

What It's All About



Christianity is a Matter of ...
Romans 14:17
August 4, 2019

We will live more authentically as Christians if we have a clear grasp of what it means to be Christians. According to this section of Romans, following Christ is _____ a matter of quarreling (14:1), judging (14:3, 10), looking down on others (14:3, 10), eating and drinking (14:17), or pleasing ourselves (15:1). In context, the eating and drinking represent controversial issues about which people may argue or insist on their rights. Being ruled by God has nothing to do with any of these things.

Instead, being ruled by God is a matter of _____, _____ and _____ in the _____ (14:17). This fits the teachings we have been considering that call us to highlight major matters that unite us. Today we will explore these qualities and how the One Spirit helps us develop them. Hopefully, this reflection on what Christianity is all about will give us clarity, focus, and help to live more faithfully under God's rule.

Righteousness refers to goodness, uprightness, or being morally right. There are several senses of righteousness in the Bible: 1) Only God is truly righteous (Mark 10:18; Romans 3:5, 25-26), but 2) he is willing to count people as righteous if they trust him (Romans 1:17; 3:21-22; 4:3, 5-6; 10:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Philippians 3:9; James 2:23). Though 3) no human can be totally righteous in actual fact (Romans 3:10), 4) we are called to become increasingly righteous in our actual attitudes and behavior (Matthew 5:20; Acts 24:25; Romans 6:16, 18-19; Ephesians 4:24; 5:9; 1 Timothy 6:11; 2 Timothy 2:22; 3:16; James 1:20; 3:18; 1 John 2:29; 3:7, 10). We also

5) look forward to our final verdict of righteousness on the last day (Galatians 5:5; 2 Timothy 4:8). I suspect the sense of righteousness in Romans 14:17 is 4), the Holy Spirit making us increasingly righteous in our actual attitudes, words, and deeds, as we _____ with him (Romans 8:4, 13; Galatians 5:16, 22-23, 25; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2).

Peace is not only the absence of strife but is also the presence of a positive sense of wellbeing. Peace is not self-generated but, like righteousness, comes from God. It is a fruit of the Spirit working in our lives (Galatians 5:22). If we live by the Spirit, our minds will be set on the Spirit, and we will experience peace (Romans 8:6). As we _____ God, he will fill us with peace and the related emotions of joy and hope, through the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13). The Spirit is also the source of unity in the body, which we maintain by learning to live in peace with others (Ephesians 4:3). In the context of Romans 14, we do this by _____ controversial matters or asserting our rights, and instead _____ ourselves with becoming righteous, peaceful and joyful through the Holy Spirit.

Christian joy is deeper and more consistent than secular joy, but it is still an emotion. Like peace, it is a fruit of the Holy Spirit working in us (Galatians 5:22; Luke 10:21; Acts 13:52; Romans 15:13; 1 Thessalonians 1:6). These passages show that joy does not depend on pleasant conditions. Rather, it is based on greater spiritual realities that supersede all circumstances. As with peace, we experience joy when we _____ God (Romans 15:13) and _____ with his Spirit (Galatians 5:22, 25).

Did you allow God's Spirit to produce righteousness, peace, and joy in you did last week? We have another chance to focus on these vital matters this week. It's a way to _____ and people will approve as well (Romans 14:18). It's what Christianity is all about (Romans 14:17).

