

ROMANS

*A Daily Devotional
Study Guide*



Monday

Study: Romans 14:13-15, Matthew 18:1-6

Reading: II Samuel 12:1-23

Memory: Matthew 5:28

Romans 14:13-15

What should you stop doing to other believers (vs 13a)?

What should you decide to do (vs 13b)?

What do you think a “stumbling block” is?

****In Israel, there are rocks everywhere. Paths have been worn down over the centuries, but even today, many of the walking paths have little stones that slightly raise up from the ground. In Bible days, more stones would make their way into the paths as they would be removed from fields or discarded from building projects.*

What was Paul convinced of (vs 14a)?

****This is a specific reference to the Jewish dietary laws that were originally given by God to the Israelites.*

Why was he convinced of this?

****Note that he uses the phrase, “in the Lord Jesus.” Because of Jesus, the Jews no longer were under the law. He had set them free from the law which he took a great deal of time to write about earlier in Romans.*

What did Paul realize about other believers (vs 14b)?

How did Paul let love control his behavior rather than his personal desires (vs 15)?

****Some believers will attempt to control other believers by saying they are “offended” by certain actions. This is not what Paul was referring to.*

In verses 15 he talked about brothers being “grieved” (ESV) by his actions. This means to cause pain or be in distress. At the end of verse 15, Paul used the word “destroy” (ESV). Paul did not want his choice of foods to cause a younger believer to be spiritually hurt and lead to the destruction of their faith. Basically, Paul was encouraging all believers to look out for the good of others, even if it meant putting their own personal likes aside.

What do you think are areas of the Christian life where these same principles can apply to believers in our society today?

****It is hard to find a direct correlation in our society since the markets don't buy meat offered to idols, nor are new believers coming out of a Jewish dietary situation. Though a direct correlation is not fully there, the underlying principle of loving others enough to put aside personal likes or dislikes is something that should be put into practice.*

Matthew 18:1-6

What did the disciples want to know (vs 1)?

****There are a handful of places in the Gospels where the disciples were concerned about human greatness. The religion of those days was based on power and prestige. The higher you were in the religious order, the greater of a person you were thought to be.*

What did Jesus do in response to their question (vs 2-3)?

****In that society, children were not highly valued, but often viewed as possessions.*

What did Jesus say about spiritual greatness (vs 4)?

How should you treat those who are weaker than you (vs 5-6)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my every day life?

Tuesday

Study: Romans 14:16-17, I Corinthians 18:1-13

Reading: II Samuel 12:1-23

Memory: Matthew 5:28

Romans 14:16-17

What did Paul instruct in verse 16? What do you think he meant?

****Though you may think there is nothing wrong with something, it could lead another person away from God.*

What did Paul say about the kingdom of God (vs 17a)? What do you think he meant?

****The “kingdom of God” is a general reference to salvation. Salvation is much deeper than what a person chooses to eat or drink. Those are physical matters, while salvation is a spiritual matter. The spiritual matters are much more important than the physical desires.*

What should salvation be producing through the power of the Holy Spirit (vs 17b)?

How can fighting and arguing over physical things destroy the peace and joy God desires for you to have as a believer?

I Corinthians 8:1-13

What issue is Paul addressing in this chapter (vs 1)?

What does knowledge do? What does love do (vs 1)?

What did Paul declare about knowledge (vs 2)?

****Paul is not degrading the importance of knowing God and knowing His Word. The “knowledge” he is referencing here was the result of pride in “more mature” believers who believed it was okay to eat meat offered to idols.*

What statement did Paul make in verse 3?

****Paul emphasized that a true knowledge and understanding of God would not lead to selfish pride, but to selfless love.*

What did Paul express about the “gods” the food was offered to compared to the one true God (vs 4-6)?

What did Paul realize, knowing that the believers came from a variety of backgrounds (vs 7)?

****Believers who had been saved out of extreme idol worship would often find it hard to have anything to do with their former lifestyle. This would include the eating of meat that was once offered to the idols.*

What did Paul declare about the physical results of choosing to eat or not eat food that had been offered to idols (vs 8)?

What did Paul warn against (vs 9)?

What could your choice do to others (vs 10-11)?

How could something that was not sin for you become sin (vs 12)?

****In one context, a person could eat meat offered to an idol and it be perfectly right, but in another context that same action would be sin.*

What was Paul’s final conclusion (vs 13)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Wednesday

Study: Romans 14:18-19, Ephesians 4:25-32, Psalm 133:1-3

Reading: Galatians 6:1-10, Ephesians 4:1-16

Memory: Matthew 5:28

Romans 14:18-19

How can we serve Christ (vs 18)?

****This phrase points back to the previous verses. When you choose to put your personal preferences aside and refrain from something that could cause your brother to sin, you are serving Christ. Though you may see nothing wrong with it, part of being a servant is the giving up of your likes and dislikes for the good of others.*

What is acceptable to God (vs 18)?

