

Name _____

Date _____

The Sonship Life Study Guide

Romans Education, Part Five

Romans Education, Part Six

Student Edition: Book 1

Godly Equity

Welcome to The Sonship Life Study Guide. This book is designed to coincide with the PowerPoint presentation and video lessons.

The video lessons are found on Vimeo.

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ACRONYMS

Romans Education, Part 5

Session One: Interactive Notetaker

GODLY EQUITY

Homework Assignment: Read Romans 14:1-15:7 until you can present a single sentence summary of the entire passage.

Write your Summary here: _____

Fig. 1: Sonship Decision-Making Skills

Wisdom	Romans _____
Justice	Romans _____
Judgment	Romans _____
Equity	Romans _____

Fig. 2: Recap of the Doctrine

Scripture	Context	Edifying Result
Rm. 12:1-2	Education	Godliness
Rm. 12:3-8	Local Assembly	Selflessness
Rm. 12:9-10	Local Assembly	Loving <u>kindness</u>
Rm. 12:11-16	Lost & Body of Christ	<u>Tender</u> heartedness
Rm. 12:17-21	Enemies	Longsuffering/ <u>Meekness</u>
Rm. 13:1-7	Government	<u>Benevolent</u> Goodness
Rm. 13:8-10	Neighbor	SKTMB
Rm. 14:1-15:7	_____	_____

Fig. 3: The Pattern of Doctrine in Equity

Godly Thinking - Romans _____

Godly Living - Romans _____

Godly Labor - Romans _____

Romans Education, Part 5

Session One: GODLY EQUITY

Session Notes

Equity is the fourth and final sonship decision-making skill.

Define the word: Equity

1. The quality of being equal or fair; fairness, impartiality; even-handed dealing. *(The Latin æquitas was somewhat influenced in meaning by being adopted as the ordinary rendering of Greek ἐπιείκεια (see EPIKY n.), which meant reasonableness and moderation in the exercise of one's rights, and the disposition to avoid insisting on them too rigorously.)*

Moderation in the exercise of Christian liberty is exactly what Paul is teaching in this section of Romans, but he is doing this with a specific goal or purpose in mind. He is not just setting forth the issue of Christians getting along or being nice to each other. That is not to say there is anything wrong with getting along or being nice. It is to say there is more being accomplished here than what is usually taught about in this passage.

Hopefully, you have done your homework assignment of reading the entire passage over and over until you are able to give a single sentence summary of what you think the passage is about.

Look at the following examples of summary statements. Some of these issues are, to varying degrees, part of the overall doctrine, but there are some important ingredients missing.

Here are some examples:

- Instructions regarding our personal convictions

The passage really isn't about their personal convictions.

- Settling difficult and delicate questions between Jews and Gentiles (respecting food and the observance of particular days, rites, etc.)

The problem here is that, even though there is probably a large group of Jews in the Roman assembly, the main issue of the passage is not about how to settle difficult questions between Jews and Gentiles.

- In things indifferent, Christians should not condemn each other (particularly with respect to different kinds of food and the observation of certain days.)

The problem here is “things indifferent.” Failing to understand the passage leads some to think that this is about minor issues that do not really matter.

- The duty of enlightened Christians towards weak brethren

This one is on the right track, but it is not complete.

- The Christian and matters of Conscience

The passage is not primarily about matters of conscience.

- Don’t judge others

While there is terminology that would lead some to think this, not only is judging not the primary issue, this conclusion is very misleading.

- Christians should get along with each other

While Christians should get along, this misses the essential ingredient of what the text is emphasizing.

As we have said before, often the thing we do may be the same as those in the world, or in some religion, would do, with the main difference being “why” we are doing it. Motivation is important to God. Why is the motivation important?

The objection is: Isn’t it enough that we are doing the right thing? What difference does it make? Does it matter why we “give in the offering” or why we “study our Bible” or why we “get along with those who disagree with us?”

It matters, and we have been over this before.

A prime example in the Bible that motivation matters is found in 1 Corinthians 13.

1 Corinthians 13:3 And **though I bestow all my goods** to feed *the poor*, and **though I give my body** to be burned, **and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.**

You can perform the greatest sacrificial acts, but unless they are done the right way/for the right reason, there is no profit to doing them.

We not only do *what* our Father would do, but we do it for the *same reasons* He would do it. If we do it for any other reason, we are not being “like Him;” we are not being godly. The point here is that Paul is not just asking the members of the assembly to get along with each other by not judging one another. This really misses what is going on in the passage.

So, as we put together a summary statement of the entire form of doctrine (Romans 14:1-15:7), it is not only about *what* we are to do (and not do), but it is also about *why* we are doing it.

In this passage, what does God want accomplished? He wants to make sure that weaker brethren are edified by stronger brethren and He wants the work of God to continue for the entire assembly.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith **one may edify another**.

Romans 15:2 Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to **edification**.

So the goal, or the *why*, of the passage is edification. Now, let's go back to our summary statement of the entire passage. Here is mine: Managing our liberty in Christ to the edification of our fellow members and the continued flourishing of God's work in the assembly.

This summary statement not only comes out of the two verses above, but it also comes from these:

Romans 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. **Destroy not him** with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but **righteousness, and peace, and joy** in the Holy Ghost.

Romans 14:20 For meat **destroy not the work of God**. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Don't destroy the weaker brother and do not destroy the work of God. Instead, let our treatment of each other result in righteousness, peace and joy.

The proper use of all the sonship skills works to bring the local assembly to a new level of body-relationship as described in Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:16 From whom **the whole body fitly joined together and compacted** by that which every joint supplieth, **according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love**.

As the members of a local assembly begin to respond to each other out of the five core features of godly love, and obeying the various forms of doctrine in the

instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment and especially equity, the relationships in that assembly, and the body functions of that assembly are transformed whereby those people (and that body) become fitly joined together, compacted, and knit together in love.

Colossians 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, **being knit together in love**, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ;

Those are not terms without meaning. Fitly joined and compacted indicate the ability of a body of believers to function as a single unit. The “knit together in love” shows the individual members to be together, like a fabric where the individual threads are no longer seen, but the whole.

Let me show you how important this is. Once an assembly becomes fitly joined together and knit together in love, its conversation (the manifestation of its life) is no longer limited to this world, but is manifested in the heavenly places!

Philippians 3:20 **For our conversation is in heaven**; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:

This is how this gets accomplished. By the sonship skills, treating each other in godliness, we are creating within our local assembly, a particular environment, a godly culture, the life of that assembly begins to be manifested to all in the heavenly places. When that happens, even though we are still on the earth, we impact the heavenly places.

Our conversation in heaven is what Romans 8:19 has in mind when it says that the creature is waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God!

Romans 8:19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.

When this doctrine effectually works in a local assembly, that godly church will have its Christ-like life manifested in the heavenlies. It is a pre-picture of the Lord Jesus and His body!

This is what the creature is looking for; waiting for. Because once it sees that manifestation, it knows that there is another local assembly of believers that are truly functioning as a body. Therefore, it rejoices to know that once that body physically gets up there, it knows how to deliver the creature from the bondage of corruption.

When this begins to take place with us, not only are we as individuals being conformed to the image of Christ, but the whole body (of the local assembly) is being conformed to His image as well. That should not surprise us as we have known for a while that the local assembly is a microcosm of the whole body of Christ that will fill the heavenly places one day.

Just to carry this one step further, as the body is compacted, knit together in love, and is effectually working in every part to the edifying of itself in love, not only is its conversation in the heavenly places, but also, to a degree, its members are being delivered from elements of the bondage of corruption while they are still here on this earth; they are, to a degree, living in “the glorious liberty of the children of God.” So, you can see how this involves so much more than just “getting along with each other.”

Now, let’s break down the entire passage into the edificational pattern.

The pattern of edification in the doctrine of equity goes like this:

Godly Thinking – Romans 14:1-12

Godly Living – Romans 14:13-23

Godly Labor – Romans 15:1-7

Let’s read the section pertaining to godly thinking.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. ⁴Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ⁷For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. ¹⁰But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the

judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Verse 1 begins with a descriptive phrase “Him that is weak in the faith...”

What does it mean to be weak in the faith?

This is not faith in the sense of believing, but rather *the faith* as it pertains to the mystery of Christ; the instruction which pertains specifically to us as members of the body of Christ.

These are “in the faith,” therefore they are justified brothers and sisters in Christ. *Weak in the faith* does not mean they are not sure about their trust in Jesus as Savior. They are not “weak in faith” (believing), but they are weak in “the faith.” Weak in the faith means there is some issue of doctrine they have not yet learned, or is not yet working in them.

For example, a person may be JUEL, but they are not aware of Paul’s teaching regarding Sanctification in Romans 6-8. They are still JUEL but, not knowing about sanctification, they may still think the way to live for God is by keeping the law. In this area, they are “weak in the faith.” It is possible to be weak in all manner of doctrines; Paul’s instruction in Justification, or Sanctification, or in this case, Christian Liberty.

Weak in the faith is not being used to describe a brother who is sinful or rebellious or any such thing and this is an important distinction. Being “weak in the faith” is not how Paul describes a disobedient Christian. It is not a believer who is rebellious or disorderly. It is not describing a believer who has been beguiled by false doctrine. It is not talking about a brother who is living in sin. The way the assembly is to respond to these kinds of things is different from how it responds to a weaker brother, and that is why we need to make the distinction.

We are going to see this distinction again when we get to 1 Thessalonians. Let’s look at the passage briefly.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. ¹²And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are

unruly, comfort the **feeble-minded**, support the **weak**, be patient toward all *men*.

Do you see the different response to different kinds of saints? Warn the unruly, comfort the feeble-minded and...do what to the weak? Support them! And when you get over here and read that word “support,” you know it means everything sitting back in Romans 14:1-15:7.

An educated son realizes that different kinds of saints are dealt with differently, and all with godly love, charity and patience. In fact, godly love handles different saints differently! The point here is to say, Paul is not telling us in vs. 1 not to dispute with anyone. He is telling us that we are never to dispute with a weaker brother – no exceptions. Why? Because it will either destroy the weaker brother or wind up destroying the assembly.

One more thing, being “weak in the faith” is not being used by Paul as a rebuke or reproach to a weaker brother. So, don’t look at it that way.

As you read through the passage, you might get the idea that a weaker brother is one who doesn’t eat meat or observes certain days above others, but that would miss the point. The point is that his edification in some doctrinal area is lacking.

Now, why would Paul bring this up? Because in every assembly that is working its way through the doctrine, it is possible for someone to come into that assembly whose edification is not on par with the rest of the assembly. Maybe they don’t have everything in Romans 1-13 working in them yet. There may be areas where they just don’t know the doctrine.

Paul is addressing this because this is a possible problem for the one who is weak in the faith and a possible problem for the assembly itself. Specifically, how the assembly handles this issue will determine how much of a problem this will be. All that instruction in godly love and charity needs to be carefully followed in this situation. We are going to talk about that.

Now, the first thing that comes to your mind when you hear someone saying something which indicates that they do not know Paul’s doctrine concerning a particular issue, is what? You want to correct them, don’t you?

Suppose a new person comes into the assembly. They have watched some videos or talked to someone in the church and they want to be a part. But in talking to them you hear them talking about “praying for rain” or “keeping the law” or

“losing his salvation” or “confessing his sins”, or “speaking in tongues” or any of a hundred other issues, and you instantly know what it is they do not know.

And you wonder, what can you do to get them to change what they believe? How do you get them to believe Paul’s doctrine? Or, to say it another way, how do you get them edified? And the answer is: you don’t. Edification is under God’s purview. And there is a process for godly edification. They need to go through the process so that the Spirit of God within them, and the word of God effectually works to change their thinking or practice; not you.

When we hear something we know is not right, and we automatically jump on it to correct it, what are we being? We are being a tutor or governor. We are being their corrector. Whether or not we know it, when we do that, we are not handling our weaker brother with godly love and charity. And what will happen in our hearts is that we will devalue them. Instead of value and esteem, we will begin to look down on our weaker brother. If we do, we will spend time criticizing and judging our weaker brother.

Now that we have defined the one who is weak in the faith, let’s move on in verse 1.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith **receive ye**, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

In other words, allow him into the assembly and include him in its fellowship, so that he can be edified as a son, just like everyone else. We are working on a program just for this purpose; the Accelerated Education, which we plan to have finished before graduation in March of next year.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, ***but* not to doubtful disputations.**

This last phrase is a warning to the assembly about the importance of how we receive a weaker brother. If “doubtful disputations” arise, then it is on us. And before Paul finishes up the godly thinking portion of the passage, he is going to inform us that this is such a big deal to God that we will answer for it at the JSOC! Properly receiving a weaker brother is a big deal to God.

So, we know what disputations are, but what are doubtful disputations? Are these disputations about doubtful things? Is this talking about grey areas where the Bible has no comment?

No. The “doubtful” is not about things. These are disputations that arise between one who is strong in the faith and one who is weak in the faith, and the weaker brother is made to doubt because of the dispute with the stronger brother. The problem here is not that the weaker brother is made to doubt, for if he is to ever get his doctrine straight, he will, at some point, have to begin to doubt it. Rather, the issue is that the stronger brother is the one making him doubt, not God. It is the job of God’s word and the Spirit of God to create that doubt, not a stronger brother.

The stronger members of the assembly never want to be in an adversarial position with a weaker brother. Not only do we run the risk of destroying our weaker brother, but we also put the entire assembly at risk. Strife and disputing will stunt the spiritual growth of the entire assembly. Disputation is not how the edification process works. And this now sets the context for the rest of the form of doctrine all the way through Romans 15:7.

