

Before I begin expounding, I would remind you that this Epistle was written to a local church in the city of Rome. In this church, there were two classes of people, basically. There were Jews. The Jews, evidently, constituted the minority in the membership and then there were Gentiles, who constituted a majority. Well, when you have people of diverse backgrounds you have various opinions, about lifestyles. About practices. Sometimes churches are very homogenous - they have just one class of people. I served a church in Louisiana where the people grew up in Washington Parish - they'd always known one another; they were neighbors and it was just tremendously homogenous.

But this congregation here certainly is not. Not that way. People from every place in the world, members of this congregation; people of all social, economic background; different levels of Spiritual understanding. Many denominational backgrounds. Well, the church at Rome was this and of course, this did not disturb Paul because Paul is the very one that says 'in Christ, the middle wall (or partition) has been broken down between Jew and Gentile and were one new man in Jesus. And the beauty of God's church is that though there are all kinds of people in it, Christ is their Head.

And everyone is important and everyone has his precious place. But in a diverse fellowship, where there are people of various backgrounds and especially, religious backgrounds, there's gonna be some tension or there is gonna be different opinions about what is right and what is wrong. The kind of lifestyle. All right, how are we going to handle this? Paul is dealing with this question and you will discover this section to be one of the most valuable sections in all of Romans. Because it's utterly practical. Now let's drop our prejudices and let's listen to what Paul has to say, because it takes a lot of faith, really, not to believe that our lifestyle is Scriptural when this is not necessarily so. Not necessarily Scriptural.

Last Sunday I taught and after I taught, there was a young man that came to me and something

that I, personally, cannot do. He said to me 'I don't have any problem with this , what-
*SM*soever'. I said 'do you know JESUS'? He said 'indeed, I do and I live for Jesus, but I
don't see any harm in drinking a beer. No harm, this is the way I was brought up. I'm not
immoral but this is a part of my culture'. Well, I didn't kick him out and say 'listen,
don't come around here and you're not a scoundal and you're not going to Heaven'. I think
he's wrong and I think God will lead him to see that, but where he is now, Paul would say
'go slow'.

You say 'well, this is tearing down all the standards of Xtnity and there's not much to the
Xtn morality and ethic'. No, indeed! Paul, where essentials are concerned, he draws the
line but he recognizes that the body of Christ has many types of people and different levels
of understanding and we don't destroy one another by saying by saying that our position is
necessarily right. Unless the Scriptures ~~xxxx~~ clearly speak on it, you see. And we're gonna
deal with this. All right, in the church at Rome, there were two groups of people, Spiritually
speaking. There was what Paul called the weak and what Paul called the strong.

Well, Paul, in 15: 1 - in Rom. 15: 1 says that he is of the strong party. Alright, now we're
gonna see what the difference was. But just to give you an understanding before we get into
this language: the weak were those who were not strong in an understanding of the Xtn faith
and basically, lived by rules. They seemed to be the Jews. They believed that the heart of
religion consists in what they ate. And the days they observed. It does not mean that we
are not Xtns; it does not mean they didn't have faith but they were ~~immature~~ immature in
~~XX~~
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understanding the full Xtn revelation. Who were the strong?

2 The strong were those who understood a great deal more. Alright, there is a conflict; there
is a debate going on in the church in Rome. How are they going to handle it? You say 'we're
not concerned today, what we eat in the church; about special days'. Well, no, we aren't but
we're concerned about a lot of things. You realize that I read recently that the Christmas

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tree divided the church? One group pulled it in and another group, at night, pulled it out.
You ever hear that? Did you know that some churches have a dress code? Did you know that
in some churches, that women cannot wear pants in the services? Right in Ft. Smith. We're
talking about something that is very, very near and very, very relevant and something that
will follow us as long as we live! So, let's look at it:

V. 1 (read) doesn't mean he didn't have faith in Jes. but he's weak in his understanding.
Immature. He says 'receive ye' and the first concession is made to the weak person. Receive
ye - what does that mean? Accept this person into your heart, into the fellowship, into
your company, into your confidence. REceive him into your membership, into your confidence
and heart, but not to doubtful disputations. Not for the purpose of passing judgment on his
opinions or debating with him and trying to change him. I remember the great Bible student
HA Ray Stedmon said: He says the favorite indoor sport of Americans is trying to change our
neighbors. Are we to change our neighbors? NO, not really. We are certainly justified in
teaching the Truth but we're never called to change our neighbors.

