



LOVE AND LIBERTY



ALL OF US LIKE TO LOVE AND BE LOVED AND WE DEARLY SAVOR OUR LIBERTY. BOTH ARE GOOD. BUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN LOVE AND LIBERTY COMPETE? THAT'S THE CASE WE FIND IN ROMANS 14. THE BELIEVERS WANTED TO LOVE EACH OTHER BUT THEY ALSO WANTED THEIR LIBERTY. THE ISSUE THERE WAS WITH REGARD TO FOODS (V. 2) AND DAYS (V. 5). SOME THOUGHT YOU SHOULD BE VEGETARIAN, AND OTHERS THOUGHT YOU COULD EAT MEAT, EVEN MEAT OFFERED TO IDOLS. SOME THOUGHT YOU SHOULD KEEP SUNDAY AS THE ONLY HOLY DAY AND OTHERS THOUGHT IT WAS OK TO CONTINUE OBSERVING ALL OR SOME OF THE RELIGIOUS AND CIVIL FEAST DAYS. WE DO NOT FACE THOSE ISSUES BUT DO DEAL WITH CONTROVERSIAL MATTERS.

FOR MANY OF US RIGHT NOW, THE CORONA VIRUS CAN BE CONTROVERSIAL. SOME THINK WE SHOULD IGNORE IT AND GO ABOUT LIFE (INCLUDING CHURCH LIFE) AS NORMAL. OTHERS THINK WE SHOULD BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHERS AND RESPECTFUL OF THE GOVERNMENT AND FOLLOW THEIR MANDATES. IN REALITY, PROBABLY FEW OF US AGREE ENTIRELY ABOUT THIS PANDEMIC AND OUR RESPONSES TO IT. BUT SHOULD THAT DIVIDE US? IS THIS A DOCTRINAL ISSUE? DOES ONE POSITION, WHATEVER IT MAY BE, INDICATE MORE FAITH OR SPIRITUALITY THAN ANOTHER? I'D ANSWER "NO" TO EACH OF THOSE THREE QUESTIONS.

SO, HERE'S MY POINT. WE NEED TO FOLLOW BIBLICAL GUIDELINES WHEN IT COMES TO CONTROVERSIAL TOPICS. ROMANS 14 GIVES US MANY OF THESE. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES.

1. BE WELCOMING OF OTHERS, NO MATTER THEIR POSITION (V. 1)
2. DON'T DESPISE OR PASS JUDGMENT ON OTHERS (V. 3)
3. REMEMBER THAT EACH OF US WILL STAND BEFORE GOD'S JUDGMENT SEAT AND ANSWER FOR OURSELVES (V. 10)
4. BE CAREFUL ABOUT HOW YOUR "CONVICTIONS" APPEAR TO OTHERS (V. 16)
5. REMEMBER WHAT'S IMPORTANT (V. 17)
6. PURSUE PEACE (V. 19)
7. GIVE UP YOUR "RIGHTS" FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR BROTHER (V. 21)
8. PRACTICE YOUR LIBERTY PRIVATELY (V. 22)

I THINK ROMANS 14:15 IS THE KEY TO THE PASSAGE. THERE WE ARE TOLD THAT IF WE HURT OUR BROTHER OR SISTER FOR THE SAKE OF OUR PARTICULAR "CONVICTION," WE ARE NOT WALKING IN LOVE. IF IT COMES TO A CHOICE BETWEEN GIVING LOVE OR USING LIBERTY, LOVE SHOULD ALWAYS WIN.

LOOKING UP!
PASTOR CHUCK CIRCLE