One more thing: this is not about whether he is receptive to what you have to say or not. And, this is not about whether or not you are telling him the truth. This is about not becoming his tutor or governor, even if he wants you to be! If you do that, you are short-circuiting his edification.

Romans Education Part 5

Session One: Summary

Moderation in the exercise of Christian liberty is not only about what we are to do (and not do), but it is also about why we are doing it.

Often the thing we do may be the same as those in the world, or in some religion, would do, with the main difference being “why” we are doing it. You can perform the greatest sacrificial acts, but unless they are done the right way/for the right reason, there is no profit to doing them. Motivation is important to God. We not only do what our Father would do, but we do it for the same reasons He would do it. If we do it for any other reason, we are not being “like Him;” we are not being godly.

When a brother is “weak in the faith” it means his edification in some doctrinal area is lacking. In every assembly that is working its way through the doctrine, it is possible for someone to come into that assembly whose edification is not on par with the rest of the assembly. There may be areas where they just don’t know the doctrine.

Romans 14:1, instructs us to receive the believer who is weak in the faith, but we are not to work on getting him to change what he believes. The Spirit of God within him, and the word of God effectually works to change his thinking or practice; not you. The last phrase of Romans 14:1 is a warning to the assembly about the importance of how we receive a weaker brother. If “doubtful disputations” arise, then it is on us. Properly receiving a weaker brother is such a big deal to God that we will answer for it at the JSoC!

An educated son realizes that different kinds of saints are dealt with differently, and all with godly love, charity and patience. Strife and disputing will stunt the spiritual growth of the entire assembly. The stronger members of the assembly never want to be in an adversarial position with a weaker brother. Not only do we run the risk of destroying our weaker brother, but we also put the entire assembly at risk.

God wants to make sure that weaker brethren are edified by stronger brethren and He wants the work of God to continue for the entire assembly. Once an assembly becomes fitly joined together and knit together in love, its conversation (the manifestation of its life) is no longer limited to this world, but is manifested in the heavenly places! When this doctrine effectually works in a local assembly; that godly church will have its Christ-like life manifested in the heavenlies. It is a pre-picture of the Lord Jesus and His body!

Romans Education Part 5

Session One: Self-Test

1. As the members of a local assembly begin to respond to each other out of the five core features of godly love, and obeying the various forms of doctrine in the instruction of _____, _____, _____ and especially _____, the relationships in that assembly, and the body functions of that assembly are _____ whereby those people (and that body) become _____ together, compacted, and _____ together in _____.
2. What are the five core features of godly love?
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
 - _____
3. When this _____ effectually works in a _____, that godly church will have its _____ - _____ life manifested in the _____.
4. Weak in the faith means there is some issue of _____ they have not yet _____, or is not yet _____ in them.
5. The _____ members of the assembly never want to be in an _____ position with a _____ brother.
6. (True/False) When a stronger brother becomes a tutor or governor to edify a weaker brother he has usurped the job of God's word and the Spirit of God.

Romans Education Part 5

Session One: 9:59 Practical Application

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Monday – Review

- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Review the previous decision making skills and make sure you have a good understanding of what they are and where you find the doctrine. Are these decision-making skills working in you?
- If you have some areas of uncertainty, spend some time reviewing the doctrine for that component and talk to your Father about how to best stabilize that foundation.
- Review the godly love components of selflessness, lovingkindness, tenderheartedness, meekness and benevolent goodness.
- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. Remember- we have liberty and grace to take the time necessary to ensure that we have a solid foundation. It is not a race. The objective for adopted sons and daughters is to bring your thoughts and actions in line with His, making godly decisions based on the doctrine and that which is pleasing to our Father. If you need to spend more time on a component of godly love or the decision-making skills – take the time now.

Tuesday – the effectual working of godly love

- Is each aspect of godly love working effectually in you? Talk to your Father in prayer about which ones are working and those areas which need a little more attention. Share with God your ideas on how to best review the doctrine and what steps need to be taken in order to ensure that each component of godly love and charity is working in you.
- Communicate with your Father whether your thinking, living and labor is in line with His. Talk to Him about the areas that are working in your life and where you are having struggles. Tell Him how you plan to work on those areas in order to bring your thoughts and actions in line with His.
- Read Romans 14:1-15:7 as many times as necessary until you understand what the verses are teaching. Can you summarize these verses into one concise sentence? Share your understanding of these verses with God. If you are struggling, read over the examples in the student notes. Now try and formulate your summary statement.
- Talk to your Father about your understanding of equity and consider whether your understanding is in line with His.

Wednesday – What does being weak in the faith mean to God

- Communicate with God your understanding of what a weaker brother is. Do you have a good grasp on what makes one “weak in the faith?” Talk to God about your responsibility to those in the assembly who may be weaker brothers or sisters.
- Think about what motivates you in your dealings with weaker brothers and sisters. Are your motivations and goals the same as those that Paul had when exercising liberty in the presence of those weak in the faith? Are they godly motivations?
- Express to God your understanding of why the motives behind your actions are important to Him. Think about how the things we do are often the same as those who are in the world and then consider what makes your actions different. A son or daughter should operate out of godly motivations and not the flesh. Recall 1 Corinthians 13:3.
- As a member of the body, what should our focus be when dealing with other members of the assembly regardless of where they are in their edification? What are we trying to accomplish? What does God want accomplished?

Should your attitude and treatment be any different? What consequences may result from treatment toward a brother or sister based on their doctrinal maturity? Devalue? Divisions? Tutor and governor?

Thursday – What does God want to accomplish

- Read Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 2:2 and Philippians 3:20 and consider what the proper use of our sonship skills will produce to God's glory.
- Now go back and read Romans 15:2 and Romans 14:14-20
- Does this give you a better understanding of God's purposes which are accomplished when the decision- making skills of wisdom, justice, judgment and equity as well as godly love and charity are working effectually in each of the members of the body of Christ? Express to God in prayer what those purposes are and how you will utilize the doctrine in order to labor with Him in accomplishing these goals.
- Communicate to your Father whether or not you are committed to laboring with Him in the assembly to ensure that not only are you being edified but every member of the assembly is being edified so that the whole body is being conformed to the image of Christ. Recall the purposes of God for the members of the assembly.

Colossians 2:2 That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; ³In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. ⁴And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words.

- Talk to your Father about what steps you can take to ensure that you are treating each other in godliness, are creating within our local assembly, a particular environment, a godly culture, so that the life of that assembly begins to be manifested to all in the heavenly places.
- Read Romans 8:19. Do you understand that your conversation and actions here on the earth are manifesting godliness in the heavenly places? Contemplate the impact you can have now as a member of the body of Christ and how the members are being delivered from elements of the bondage of corruption while they are still here on this earth; they are, to a degree, living in "the glorious liberty of the children of God."

Friday-No doubtful disputations allowed here

- Review Romans 14:1-10 concerning godly thinking.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

- Again think about what it means to be weak in the faith. Have a conversation with your Father about your understanding of what that means. Do you understand that being weak in the faith is not a question of whether or not you are justified but it addresses where you are in the doctrine?
- Do you know members of the assembly who may be new to sonship and are not as advanced in the doctrine as you might be? Consider how you can be of benefit to them concerning their growth in the doctrine without being their tutor and governor in the process. Weak in the faith is a positive statement about one who is justified unto eternal life but is going through the process of godly edification in accordance with the proper order or sense and sequence as set forth in Paul's epistles.
- Think about how edification takes place. Communicate to your Father your understanding of who is responsible for the edification of the saints and what that process is. Consider how you may benefit those as they go through this process. Consider how you can value and esteem them by showing them love and charity as they become edified in accordance with the proper sense of sequence of the doctrine effectually working in them.

Isaiah 28:9 Whom shall he teach knowledge? and whom shall he make to understand doctrine? *them that are* weaned from the milk, *and* drawn from the breasts. ¹⁰For precept *must be* upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little: ¹¹For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. ¹²To whom he said, This *is* the rest *wherewith* ye may cause the weary to rest; and this *is* the refreshing: yet they would not hear. ¹³But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken.

1 Corinthians 3:1 And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even* as unto babes in Christ. ²I have fed you with milk,

and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able *to bear it*, neither yet now are ye able.

1 Thessalonians 5:11 Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do. ¹²And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; ¹³And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves. ¹⁴Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are **unruly**, comfort the **feebleminded**, support the **weak**, be patient toward all *men*.

- Talk to the Father about your thoughts on how you can be of support to those who are weak in the assembly. Consider the consequences to them if you negatively impact their edification through doubtful disputations.
- Do you understand what Romans 14:1 means when it speaks of “doubtful disputations”? Consider the ramifications of causing a weaker brother or sister to doubt. Consider how important this issue is to God and express your understanding to Him. Do you understand why you are not to be a tutor and governor to he who is weak in the faith?
- Consider the impact these disputations will have on the assembly as a whole. Do you see how your treatment of those weaker in the faith can be the cause of divisions? Talk to your Father about His purposes behind the assembly and why it is important that we value and esteem each member of the assembly and act in accordance with godly love and charity.
- Prayerfully consider the importance of the spiritual health and edification of the assembly. Ponder how important this is to God. Consider the consequences of the assembly’s failure to adhere to the doctrine in Romans 14:1-15:7 as it relates to the edification of the weak in the faith.
- Do you see an exception to Romans 14:1 when it comes to the weaker brother or sister?
- Now read again your summary statement. Do you need to make any adjustments to it?
- Thank God for His word as you are being conformed to the image of Christ. Remember the goal is to have the mind of Christ: to think, live and labor with our Father and bring Him glory!

Romans Education Part 5

Session One: Self-Test Answers

1. As the members of a local assembly begin to respond to each other out of the five core features of godly love, and obeying the various forms of doctrine in the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment and especially equity, the relationships in that assembly, and the body functions of that assembly are transformed whereby those people (and that body) become fitly joined together, compacted, and knit together in love.
2. What are the five core features of godly love?
 - Selflessness
 - Lovingkindness
 - Tenderheartedness
 - Longsuffering/Meekness
 - Benevolent Goodness
3. When this doctrine effectually works in a local assembly, that godly church will have its Christ-like life manifested in the heavenlies.
4. Weak in the faith means there is some issue of doctrine they have not yet learned, or is not yet working in them.
5. The stronger members of the assembly never want to be in an adversarial position with a weaker brother.
6. (**True**) When a stronger brother becomes a tutor or governor to edify a weaker brother he has usurped the job of God's word and the Spirit of God.

Romans Education, Part 5

Session Two: GODLY EQUITY

Session Notes

Now that we have covered verse one, Paul is about to give us two examples of how this doctrine works.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. **2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.**

Romans 14:5 **One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*.** Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

The specific examples are not necessarily the issue, for the corrective doctrine can be applied to every weaker brother situation that may arise in the assembly.

We have two people in each example. One is the “stronger” brother and the other is the “weaker” brother. For now, let’s focus our attention on the first example.

In the first example, the stronger brother believes he can eat all things. In this example, the issue is eating meat. The weaker brother, for whatever reason, will not eat meat, but only vegetables.

Now, is there anything sinful about eating vegetables? No. Therefore, the weaker brother is not doing something wrong; he is not committing sin. Therefore, this is not a “right or wrong” issue. Why is this observation important? Because, when we are dealing with an issue of equity, we are not talking about things which are wrong or sinful. If it were an issue of right or wrong, this would be a decision that would likely fall under justice, and it would be dealt with in a different way.

Let me give you an example. In 1 Corinthians, Paul talks about some members of the Corinthian assembly who are committing fornication, which is to say, they are not married but they are sexually active. Paul instructs the assembly as to how they should handle these fellow members.

1 Corinthians 5:9 I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: ¹⁰Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with

the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. ¹¹But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. ¹²For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? ¹³But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.

You can see how Paul exhorts the church to holiness by separating themselves from those who are intemperate and wicked. This is a justice issue of good and evil. But, you understand, this is a very different issue than what we are looking at in Romans 14.

What is the issue in Romans 14?

The issue is that the weaker brother is not yet edified to the place where he understands Paul's doctrine for the body of Christ living in this DoGG. He may have some hang-ons from his old Gentile religion, or, if he is a Jew, he may have retained parts of living under the Law as part of God's program with Israel. While the particular examples Paul uses in vs. 2 is that of eating meat, and in vs. 5 of observing days, what makes one of them the weaker brother is not limited to these two issues. It could be that the weaker brother has any number of doctrinal deficiencies concerning what he believes and how he should live. The weaker brother does not yet know that nothing is unclean of itself. Perhaps he does not understand the DoGG, or the liberty of a son in the DoGG. Maybe he does not know there has been a dispensational change and what that change means for him. Maybe he does not know that he is under grace and is not under the bondage of the Law. Maybe he does not realize that God is now dealing with him as an adult, and not a child and has therefore given him liberty in Christ.

In the passage, the stronger brother is strong in the sense that he has an understanding of the DoGG and how it impacts his conduct. The weaker brother is weak in the sense that he does not yet possess a sufficient understanding of how living in the DoGG affects his conduct.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is

weak, eateth herbs. ³**Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth:** for God hath received him.

Notice in vs. 3, wrong thinking can be had by both parties. The stronger brother, if he does not think properly, will despise his weaker brother. The weaker brother, if he does not think properly, will judge his stronger brother. Despising and judging are processes that go on in our minds, hence, this is the thinking portion of the doctrine.

Let's talk about those two words; despise and judge.