HA We can't change our neighbors. We are our neighbors keeper but we're not our neighbors
changer. So Paul is saying 'don't bring these weak people into your fellowship for the
purpose of arguing with them on these points that they cannot receive' and in a few moments,
we are going to see what the two points were and they were overeating and over special days!
And the ones who were concerned about the dietary laws - were the ones who had a background
in this... Jews! But the Gentiles were not concerned about dietary laws and the Kingdom of
God does not consist of meat and drink (Rom. 14: 17) but it's righteousness, peace and joy in
the Holy Ghost.

But some who were weak would think that a very vital part of the Xtn life is what you eat.
The days you observe. Look at

V. 2 (read) 'believeth that he may eat all things' (now that would be the strong; that he
may eat anything. And the Bible teaches this. We're not under the dietary laws of Leviticus.

Another who is weak (see?) eateth herbs' (or only eateth vegetables). Now there was a reason that the weak did not want to eat meat and therefore, they became vegetarians. In the ancient world, when, say a cow was killed for beef, a part of that animal was sacrificed unto a god. That was just a ritual. As a matter of fact, the butcher shops were beside the Temples. These Jews said 'why, listen, we're not gonna eat this meat. It's been sacrificed to idols. We don't believe in idols. If we eat this meat, we're worshipping idols.'

'Well, now' the strong said 'well, now, you're foolish. There's no such thing as idols in the first place. They go through this ritual but that's perfectly good meat and it's not affected at all. There's no idols'. Now Paul believed this and yet, he said he would not eat any meat as long as the world stood, if it offended a weak brother. A weak brother. So this is the picture that we have. Look at

V. 3 (read) this is a command from Paul. Now it's difficult not to dispise. Someone who is narrow minded, to dispise them and say 'listen, you're ignorant. You don't know anything. I just cannot accept your intolerance, your narrow mindedness.' I face this and I don't like it sometimes. People with little old narrow views but we have to be careful. They're our brothers and sisters in the Lord. I've seen people completely change - in this congregation, I've seen people completely changed in their attitudes toward things. You see, remember God is working and He doesn't do His work overnight.

It's not our place to kick these people out and say that they are not Xtns. There are whole churches that are so immature that they are bound by legalism. They're basically bound by legalism. It doesn't mean they're not Xtns, though, they're just not grown up. But somewhere along the line, they may get a pastor who'll stay with them, who teaches the full(or all) of Scrip. and the joys of the liberty of Christ. That congregation basically changes character through the Word of the Lord. But we're commanded 'let not him that eateth (or those who are stronger or have more understanding in the faith) dispise him (or look down their nose at him) that eateth NOT (that is: eateth not meat) and let not him which eateth, not judge him that

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eateth'. Let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth. You see, the tendency of the weak would be to judge those who eat and say 'well, listen, you're not a Xtn. You are so worldly and so loose in your living that you buy this contaminated meat; you are actually worshipping idols'. So there's the tendency of the weak to judge the strong ~~and~~ as being so liberal and so far out, that they're not even Xtens!

Paul is saying 'Oh, yes, they ARE and we must not be their judge but we must leave that to God. Look at the latter part of V. 3 'for God hath received him'. Received him how? In ^{grace} faith. We're not saved according to our understanding or by our lifestyle. We are saved by the Grace of God! And we're saved out of an environment that has molded us. SM For instance, I grew up believing that it was a sin for a woman to cut her hair. Why? BEcause my mother never cut her hair and I remember there was a time in my life that if I saw short hair on a woman, I said 'why, I don't understand! I'm not sure this woman is a Xtn'. And yet, I don't know of anybody in this congregation - the finest ladies in our congregation - have short hair, basically. Does the Bible say how long the hair should be? No, it doesn't.

