

[Romans 14:5 – 17]

~ Many people will be reading our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God this coming year; and I pray God will bring each of us a tremendous blessing; such as we have never received in times past. From my viewpoint, we are entering the darkest time in this so-called safari ministry. There are many reasons for that darkness; one is that there is now going around blatant heresies and utterly wrong, simplistic, uneducated and false teachings. The Word of God is being misused, abused and distorted like never before in history. Many of us still wish there could be a revival – and there could be – but there are few prospects of it happening right now in *ANY* part of the world as I type this report.

I have no delusions that the multitudes of sleeping saints will wake up; or that lukewarm people will get fired up; or that disgruntled people will become satisfied; or that all the discouraged people will cheer up; or all the depressed people will look up; or that all estranged people would make up; or that gossipers and ignorant teachers will shut up! If all of those things happened, then revival might become a reality – but they would have to *ALL* happen. Even so, I am praying that the Lord will break through the blue with either a great spiritual movement – or – to remove His church from the world altogether. May His will be done!

Our previous report didn't take us very far in this chapter, and this report will not be sufficient to conclude it, either; because we are learning Christian conduct, and there is a whole lot we *all* need to get straight in that regard. Specifically, concerning separation of the sons of God *UNTO* Him! Remember, this epistle began by saying Paul was an apostle separated *UNTO* the Gospel of God — not *from* anything; and we have stressed that point several times along this Roman road. There are several words in the English language to which a correct understanding of the preposition pertaining to it is critical if you want to comprehend what someone is trying to convey.

Something can be cleaved apart – or it can be cleaved together, for example. Sometimes, the same word actually means the opposite of what it means somewhere else; all depending on the context. “*Separation*” can be *FROM* something; but it can also be *UNTO* something. When a man gets married, he becomes separated *UNTO* one woman; that’s what marriage is. Being separated from other women isn’t really the important thing; because if that man is separated *UNTO* his wife, he will automatically be separated *FROM* the others! It’s a fair distinction. It’s legitimate. And it is important to properly process and apply in our thinking and lives.

The biggest problem today is that many people want to be separate *FROM* something; but few are separated *UNTO* the Lord Jesus Christ – and certainly not unto the Gospel – and most have no earthly idea what this means in their lives. Paul was separated *unto* the Gospel, which means he was separated *UNTO* Christ. That is, to Him Personally and unto the things of Christ; specifically, this is also what God refers to as “*holy!*” Remember, the pots and pans in the tabernacle were *separated unto* the use and service of worshipping God. They were holy vessels. As the children of Israel moved along in the wilderness those pots and pans took a real beating, too. I doubt they looked very good after a few decades. Well, those instruments were still holy because they were used exclusively in the service of the True and Living God.

That should be the desire and position of every Christian. Paul told the carnal Corinthians they were separated unto Christ as a chaste virgin. Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ? Do you love His Word? Do you want to be with Him and do His things? Do you want to talk with Him? Do you want to hear from Him? If you answered *yes* to those questions, then separation is no problem for you. The problem is: there are *MANY* self-proclaimed super-duper make-believers espousing hyper separation – and, quite honestly – because I always am honest with you readers – they scare me to death! They always seem to ask me if I do this or that or don’t do that. Well, you may be sure there are many things I do that you likely don’t do; and there are things I don’t do that I could almost bet my life you do! Of course, the only reason anyone ever asks me those things is so they can meddle in my affairs in an attempt to discredit my message. See, the world doesn’t truly

care what I do, don't do, have or have not – but they sure do care about finding fault with this proper, correct and complete Bible teaching....

5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

~ I believe that whatever a Christian does should be done with enthusiasm; and that is the first great principal Paul lays down in verse five. We considered this in our previous report, and if you have not had a chance to read that report, I suggest you go back and do so now. There are many who regard Saturday as their Sabbath and split those types of theological hairs in every doctrinal passage taught to them. If you are under a conviction to worship on a specific day, then I think that's the day you ought to do so. I, personally, have my own reasons for why I feel Saturday is not an appropriate day of worship. That's why Paul said, "*....whatever you do let every man be fully persuaded.*"

Many people go to a stadium on Sunday and pay hundreds of dollars for the privilege of watching some shamefully overpaid children chase balls that aren't even round up and down a field for a few hours. They scream and carry on so loudly that they sometimes cannot even talk the next day! Those people are fanatics, without question – but they don't think so – they only think of themselves as "*fans.*" These fans buy clothes to look like their team and purchase all sorts of identifying trinkets to attach to their cars and homes – and, friends, I don't care what they do. That's between them and the Lord. I don't think they are thinking right, though. They never support a sincere cause like this ministry. I can't get enthused about sports any longer; I see it as a colossal waste of time. Most of it seems rigged through corrupt officiating. Interestingly, if you stand up and even mention the Lord Jesus Christ with enthusiasm, those people will relegate you to the worst possible use of the term "*fanatic!*" Well, I write these reports because that's what I love to do. There isn't anything more that I want to do than write this safari according to Scripture. You can just write that down.

The deadness of saints who have no enthusiasm whatsoever for the Word of God is the main reason the world has all but stopped going to church.