OED: Despise

1. To look down upon; to view with contempt; to think scornfully or slightly of

That last part of the definition is interesting; "to think scornfully or slightly of." Slightly means to disrespect, disregard and ignore, the very opposite of value and esteem!

Thinking about this in relation to the education proper, what words or phrases come to mind that describe the thinking of one who does value and esteem their fellow brother?

Romans 12:3 – not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think

Romans 12:16 – mind not high things, be not wise in your own conceits

What are these describing? Pride. This is the sin of the adversary and if left unchecked, will destroy the edification of an assembly.

Now let's take a look at the word "judge."

OED: Judge

3. *transitive*. To pronounce an opinion about; to pass judgement upon; to criticize; *esp.* to express, or indicate that one holds, an unfavourable view of; to condemn, censure. Also (*esp.* in later use) *intransitive*.

When Paul says the weaker brother should not judge, it means he should not criticize, view unfavorably, or condemn the other brother.

There is something that the stronger brother is doing (in this case, eating meat) which the weaker brother finds offensive. The weaker brother perhaps does not realize that in this DoGG, you are free from the dietary restrictions of the Law and you are free to eat whatever. He may also not realize that to the stronger brother, eating meat which has been offered to idols has nothing to do with idol worship because he realizes there is only one true God. Or it may be that in his past as a Gentile, there was another reason he used to eschew eating meat and that is still in his thinking, which is not in the thinking of the stronger brother.

Back in my days as an independent Baptist, we labeled lots of behaviors as sinful where the Bible did not. For many, it was an honest attempt to live for God, but it was at the preaching of men rather than the study of God's word.

An example was women wearing pants. The verse used was Deuteronomy 22:5.

Deuteronomy 22:5 The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so *are* abomination unto the LORD thy God.

The preaching was that women who wore pants were an abomination to God. We were having a church fellowship when I was on staff in Baton Rouge and one of us was going to have to dress up like a woman for a skit. I drew the short straw. When I objected, appealing to the verse, my fellow staffers said, you know that is referring to a lifestyle, not just putting on a skirt for a funny skit. After all of them trying to make me feel better, I asked Chuck, would you do it? He said "no." I asked, "Why not?" He answered, "Because it's an abomination." Funny. But that was my background and for many years, my wife never wore pants. But, as you really begin to examine the doctrine and RDW, you find out that God does not see it that way.

But the point is that if anyone had certain behaviors which the church (pastor) considered sinful, we looked at them a little like 2nd class members who were not serious about living for God. I have heard lots of preaching against all kinds of things which I eventually came to understand, were not sinful. It doesn't mean

those were good things to do, and they certainly weren't edifying, but they were not sinful. But it caused a division in our thinking and tutor and governor (T&G) actions on our part to get everyone to conform.

We wound up doing exactly what Paul says not to do; being a T&G. And you know the irony was; we were the weaker brothers. But, so were the ones doing these things: for they were not doing them out of an understanding of Christian liberty in this DoGG. So we have two groups of weaker brothers at odds with each other. We were oblivious to what real edification was. We thought when someone stopped doing one of those supposedly sinful things that was spiritual growth. No wonder so many dropped out, edification never took place and we were oblivious to it the whole time.

And just to say, when Paul was writing Romans 14, he did not have that kind of church in mind. Even though we got the soul winning part right, we missed so much we should have been doing.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: **for God hath received him.**

Notice the colon, and then, "for God hath received him." Him, who? The "him" is referring to either brother. Depending on which side of the issue you are on, it refers to the one on the other side. So, if you are the stronger brother, you will read it, "God hath received your weaker brother." And if you are the weaker brother, then you will read it, "God hath received your stronger brother."

What does it mean that God hath received him? It means that no matter where he is in the edification process, God is not displeased or troubled by him; he is approved. We were all, at one time, weaker brothers and sisters, as we did not yet have very much of the doctrine working in us. When we were, God was not upset or impatient with us.

This gives rise to a problem, for once a person realizes the truth of this, then what happens if they just decide to stop where they are and not go any further. What if they think, “No more work, no more provoking the Adversary, no more problems. I am going to quit right here because Romans 14 says wherever I am in my edification, God approves of me and is not upset.”

Is this acceptable? It is not. How do we know? We know because all of this is written in a context.

Look back at verse vs. 1 and notice the phrase “in the faith.” When you are “in the faith” we know this is talking about Paul’s doctrine, but even that has a context. Just to put it all together, he is the context for what Paul is referring to.

I want to introduce this in a way everyone will understand the overall context to Romans 14. These things, all these doctrines, all these exhortations, everything we encounter...it is all being written to a body of believers who have a level of understanding as to the purpose of a church (the education/edification of its members), and have committed themselves to that. That is encapsulated by the phrase “in the faith.” That phrase is not just talking about being saved from the debt and penalty of sin. It is referring to the whole of Pauline doctrine; the mystery of Christ.

Paul is writing the education proper (Romans 12:1-15:7) to a body of believers who understand what that is and who have committed themselves to it. The actual truth is, if a church does not understand about the education, if they are not being edified unto godliness, if they do not understand what this is all about, Paul does not have that kind of a church in mind as he writes this. That is what I mean by context.

Just to flesh this out, you have a church which is involved in the progressive education of sons, with the intent of edifying its members unto godliness. That means this church has moved, or is moving, through the doctrine, in order, from Romans to Philemon. The people understand they are involved in a progressive education.

It is led by a pastor who is a son himself. This church has deacons who are committed to the edification of the assembly.

It consists of saints who understand about the sonship education (no matter how they refer to it) and they are involved in the edificational process in their individual lives with a desire for the entire assembly to be edified as a body.

It means when someone new comes into the assembly, it is for the purpose of being educated and edified. In other words, either they know what the assembly is about, or they come to that understanding and they continue to attend for that reason. These saints, new to the assembly, can very well be (depending on their background) weaker brothers. They probably do not realize they are weaker brothers because you cannot know what you do not know. But, as they 1) go back to pick up the doctrine they missed, and 2) continue with the assembly in the present doctrine, they will encounter those doctrines which they did not understand and the process of edification begins to bring them up to speed.

That is why we are working on an Accelerated Education Program for the purpose of solving this “weaker brother” issue.

But, back to the point, it is this kind of church that Paul is writing to. And if this is the kind of church, the kind of saints, then the answer to the problem is, even when we understand that God is not troubled over where we are in our edification that does not make us want to quit. It just shows his patience and love toward us.

What we have is a group of people who want to become fully educated sons and daughters. We are not afraid to die, but we would like to get a little further along in our education. We are ready for the Blessed Hope, but we don't mind sticking around to further our edification.

Looking at verse, 4, if God has received every one of us, no matter where we are in our edification, then we should do the same for all of our brothers and sisters; and do so gladly and with love (SKTMB).

Romans 14:4 **Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?** to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

The first phrase of vs. 4 is saying, “who gave you this right to sit in judgment on others?” It is not ours to sit in judgment on the servant of another man. Even more so, it is not ours to sit in judgment on the servant of God. He has the control over him; and if *he* chooses to forbid his doing anything, or to allow him to do anything, it pertains to *his* affairs, not ours.

Romans 14:4 **Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?** to his own master he standeth or falleth. **Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.**

Because it isn't used in our common vocabulary or writing these days, it is easy to overlook the “Yea” at the beginning of the last sentence in vs. 4. This is one of those words like “Verily” or “Nay” that is meant to bring greater emphasis to what is about to be said.

So, after getting our attention with “Yea,” Paul goes on to say that “he shall be holden up” which is way of saying that God will hold him up or approve him.

When it says God is able to make him stand, he is talking about stand in the sense of (OED 22b definition) to remain in a state of approval before God.

Sentence 1 of vs. 4: What right do you have to judge the servant of another? It is to his own master (in this case, God) as to whether he is approved or disapproved.

Sentence 2 of vs. 4: With an emphatic Yes!, this brother is approved by God, for God Himself is able to approve him and to keep him in this state of approval “in Christ.”

That brings us to the second example, the observance of days.

Romans 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

Just as the first example did not tell us the nature of the weaker brother's objection to eating meat (such as in Corinth, being offered to idols), in the same way, the second example does not specify the observance of days. All the conjecture about this being Sabbath or it being certain feast days is irrelevant to understanding the text.

If we are not supposed to correct the weaker brother over his lack of knowledge and leave it to the edificational process (the Spirit and the word of God), then why does Paul seem to violate this process with the Galatians? Notice how Paul outright corrects them for observing days, months, times and years in vs. 10.

Galatians 4:7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. ⁸Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. ⁹But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? ¹⁰Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. ¹¹I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain.

Paul is not violating his doctrine in Romans 14 because this is a different circumstance. In Romans 14, we have a brother who does not yet know the truths of the mystery of Christ. But here in Galatians 4, Paul says these saints knew better. Look at verse 9. These are people who had forsaken those things of the Law, but they put themselves back under bondage.

This is a different circumstance in that the Galatians knew better and had done better. But they went backward and returned to putting themselves back under the Law. The Galatians were not ignorant, they were disobedient! When we study Galatians, we will see that they had advanced themselves in the faith before they allowed false teachers to come in and seduce them back to the Law. Their actions were not out of ignorance, but the PoE victimized them.

Therefore, Paul deals with the Galatians differently than he deals with a weaker brother. The Galatians were not weak in the faith. These are two different things with two different groups of people.

This is another aspect of discernment where we know when to use godly equity and when to reprove and rebuke in love.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Two: Summary

When we are dealing with an issue of equity, we are not talking about things which are wrong or sinful. If it were an issue of right or wrong, this would be a decision that would likely fall under justice.

The corrective doctrine of Romans 14 can be applied to every weaker brother situation that may arise in the assembly, as the weaker brother may have any number of doctrinal deficiencies concerning what he believes and how he should live.

In the passage, the stronger brother is strong in the sense that he has an understanding of the DoGG and how it impacts his conduct. The weaker brother is weak in the sense that he does not yet possess a sufficient understanding of how living in the DoGG affects his conduct.

Romans 14:3, shows that wrong thinking can be had by both parties. The stronger brother, if he does not think properly, will despise his weaker brother and the weaker brother, if he does not think properly, will judge his stronger brother.

The stronger brother should not despise, (look down upon; to view with contempt; to think scornfully or slightingly of) his weaker brother, nor should the weaker brother judge the stronger brother, meaning he should not criticize, view unfavorably, or condemn the other brother.

We were all, at one time, weaker brothers and sisters, as we did not yet have very much of the doctrine working in us. When we were, God was not upset or impatient with us, and neither should we be with our brother. So, no matter where our brother is in the edification process, God is not displeased or troubled by him; he is approved. Even when we understand that God is not troubled over where we are in our edification, it should not make us want to quit.

If God has received every one of us, no matter where we are in our edification, then we should do the same for all of our brothers and sisters; and do so gladly and with love.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Two: Self-Test

1. Despising and _____ are processes that go on in our minds, hence, this is the _____ portion of the doctrine.
2. The _____ brother, if he does not think properly, will _____ his _____ brother. The weaker brother, if he does not think properly, will _____ his stronger brother.
3. When it says God is able to make him stand, he is talking about stand in the sense of (OED 22b definition) to remain in a state of _____ before God.
4. We are not supposed to _____ the weaker brother over his _____ of knowledge and leave it to the _____ process (the Spirit and the word of _____).
5. If God has _____ every one of us, no matter where we are in our _____, then we should do the same for all of our _____ and sisters; and do so _____ and with _____.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Two: 9:59 Practical Application

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Monday – Review

- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Review the previous session and make sure you have a good understanding of what defines a weaker/stronger brother in the faith.
- Are you able to locate the doctrinal components for the decision-making skills as well as the doctrinal components of godly love and charity? It might help to mark them in your bible. Are these working in you?
- If you have some areas of uncertainty, spend some time reviewing the doctrine for that component and talk to your Father about how to best stabilize your foundation. We are God's building!

1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building. ¹⁰According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. ¹¹For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ¹³Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every

man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. Remember, we have liberty and grace to take the time necessary to ensure that we have a solid foundation. It is not a race. The objective for adopted sons and daughters is to bring your thoughts and actions in line with His, making godly decisions based on the doctrine and that are pleasing to our Father. If you need to spend more time on a component of godly love or the decision-making skills – take the time now.

Tuesday – Weak or strong in the faith – We are the same in God’s eyes

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. ⁴Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

- Do you understand what the issues are in these examples? Talk to your Father about what point He is trying to get across in these examples in Romans 14:2 and 14:5?
- Recall what defines one who is “weaker in the faith”.
- Is God only holding those stronger in the faith accountable for their thoughts and actions? Have a conversation with your Father concerning what your attitude should be toward brothers and sisters who are weak or strong in the faith. Do you see a difference?
- Think about that new member of the assembly who is not as advanced in the doctrine. Recall what it was like for you when you first joined the assembly as a new son or daughter. Talk to God about how you felt as a weaker brother or sister and what your experiences were in dealing with those who

were stronger in the doctrine both positive and negative experiences. Now Ask God how you can be of benefit to that weaker saint.

- Consider some of the church traditions that you adhered to before you began sonship. Talk to your Father about your experiences as you began the edification process and realized many of the church traditions or teachings were not based upon the solid foundation of the doctrine. Did your understanding change immediately or was it a process as you studied the doctrine and it began to effectually work in you?

Wednesday: Justice or Equity? Right or Wrong? Weak or Strong?

