

SUPRA CULTURE FOR BELIEVERS IN JESUS CHRIST

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There is much discussion in churches worldwide about what is proper and what is improper for Christians. There is also much disagreement concerning certain doctrines of the Church. Many books have been written on the subject. We believe that the Bible is the absolute truth and it is God's instructions and commands for the behavior and culture of all believers. God's instructions in the Holy Bible are SUPRA, above and beyond all local cultures of the believers. In Romans 14 we discover **10 basic principles of God's Supra Culture for us as believers in Jesus Christ.**

ROMANS 14

Verse 1: Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.

Principle No. 1. We must not judge one another, especially on disputable matters such as choice of clothing, hair style, preference of food, choice of music, and all cultural matters, including convictions in disputable doctrinal matters such as mode of baptism, gifts of the Spirit, Holy Communion, forms of church government and methods of evangelism other matters that are dividing the believers.

Verse 2: One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.

Verse 3: The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.

Principle No. 2. We must recognize that our faith is not at the same level so we must be considerate of each other and not condemn each other or look down on each other. God accepts both, the one who eats everything and the one who does not.

Verse 5-6: One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

He, who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Principle No. 3. There is liberty to be different. But we must be fully convinced of what we do, do it to the Lord and give thanks to God. So the question is "Can I do this for the Lord? Can I give thanks to God for this?"

If we cannot do it for the Lord and cannot give thanks than we do not do it.

Verse 7: For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Principle No. 4. We do not live alone but in a community of believers. Therefore we need to be considerate of others and always realize that we belong to the Lord. We are not our own

but we have been bought with a price, the precious blood of Jesus and we are His property. So we must have His approval for our words and actions.

Verses 10-12: You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat. It is written: "As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God." "So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Principle No. 5. Only God has the authority to judge us and we are all accountable to God for our behavior. We have no liberty to judge our brother or sister. Some day we all will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ and give account to the Lord Jesus Christ for our behavior here on earth.

Verses 13-16: Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in your brother's way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat; you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.

Principle No. 6. We should make a decision today not to be offensive to other believers or members of other denominations. What you may think as good others may think of as evil or sin. You may think it is perfectly OK to carry on a conversation on your cell phone or send text messages during worship but the one sitting next to you may think it is evil. You may think one form of evangelism as completely Biblical but your brother or sister may think it to be compromise. In some cases we must agree to disagree and live at peace with each other and remember the words of Jesus in John 13:34 and 35, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

Verses 17 and 18: For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. Because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and approved by men

Principle No. 7. Pleasing God and being approved by each others is our goal in the community of believers. This is accomplished when we grow in Christ and manifest righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Verses 19-21: Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.

Principle No. 8. We must make every effort to maintain peace in the church of God and encourage one another. We do this by denying self and give priority to the feelings of others. Self denial is an absolute requirement of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verses 22 and 23: *So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*

Principle No. 9. We do not openly criticize each other concerning what we do or not do. We must be sure that what we do is based on our faith in God and obedience to His Word. This is the SUPRA Culture in a church fellowship or in community of believers, above and beyond all our own cultures, lifestyles and personal convictions.

Verses 5-7 of Romans Chapter 15: *May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, ⁶ so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.*

Principle No. 10. We accept one another and love each other as we are followers of the Lord Jesus Christ representing many nations, cultures, denominations, organizations and forms of worship. With one heart and mouth we glorify God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ and give praise to Almighty God. May God give all of us great endurance and encouragement to follow Jesus Christ in a spirit of unity.