What if I had held on to that? What if I had held on to that old prejudice? Had I done this, I simply could not have explored the areas of Biblical Truths and revelation. There are some people who never let the Bible speak; they live by their prejudices and that's sad. That is sad. 'For God hath received Him' - received him on the basis of faith in Jes. Not on the basis of his understanding of lifestyle. Now, I know you're saying 'anything goes in the Xtn life'. Oh, no, I'm not saying that at all. ~~XXXXXXX~~ down some things as strong as anybody. He has the highest teaching on Marriage against Adultery. We're not talking about this. We're talking of things that's not- it's not immoral or unmoral but they are amoral.

It's just something that the Bible doesn't clearly speak on - that we have a liberty in. He's not talking about that which tests(?) his character and the moral Law of God. We have to understand this. The length of a woman's hair does not - is not a fundamental teaching of the Word of God. That is NOT essential to Xtn living and Xtn behavior. Now in

V. 4 (read) 'now who do you think you are' is really the thrust of the question. Who do you think you are to judge another mans servant? He to his own master, he standeth or falleth. Now he's making a great point here. He's saying 'this person that you're judging, are you their master? Well, who do you think you are, to set yourself up as their master? Suppos e you're invited to a mans home and maybe there's a servant there serving the meal and maybe the biscuits are not exactly like you'd like them. Are you going to dress the servant down?

Why, never. Why? BEcause you're not their master. If that servants dealt with, it'll have to be the lady of the house or the man of the house. It will not be you. I am not your master in these areas, you are not my master. Just not! Only God is the master. 'Yea' he say's -- in the next part -- 'to his own master, he standeth or falleth!'. Yes, he shall be holden up (or he shall stand) for God is able to make him stand'. You see, he's saying 'don't worry, don't worry, this person has the grace of God and he's gonna stand because God is gonna make him stand. You know I like something that Bill Gothard and he has this long pen, about fifteen to twenty letters 'Please Be Patient With Me, God Is Not Finished With Me Yet'.

Listen, if a person is a Xtn and the H. S. is working, God is doing a great work. And we can't straighten them out from these points. Oh, we may counsel them and we have this responsibility to counsel and to instruct, but not to judge. And not to say they're not Xtns and not to accept them in our hearts and love them and pray for them. Now, he comes to another problem that was bothering them....

V. 5 (read) now, it's very logicsl that a Jew, a converted Jew, a Xtn, would have a regard for certain days. Now you say 'well, this is talking about the Sabboth or Sunday. It's quite possible but in the case of the Jews, it would be more than just Sunday or the Sabboth. The Jews had all kinds of Holy Days. Their religion was centered around festivals. We know this from reading the O. T. Well, Gentiles knew nothing about this. You and I don't know anything about this, basically and we look, in vain, in the N. T., to find any command to observe things like this. We find commands NOT to do this, basically. But the Jews were saying 'listen, we have got to keep certain days.' The Gentiles were saying 'no, God is the Lord of every day and

we are not to be bound down by law. O.K. What does this mean? Does it mean the Jews were not saved and the Gentiles were saved or the Gentiles were saved and the Jews were not saved or the Gentiles were right and the Jews were wrong? The Jews were right and the Gentiles were wrong? That's not what Paul says. Paul does not take a categorical stand. He says 'one man will esteem one day; another every day alike'. THEN he makes this tremendous statement: 'let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind'.

Be convinced in your heart that you are doing what is right with the Light you have and you can answer to God for it and you can pray about it and you are not condemned! If Special Days are important to you, all right. If these days are not important to you and in your heart, you can live with it, you can pray and you feel no condemnation, go ahead! All right. You say 'but wait a minute, WAIT a minute - we've got to meet on Sunday and we can't meet any other day'. Where's the commandment? There is no commandment. That shows you the extent of liberty for the Xtn. You say 'but listen, the historic church for two thousand years, has met on Sunday'. EXACTLY! And the great events of the N. T. happened on Sunday and there is overwhelming evidence and I'm completely convinced ~~XXXX~~ in my heart that today is the day for us to leave it.