- Do you understand the differences between an issue of right or wrong (justice) and the issue of not yet being advanced in the doctrine (equity)? Talk to your Father about the differences you see.
- Read 1 Corinthians 5:9-13; Galatians 4 as they are good examples of corrective doctrine.
- Do you understand the definition of despise? Talk to your Father about the definition and why these behaviors and attitudes can be detrimental to the assembly. Do you see why treating a brother or sister in Christ with disrespect and scorn is contrary to the way we are taught to see each other?
- Do you understand the definition for judge? There are certainly times that we are to judge but consider the situations with a weaker or stronger brother. What are the possible consequences of being critical or condemning toward members of the body who are weak in the faith?
- Read the following passages concerning times when judgment is appropriate. Read Romans 14:13; 1 Cor 11:31; 1 Corinthians 10:15; 1 Corinthians 6:3-5; 2 Corinthians 5:14. There are times when corrective doctrine is essential for the health and stability of the body. Do you understand the difference?
- Consider where the responsibility of edification lies. Who is it that causes the doctrine to effectually work in the individual? Is it you? Think about what your responsibility is? What are the ways that you can value and esteem all members of the assembly regardless of where they are in their edification. Ask God what you can do in labouring with Him to be of benefit to all the members but especially to those weak in the faith

- Consider what it means to be “in the faith”. Review our responsibility to each other in Romans 12:1-15:7. Does this give you a better perspective on how you should see both weaker and stronger members of the assembly? Think about how God sees each one of us and then talk to God about how He expects us to view each other, regardless of where we are in our edification.
- Talk to your Father about the importance of valuing and esteeming members of the body, especially those who are weaker in the faith. Share with Him the ramifications of judging and criticizing those in the body and what you can do to ensure that you treat each other with respect, love and charity.
- Now check your motivations! Are they godly?

Thursday – Master and Servant

Romans 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

- Who might the master be? Talk to your heavenly Father about your understanding of who this master is and who is the servant in this passage.
- What does it mean to you to be approved of God? Discuss with your Father your understanding of what it means to be holden up and able to stand. Does this give you some comfort and security?
- Read Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 2:2 and Philippians 3:20 and consider what the proper use of our sonship skills will produce to God’s glory. Share your understanding with God in prayer.

Romans 14:3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

- Do you understand what Paul is saying when he tells you to not judge either the weaker or stronger brother in the faith? Talk to the Father about what it means to you that He has received both. Does it mean the same thing to you that it means to God? Do you need to make some changes to the way you see other members of the body of Christ?

- Consider what it was like when you were new to sonship and weak in the faith. What made you feel valued and esteemed? What can you do to make others in the assembly feel valued and esteemed? What things had the greatest impact on you?
- Think about the fact that regardless of where we are in our edification process, whether weak or strong in the faith, God has received you. Talk with your Father about how that makes you feel. Now apply that to your thoughts and actions toward members of the assembly. Is your thinking, living and labour in line with your Father's?
- Do you recognize the importance this is to God and to the accomplishment of His plans and purposes within the divine institution of the church (the assembly)? Express to your Father how important this is to you. Is your thinking in line with His? What motives and attitudes need to change?

Friday – So who is Paul talking to?

- Review Romans 14:1-12 concerning godly thinking.
- Consider who Paul is speaking to in Romans 14. Does this provide you with a different perspective on who they are? Who we are? Paul is writing the education proper (Romans 12:1-15:7) to a body of believers who understand what that is and who have committed themselves to it. It consists of saints who understand about the sonship education (no matter how they refer to it) and they are involved in the edification process in their individual lives with a desire for the entire assembly to be edified as a body. Each member of that assembly, whether a new member or one who has been a part of the assembly for many years, has the same edification goals.
- Does this give you a better perspective on what being “weaker in the faith” means? Does this understanding change how you see others in the assembly? Does this impact how you view other saints who might still be holding on to some church traditions, who might be struggling with right division, or who have just begun their journey toward becoming a fully educated son or daughter?
- Read the following and ponder how you should deal with each other, whether weak or strong in the faith.

- Patience: Galatians 5:22-23; Galatians 6:9; Ephesians 4:1-3; 1 Corinthians 13:4; Colossians 3:12-13; 2 Timothy 2:24-25; Romans 15:1-3; 2 Timothy 4:2. Can you think of other passages that may provide guidance on how you are to interact with other members of the assembly?
- Have a serious conversation with your Father on how your actions and attitude can be of benefit to those saints rather than a hindrance to their growth in Christ. Are your motivations in line with His? Are you valuing and esteeming them? Are you treating them with Godly love and charity?
- Thank God for His word as you are being conformed to the image of Christ. Remember the goal is to have the mind of Christ: to think, live and labor with our Father and bring Him glory!

Romans Education Part 5

Session Two: Self-Test Answers

1. Despising and judging are processes that go on in our minds, hence, this is the thinking portion of the doctrine.
2. The stronger brother, if he does not think properly, will despise his weaker brother. The weaker brother, if he does not think properly, will judge his stronger brother.
3. When it says God is able to make him stand, he is talking about stand in the sense of (OED 22b definition) to remain in a state of approval before God.
4. We are not supposed to correct the weaker brother over his lack of knowledge and leave it to the edification process (the Spirit and the word of God)
5. If God has received every one of us, no matter where we are in our edification, then we should do the same for all of our brothers and sisters; and do so gladly and with love.

Romans Education, Part 5

Session Three: GODLY EQUITY

Session Notes

Before we get going today, I want to point out an important distinction with regard to the brother who is not eating meat, but herbs only. Notice, the context has only to do with his belief that eating meat would be, in some sense, morally or spiritually wrong. This illustration has nothing to do with what a person eats or does not eat concerning health issues. For example, there are certain meats I cannot eat because I am allergic to them; shellfish and certain seafood. The reason I do not eat them is not because they are banned in God's program with Israel, but for my own personal health reasons. This is not what Paul is talking about when he is describing the stronger and weaker brothers.

A person does not have to have an allergy they can simply choose not to eat one thing, but to eat another. For example, many people, for health reasons, try to steer away from red meat, but they will eat fish or chicken. Again, this is not a moral or spiritual issue for them, so Romans 14 is not referring to this kind of situation either.

Paul is writing in connection with this DoGG and the proper doctrinal understanding that we are free to eat whatever we want. It is an issue of liberty. But what we are not free to do is impose our liberty on another brother who, by his own conscience, is reluctant to... fill in the blank, for this does not just apply to eating meat.

Romans 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ⁷For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Now we come to the second illustration. The first was on the subject of eating meat or not. This second one concerns the observing of certain days over other days. Most likely, this is another issue of Israel's program which is still in the thinking of the weaker brother. The weaker brother is observing days because he has not yet been edified to the place where he understands that for the body of Christ, every day is as spiritually important as any other day.

But the thing which they both have in common is that they are both doing what they do as "unto the Lord." The weaker brother's view is honestly held by him as being honoring unto Christ. As he grows in grace, he will learn to see the days differently, in accordance with the DoGG in which he lives. Until that time, the stronger of the assembly are to "receive him" as vs. 1 said to do. By the way, that "receive him" does not just mean to let him attend the assembly, but it means to fully love and embrace this brother. It means to include him in your own fellowship.

Romans 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. **Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.**

This is not about Paul having no opinion about what the right thing is to believe. This is not saying that a person can believe anything he wants to believe, as though it doesn't matter to God. It does matter.

What Paul is saying is for a man to be persuaded in his own mind through the edification process, not by the imposition of the stronger brother.

Look, there are two issues these verses are meant to get cemented into our thinking. The first issue is for the stronger in the assembly to look at the weaker the same way God looks at them. Not to despise them or belittle them. But to value and esteem them, right where they are in their own edification.

The second issue, which is the one that is about to come up in the next verses is to recognize the power of grace in the edificational process. If we do, if our confidence is in the edification process, then we are not so likely to "jump the gun" with the weaker brother by getting him to think or act in a way that is beyond his edification at the time.

Now, look at how Paul sets this up. He shows the common ground between the stronger and weaker brother. They both honestly believe what they believe and do

what they do. Sure, one of them doesn't know the full truth yet, but because this context is about a brother who has come to the assembly for that purpose (edification), that is not the issue right now. Both of them are acting as unto the Lord.

Romans 14:6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.

Now, Paul is going to take this issue of their service to God (their heart attitude/honesty of heart and desire for edification) and present that as sufficient as far as the stronger brother is concerned.

Romans 14:7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.
⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

Verse 7 is not referring to the fact that we have some measure of influence on those around us, but along with vs. 8, indicates that our whole existence, our life and death, is an issue between us and our Lord. And since this is all in the context of our edification, Paul is describing brethren with honesty of heart; which is the prerequisite for edification (as opposed to the rejection of the doctrine).

Therefore, the stronger brethren of an assembly are to leave these other issues (illustrated by meat and days), which are the product of a lack of edification, to your fellow brother's honesty of heart (here described as "living and dying unto the Lord") and the process which the Lord has devised within the local assembly to produce the edification of the weaker brother. The idea is that our love toward our weaker brother, and patient trusting in the edification within the local assembly, will enable our weaker brother to grow in grace.

Now, this is what I see. I know it looks like a stretch because I am using words that are not in the text itself. When Paul talks about living and dying *unto the Lord*, I do not think he is describing everyone, but those within an assembly who are there for the edification; those with honesty of heart who are seeking to be

edified. Combine that with the idea that Paul is restraining the stronger brother from imposing his own knowledge and maturity on the weaker.

“Whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s” indicates that these contextual issues of meats and days (which are representative), will be resolved between the saint and his Lord. And how will the Lord do this? Through the educational ministry of the local assembly to bring saints to an understanding of the doctrine (renewing their thinking about a particular issue) and then through their personal response to that doctrine in their time with the Lord which results in the effectual working of the word (a conviction of the truth of this new doctrine they are learning) to produce a change in their behavior.

The stronger within an assembly must trust the edificational process to do what it was designed to do. Confidence in the edification process is their focus. They will also need patience and love while they wait for the weaker brethren to catch up. But that does not mean we have to wait around, hoping for the missing edification to take place. Instead, we can supply a way for them to catch up. Therefore, we record our sessions, so others can benefit later who were not there at the time it was taught. This is a benefit of technology which we have today, which Paul only had by writing the epistles down and preserving them.

Also, we are making available the Accelerated Education, so that a weaker brother doesn’t have to study for years to get Paul’s foundational doctrines working in him. He can get a basic understanding in months while being encouraged to look at the expanded studies on his own.

Now, let’s look at the remainder of the godly thinking portion of the passage.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

The “judging” is what the weaker brother does, and the “set at nought” is what the stronger brother does. This is picking up on what was first set forth back in vs. 3.

Romans 14:3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

Returning to vs. 10, Paul then says that both brothers will stand before the judgment seat of Christ (JSoC) and give account of their actions.

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? **for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ (JSoC).**

The very fact that, in the progressive doctrine of Paul's epistles as laid out in our Bible, this is the first direct reference to the JSoC, points to how important this issue is for both brothers the stronger and the weaker. We are not going to step aside here for a more detailed look at the JSoC, but I refer you to the Theodicy study where we spent quite a bit of time on this issue. For now, let me just say that it will be our edification (or lack of edification) which will be the focus at the JSoC, which will determine our joint-heir inheritance.

Seeing that Paul inserts the JSoC into the midst of this should make us think about how important it is to God that we not, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians, attempt to have dominion over the faith of another.

2 Corinthians 1:24 **Not for that we have dominion over your faith**, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

That may not be our intention, but if we do not handle these edificational differences with our Father's wisdom, we can wind up doing just that. This is why you hear me talk about something being a sonship decision so often. In our assembly, we have people at all kinds of stages of edification. So, to almost all of us, there is someone who is, in some area, a weaker brother. This section of godly equity is important to the preserving of that weaker brother and to the continued edification of the assembly as a whole.

Romans 14:11 For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

The following is from Isaiah 45. The thing to realize is that Isaiah is not talking about the JSoC, since that was not known until the mystery was revealed to Paul. When you read it, you realize this is not about the body of Christ, but about Israel.

Isaiah 45:23 I have sworn by myself, The word is gone out of my mouth *in* righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, Every tongue shall swear. ²⁴Surely, shall *one* say, in the LORD have I righteousness and strength: *Even* to him shall *men* come; And all that are incensed against him shall be ashamed. ²⁵In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.

So, if this is not about the JSoC, why does Paul reference it? Because Isaiah is talking about Israel's accountability to God and Paul is showing that to be a parallel issue for us and the JSoC. Since this is its first mention, as you progress through the Scriptures, Paul's reference is to explain the JSoC for those who did not previously know what that was about. So, just as there will be a judgment for those in the prophetic program, there will be also for us in the mystery program. And now we know that a part of that judgment will pertain to how we handled the edification of a weaker brother.

Now we want to move to the next section which is the godly living section. This is contained in vv. 13-23. Let's read it now.

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. ¹⁴I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. ¹⁵But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men. ¹⁹Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. ²⁰For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. ²¹*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. ²²Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ²³And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Now, let's look back at vs. 13.

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.

Now, Paul uses the word "judge" for everyone involved, the stronger and weaker brother. Why do I say this? Because the immediate "us" in the previous verse is for both types of brothers.

Romans 14:12 So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

Which type of brother shall give account? Every one of us, not just the weaker or just the stronger. As Paul comes out of an "us" which includes everyone, look again at vs. 13.

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more...

The "us" of vs. 13 is the same as the "us" of vs. 12. The judge of vs. 13 is no longer confined to the weaker brother who is judging the liberty of the stronger brother. Both are making a wrong judgment about the other.