How will selfless acts also allow you to be approved by men (vs 18)?

What should you pursue (vs 19)?

****Serving Christ by serving others is not something that will just happen. You need to seek after it. The Greek word has the idea of a hunter chasing after prey.*

How can you strive to build others up?

Ephesians 4:25-32

What are you to put away (vs 25)? Why?

How are you to handle your anger (vs 26)?

****Anger is an emotion. Everyone gets angry at one time or another. When this happens, you must do what you can to deal with the anger. Allowing it to fester is harmful to you and the person you are angry at.*

How will choosing to live with anger give opportunity for the devil (vs 27)?

What reason did Paul give for working hard (vs 28)?

What should not come out of your mouth (vs 29)?

What should you seek to do with the words you say (vs 29)?

What do you do when you tear others down rather than build them up (vs 30)?

What should you remove from your life (vs 31)? Explain what those things may look like.

How should you treat others (vs 32)?

How are you to forgive (vs 32)?

Why is understanding the forgiveness of Christ so important?

Psalm 133:1-3

What is good (vs 1)?

What is peaceful unity compared to (vs 2)? Why?

****David referenced that time when Aaron was anointed priest over the 12 tribes. Though they were 12 different tribes, because they worshiped the same God, they could act as one.*

What else was unity compared to (vs 3)?

****Mt Hermon was north of Israel and the source of all the water that flowed in the land.*

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Thursday

Study: Romans 14:20-23, I Corinthians 9:19-27

Reading: I Corinthians 11:17-34

Memory: Matthew 5:28

Romans 14:20-23

How can you hurt other believers by your choices (vs 20)?

What do you think “for the sake of food” (ESV) means (vs 20)?

****By their choices of what to eat, they could severely hurt the spiritual lives of others. Though we don't have the same circumstances today, the same principles apply. When you make choices, you should have the good of others play a part in the choices you make.*

What should you not do (vs 21)?

What does it mean to cause another to “stumble” (vs 21)?

****Anything that hinders or weakens the spiritual walk of others should be avoided. Most of the time, some one will not tell you that your choice is causing you to stumble. This requires your awareness and sensitivity to the needs and spiritual condition of others around you.*

What are you to keep between yourself and God (vs 22)?

****In the context of what Paul is saying, verse 22 describes how you should not allow your Christian liberty to cause others to sin. Though you may be totally convinced that something is okay for you to do, it may not be okay for others.*

What can you bring upon yourself by what you approve of (vs 22)?

What do you think are some areas of your life where this can apply?

What happens if you do something, though you are unsure if it is right or

wrong (vs 23)?

What do you think the end of verse 23 mean?

****God has given people consciences to help guide and direct them in life. It is not your responsibility to work against the consciences of others because you disagree with their choices. Instead, to seek the benefit of others, you should encourage them not to go against what they feel is right or wrong.*

I Corinthians 9:19-27

What was Paul willing to do (vs 19-22)? Why?

What was Paul's focus as he considered what actions to take in life (vs 23)?

What illustration does Paul use (vs 24)?

****Paul was not declaring that all believers are in a race and only one believer gets the prize. He was declaring that if a person wants to win a race, they are willing to live sacrificially in order to have a chance to win.*

How are you to run your race (vs 24b)?

What prize are believers striving for (vs 25)?

****Just as athletes are willing to sacrifice and put their desires aside for a temporary prize, believers should be willing to sacrifice for an eternal prize.*

How did Paul live with purpose (vs 26-27)?

Why is it important to live with purpose?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my everyday life?

Friday

Study: Romans 14:13-19

Reading: I Corinthians 8:1-13

Memory: Matthew 5:28

What Does the Bible Say?

Most problems and arguments that occur among people, especially in churches, happen because people are different. What one person thinks is important, might not be as important to another person. What one person thinks is sin, might not be sin to someone else. This is why it is important to understand that we are accountable for our own actions and that we shouldn't judge others for what they do or don't do. Paul realized that judging others could be a major hindrance to unity and peace in a church, but he also realized that selfish liberty could cause just as much of a problem (vs 13).

Paul understood that earthly objects are just objects that aren't good or bad in and of themselves. He knew that eating meat that was offered unto idols or not observing special days wasn't sin for him, but he understood that the consciences of others wouldn't allow them to do those things. Just because there was nothing wrong with eating meat offered to idols, didn't mean that he would eat it around those who wouldn't eat it. He knew how important it was for all believers to be controlled by love. Because He loved others, he was willing to give up certain things in order to avoid causing a weaker brother to sin or be turned away from the faith (vs 14-15).

Following God isn't about what we do and don't do, but is about following the leading of the Holy Spirit who will lead us into peace, joy and righteousness. Living godly doesn't only involve our relationships with Him, but also consists of our relationships with others. In order for our actions to be approved by God, they need to be actions that help other people glorify God. We as believers are supposed to follow after things that bring about peace. What we like or dislike isn't that important in our Christian walk. What is important is how our yielding to the Holy Spirit enables others to draw closer to Christ (vs 16-19).