NO comm. about Sunday

It's a tremendous study, just to study the N. T. and see the things that happen on Sunday.

① That was the day that Jes. rose again. But not only was that the day Jes. rose again; that was the day that ^②He ascended into Glory. #3. That was the day that He first appeared unto the disciples. ^④#4. That was the day that He first broke bread. ^⑤#5. That was the day that He breathed upon them to receive the H. S. ^⑥#6. That was the day that the H. S. came - Pentecost happened on the first day. ^⑦That was the day that He gave the Great Commission to the church.

⑧ Day He's coming again

⑨ That was the day that He appeared to John on Patmos and that was the day that the early Xtns began to meet. And Scrip. says 'they DID meet'. But you look in vain to find a definite commandment that we MUST meet on Sunday. Acts 20: 7 (read) 'broke bread' that was the Lords Supper. The nearest commandment is Paul's work in 1 Cor. 16: 2 (read) there are some who

would say 'that is a commandment' but it is not a full-fledged commandment. Should we meet on the first day of the week? I think we should BUT a Xtn brother said to me 'I believe we ought to meet on Saturday'. I said 'you really believe that? You've studied the N. T.?' He said ;yes! I really believe we ought to meet on Saturday'. I brought to him what I've just said to you, I said 'you realize the important things in the Xtn dispensation has happened on Sunday and the early church and the historic church, in it's Catholic-Anglican and free Evangelical traditions, for two thousand years, have met on Sunday?'

He said 'I still believe Saturday'. I said 'fine. You're my brother'. Now I said to him, I said 'I think you'll learn better with an open Bible and the H. S. - I think you're gonna come around. You're gonna start meeting on Sunday but if this is your life and you are convinced, I would not condemn you.' Why? BEcause of what Paul says. This is how far he takes it, my friend.

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Some years ago, I did something I've never done, as a pastor. I preached a sermon in this church, entitled: 'Form And Freedom In The N. T. Church'. You know what I discovered? Practically, no form. There's nothing in the N. T. about so many things. Now we have a lot of ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ traditions about so many things, and we Baptists are so strong on this and the Pentecostals and Nazarenes and Methodist sometimes - we're pretty strong on it. We don't have ~~HA~~ a word of Scrip. for it. Like the eleven o'clock worship hour - that was between the time of the milking of the cows. You change that in some churches, you'd have a revolution on your hands. You can't worship except at eleven!

There's not a bit of Bible in this. The Bible doesn't tell a pastor how much education he has to have. Doesn't tell you how often you are to celebrate the Lords Supper; doesn't tell you how you're to do baptisms; doesn't tell you how you're to minister the Lords Supper. It is absolutely AMAZING when you read the N. T. - the freedom that Gods people have under the Lordship of Christ. That Gods people have, UNDER the Lordship of Christ. And Paul is ~~XXXXXX~~ certainly showing it here. Now in all probability, for a time, the early Xtns met on Saturday and Sunday. But these Jews were evidently clinging pretty heavily to Saturday and Paul says

'don't condemn them. DON'T condemn them'. How about a Seven-Day Adventist? Have you ever met a Seven Day Adventist?

Sometimes they're the most marvelously dedicated people I've ever known. Now, here's a problem: when the Sabbatarians come along and say 'THIS is the package of salvation; you've GOT to meet on Saturday to be a Xtn' - they, indeed, have Paul down their neck. I'm not talking about that. Neither was Paul. No legalism in Paul to be saved and that's the problem with Sabbatarians, as a rule. It's not just that I think this day is preferable but this day is a MUST; this day is a PART of salvation; you MUST and you also much give that tithe. You've GOT to give the tithe; you've GOT to meet on Saturday or you're lost!

