

# The Book of Romans

## Chapter Fourteen - Christian Maturity

### Focus Verse - Romans 14:13

#### I. Introduction - Greatest Book in the New Testament for the Christian!

This one Book in your Bible condenses down into 16 chapters the greatest themes of all humanity - the themes of understanding sin, God's judgment, justification by faith, sanctification (clean living), victory over sin, eternal security, and serving Christ!

#### II. Book Review So Far - *There are Six Sections (main subjects) in Romans*

##### A. SECTION ONE - **Sin** - Chapters 1 & 2

Chapter 1. **The Righteousness and Wrath of God** - Describes the condition of the human heart in very vivid terms - as depraved (ruined utterly in character or quality)!

Chapter 2. **The Sin of Self-Righteousness** - There are so many people who look at the list and find some way of excusing THEMSELVES, and looking down at OTHERS - "civilised" vs "heathen" and the lower classes

##### B. SECTION TWO - **Our Great Salvation** - Chapters 3-5 (*Justification*)

Chapter 3. The fact of There Being No Difference - No Excuses

Chapter 4. How To Become Strong in Faith

Chapter 5. The Benefits of Salvation

##### C. SECTION THREE - **The Christians' Sanctification** - Chapters 6-7

##### D. SECTION FOUR - **The Believer's Security in Christ** - Chapter 8

E. SECTION FIVE of the Book of Romans - **The Special Place of Israel in God's overall plan**. This section explains a lot of the background to the history in the Middle East, and help us Gentiles understand the level of God's commitment to us! There are 3 chapters in this section (chapters 9, 10, 11).

Chapter 9. The Position of Israel - A special place of use

Chapter 10. The Need of Israel - to get the Gospel

Chapter 11. The Future of Israel - God's plan for them in the future

##### F. SECTION SIX - **The Christians' Service** - Chapters 12-16

Chapter 12. God's Gifts of provision - how He enables us to serve

Chapter 13. Life Principles

### III. Focus Verse: Romans 14:13

#### IV. Lesson - Chapter 14 has to do with the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christians in dealing with each other.

We now turn to a whole chapter on handling differences in people's levels of Biblical maturity and all the various approaches to the Christian life. We are dealing with "weaker brethren" – people who have no "grace" or ability to put up with differences. These are immature believers than can be severely hurt by our confidences.

##### A. \_\_\_\_\_ **Christians are Welcome!** (Rom 14:1-9)

1. Remember we all started off weak, and immature as believers (Mt 18)

- a. Pride damns everybody!
- b. People who become born again have to start completely over, and are going to say stupid things and do stupid things – they are going to have to overcome ignorance and instability
- c. New Christians will not all have the same beliefs
- d. Listen to what God says is the right attitude when dealing with another brother who doesn't believe like you believe and doesn't think like you think - "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations."

1) Now, you'll find people weak in the faith. And the idea is, when you deal with them, don't get them into big arguments that can't be settled.