The first use of the word "judge" in vs. 13 has this definition:

OED: judge

3. transitive. To pronounce an opinion about; to pass judgement upon; **to criticize**; *esp.* to express, or indicate that one holds, **an unfavourable view of; to condemn, censure.**

By the way, this is not saying that we are never supposed to judge anyone for anything; there is a context to this. There are things we are supposed to have an unfavorable opinion about, things that should be condemned, but this situation in the assembly is not one of them.

Paul is saying for both the stronger and the weaker to stop thinking about each other in a critical and unfavorable way so that they do not put a stumblingblock in each other's way. There are plenty of things we are supposed to judge. In fact, in this very verse following the colon, Paul says "judge this rather."

But before we leave the opening phrase of vs. 13, what is it saying to us? It is a summation type statement for the first twelve verses. See the "therefore" in the

verse? Paul is saying, in view of everything I just told you (in vv. 1-12) stop judging each other, but instead, start thinking about the actions that are a result of your wrong thinking. And this gets us started in the godly living section of the doctrine.

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: **but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.**

What results from our improper thinking about our brother will be that we put a stumblingblock in his way; an opportunity for him to fall. This is hardly what we should want for a fellow saint whom we value and esteem, who we selflessly love as a brother or sister in Christ, who we honor and whose edification we care about as much as our own.

While I think that stumblingblock is understood by everyone, I think it is important to understand the way in which our wrong behavior can result in a stumblingblock. Obviously, this is not physical, but the obstacle (stumblingblock) is to our brother's edification. Our wrong critical thinking will produce an attitude and behavior which will prove detrimental to the edification of our brother. This can happen with either the weaker or stronger toward the other. When we see it in light of "an occasion to fall" that is also making a reference to negatively impacting their edification, whereby they might fall spiritually.

So, here is a brother who is being criticized for exercising his liberty in Christ by a brother who does not fully understand the doctrine in this area. What is the natural response of the stronger brother? Because he understands Paul's doctrine, he knows he isn't doing anything wrong and so his immediate response is to defend his actions by pointing out what the weaker brother does not know. Instead of letting the natural process of edification take place, he jumps ahead and wants to set forth an argument.

This is wrong on both parts. The weaker brother (who, by the way, probably does not know he is the weaker brother) is being critical of another's liberty in Christ. That is wrong. The stronger brother now resents the weaker brother and tends to dismiss him because he doesn't know what he is talking about.

So, as Paul begins vs. 13, he is talking to both of them, correcting both of them.

Why does Paul begin this with “but judge this rather?” Well, we have to go back and understand the way Paul uses the word judge. In the first part of the verse to judge meant to criticize. But when Paul says, “...judge this rather,” he is using the word “judge” in a different meaning.

OED: judge

To form an opinion or conclusion about (a person or thing), esp. following **careful consideration or deliberation; to assess, evaluate, or appraise.**

What this means is that we are to think about this stumblingblock issue in a very judgmental way, in a discerning way. It means we are being careful not to handle this situation in a way which would hinder the edification of our brother or affect the atmosphere of the assembly at large and thereby affect its edification. You understand that any division over issues affects the whole.

That means instead of rushing to defend ourselves to the weaker brother by overwhelming him with doctrine he does not yet possess, we understand what is going on. He has a genuinely held belief that he thinks is “unto the Lord.” We should admire that about him, knowing that one day he too will understand his liberty in Christ, and he will hold to that just as tenaciously.

We didn’t talk about it before, but when you rush to defend yourself, to the brother who doesn’t know or understand the doctrine it only looks like you are trying to justify some kind of wrong action. He does not yet have a basis for understanding your liberty or how it glorifies God.

For the weaker brother, (and you won’t identify yourself that way) when you look around and see people behaving in a way you think is wrong, you need to stop and consider that situation. Is this something that is plainly identified in the bible as sin? For example, is it as obvious as stealing or adultery? If it is, there is a way to deal with that, but that is not the situation Paul is dealing with here in Romans 14.

Or is the problem with something that is not plainly identified in scripture, like eating meat? If it is about one of your preferences (which is often called *convictions*) which they appear not to have in common with you, then stop thinking about your brother in a critical, judgmental way.

Look, it is not always this way, but often when a person is genuinely a weaker brother, the reason he does not acknowledge that he is, is because he considers

himself to be more spiritual than another brother which is exercising his liberty in Christ. For example, he will not eat meat which has been sacrificed to idols. Or, for an even more extreme example, not knowing he is no longer under the ceremonial law, he refuses to eat meat which has not been prepared kosher. He may refuse all pork and any beef which has not been prepared in accordance with Israel's dietary laws.

As such, he considers himself to be pleasing God and very spiritual for he is taking pains to do things which many others do not. Part of the problem is that some Christians are living, not out of the glorious liberty which has been provided for us as members of the body of Christ, but they are simply living out of their fleshly appetites, or out of a worldly culture.

Taking the whole of what Paul is setting forth, even when Christians are not intelligently living out of their liberty in Christ it is still the wrong attitude to dismiss them as unimportant or inferior in some way. We are to love them and trust in the edification process to mature them in grace living.

But be aware that this type of living is not the mark of a church which is educating the saints in the sonship education with an eye toward edification unto godliness. This is the kind of thing that takes place in most churches, where you have a mix of worldly and committed Christians, none of which understand the basic issues of RDW, living out of grace, or how to engage with the doctrine to be edified. These are churches which largely preach some version of a law in order to be spiritual. They have a long list of "thou shalt nots." Now, perhaps you can see why I say that Romans 14 is specifically written to a particular kind of assembly, one which is engaged in the sonship education.

But to return to the point, Paul is using the word judge the second time in the sense of carefully considering our thoughts and actions toward our fellow saints so that we do not hinder their edification, we do not discourage them, and we do not allow any kind of adversarial relationship to develop within the assembly.

One last thing. When it comes to examples of edificational differences such as eating meat illustrates, the problem is usually with the weaker brother. He is offended by what he doesn't know; his brother's liberty in Christ; in his mind he isn't "separated enough."

But when it comes to the observing of days, the problem is more likely with the stronger brother who is offended by the setting forth of the things in Israel's program being put on members of the body of Christ. It may not *always* be this way, but the reason I say this is because, as we will see in the next lessons, the remedy for the offense of eating meat is to take the offense into consideration and, as a result, eat no meat. But the remedy for the observance of days is not to start observing days so that the weaker brother is pacified. In the observance of days, the weaker brother is the one holding one day as better, or more significant than another day. But notice Paul does not say for the stronger to engage in observing days, for to do so would put the assembly back under Israel's program.

Refusing to eat meat does not do so. So, the two illustrations are pointing at two different kinds of issues that could come up when there are edificational differences and we know this because the actions we take in response to each issue are different.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Three: Summary

To almost all of us, there is someone who is, in some area, a weaker brother. Often when a person is genuinely a weaker brother, the reason he does not acknowledge that he is, is because he considers himself to be more spiritual than another brother who is exercising his liberty in Christ. This section of godly equity is important to the preserving of that weaker brother and to the continued edification of the assembly as a whole.

In Romans 14, Paul is writing in connection with this DoGG and the proper doctrinal understanding – the issue of liberty. We have liberty, but what we are not free to do is impose our liberty on another brother who, by his own conscience, is reluctant to do something he feels is morally or spiritually wrong. The stronger within an assembly must trust the edificational process to do what it was designed to do. Confidence in the edification process is their focus. They will also need patience and love while they wait for the weaker brethren to catch up.

The two illustrations in Romans 14 (eating meat/observing days) are pointing at two different kinds of issues that could come up when there are edificational differences and we know this because the actions we take in response to each issue are different. Still Paul exhorts us to “receive him”...not just let him attend the assembly, but to fully love and embrace this brother.

We are to value and esteem the brother right where they are in their edification. The idea is that our love toward our weaker brother, and patient trusting in the edification within the local assembly, will enable our weaker brother to grow in grace. It means we are being careful not to handle this situation in a way which would hinder the edification of our brother or affect the atmosphere of the assembly at large and thereby affect its edification.

Even when Christians are not intelligently living out of their liberty in Christ it is still the wrong attitude to dismiss them as unimportant or inferior in some way. We are to love them and trust in the edification process to mature them in grace living.

When we allow our brother to “be persuaded in his own mind” we are allowing the edification process (God’s word / Holy Spirit) to work....and this is the power of God’s grace.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Three: Self-Test

1. It will be our _____ (or lack of edification) which will be the focus at the _____, which will determine our joint-heir _____.
2. It is important to _____ that we not, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians, attempt to have _____ over the _____ of another.
3. What results from our _____ thinking about our brother will be that we put a _____ in his way; an opportunity for him to _____.
4. Our wrong critical thinking will produce an _____ and behavior which will prove _____ to the edification of our brother. This can happen with either the weaker or _____ toward the other.
5. When you rush to _____ yourself, to the brother who doesn't know or understand the doctrine it only looks like you are trying to _____ some kind of _____ action.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Three: 9:59 Practical Application

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. ¹⁴I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. ¹⁵But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. 16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. ¹⁹Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. ²⁰For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. ²¹It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. ²²Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ²³And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Monday – Review

- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Review the explanation on the distinction concerning eating meat for religious reasons and for dietary necessity. Make certain you understand the difference. One has to do with edification and the other has to do with a health matter or preference.

- Do you understand your liberty in Christ? Do you understand that we are free to eat anything we desire but we are not free to impose our liberty on another? Review that section of the notes to ensure that you have a good understanding of the issue.
- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. Remember – we have liberty and grace to take the time necessary to ensure that we have a solid foundation. It is not a race. The objective for adopted sons and daughters is to bring your thoughts and actions in line with His, making godly decisions based on the doctrine and that are pleasing to our Father. If you need to spend more time on a component of godly love or the decision-making skills – take the time now.

Tuesday – Start with what we have in common

- Romans 14:5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.
- Both the weaker and stronger brother have something in common, they are both doing what they do as “unto the Lord”. How are they to see each other? Talk to your Father about what it means to see each other as He sees you.
- As a stronger brother or sister in the faith, what is your responsibility toward one weak in the faith? Do you see them as God does? Do you trust that the edification process is sufficient for their growth or progress in the doctrine?
- Have a conversation with God about what it means to be fully persuaded in your mind. Are you fully persuaded that the process of edification will do its work? Do you understand that to impose your honestly held beliefs concerning the doctrine upon one weak in the faith is to act as a tutor and governor?
- How should you act toward a brother or sister who is fully persuaded that they should esteem one day above another contrary to the liberty they have in Christ to esteem every day alike? Do you understand what it means to leave issues related to a lack of edification to a brother or sisters honesty of heart (as living and dying unto the Lord)? Talk to your Father about how

you can make them feel valued, esteemed, loved and respected right where they are in their own edification.

- What is the idea that Paul is trying to impress upon the assembly, especially those stronger in the faith? Consider the outcome when we esteem and love those weak in the faith and allow them to be properly persuaded through growth in the doctrine.

Wednesday – Let the doctrine do its work

- Communicate with God your understanding of how He will resolve the differences between the stronger and weaker brethren. Is it your job?
- Share with your Father your confidence in the edification process that He has established to conform each of us into the image of Christ and to transform us by the renewing of our mind. Can you rest in that confidence and patiently allow the doctrine to do its work?
- Are you familiar with the various options available to assist the weaker brother or sister in his or her edification? What resources might benefit them in such a way that you do not interfere with the proper order and sequence of the process of edification. How can you encourage one who is “weak in the faith” toward the resources available for them to “catch up” to the other members of the assembly. Talk to your Father about how you might take the necessary time to familiarize yourself with the resources available.
- Talk to God about your responsibility to those in the assembly who may be weaker brothers or sisters. Consider the role of the local assembly in bringing an understanding of the doctrine, allowing that doctrine to effectually work in each person in an honest and sincere way thereby allowing that doctrine to bring about a change in thinking and behavior. Share with your Father your appreciation for that educational ministry and its impact on you. Note the patience, love and encouragement you have received in the process of your edification. Express to your Father your willingness and desire to show that same support to those weaker members of the assembly.

Thursday – the Judgment Seat of Christ

Romans 14:10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.

- Consider that this is the first time the Judgment Seat of Christ is referenced. Does this cause you pause? Think about how important your treatment of the weaker or stronger brother is to God.
- If you do not understand what the judgment seat of Christ is, you may wish to go back to the Theodicy sessions and refresh your memory. Keep in mind that the judgment seat of Christ concerns justified saints not the lost. It is not a punishment but concerns reward.
- Read 2 Corinthians 5:10; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15 concerning the Judgment Seat of Christ.
- Recall that in 2 Corinthians 1:24 Paul tells us that we “have not dominion over another’s faith.” Talk to your Father about the importance of esteeming and valuing members of the assembly who are in all stages of the edification process. Think about why this section of godly judgment is so important to the preservation of the weaker brother and the continued education of the assembly as a whole?

Friday – now....watch out for those stumblingblocks

- Review Romans 14:13-23 concerning godly living

Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.

- Think about what might constitute as a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall to a brother in Christ. Speak to your Father about the ways a wrong attitude toward either a stronger or weaker brother might result in a detrimental impact on that person’s continued edification. Consider some of the ways members of the assembly might respond to criticism or react to defensiveness.

