, and that is called gossip. Gossip-mouths are dangerous people. **Proverbs 16:27-28**
4. Paul says, "It's none of your business; quit being a busybody."
  - We all have enough to judge in our own lives without looking under every rock to find something wrong in somebody else's area, so we can pounce on it.
  - In verse 4, Paul basically says, "Who do you think you are? Stay in your own backyard."

**In Conclusion:**

1. A judgmental, critical spirit is evidence of somebody who is not filled with the Holy Spirit. **Galatians 5:22-23**
2. When people are filled with the Spirit they live in such an awareness of their need of grace and they live in such an appreciation of God's grace that they very naturally extend that grace to others.

3. Even when it is a matter of blatant sin or false doctrine, they approach the matter with grace and meekness. **Galatians 6:1**
4. May **Ephesians 4:29** burn in our hearts and rest on our lips!