How Does this Apply to Me?

What is your motive for doing or not doing things in your life? Is your motivation based in love or in selfishness? The worldly philosophy of selfishness has crept into our churches and causes many problems. People feel that their way is right and that others shouldn't be bothered by it because there is nothing wrong with it. This is where you need to be different. If something that you are doing causes someone else to sin or stumble in their Christian life, then it is wrong for you. As a believer, life is no longer about you and what you want, but it is about bringing glory to God through your life. Others need to be exalted and lifted up spiritually by the things that you do or don't do.

Does this mean that if one person doesn't like what you are doing that you shouldn't do it? To answer that questions, you just need to look at the life of Jesus. There were times where the Pharisees, His family, and even His own disciples didn't like what Jesus was doing, but He still did those things. The point that Paul wanted his readers to understand was that love needed to control all that they did. The issues that Paul brought up dealt with cultural likes and dislikes and the need for unity.

Paul mentioned the mature brother and the weaker brother, but I have also come across another category of believers. The mature believer needs to do everything that he can to assure that he won't cause a weaker brother to sin, but he doesn't have to give in to the brother who demands to have things his own way. This type of person often had his own unbiblical opinions on many things and thinks that the church should conform to his way of thinking. In many cases, this brother has been saved for many years, but has grown very little in his understanding of God. Instead of viewing Christianity as God centered, his view is normally centered on outward works. Though this person is to be loved, his opinions aren't to be the opinions that control the church and keep the church from accomplishing the purpose God has called it to.

Thought for the day

Saturday

Study: Romans 14:20-23

Reading: Mark 9:41-50, Romans 14:1-23 (read again for full understanding of this important concept.)

Memory: Matthew 5:28

What Does the Bible Say?

Though mature believers understand God's grace and God's purpose for their lives, they must also be cautious that their liberty doesn't cause harm to the work of the Lord. This is why Paul told the Romans not to destroy the work of God over their disagreements about food. Eating food wasn't a doctrinal issue, but an issue of personal preference and personal convictions. People in those days were just like people today because all people have a tendency to allow things that shouldn't be a big deal become a big deal. Paul understood that if the mature believers did what they wanted to do without considering the effects that it would have on the immature believers, then the mature believers were sinning (vs 20). This concept applied to every area of life and not just to food and drink. The responsibility in this passage is placed on the mature believer and his need to display love by choosing not to do certain things that he may find nothing wrong with. The mature believer chooses not to do something to keep the weaker brother from sinning (vs 21).

Paul concluded Romans 14 by first addressing the mature believer. When a mature believer understands God's plan and knows that what he or she is doing is within the will of God and there is nothing wrong with it, then they are not bringing judgement upon themselves even if another person is convicted that the action is wrong. He has no reason to feel guilty because He has God's approval on what he is doing (vs 22).

Paul then addressed the weaker brother. If a weaker brother isn't sure if what he is doing is right or wrong and he goes ahead and does it anyway, then he is sinning. Even if a weaker brother sees a mature brother doing the same thing, or if a mature brother tries to tell him that there is nothing wrong with it, it is still sin. God is a personal God who will reveal to every individual believer what His desire is (vs 23).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you think that everyone should do things the way that you do them? Do you automatically claim that something is sin just because you don't like it? All believers face the temptation of thinking their way is best and that all others should do things the way they do things. From your reading over the last few days, it was clearly revealed that this is the wrong type of thinking for you as a believer to have. God wants you to be fully convinced in your own mind concerning things He wants and doesn't want you to do. Don't cast judgement upon others because they aren't doing things your way.

Do the things that you do cause others to stumble into sin? The word "offend" is often misinterpreted by Christians. For instance, when someone does something that a person doesn't like, they say they are "offended" by what that person did. In that use, the word "offend" has to do with opinions, their likes and dislikes. At others times, people might say, "You offended me." This doesn't mean that you caused them to sin, but that you hurt them emotionally. These uses of the word "offend" aren't what the Bible is talking about. The actions that you do that cause another to act against their conscience or against what God wants them to do and leads them into sin is how you cause another to stumble. This could be because they saw you doing it or because you told them there was nothing wrong with it. This means that if you do something that another person doesn't like, you aren't necessarily sinning (though you should be sensitive to the feelings of others), but if you do something that causes another person to sin, then you are sinning.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for treating you individually.
- * Ask God to help you treat others as He treats you.
- * Praise God because He always knows what is best.

Thought for the day

Sunday

Reading: Romans 14:13-23

(Take time to read this passage again, letting the truths you have studied this week sink into your mind. You are encouraged to go online and read it through a few times in different versions.)

www.biblegateway.com

Bible Memory

Matthew 5:15 Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. 17 "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. 18 For truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the Law until all is accomplished. 19 Therefore whoever relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. 20 For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' 22 But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire. 23 So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny. 27 "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