- Now consider Paul's admonition to "judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way". Here we are expected to use discernment in our interactions with other members of the body. Have a conversation with your Father about your understanding of how judge is defined in this context. What is Paul trying to convey?
- We are to consider carefully how we respond to those weak in the faith so that we do not discourage them and hinder their edification. Share with your Father how you might encourage each other rather than placing a stumblingblock in the way of their growth in the doctrine.
- Talk to God in prayer about the impact an adversarial relationship within the assembly could have upon the edification of every member of that assembly. Prayerfully consider the importance of the spiritual health and edification of the assembly. Ponder how important this is to God. Consider the consequences of the assembly's failure to adhere to the doctrine in Romans 14:1-15:7 as it relates to the edification of the weak in the faith.
- Read Titus 3:9 concerning the impact of contentions in the body.
- Ephesians 4 concerning the importance and benefit of unity in the body.
- Thank God for His word as you are being conformed to the image of Christ. Remember the goal is to have the mind of Christ-to think, live and labor with our Father and bring Him glory!

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Three: Self-Test Answers

1. It will be our edification (or lack of edification) which will be the focus at the JSoC, which will determine our joint-heir inheritance.
2. It is important to God that we not, as Paul said in 2 Corinthians, attempt to have dominion over the faith of another.
3. What results from our improper thinking about our brother will be that we put a stumblingblock in his way; an opportunity for him to fall.
4. Our wrong critical thinking will produce an attitude and behavior which will prove detrimental to the edification of our brother. This can happen with either the weaker or stronger toward the other.
5. When you rush to defend yourself, to the brother who doesn't know or understand the doctrine it only looks like you are trying to justify some kind of wrong action.

Romans Education, Part Five

Session Four – NOTETAKER

Fig. 1: Dual Edification of Romans 14:14

Weaker Brother



Stronger Brother



Fig. 2: Recap of the Doctrine

Scripture	Context	Edifying Result
Rm. 12:1-2	Education	Godliness
Rm. 12:3-8	Local Assembly	Selflessness
Rm. 12:9-10	Local Assembly	<u>Lovingkindness</u>
Rm. 12:11-16	Lost & Body of Christ	<u>Tenderheartedness</u>
Rm. 12:17-21	Enemies	Longsuffering/ <u>Meekness</u>
Rm. 13:1-7	Government	<u>Benevolent</u> Goodness
Rm. 13:8-10	Neighbor	SKTMB

Romans Education, Part 5

Session Four: GODLY EQUITY

Session Notes

Previously, we started the godly living section in Romans 14:13. The godly living section is broken into two parts. The first part is contained in vv. 13-18 and it has to do with the proper conduct toward a weaker brother and his individual edification.

The second part is contained in vv. 19-23 and it has to do with the proper conduct as it affects the edification of the assembly as a whole. In both of these two parts, Paul describes behavior that is contrary to godly equity, followed by behavior that is in accordance with godly equity.

For example, in verse 13, Paul says to no longer judge one another. Then he describes the spiritual danger of that ungodly living: lest we put a stumblingblock in our brother's way, which is to say that we have created an obstacle to their edification.

The first half of the verse is written to everyone; stronger and weaker brothers are to cease from judging one another. For reasons we are about to see, in the second part of the verse, Paul is mainly speaking to the stronger brethren in the assembly. So let's look at the first part of the verse.

Romans 14:14 **I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is nothing unclean of itself*:** but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.

Now Paul tells us he knows something, and he tells us how he knows it; he has been persuaded by the Lord Jesus. Where did Paul get his doctrine? He was personally taught by the Lord Jesus Himself!

And what did the Lord Jesus persuade Paul of? That there is nothing unclean of itself. What does that mean? Under the law, if something was considered unclean, then it could not be eaten.

Leviticus 11:1 And the LORD spake unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them, ²Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, These *are* the beasts which ye shall eat among all the beasts that *are* on the earth. ³Whatsoever parteth

the hoof, and is clovenfooted, *and* cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat.

Leviticus 11:4 Nevertheless these shall ye not eat of them that chew the cud, or of them that divide the hoof: *as* the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you. ⁵And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you. ⁶And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he *is* unclean unto you. ⁷And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he *is* unclean to you. ⁸**Of their flesh shall ye not eat, and their carcase shall ye not touch; they *are* unclean to you.**

Leviticus 11:9 These shall ye eat of all that *are* in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. ¹⁰And **all that have not fins and scales in the seas and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which *is* in the waters, they *shall be* an abomination unto you:** ¹¹They shall be even an abomination unto you; ye shall not eat of their flesh, but ye shall have their carcasses in abomination. ¹²Whatsoever hath no fins nor scales in the waters, that *shall be* an abomination unto you.

But now Paul is coming along and saying that nothing is unclean and now, in this DoGG, we can eat those things which were forbidden in Israel's program.

After thirteen verses on how to think and conduct themselves toward each other (because that is the important part of the doctrine), now Paul weighs in on the issue of eating meats. Paul says that nothing – which would include meat offered to idols – is unclean in and of itself. And he says this on the authority of the Lord Jesus. Once we read this, it ought to put the matter to rest once and for all.

When Paul says he was persuaded by the Lord, it is because, as a Jew, Paul did not already have this opinion. Because he grew up knowing about Leviticus 11, he needed to be persuaded, just like every brother who is “weaker” in this area of diet. Paul was not just a Jew, but a Pharisee. As such, he was very knowledgeable of foods and animals which were considered clean and unclean. To make a statement

that nothing is unclean of itself is quite an admission to someone with Paul's background. But this is one of the dispensational differences between prophecy and mystery.

Prior to his conversion and subsequent education from the Lord Jesus, Paul understood there were things which were unclean of themselves. But that was in the prophetic program with Israel. Now, Paul is giving instructions which pertain to the DoGG in the mystery program, for every member of the body of Christ whether they be Jews or Gentiles. Those distinctions are no longer valid in this DoGG in that what now applies to one, applies to both.

But notice, after the colon, Paul does not say, "so this settles the matter of who is right and who is wrong." No, he says:

Romans 14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: **but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**

Even though Paul's plain statement about nothing being unclean is for the entire body of Christ, notice what follows after the colon is intended for the stronger brother.

In the last part of vs. 14, Paul is describing saints who are unaware of what Paul was taught by the Lord Jesus. They may still be hanging on to certain parts of the law as it concerns what can and cannot be eaten. Their conscience would be violated if they were to eat a certain meat and so he is quick to say, "but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." Paul knows that edification comes by persuasion and not by argument.

When the doctrine of liberty says nothing is unclean, that is doctrine aimed at the weaker brother. When the doctrine of equity says "to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean," that is doctrine aimed at the stronger brother to regard his brother's conscience.

Equity deals with other saints by being aware of the dictates of their conscience. When people honestly find themselves in a situation whereby they are a weaker brother, the godly equity of the stronger brother is not after the letter of what is

right and what is wrong, but defends that which is done in good conscience by another brother or sister.

This is what it means to let every man be persuaded in his own mind. We don't take over their faith, we allow them to operate (and we also operate) by grace through faith, by allowing the working of God's word and the Spirit within them to convince/persuade them of the truth.

We manifest godly equity when we carefully handle our responses to weaker brothers ensuring we do not injure them or their edification by violating their conscience, and by trusting the edification process, the power of God's word to persuade us of the truth of any doctrine.

And we know that the edification process whereby we hear the word, we understand the word, we believe the doctrine to be true, we engage our Father in prayer in connection with the doctrine, we meditate on the doctrine and look for ways to implement it into our everyday lives.

To superimpose our knowledge on a weaker brother is to create a law and thereby put their spiritual life to death, the very opposite of what we should want for them. Look, the lack of doctrinal understanding will get fixed by edification. In the meantime, let's not kill the patient in an attempt to rid them of the disease.

Romans 14:15 But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

This is fairly straightforward. If we don't handle the situation properly, our brother will be grieved and if he is grieved, it will demonstrate that we have not behaved charitably. And while it is an easy jump to recall that charity will involve those five features of godly love, it is also important to recall the obligation of every member to the body as a whole, we participate as part of the body, and we cooperate as the members' one of another that we are.

Our decisions should be made with the body in mind. Grieving our weaker brother is not beneficial to him individually and not to the body as a whole. We participate in this matter by loving the weaker brother and including him in our sphere of fellowship and cooperate by trusting the edification process to do its work.

So Paul ends the verse with the exhortation, “destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.” Don’t let the meat be more important than you brother’s edification. Don’t let your liberty be more important than the peaceful fellowship and continued edification of the assembly. Yes, you have that liberty to eat meat, but godly equity limits liberty out of love for others. How important is this brother to you? How important is he to God? Important enough that Christ died for him (for whom Christ died). That should work to produce a V&E (value and esteem) on our behalf toward him.

Romans 14:16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

Even though you are correct in your understanding of your liberty in Christ, when it is not used in love, we are creating a situation whereby our liberty can be spoken of as evil. Do not allow the truth to come under reproach. We can do the right thing the wrong way. There is a law that supersedes our liberty and that is the law of love.

And this now becomes the perfect place to add another core feature of the godly love we are being educated in; sacrificial love.

Yes, we have liberty and there is no right and wrong about that. What I mean is, you either have it or you don’t. Liberty is always true. But, it is possible to abuse our liberty in Christ. When we abuse our liberty, we are allowing our good to be evil spoken of.

There are a couple of ways in which our liberty can be abused. The one we are concerned with right here in Romans 14 is when our liberty is harmful to the weaker brothers in our assembly. The desire to sacrifice (by limiting) our liberty for the spiritual good of another is the feature of love that fits with godly equity.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Actually, we need to see vv. 16 and 17 together, for vs. 17 is the reasoning behind not letting our good be evil spoken of.

Romans 14:16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

The “For” of vs. 17 is a “For” of explanation. In order to understand what is going on here, we need to know some things about the kingdom of God. And don’t forget the context – the treatment of our weaker brother. Paul connects our treatment of the weaker brother with the kingdom of God.

Because the kingdom is so much a part of Israel’s program, we tend to think of the kingdom as only pertaining to them. But we realize that we are not part of the prophetic program, so the kingdom which will be set up on this earth is not what Paul is referring to. Paul is fleshing out our understanding of the kingdom of God to more than what was revealed to Israel. There is an aspect of the kingdom of God that pertains to the mystery of Christ. It involves us in glorified bodies delivering the creature. We talked about this back in Romans 8.

We realize that Paul is giving us information that was not known in the time past of Israel’s program, as this is about the kingdom that will be established in the heavens, where we will reign with Christ! We are not involved in establishing God’s kingdom on this earth, but His kingdom in the heavenly places. That means that our integrating godly equity into our thinking and living – the way we treat our weaker brother – is directly connected to the kingdom of God and our work in the heavenly places.

Do you realize what that means? It means what we are being taught right now, in Romans 14, is going to have an application out in eternity to the accomplishment of some operation of our heavenly Father! This is equipping us for the future! And if you can understand that, then you can see that vs. 17 is not just about teaching us that the kingdom of God is not manifestly about physical things, but about spiritual things. No, there is more going on here than that.

Stop and think about this. What appears to us as such a small and insignificant issue, the eating of meat...what appears to be conduct that is not a big deal, the treatment of a weaker brother...to our heavenly Father this is incredibly important because it is directly related to His kingdom in the heavenly places.

So, how is that? What can make this of such importance. I will give it to you in one word: edification. When Paul writes to the Corinthians about this issue, look at what he says.

1 Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

When Paul says all things are not expedient, he is saying that not everything he has the liberty to do will help our edification or the edification of the body. In fact, if it is not expedient, it actually provides an obstacle to edification. Yes, it is possible to have the liberty to do something which ultimately winds up stopping or damaging our edification. This is why we need discernment and not greedily and selfishly demand our liberty just because we have it. And this is another way we abuse our liberty in Christ.

Now what does Paul mean when he says, “but I will not be brought under the power of any.” He is talking about not engaging in some things for which he has liberty so that he does not come under the power of some carnal issue. Paul knows that some behaviors, though not wrong in and of themselves, will prevent us from being conformed to the image of God’s Son. This is why we should always be thinking about the *wise* exercise of our liberty, and not just doing things because we can, such as demanding “meats for the belly!” which is a sort of worldly mantra for feeding fleshly desires and ignorantly reveling in them.

When it comes to liberty, we want those things which commend themselves to our edification; things which are expedient.

Our body has natural appetites, and this world has made provision for the satisfaction of those appetites, by the way, both of which will be destroyed as Paul says to the Corinthians.

1 Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. ¹³Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: **but God shall destroy both it and them...**

The “belly” is the natural appetite and the “meats” are the provision. God will destroy both of them so that in eternity, we will not have those fleshly appetites. That does not mean we will not eat in eternity, but it means that the flesh’s propensity for engaging in things which prove to be spiritually detrimental will be gone.

The reason Paul talks about this is so that we can live right now consistent with our sanctified status in Christ. That means we don’t blindly engage our liberty to fulfillment of our flesh, but rather to the edification of others and ourselves.

So, let’s put this together. Do not let your good be evil spoken of. Why? Because the heavenly kingdom of which we are a part is directly connected to our edification (and the edification of others) and the external issues (such as: what we eat) have no bearing upon our standing before God. Those things themselves have no bearing on God’s operations in the heavenly kingdom. Why? Because those are “outer-man” issues.

But I will tell you what does have a bearing; the edification of your inner man. And in connection with that, Paul lists, in vs. 17, three things that also matter.

Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Notice that all three are inner-man issues which have a connection to our edification.

The issue of righteousness has to do with God. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled by godly equity, that is true. But this is not just the righteousness of the law, but it is the very righteousness of God Himself. The godly use of equity to limit our liberty in order to benefit our weaker brother exhibits that kind of righteousness – the righteousness of Christ made manifest in us; the righteousness of the kingdom of God.

The second issue of peace has respect to our fellow saints. This is the atmosphere that should prevail in the assembly in order for edification to take place.

