

Romans – Gospel of God Exalted

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

Zoom Meeting ID:

 **828 7580 6094** ► **Thursday October 16, 2025**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Romans 14:11–12 (NASB95) ¹¹For it is written, “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.” ¹²So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.

The Unity of Strong and Weak Christians—part 2 Build Up One Another Without Offending

Romans 14:10–15 (NLT)

¹⁰ So why do you condemn another believer? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. ¹¹ For the Scriptures say, “ ‘As surely as I live,’ says the LORD, ‘every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance praise to God.’ ” ¹² Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God. ¹³ So let’s stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall. ¹⁴ I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong. ¹⁵ And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don’t let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died.

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Romans 14:10–15 (NASB95)

- 10** But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.
- 11** For it is written, “AS I LIVE, SAYS THE LORD, EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW TO ME, AND EVERY TONGUE SHALL GIVE PRAISE TO GOD.”
- 12** So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God.
- 13** Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this—not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way.
- 14** I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean.
- 15** For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died.

POINT 1 -THE LORD ALONE WILL JUDGE EACH BELIEVER

But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.” So, then each one of us shall give account of himself to God. (14:10–12)

Paul asks, why do you **judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt?** It is a terrible thing for men “to play God,” as it is often phrased. The work of Christians is to serve the Lord, not to take His lordship by self-righteously judging fellow believers. Our concern, rather, should be for

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being judged ourselves by the Lord, **For, we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.**

When we, along with all other believers, stand before the Lord on His **judgment seat**, “each man’s work will become evident, for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire” **(1 Cor. 3:13–15).**

Reinforcing his argument for believer’s judgment with a quotation from Isaiah 45:23, Paul reminds his readers that **it is written, “As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God”** (cf. Phil. 2:10–11).

Our responsibility is not to judge, to despise, to criticize, or in any way to belittle our brothers and sisters in Christ. We will not be called on by our Lord to give an account of the sins and shortcomings of others, but rather **each one of us shall give account of himself to God.**

POINT 2 - DON’T CAUSE YOUR BROTHER TO STUMBLE

Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore, but rather determine this— not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother’s way. (14:13)

Therefore, refers back to verses 10–12, in which Paul reminds his readers that God alone is qualified and has the authority to judge the minds and hearts of His people, who will all stand before His judgment seat (v. 10) and give account of themselves to Him.

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Consequently, we must **not judge one another** (cf. Matt. 7:1–5). It is the unloving attitude of contemptuous superiority by strong believers and the equally unloving attitude of self-righteousness by weak believers by which they **judge one another**. From Paul's day to ours, those wrongful judgments have been major causes of disrespect, disharmony, and disunity in the church.

In the first phrase, **let us not judge one another**, the verb carries the idea of condemnation, But, in the following phrase, the same verb is translated **determine**, which refers to making a decision. "Being judgmental" carries the negative idea of criticism, whereas "using your best judgment" refers to making a careful decision, with no negative connotation. Paul's play on words demands that we should never be judgmental of fellow believers but instead should use our best judgment to help them. In relation to the second meaning, we should **determine ... not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way**. He gives the same warning in his first letter to Corinth, saying, "Take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak" (**1 Cor. 8:9**). This carries the idea of stumbling into sin.

For example, although the New Testament does not forbid the drinking of alcoholic beverages, there are many good reasons for Christians to abstain. One of the most important is the detrimental effect it can have on a former alcoholic. Our drinking, even in moderation, could easily place **a stumbling block** in that **brother's way** and cause him to fall back into his former addiction.

The same principle applies to any activity or practice that is not inherently sinful. Problem areas vary from society to society and from person to person, but the principle never changes. The loving, caring, strong Christian will determine in his

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mind and heart to be sensitive to *any* weakness in a fellow believer and avoid doing *anything*, including what is innocent in itself and otherwise permissible, that might cause him to morally or spiritually stumble.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What does it mean to “judge your brother” or to “regard your brother with contempt”?**
- 2. What is the bottom-line issue that should keep us all more concerned about what we are doing and less concerned about people’s non-moral practices?**
- 3. What can you look forward to? V12**

POINT 3 - DON’T GRIEVE YOUR BROTHER

I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself; but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. For if because of food your brother is hurt, you are no longer walking according to love. (14:14–15a)

A second way to build up fellow believers without offending them is to be careful not to say or do anything that might cause them to be spiritually grieved or hurt. As far as nonsinful things are concerned, the apostle says, **I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself**. He was not stating a personal opinion or preference about such things but was **convinced in the Lord Jesus**; that is, he knew by divine revelation.

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Having been a Pharisee, Paul doubtless had been extremely careful about what he ate and did not eat. But he now understood with absolute certainty the truth which the Lord declared to Peter three times in a vision: “What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy” (**Acts 10:15**). That divine cleansing referred directly to the multitude of animals Peter was commanded to eat that were ceremonially unclean according to Mosaic law (vv. 12–13). Indirectly, and in an even more important way, it referred to God’s full and impartial acceptance of believing Gentiles into the church (vv. 28, 34).

Jesus declared that “there is nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him” (**Mark 7:15**). Paul assured Timothy that “God has created [all foods] to be gratefully shared in by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer” (**1 Tim. 4:3–5**). He informed Titus that “to the pure, all things are pure” (**Titus 1:15**).