- 2) Deal with them doctrinally, but don't get into stuff that you can't prove.
  - 3) Take him into your church and have fellowship with him anyway.
2. But not to \_\_\_\_\_ arguments - "But not to doubtful disputations."
- a. Avoid Controversies that destroy people
    - 1) About judging foods – dietary laws
    - 2) About judging people and their personal convictions
    - 3) About social and religious holy days
  - b. The weakest people in the Born Again faith are \_\_\_\_\_. They're all babies.
    - 1) And they have to have signs, they have to have wonders, to believe anything. And they spend all their time talking about themselves. That's the characteristic of a baby.
    - 2) Now, you people who have children, don't you know how your kid acts? He says, "I'm hot." "I'm cold." "I'm thirsty." "I'm tired." "Open the window." "Shut the window." "Open the door." "I can't see." "I can't hear." "I'm tired." "When do we get up?" "When do we go to bed?" "It's cold." "It's too hot." "When we get out, do I have to take a—"
    - 3) See, it's just me, me, me—that's all that stuff is. And to charismatics, that's all it is. "I was there," and "I did this," and "I had this wonderful feeling," and "I believe that we let loose our faith, like the other day I did this," and "I felt this," and "I believe that you should have the anointing of the Holy Ghost, because I think that I feel that I have, and if I take my faith and turn it loose so I've released my faith, and I—"
    - 4) I, I, I, I, I!!!
    - 5) Now, what that is is a baby. That's a baby. And they're weak in the faith. You know why they talk so much about that faith? Because they don't have any! That's why.
  - c. When you get strong in the faith, and not weak in the faith, you don't have to spend all your time doing that just talking about how you feel and what your relationship is to the Lord, and the Lord's relationship with you. If you keep that stuff right, you don't have to be talking about it all the time!
  - d. There's nothing worse than somebody who just spends the whole time just talking about themselves. Some of this modern preaching is just 40 minutes of "what I did last Thursday in visitation." You know. "And if you're spiritual, you'll do it like I did it." That's a baby. That's a baby. There's more important things than that.
  - e. Little people talk about people. Bigger people talk about things. And the biggest people talk about God and what God has said. That's the difference.
3. Be Careful Judging \_\_\_\_\_
- a. "For one believeth that he may eat all things."
    - 1) It's a wonderful thing to be blessed with a good stomach, and with a hearty, unpicky appetite
    - 2) It is NOT wrong to be able to eat anything! 99% of this western world needs a good famine, or war to get them back to eating whatever is put in front of them!
    - 3) Poor diet is not poor spirituality
    - 4) It is a matter of faith to be able to eat things in front of you!
  - b. "Another, *who is weak*, eateth herbs."
    - 1) Here is the skinny vegetarian Christian who constantly worries about cancer, and headaches, etc
    - 2) Well, it's okay!
    - 3) But is that how you should be all your life? If it is, then that's fine with me!
4. Be Careful Judging \_\_\_\_\_
- a. This is a condemnation of our modern world – it, in all its liberal glory is the most judgmental, intolerant, bigoted, inflexible, narrow-minded way of thinking out there!

- b. Absolute damnation spews forth from every newspaper, and magazine, judging how people dress, where they live, what they do for a living, etc
- c. Comparing themselves among themselves
- d. Remember the Pharisee and the Publican in Luke 18:11?
- e. Remember the sinful woman who wiped Jesus' feet with her tears?
- f. People need to see others for what they do – as wrong, but do we see people for what they ARE?

5. Be Careful Judging \_\_\_\_\_

- a. Some Christians HAVE to have special days before they get excited about God
- b. That's babyish! But, that's how they may be right now
- c. I have to get along with them. I HAVE to!
- d. I have a tendency of making fun of superstitions, but I shouldn't, and I have to be careful – I could end up damning the conscience of someone! Seriously!

6. Principles

- a. Don't either of you (the stronger in faith, or the weaker in faith) despise either of yourselves!!!
- b. Don't \_\_\_\_\_ – Don't sit in judgment of people.
  - 1) It is a very easy habit to get into, setting yourself up higher than others.
  - 2) There is a time to judge people's actions as sinful, but differences have to be allowed for because of different levels of maturity
  - 3) Superstitions are wrong, but can be used to preach the Gospel as Paul did in Acts 16
  - 4) Other religions are wrong, and need to be pointed out, but you need to be careful to instruct (2Tim 2:24-26) instead of just condemn
- c. Be \_\_\_\_\_ – STUDY the thing out further – maybe you are wrong, and you will only become the better for it when you study it out from another perspective! Some people may be afraid to study it out in case they ARE wrong!
  - 1) Some think Saturday is still the day to worship
  - 2) Some think having a TV at all is wrong
- d. Do everything you do and don't do *for the Lord* – to please Him! Are you seeking to please God or puff yourself up? Does you “stand” make YOU feel better, or does it just bring glory to Christ?
- e. Give thanks – never gripe about anything! When you are complaining, you are judging God!
- f. “\_\_\_\_\_” to the Lord (14:8) – that's who matters most of all! Just spend your time getting closer and closer to Him in heart and actions!
- g. Jesus died for absolutely all kinds of sinners, who have all kinds of confusion, and are at all levels of spirituality, so have some grace with all of them!