The third issue of joy has to do with ourselves. That “joy in the Holy Ghost” makes it so that our joy is viewed as we gladly and genuinely limit our liberty for

the benefit and edification of our brother. In other words, we rejoice to demonstrate the discernment of equity so that we are not only seen of men, just as were the Thessalonians...

1 Thessalonians 1:6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: ⁷So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.

...but we rejoice in that we are also seen of angels. Let us not be seen begrudgingly and uncharitably exercising our liberty in Christ. But let it be the joy of the Holy Ghost in us as we live out this sonship life to the benefit of the weaker brother and the rest of the body of which we are a part.

Romans 14:18 For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Verse 18 finishes the first part of the godly living aspect of the doctrine. And this section of scripture would be incomplete without, at least for a son. Why? Because, while Paul has told us what to do (and not to do), it is vs. 18 that tells us “why” we are told to do it. And you know that the difference between childhood and adulthood is that adults understand “why.” It is that understanding that gets this doctrine in our heart and working in us.

Vs. 18 is primarily for the strong in the faith.

Romans 14:18 For he that **in these things** serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

In what things? The things which make up the doctrine of godly equity, the things which cause us to limit our liberty for the sake of a weaker brother, the things of the kingdom (righteousness, peace and joy), the things of godly love which now includes sacrificial love which gladly limits liberty for the benefit of others. This is how we serve the Lord Christ! Isn't that what the verse says?

Romans 14:18 For he that **in these things serveth Christ** *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

When we limit our liberty to preserve the edification of another saint, there will be reward at the JSoC in the form of the reward of the inheritance; the joint-heir inheritance.

Romans 14:18 For he that in these things serveth Christ **is acceptable to God, and approved of men.**

Acceptable to God! How wonderful to read those words. Does that phrase ring a bell of familiarity with you?

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, **acceptable unto God**, *which is* your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

But the word shows up again in vs. 2. Take a look.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. ²And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that (1)good, and (2) acceptable, and (3) perfect, will of God.

Do you recall what was the acceptable will of God? It had to do with our godly living. And where are we when we run into the word again? We are in the godly living section of equity, the last of the four decision-making skills.

So what about “approved of men?” As we begin to live out of the doctrine of godly equity, our fellow sons and daughters will certainly approve. In fact, it will be an encouragement to them in their own living out the doctrine. The reason I think this has to do with the fellow saints in our assembly is because the world at large will probably never see our equitable treatment of a weaker brother. And if they did, I am not sure they would know what they were looking at. They might even be critical as they perceive us a being weak. But to fellow sons and daughters, this is evidence that the doctrine is working in us, that we are ready to move on the next part, and that we are manifesting that we are being readied for the heavenly places – for the kingdom of God!

Romans Education Part 5

Session Four: Summary

The godly living section in Romans 14: 13-23 addresses conduct toward a weaker brother and his individual edification, and the proper conduct as it affects the edification of the assembly as a whole. Paul's instructions pertain to the DoGG in the mystery program; and are for every member of the body of Christ whether they are Jews or Gentiles.

We manifest godly equity when we carefully handle our responses to weaker brothers, ensuring we do not injure them or their edification by violating their conscience, and by trusting the edification process, the power of God's word to persuade us of the truth of any doctrine.

Some behaviors, though not wrong in and of themselves, will prevent us from being conformed to the image of God's Son. We should always be thinking about the *wise* exercise of our liberty, and not just doing things because we can, such as feeding fleshly desires and ignorantly reveling in them. When we put a stumblingblock in our brother's way, we have created an obstacle to their edification. When we abuse our liberty; when our liberty is harmful to the weaker brothers in our assembly; we are allowing our good to be evil spoken of. There is a law that supersedes our liberty and that is the law of love.

The godly use of equity to limit our liberty in order to benefit our weaker brother exhibits the righteousness of Christ made manifest in us; the righteousness of the kingdom of God. The atmosphere of peace (respect to our fellow saints) should prevail in the assembly in order for edification to take place. Our joy is viewed as we gladly and genuinely limit our liberty for the benefit and edification of our brother.

Do not let your good be evil spoken of because the heavenly kingdom of which we are a part is directly connected to our edification (and the edification of others). To our heavenly Father, the treatment of a weaker brother is incredibly important because it is directly related to His kingdom in the heavenly places.

When we do the things that make up the doctrine of godly equity; the things which cause us to limit our liberty for the sake of a weaker brother; the things of the kingdom (righteousness, peace and joy); the things of godly love which now includes sacrificial love which gladly limits liberty for the benefit of others; this is how we serve the Lord Christ, and this is acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Four: Self-Test

1. When we limit our _____ in order to _____ the edification of another saint, there will be reward at the _____.
2. Our _____ should be made with the _____ in mind. Grieving our weaker brother is not beneficial to him individually and not to the body as a whole.
3. To superimpose our knowledge on a _____ brother is to create a _____ and thereby put their spiritual life to _____, the very _____ of what we should want for them.
4. If we don't handle the situation properly, our brother will be _____ and if he is grieved, it will demonstrate that we have not behaved _____.
5. The desire to sacrifice (by limiting) our liberty for the _____ good of another is the feature of _____ that fits with godly equity.
6. When Paul says all things are not _____, he is saying that not everything he has the _____ to do will _____ our edification or the edification of the _____.
7. Equity deals with other saints by being aware of the dictates of their _____. When people honestly find themselves in a situation whereby they are a weaker brother, the godly _____ of the stronger brother is not after the letter of what is right and what is wrong, but _____ that which is done in good _____ by another brother or sister.
8. When the doctrine of _____ says nothing is unclean, that is doctrine aimed at the weaker brother. When the doctrine of _____ says "to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean," that is doctrine aimed at the _____ brother to regard his brother's _____.
9. There is a law that supersedes our liberty and that is the law of _____.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Four: 9:59 Practical Application

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations. ²For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. ³Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. ⁴Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. ⁵One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day *alike*. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. ⁶He that regardeth the day, regardeth *it* unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard *it*. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. ⁷For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. ⁸For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. ¹⁰But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. ¹¹For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. ¹²So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. ¹³Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way. ¹⁴I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. ¹⁵But if thy

brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. ¹⁶Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. ¹⁸For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

Monday – Review

- Read over Romans 14:1-18. Has your summary statement changed?
- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Review the explanation concerning the application of eating meat and esteeming days. Make sure you understand the reasons provided in the previous session concerning who Paul is addressing in Romans 14:13-18. This has to do with the proper conduct toward a weaker brother and his edification.
- Romans 14:19-23 addresses the proper conduct as it impacts edification of the assembly as a whole. Note that Paul is not telling the stronger brother in the faith to esteem days but He is telling him to “destroy not him with thy meat”. Do you have a good understanding of the difference?
- Do you understand your liberty in Christ? Do you understand that we are free to eat anything we desire but we are not free to impose our liberty on another? Review that section of the notes to ensure that you have a good understanding of the issue.
- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. It is imperative that we each take the time necessary to ensure that we have a solid foundation. The objective for adopted sons and daughters is to bring your thoughts and actions in line with His, making godly decisions based on the doctrine and living a life that is pleasing to our Father. If you need to spend more time on an area of doctrine – take the time now.

Tuesday – I am fully persuaded-

- Romans 14:13 Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in *his* brother's way.
- Both the weaker and stronger brother have something in common, they are both doing what they do as “unto the Lord”. How are they to see each other? Talk to your Father about what it means to see each other as He sees you, through the eyes of godly love and charity. He sees Christ in you.
- Consider the first half of the verse above. Note that it is being addressed to both the stronger and weaker brother. Paul admonishes both to cease from judging one another. Communicate to your Father your understanding of your responsibility to a weaker brother in the faith. Is it the same responsibility for the weaker brother? Do you understand what Paul means when he writes to not “judge one another any more”? Recall the previous sessions definitions of the term “judge.” Make sure you are applying the correct definition in this context.
- Have a conversation with God about what it means to be fully persuaded in your own mind. Are you fully persuaded that the process of edification will do its work? Do you understand that to impose your honestly held beliefs concerning the doctrine upon one who is weak in the faith but equally persuaded is to act as a tutor and governor? Talk to your Father about ways you can avoid becoming a tutor and governor.
- How should you act toward a brother or sister who is fully persuaded concerning esteeming days? Do you understand what it means to leave issues related to a lack of edification to a brother or sister's honesty of heart (as living and dying unto the Lord)? Talk to your Father about how to make them feel valued, esteemed, loved and respected right where they are in their own edification.
- What is the idea that Paul is trying to impress upon the assembly? Think about who is responsible for the edification of an individual. Think about the process of edification: allowing each person to operate by grace through faith, allowing God's word and the Holy Spirit to bring conviction of the truth. Are you confident that God's word is sufficient to edify both the weaker and stronger members in the faith?

Wednesday – for nothing is unclean of itself BUT

- Consider the edification process: we hear the word, we understand the word, we believe the word to be true, we engage with our Father in prayer concerning that doctrine, we meditate on the word and as the word effectually works in us it is manifested in our thoughts and actions. Talk to your Father about the ramifications of imposing our knowledge upon a weaker brother and bypassing this process. Is this an expression of godly equity or a violation of it?
- Consider the outcome when we esteem and love those weak in the faith and allow them to be properly persuaded through growth in the doctrine. Communicate with God your understanding of how He will resolve the differences between the stronger and weaker brethren and what your role is in this process.
- Romans 14:14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean. ¹⁵But if thy brother be grieved with *thy* meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.
- Talk with your Father about your obligation to every member of the body as a whole. You may wish to return to Romans 12 -13 as a review of how we are to treat each other as members one of another.
- Read Leviticus 11:1-12 and compare to Romans 14:14 and Acts 10. Communicate to God in prayer your understanding of the differences in these passages. Take special notice of Romans 14:14 after the colon. **but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.** This is aimed at the stronger brother in the faith. Do you understand why?
- Paul was speaking about an issue of conscience. Do you understand that it is the word of God that persuades the weaker brother. Think about the requirements imposed on the stronger brother by the decision-making skill of Equity. Talk to God about ways that you can value, esteem and love those weaker in the faith with regard to the dictates of their conscience so as not to put a stumblingblock in the way of their edification.
- Do you understand that this is not an issue of right and wrong but that equity defends that which is done in good conscience by another brother or sister?

Charity dictates that you **not destroy him with thy meat, for whom Christ died**. Share with your Father your understanding of what this means. Talk to Him about your understanding of how important the edification process is to Him and how important it is to you to see that the weaker brother grow in Christ.

- Consider the impact “grieving thy brother with thy meat” could have on the individual and on the body of Christ as a whole. Communicate to your Father your understanding of how important edification is to God. Consider the price God paid.

Thursday – Liberty tempered with godly love

- Share with your Father your confidence in the edification process that He has established to conform each of us into the image of Christ and to transform us by the renewing of our mind. Can you rest in that confidence and patiently allow the doctrine to do its work?
- Romans 14:16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ¹⁷For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.
- Your exercise of liberty should be tempered with godly love and charity. Talk to your Father about ways in which your good might be evil spoken of. Talk to God about what is most important to Him when dealing with a weaker brother who has honestly held beliefs that may not be currently in line with the doctrine. Is it an issue of who is right or wrong?
- Discuss with your Father in prayer your understanding of 1 Corinthians 6:12 All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. ¹³Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them. Now the body *is* not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.
- Do you understand what Paul means when he says that “all things are lawful unto me but all things are not expedient”? Consider the plan and purposes of God. We are to be conformed to the image of Christ. Exercise of our liberty without charity or discernment can create obstacles to the edification of the body. Communicate in prayer how essential the edification of the

body is not only as it relates to this physical realm but also to His kingdom in the heavenly places.

Friday – the kingdom of God is not meat and drink BUT....

- What does it mean to you that the truth should not come under reproach? Have a conversation with your Father about the how you might abuse the liberty you have in Christ and ways to ensure that you do not do so. Do you understand that the exercise of our liberty comes with a responsibility to the other members of the assembly? Talk to your Father about the benefits to the body when you temper your liberty with godly (sacrificial) love. Talk to Him about the consequences of abuse of that liberty.
- Romans 14:17 For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Do you understand what Paul is saying here concerning the kingdom of God? Meat and drink are external or outer man issues. What is it that God is most concerned with?
- Read Galatians 5:22; Galatians 6:8; Ephesians 4:23; Ephesians 5:9; 2 Corinthians 3:17
- The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Think about the impact godly equity has in the heavenly realm and the atmosphere it establishes in the church. Consider what godly equity is. It is the limitations we place on our liberty for the sake of a weaker brother it is righteousness, peace and joy, and the combined components of godly love and charity. Equity is gladly limiting our liberty in the service of Christ.
- Romans 14:18 For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.
- Read Romans 12:1-2. Consider the acceptable will of God. Share with your Father what that means to you in light of what you have now learned in the living portion of the doctrine of equity. Communicate to God your desire to serve Christ and your commitment to ensure that the exercise of your liberty will always be tempered with godly equity and love.
- Talk to Him about the steps you plan to take to ensure that the members of the body feel valued and esteemed regardless of where they are in their edification. Share with God your desire to sacrificially love those weaker in the faith to ensure that the assembly is a place where godly edification can take place. What things might you do to make that happen?