Now Paul would say 'that's as big a heresy as was ever taught in the world'. In the Galatian Epistle, he condemns this throughout. We're not talking about this at all. Let's move on.

V. 6 (read) 'regardeth (or observes). That is, these Special Days. 'But he that observes NOT the day, to the Lord, he does not observe'. He says 'these two parties, they are doing it for the Lord. The one who meets on Saturday is doing it for the Lord and the one on Sunday for the Lord. They're both for the Lord, though they're meeting on different days. 'He that eateth, eateth to (for is the preposition) he who eateth, eateth for the Lord'. For he giveth God thanks.' He that eateth this meat offered to idols, convinced in his mind there is no idols, he eats to the Lord.

He that eateth not for the Lord; he eateth not and giveth God thanks'. So he's saying 'those who eat just vegetables, they do it unto the Lord and those who eat the meat, they do it unto the Lord and he's placing them in the same category.

V. 7(read) 'to (or FOR) himself and no man dies for himself.' What a text this is for the Xtn. You see, our reference is not ourselves, it's not our peers, it's not our church, it's God! It's the Lord and that's Jes. Christ. We live for the Lord. What we do is for the Lord, he

is saying and we could never think of anything we do, except for the Lord. If we can eat for the Lord, fine. If we're eating only vegetables for the Lord, fine. Just be sure that it's unto the Lord and we can thank the Lord for it.

V. 8 (read) we belong to the Lord, JC. So he's coming to this tremendous teaching of Scrip. that JC is Lord; that we are responsible to Him and as long as we feel right with Him, i t's *sm* approved of God, in the area where Scrip. doesn't really speak. Course we cannot commit adultery unto the Lord. Anybody knows this. We cannot lie unto the Lord. No. And Paul would say that as strong as anyone. But in these areas of lifestyle, which does not affect salvation or doctrine, he says 'if you can do it unto the Lord, fine. If you can't do it unto the Lord, don't do it! As a matter of fact, we'll see before we close, if you can't pray about it, don't do it.

And if you can't ask God to bless it, don't do it.

V. 9 (read) 'to this end (or for this reason) the Greek says 'and live again'. For this reason Christ died and lives again - what? 'That He might be Lord, both of the dead and the living'. This is the most important teaching of the entire Word of God. Lord! The Lordship of Christ. That's the _____, that's the thing - always to refer to: Jes. is my Lord; can I do this unto Him and for His glory? So in the light of this, he says in

V. 10 (read) why do you judge your brother? Now that's a word to the weak. If Jes. is your Lord and Judge, why do you sit around, judging your brother who's eating this meat and not keeping all these days? See? Now there's people right here in this class that you're strong enough not to be bound by legalism. You hear about the hair code; the dress code in certain churches. We need to be careful. It looks to us as if ignorance and foolishness but it may not be to that individual and we don't want to destroy some of Gods people by taking a judgmental attitude. But look he gives another question there in this same verse:

There in V. 10: 'or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?' Who's that? That's the strong. He goes on to say in that same verse: 'for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of ~~BM~~ Christ'. See where he's leading? He says 'why do we set ourselves up as judges. Why are we evaluating people and why do we get all worked up about these things'. Let me tell you, people really get worked up about these things and churches are split and ^{great} divisions and long standing _____ of _____ in the hearts of people. Paul says 'why do you do this? You're not the judge but Christ is'. We shall all stand before the judgment seat and that's the Bema. That was the form or the platform where the judges sat in the Olympic games and the Ismaen(?) games to reward the runners, according to their performance.

Every believer is gonna appear before the Bema (?). We're gonna answer for our lifestyle. I am responsible to you and you are responsible to me. I'm responsible NOT to be a stumbling block in your life. I'm gonna have to answer for this, before the Bema, and you are.