Candidly, I don't blame them. Have you ever seen the saints on Sunday morning? Let's just say they are less than enthused. If you are not totally convinced and excited that Christ is by far the best thing in your life, then there is a good chance you aren't even saved. We have men teaching Sunday school who just aren't interested. When that happens, I think they are committing sin. That's one of the main reasons church work gets bogged down and people are not reached by the message of the Gospel. Mankind will *NEVER* turn to Christ until they come to the end of themselves. If you do not understand the Word of God entirely, then it will be impossible for you to get excited about it. Men *WILL* turn to religion to ease their guilt complex, but it is simply an empty ritual they tolerate once each week; and only then because church, and the idea of dimly acknowledging God, gives them some semblance of credibility in their community. Their religion turns to bitterness and resentment — every time — sooner or later.

That brings us to questionable conduct; as we began to consider in our previous report. Many people ask me if "X" is right or wrong. I always tell them that for *THEM* it is wrong, but for *ME* it would be alright. Naturally, they always gasp for air and shake their heads at me. See, I have no question about those things I consider right and wrong; but if *YOU* have a question whether something is right, then it is completely wrong for you. Make a note. The man who has a question about certain things can never do those things being fully persuaded in his own mind. People who are fully persuaded in their own minds do not have questions like that. No one has ever asked me if going to a football game is right or wrong — they just go — and they go with *high* enthusiasm, too, by the way.

Remember, Simon Peter followed the Lord "*afar off*" that night after the betrayal when Jesus was arrested. Jesus was taken into the judgment hall to Caiaphas the high priest. Simon Peter was afraid of what was happening; but John went right into the judgment hall, and he apparently knew everyone there. Simon Peter shouldn't have been anywhere near that place because he had a conviction — John had no conviction about being there. That will not compute with these people who set up their little systems of conduct and believe God could not rule this universe without them. Those super-duper saints *ALWAYS* have some awful hidden skeletons in their

closets. When you meet them, you had better keep your eye on them, because they are as dangerous as a runaway train. The normal and natural saint has enthusiasm about the things they do for God. Further, only that normal and natural – or normal and *supernatural* – saint ever gets anything done for God that is of lasting value. You can just write all that down, also, my friends....

6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

~ Either way, irrespective of what we do or when we do it, we must give thanks to God from our hearts. The things on the table don't mean anything; what's in the *heart* means everything! I hear many people say, '*no man liveth unto himself and no man die unto himself.*' They use that to try to reinforce a point that our lives affect others, and we have influence on them; however, that's *NOT* the thought here. Verse seven means we cannot live our lives apart from Christ. That's why our conduct could never be limited or even gauged by the food spread out on the table. We better make sure our lives are all spread out before Christ. You and I will give an account for the things that we did in the flesh. Whatever you do or wherever you go, keep in mind that one day you'll be required to attend a meeting with Him. His questions won't have anything to do with meat on the table, but He is going to ask you all about your relationship to Him in your heart when you sat down at His table. We can be Godless with meat; and we can be Godless without it....

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.

12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

~ I have never really understood why people always want to go to Bethlehem at Christmas time. There's no star there today; the New Testament closes with Jesus saying He is the root and the offspring of David. Christ Himself is the Bright and Morning Star! He left Bethlehem a *LONG* time ago; and that's the star this Spiritual Safari follows; and we're just going to continue to follow it until one day we'll find ourselves in His presence....

13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

~ Remember, Jesus told the Pharisees who wanted to stone the woman caught in adultery, "let him amongst you that has no sin cast the first stone!" Of course, there was no stone throwing that day. When we finally recognize how we will be required to give an account for ourselves and our conduct towards others, we should be very disturbed. I am. I wonder how I am going to explain certain things to the Lord. If I am busy worrying about judging you, then I can't be considering myself. Well, Paul is going to develop that thought in the next leg of our expedition; and we are going to learn that our conduct must be controlled for the sake of the weak brothers and sisters....

14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

~ Why don't we stop hurting each other? There's plenty of that around in the lost world – even in the apostate churches. At the same time, we need to be very careful to realize our Christian liberty can cause us to be seriously criticized. Verse seventeen is another abused verse of Scripture that has to do with *conduct*. It has *NOTHING* to do with physical eating, drinking or fasting – and it has nothing to do with meat on Friday or pork or a vegetarian diet, either! These little rules are only traditions of men, and they are pure garbage, quite frankly. They were eating and drinking in Noah's day. They were talking all about all of these problems way back then.

The Heavenly sphere of life, in which the Word of God and the Holy Spirit govern – and whose body is the church on earth – that is, the spiritual aspect of our salvation – is all that is important in our lives. God rules everywhere; but there is a realm in which He governs by spiritual forces and laws alone. That statement is directed at the church today. The true Christian simply cannot do the things the world does because the natural man is totally incapable of seeing or entering the Kingdom of God until he is born again. If I could only correctly convey to you how critical it is that we are guided along by the Spirit of God concerning spiritual principles, then we may not need a report every single day. But, we're going to pick right here in our next report because we do need one — at least one — every day ~