B. **The \_\_\_\_\_ is what we have to worry about (14:10-12)**

- 1. All believers will stand before Jesus OUR Judge (Cf 14:4)
  - a. Only believers will be there
  - b. All believers since Calvary
- 2. All of us will have to answer to Jesus / God – note the deity issue settled forever!
- 3. Especially those who know better, and yet never cared about others and their perceptions and confusions
  - a. To answer to Him means that you will first have to explain your actions as a Christian
  - b. Then, you will have to lose or gain rewards based upon those actions
  - c. Most of us will lose rewards
  - d. Rewards include
    - 1) \_\_\_\_\_ – the highest rewards
    - 2) \_\_\_\_\_ of authority in the Millennium (Luke 19:17)
    - 3) \_\_\_\_\_ – high praise by the Lord Jesus Himself

4) \_\_\_\_\_ – things that will be special in heaven (Mt 6:20)

4. This will take place during the time of the Tribulation, and it will occur before the Marriage supper of the Lamb

**C. Make \_\_\_\_\_ Among Yourselves (Rom 14:13-21)**

1. Condemn the damning of others, not others themselves
  - a. Mature Christians know better about meats, and idols, etc
  - b. But we need to worry about grieving/upsetting weaker brethren
  - c. Your rightness can destroy – can be used by the devil to devour a believer
2. Allow weaker believers to serve with you (14:18). Leadership needs helpers, and imperfect people need to be able to grow under mature mentors (as \_\_\_\_\_ did under Barnabas)
3. Build up each other constantly
  - a. If you are Mature – teach them patiently (2Tim 2:24-26)
  - b. If you are weak, confused – allow yourself to be wrong, and grow
4. See the contrast... for stupid \_\_\_\_\_, do not destroy the eternal work of God in people's lives!
  - a. What you do, and what you don't do could really be evil to some people
  - b. Personal denial is the key – not personal rights
5. This has nothing to do with compromising clear Bible Doctrine – only with getting along, and respecting people, especially other believers, even when they are different!
  - a. God is not saying throw away doctrine
  - b. The BEST thing is for people to debate and refine doctrine, and prove truth
  - c. The issue is how far are you going to go with something so that it is just YOU and God who are right, and the rest of the world is wrong!!!
  - d. Almost all religious activities remove doctrine because it is “so divisive” – and IT IS!

**D. Live by \_\_\_\_\_ instead of Condemnation (Rom 14:22,23)**

1. Faith is \_\_\_\_\_
  - a. Some people THINK they see a certain truth in a Scripture, so they live that way
  - b. That's living by faith!
  - c. It doesn't mean you are always right, but that you are trying to live by faith!
  - d. You have to have your faith coming from what the Bible says to be the right kind of faith – all other faith is just blind guesses, in religious garb!
2. Allow some things:
  - a. Allow yourself to do things that are not forbidden in the Bible, even though you may have been brought up to think it was wrong
    - 1) Eating meat on Fridays, etc
    - 2) Submitting to your husband, and honouring him
    - 3) Listening to your wife, and admitting she is right, when she is
    - 4) Love people that hurt you, and bless them
  - b. Allow others to do things that you might not allow yourself to do
    - 1) Chalk it up to immaturity
    - 2) Take it as a chance to rethink your convictions
3. Get rid of \_\_\_\_\_ – that is the focus! Get busy studying out what you are confused about, or where you have doubts, and become fully persuaded about what is right and wrong
4. Just live in obedience to God – that is living by faith!