The strong Christian is therefore entirely right in his conviction that he is at liberty to enjoy anything the Lord does not declare to be sinful. The weak Christian, on the other hand, is wrong in his understanding about some of those things. But he is not wrong in the sense of being immoral. He is wrong in the sense of not having complete and mature understanding, which causes his conscience to be unnecessarily sensitive. For that reason, **to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean** in his mind.

It is likely that every Christian has a weak spot of some sort in his conscience. Paul himself probably had one or more. He did not claim to be free of every spiritual deficiency, but he testified before the Roman governor that he did his “best to

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maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men” (**Acts 24:16**).

For various reasons, there are certain things that we know are not sinful but that we do not feel comfortable in doing or even being near. And as long as we feel discomfort about any such thing, we should avoid doing it—even if it would not cause offense to other believers. If we ourselves consider **anything to be unclean**, then *to us it is unclean*. And if we persist in violating our conscience, that conscience will become more and more insensitive until it is “seared ... as with a branding iron” (**1 Tim. 4:2**). It then is no longer as sensitive as it needs to be to protect us from sin.

But Paul’s major emphasis in this passage is on how our words and actions affect the spiritual welfare of fellow Christians. Therefore, **if because of food**, or any other issue, our **brother is hurt**, we **are no longer walking according to love**.

Is hurt has the basic meaning of causing pain, distress, or grief. It is used by John to describe Peter’s reaction when Jesus asked “him the third time, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love Me?’ ” and “Peter was grieved” (**John 21:17**). It is even used of the Holy Spirit, who is grieved when we sin (Eph. 4:30).

It is tragic when Christians **hurt** a **brother** Christian, particularly over matters that are not inherently wrong. A weak Christian can be **hurt** or distressed from watching another Christian say or do something he considers sinful. The hurt is deeper if the offending believer is admired and respected by the weaker one. A weak Christian also can be **hurt** when, by word or example, he is led by a stronger brother to go against the convictions of his own conscience. That is by far the greater offense. Being upset over what another Christian does can certainly **hurt**, but that hurt is

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not nearly so severe and damaging as the **hurt** of a believer's conscience over what he himself has done. He suffers feelings of guilt, and forfeits much of his peace of mind, his joy, his witness, and perhaps even his assurance of salvation. A Christian whose careless use of his liberty causes such **hurt** to other believers is **no longer walking according to love**.

Paul goes on to say that a strong believer who causes a weaker brother to stumble by going against his conscience not only is unloving but commits sin against that brother and against the Lord Himself. "Food will not commend us to God; we are neither the worse if we do not eat, nor the better if we do eat. But take care," he warns, "lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if someone sees you, who have knowledge, dining in an idol's temple, will not his conscience, if he is weak, be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? For through your knowledge, he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose sake Christ died. And thus, by sinning against the brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ" **(1 Cor. 8:8–12)**.

Paul is not, speaking of "ruined" in the sense of damnation, because that is what believers are eternally saved from. He is speaking of the loss of such things as those already mentioned—peace of mind, joy, witness, and assurance of salvation. The best safeguard against grieving another believer's conscience is to determine to do the opposite of what the insensitive and unloving person does: to always walk **according to love**.

POINT 4 - DON'T DEVASTATE YOUR BROTHER

Do not destroy with your food him for whom Christ died. (14:15b)

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A third principle for building up rather than harming weaker believers is not to spiritually devastate them. As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, the six principles or guidelines in verses 13–23 overlap and are not completely distinct or separable. While this third warning is much like the second, it is considerably stronger.

To destroy ... him for whom Christ died, is not to cause his damnation but to seriously devastate his spiritual growth. When Jesus said, “It is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish” (**Matt. 18:14**), the context makes clear that “these little ones” are believers. They have been “converted and become like children” (v. 3) and “believe in Me” (v. 6). Jesus was not concerned about their loss of salvation but about their loss of spiritual well-being, which, although not an eternal loss, is an injury the Lord considers to be extremely grave. Even to “despise one of those little ones” (v. 10) **for whom Christ died** is a great offense to God.

It is also important to note that the phrase **for whom Christ died** is here used to describe believers. This is commonly called limited atonement, or particular redemption, the idea that Christ sacrificed His life on the cross only on behalf of the elect who come to faith.

Certainly, the atonement in its ultimate and full sense is limited to the elect, but the New Testament is filled with declarations that Christ’s sacrifice was sufficient to cover the sin of every human being. John the Baptist proclaimed Jesus to be “the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of *the world!*” (**John 1:29**). Jesus said of Himself “that *whoever believes* may in Him [the Son of Man] have eternal life,” and that “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that *whoever believes* in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (**John 3:15–16**). “I am the

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living bread that came down out of heaven,” Jesus said; and “if *anyone* eats of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread also which I shall give for *the life of the world* is My flesh” (**John 6:51**).

In his first letter, John wrote that “we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also *for those of the whole world*” (**1 John 2:1–2**), and that “we have beheld and bear witness that the Father has sent the Son to be *the Savior of the world*” (**4:14**).

Discussion Questions

- 1. What is the principle that must guide us in how we live our lives before other believers? V15**
- 2. What was most meaningful to you in this lesson?**

CLOSING PRAYER