V. 11 (read) now notice 'shall bow to Me' - not to man. And 'every tongue shall confess to God'. Not to man. And when we try to play God and someone else's life, what we're trying to get them to do is to bow their knee to us or to confess to us when that is not our place, at ~~all~~ all. God calls on us to direct our children; pretty clearly. That can even be overdone, because the Bible says not to over-correct and not to exasperate our children and twist them into radical action and reaction against us. Some parents actually go beyond their rights even in dealing with their children. He sums it up in

V. 12 (read) notice it is singular 'every one'. ¹ Who? 'Who shall give an account?' EVERY one! It's a solemn word to us. Every one - ² What? Shall give an account; ³ of whom? Of himself. Notice the singular. Every one of us shall give an account of himself, not of our neighbors - just himself. And when we realize this, we're not gonna be too inclined to try to straighten out our neighbors. We're gonna be so concerned about our own accountability to God and when Daniel Webster, who should have been President; when those minor lights were elected President before 1850, Daniel Webster should have been President!

The sad thing that some of our greatest men never made it. But someone asked the wise Webster 'what is the most solemn thought that ever crossed your mind?' He said 'that I, Daniel Webster must give an account of myself to God'. And he's talking about our behavior, our relationship to our brothers in areas of disagreement.

Quickly, there are three approaches:

#1. APPROACH OF LIBERTY OR LICENSE. This says there's no rules. That is not Xtn. There are some rules, absolutely. We're got a lot of people today who ~~XXXX~~ claim they are Xtns, who have no rules, whatsoever. They go against the very plain teaching of Scrip. Paul is not a libertarian.

#2. THE LEGALISTS. They are practically ALL rules. Their religion is 'you don't do this' and it's based upon their prejudices, quite often. Based upon what their pastor taught them or their mother and often it's in the area where God gives great liberty but they bring you right down a straight line and if you don't agree with them, you're lost and they don't want anything to do with you. The Xtn way is the way of Love, which is a combination of

#3. LIBERTY AND LAW or it would be better to say 'RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST'. That's Xtnity. Liberty but liberty controlled by definite moral, Spiritual responsibility, based upon the Word of God. Sometimes it's a difficult path to walk between liberty and law but that's Xtnity. Now how do we determine when a thing is right or wrong? All right, here are three questions we can always ask:

#1. DOES IT ACCORD WITH THE SCRIPTURE? When the Scrip. speak clearly against something, it's always wrong. When the Scrip. ^{condemns} ~~commends~~ something, it's always wrong. The Scrip. 'thou shalt not lie' - it always wrong to lie. The Scrip. says 'always be honest'. Where Scrip. speaks, we are under the authority of Christ to do what it says. But you see Scrip. doesn't speak at many areas. Specifically! It just doesn't speak! For instance, I grew up where tobacco was king. I never thought there was anything wrong with tobacco. But I was

taught that mixed bathing was an awful sin! I didn't do it. But when I went to Greensboro, N. C., I discovered that they thought tobacco was awful and there was nothing wrong with mixed bathing. Is it alright to use tobacco and grow tobacco in Eastern Carolina but wrong in the Piedmont? Is mixed bathing right in the Piedmont and wrong in Eastern Carolina? Now that's where we have to be persuaded in our minds, under God. And another principle which we will see in just a few moments. In the second place, we have to ask the question

#2. DO THESE THINGS ACCORD WITH THE PRINCIPLE - THE TRUTH PRINCIPLES OF SCRIPTURE?

1 Now you will not find a command in the Bible that says 'thou shalt not overeat'. But you DO find a command in the Bible that this body is the Temple of the H. Ghost and should be kept clean and should be kept strong to glorify the Lord. So there are many things; while it's not specifically stated, it's covered by Truth Principles. 2 The Bible doesn't say 'thou shalt not smoke'. But, again, the Bible says that the body should be kept clean, a living sacrifice unto God. That's covered by a Truth Principle. But then there is a third question and that is

#3. DOES IT EDIFY OR DOES IT OFFEND MY BROTHER? Now the man that talked to me last week and said he had beer in his refrigerator and he was was - he said 'it's just something I grew up with'. They do this in Germany. The Xtns do this in Germany; Baptists do this in Germany. I asked him this: to pray about it. I said 'but not listen, in our culture, if many Xtns saw beer in your refrigerator, you'd have no testimony whatsoever!! You cannot witness to the lost in Ft. Smith'. This is a fundamental understanding that we need. If what we are doing offends ANYBODY, keeps somebody in a lost condition or causes a Xtn to stumble, that is very, very serious sin.

SM For years, I did not have a television in my home, though I had no conviction against it, in my heart. Because there was a very earnest Xtn woman that lived next door who said 'I think television is one of the greatest evils in all the world' and all she could see was just the sin! And she said 'if you got a television, I would lose all my confidence in you.' I did not get one. When it would have been no sin to me; I wouldn't have looked at it, probably no more than an hour for I didn't have time. Certainly not more than two and it would have been

a religious broadcast or the world news. But not to this dear lady! WE have to deny ourselves sometimes - say 'well, what if the interest of a whole body, a church is at stake?' Well, sometimes the church has to take an action for the progress of the Kingdom. If it offends someone, but those people ought to be dealt with and ought to be talked to and they ought not to be kicked around, who cannot go along with certain things.

Like in the day when we used to debate whether a Baptist should be in the church and whether we should wear zippers or buttons - did you know that used to be an issue? When the zip^{pers} came out, some of the old timers said 'oh, you shouldn't wear a zipper. If you don't have buttons on - those zippers are worldly'. It's AMAZING what people have discussed. Some would say 'you're not a Xtn, if you've got a zipper on'. You'd say 'well, that's carrying it far'. Well, we have things just that foolish going on in Xtens churches, among Xtens.

O.K. so these are the three questions to ask. Now, there is something else to ask. Three more questions:

#1. HOW WILL MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS ACT AFFECT MYSELF? Does it make me a better person or does it hurt me?

#2. HOW DOES IT AFFECT OTHERS? This young girl was saved and she said to her pastor 'you know, I want to go to a dance. Should I go?' sm The pastor said 'well, if you can take Jes. with you, be all right'. She said 'I believe I can'. She went to the dance, she was dancing and a young man broke in and said 'I want to dance with you' and she turned to the young man and said 'are you a Xtn?' and he said 'no, I'm not, are you?' She said 'yes'. He said 'what are you doing here?' You get it? Do you get it? Here's the question and Paul is strong - he comes down strong on this. As a matter of fact, he says 'we can destroy our weak brothers by actions that would be no sin to us, but which is poison to them'. Remember my title today: One Mans Faith is Another Mans Poison!

#3. HOW DOES IT AFFECT THE CAUSE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH? Does it strengthen the

witness of FBC in this community? Does it help us to win the lost? Or does it hurt? We have our answer. And then, there is the test of secrecy. What we do, are we willing for it to be known? Or we have to do it behind somebodys back or out of town?

#2. THE TEST OF UNIVERSALITY. Would it be all right with you if everybody does this? Or would you really like for it to be limited?

#3. THE TEST OF PRAYER. Can you pray about? Here's the rules. Here's the rules. Here's Paul's rules: this was stated by St. Augustin in the ^{5th} 15th Century, but this is Paul. He was a Pauline. ¹ In essentials unity. What are essentials? The Deity of Christ. Morality, Honesty, Integrity. No compromise. Paul NEVER would compromise on that. ² But in non-essentials: see? In non-essentials, what ye eat, the days ye observe - liberty. ³ And in all things - charity! That's the rule. That's the Xtn rule.

Next Sunday we'll continue this. Paul stays on it - it's that important. I was talking to Doris yesterday and I said 'Honey, we got some prejudices. We felt kinda strange about some people. Let's purify our hearts'. Since I've been in Ft. Smith, I saw a member of this church and I mean a big one, mowing his lawn on Sunday. I saw another one go fishing. I was taught that that was a deadly sin and those who did it are pagans or lost. Were they? Did my parents not judge? Had they read Rom. 14? You think about it and make up your mind.

Let's stand.