- Thank God for His word as you are being conformed to the image of Christ. Remember the goal is to have the mind of Christ—to think, live and labor with our Father and bring Him glory! Let us make sure that foundation in Christ is solid and let us each esteem the other higher than ourselves

Philippians 2:1 If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

1 Corinthians 3:10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. ¹¹For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. ¹²Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; ¹³Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. ¹⁴If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. ¹⁵If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Four: Self-Test Answers

1. When we limit our liberty in order to preserve the edification of another saint, there will be reward at the JSoC.
2. Our decisions should be made with the body in mind. Grieving our weaker brother is not beneficial to him individually and not to the body as a whole.
3. To superimpose our knowledge on a weaker brother is to create a law and thereby put their spiritual life to death, the very opposite of what we should want for them.
4. If we don't handle the situation properly, our brother will be grieved and if he is grieved, it will demonstrate that we have not behaved charitably.
5. The desire to sacrifice (by limiting) our liberty for the spiritual good of another is the feature of love that fits with godly equity.
6. When Paul says all things are not expedient, he is saying that not everything he has the liberty to do will help our edification or the edification of the body.
7. Equity deals with other saints by being aware of the dictates of their conscience. When people honestly find themselves in a situation whereby they are a weaker brother, the godly equity of the stronger brother is not after the letter of what is right and what is wrong, but defends that which is done in good conscience by another brother or sister.
8. When the doctrine of liberty says nothing is unclean, that is doctrine aimed at the weaker brother. When the doctrine of equity says "to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean," that is doctrine aimed at the stronger brother to regard his brother's conscience.
9. There is a law that supersedes our liberty and that is the law of love.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Five: GODLY EQUITY

Session Notes: Godly Living

As was said earlier, the godly living section which runs from Romans 14:13-23 is divided into two parts. The first part is vv. 13-18, which has to do with the individual edification of a weaker brother.

The second part is vv. 19-23, which has to do with the edification of the assembly as a whole, as a unit. We now begin our study on the second part.

Let's begin by reading the entire passage. As we read, see if you can locate terms and phrases that indicate that Paul has the entire assembly in view and not just an individual weaker brother.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. ²⁰For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. ²¹*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. ²²Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ²³And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Now, let's focus in on vs. 19.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

The “things” which make for peace and wherewith we may edify another are, among other things, the sonship skills being put to use within the assembly, the features of godly love exercised toward our fellow members, and the understanding that there is, along with our individual edification, an overall edification for the church as a whole. This time, in vs. 19, the terminology is not about the weaker or stronger brother, although we are still in that overall context, but it is a general “us” and “wherewith one may edify another.” These are not just responsibilities of a stronger brother, but of every member of the assembly.

Romans 14:20 **For meat destroy not the work of God.** All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.

Verse 20 contains some terminology that makes me think this is about the assembly at large and not just a single brother. That terminology is “the work of God.”

What Paul is saying in vs. 20 is that we should not allow the exercise of our sonship liberty (no matter what the issue is; it is not just restricted to eating meat) to destroy the work of God. And what is God working to do within the local church? He is edifying the individual members, but He is also producing a microcosm of the creature which will have the entire body of Christ in it. And in that microcosm, He is looking at the church as a whole and working to conform it to the image of His Son.

So, what does that mean? How does a whole assembly get edified and conformed? Its conformity to Christ is measured in its ability to work together as a single body, with every member of that body vitally involved and joyfully committed to the success of the local body of which they are a part, so they will be able to do the same in the body of Christ in the creature one day.

Romans 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. **All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence.**

The second sentence in the verse has two parts, just like in vs. 14. Paul says all things are pure, so there is no dietary restriction. But what is not pure is a stronger brother who doesn't care about how he handles a weaker brother and doesn't care how his liberty impacts his brother. Paul says that man is “eating with offence” and it is *evil* for him to do so. That kind of thinking and behavior is contrary to sonship.

Romans 14:21 *It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

Now we see that the meat and days issues were representative of any kind of edificational deficiency which constitutes a weaker brother. It doesn't matter what the issue is; the godly thing to do is to limit our liberty to keep our brother from stumbling.

Notice in vs. 21, there are three descriptors of damaging a weaker brother's edification: 1) stumble, 2) offended, and 3) made weak.

Is there a difference or is Paul merely repeating himself for emphasis? I think these are slightly different, for a couple of reasons. Firstly, because there is more than one way in which a weaker brother's edification can be damaged. But mainly, I think they are different because of the use of the word "or."

OED: or

1. Used to coordinate two (or more) sentence elements between which there is an alternative.

And since we have two uses of the word "or," then we have three different elements.

Again, we have three issues: stumble, offended and made weak. Let's deal with these one at a time starting with stumble. This is the term we have already seen in the passage when Paul wrote in vs. 13 about not putting a "stumblingblock" in our brother's way. In vs. 13, we are told not to hinder the edification process, but it is not until we get down here in vs. 21 that we are told the two ways we can do that.

Causing someone to *stumble* is the general term that describes when we have hindered or prevented the edification of a fellow saint.

Now, let's look at the *offended* issue.

When our brother is offended, we now have a cause for his stumbling; a way in which his edification is hindered. Since the weak brother does not have sufficient edification to understand the actions of a son exercising his liberty, if the strong brother confronts the weak, there is a risk of the weaker brother being emotionally hurt, taking the correction personally, as a rebuke. When that happens, in the mind of the weaker brother, the issue is no longer about the doctrine, but it is about the other brother himself. He can't see the doctrine.

For example, let's say we are talking about the issue of eating meat offered to idols. The brother who refuses to eat that meat, out of allegiance to the Lord, does not view himself as a weaker brother. He actually sees himself as the stronger! He sees himself as more committed to Christ and more separated from the world. He has a misunderstanding that stems from not knowing Pauline doctrine.

IMPORTANT: Therefore, this moniker of “weaker brother” is a descriptor for us *to know*, but not to use!!! Please, do not deal with any member of the assembly by calling them a weaker brother, for they would likely take offence to that moniker, as they would see it as demeaning or an insult.

I want to step aside here just for a moment to say this is not the only time that we should be careful about what we say. For example, I have known married couples who were having troubles in that it was affecting their relationship and how they felt about each other. Sometimes, in exasperation, the husband would tell his wife “The Bible says I am the head and you are supposed to be subject to me, so submit!!!”

Now, while that is what Ephesians 5 says...

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

...that is not a passage you should be quoting to your wife! First of all, there is more here than simply reading a verse. The husband also has some responsibilities. But the point I am after is that those verses have to effectually work in her. If a husband makes this a command, law or rule, he has put her spiritual life to death because he has short circuited the edification process and denied her the work of grace in her soul. Husbands need to trust the edification process.

And just to be balanced in my approach to this doctrine, for those wives who hear this and feel like they have found an excuse to continue to be unruly, this is part of the instruction that allows them to be conformed to the image of God’s Son. And that is just part of what is wrong with that kind of attitude.

But here is my point, have some discretion and discernment about how to talk to people in the various relationships you have. You don’t quote Ephesians 5 to your wife and you don’t call a fellow member “weak.” Okay, now let’s step back in to the study proper.

We are looking at the differences between stumble, offence and made weak. We have covered what *stumble* is.

Now, let's take a look at the OED definition of *offence*.

OED: offence

5. With reference to feelings (the chief current use).

a. *transitive* (in *passive*). To be displeased, vexed, or annoyed. Now usually: **to feel personally upset or hurt; to take offence**. Usually with *with*, *at*, *by*, etc., or with clause

b. *transitive*. **To hurt or wound the feelings** or susceptibilities of; to be displeasing or disagreeable to; to vex, annoy, displease, anger; (now *esp.*) to excite **a feeling of personal upset**, resentment, annoyance, or disgust in (someone).

Offence carries the idea of being a stumblingblock by causing the weaker brother to be embarrassed, hurt or angered. This division can wind up affecting the entire assembly, but at the very least, there are two members of the body whose fellowship has been adversely affected, which will affect the body as a whole.

To correct the weaker brother may feel to him like a personal attack that diminishes his knowledge and his commitment to Christ, even when that is not the intent of the stronger brother.

Now let us look at the third issue of “made weak.” This is very interesting, for when I looked this up in the OED, here is what I found:

OED: [made] weak

2. b. In the translations of the Bible from Tyndale onward, used to render Greek *ἀσθενής*, *ἀσθενῶν*, applied by St. Paul (*esp.* in Romans xiv and 1 Corinthians viii) to believers whose scruples, though unsound, should be treated with tenderness, **lest they should be led by the example of the more enlightened into acts condemned by their conscience**. Hence allusively in *weaker brethren* (often supposed to be a scriptural phrase), applied to the more timorous members..., who are in danger of being shocked by extreme statements...

As you can see, the problem with being made weak is not that of feeling insulted or offended by being made to feel foolish or inadequate. There is no animosity between brethren in the “made weak” issue. But what we do have is a brother doing things that his conscience will not allow. This would likely only be the case if the stronger brother insisted on the weaker exercising his liberty (before his edification could catch up with his actions.) Why do I say this? I say this because

people who genuinely hold a position of conscience do not usually violate their conscience on their own. They can be bullied, embarrassed, intimidated or forced to comply, but that is very damaging to the edification process. It short-circuits that process because their liberty would not be the result of the word of God working in their inner man; it would not be them being “led by the Spirit.” You realize what that means: there is no edification working at all when a saint is influenced to violate their conscience.

But, as the Spirit of God takes the word of God which we have come to hear and understand through the teaching in the local assembly, He (the Spirit), in connection with our positive and proper response to the doctrine, works in us to change our conscience, so that we *see with the eyes of our understanding*. And this is a process. This change of conscience takes a while; it is not like flipping a light switch and suddenly we are edified and we start exercising our liberty in Christ with no pangs of guilt, hesitation or regret over what we used to believe and how we lived out of that understanding.

Romans 14:22 **Hast thou faith?** have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

The word *faith* here refers only to the subject under discussion--to the subjects that pertain to our liberty in Christ. “Hast thou faith” is a way of saying, “Do you believe that it is right to eat all kinds of food, etc.?” This is identifying the audience. So, if you are that guy, then the next part of the verse is for you.

Romans 14:22 Hast thou faith? **have *it* to thyself before God.** Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

We do not force our faith or opinions on others. We should be satisfied with cherishing our liberty, and acting on it in private, where God is the witness. God sees our sincerity, and will approve our actions. But we do not practice liberty in a way so as to give offence, and produce disturbance in the church. The limiting of our liberty will not offend God, as though we have betrayed the truth, but our weaker brother may well be offended.

Romans 14:22 Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. **Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.**

There is a two-fold happiness here, depending on how you see the verse. On the one hand, we certainly will have peace of mind and happiness as a result of not insisting on exercising our liberty. We may have doubts about what we are doing, but we have no doubt about the propriety of abstaining from them.

But, I see the last part of this verse as talking about our weaker brother and his happiness that comes from our equitable behavior. I think this will be clearly seen when get to the next verse.

We are, by our godly equitable actions toward a weaker brother, providing for his happiness! How are we doing this? We can do this because our weaker brother has not been made to act in a way that violates his own conscience.

At the same time, we are happy because our own conscience is free from offence because we have acted with godly equity toward our weaker brother.

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

We are still talking about the weaker brother in vs. 23 because the stronger brother doesn't doubt as to whether he could eat or not. When Paul says, the weaker brother is "damned" if he eat, what does that mean? To understand, let's break this verse down by phrase.

Romans 14:23 **And he that doubteth** is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Doubteth means that the weak brother is not fully satisfied in his own mind. He does not have a clear conscience about his actions. For whatever reason, he conscientiously believes there is a difference between certain foods.

Romans 14:2 And he that doubteth **is damned if he eat**, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

This word "damned" is almost exclusively used to talk about the future punishment of the unsaved in hell or the lake of fire. But the actual meaning of the word is "to condemn."

OED: condemn

3. a. transitive. To pronounce (a thing, practice, etc.) to be bad, unfit, inadequate, invalid, etc.; **to condemn** (a person or thing), esp. by public expression of disapproval.

4. transitive. To bring condemnation upon (a person or thing); to cause the downfall or ruin of (someone or something)...

So, with that definition, “is damned if he eat” is not saying he would lose his salvation and wind up in hell; it is saying that the person who violates his own conscience would incur guilt and would be blameworthy in doing it. If a man does something that he believes is wrong, then he is guilty of that wrong, even if it is not actually wrong in the eyes of God! So then, if a man eats meat when he thinks it is morally wrong or a sin, then he is condemning himself by eating.

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, **because *he eateth not of faith***: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

If he still has doubts, but he eats anyway, something he believes to be wrong, then his eating is not “of faith.” His eating is not a product of edification. He is not fully persuaded in his own mind. He is not operating out of grace. He is not being led of the Spirit. He is not being spiritually minded. He is not being conformed to the image of God’s Son. He has put his spiritual life to death.

It makes no difference if he is obeying the law of Moses, or just following a stronger brother, or just trying to fit in, if he is acting out of anything other than his edification – if he is acting out of anything other than the leading of the Spirit to obey the doctrine which he has come to understand from God’s word – if he is acting out of anything that does not include his talking with his heavenly Father and meditating on the word of God that speaks to the area under consideration – if he is acting out of anything other than a settled mind which is at peace on this doctrinal issue – if he is acting out of anything other than his understanding of this DoGG and how it differs from the prophetic program given to Israel – if he is acting out of anything other than the doctrine written by his apostle, then he is acting out of his flesh – and his eating is not of faith.

And how does God feel about that? God condemns that just as if he were doing a sinful thing!

Romans 14:23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: **for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**

So now, let us look at this phrase in the context in which we find it. “Whatsoever is not of faith is sin” does not have to do with you believing something will come to pass, or referring to you doing something without any evidence attached to it.

There are two issues here: 1) Let us not violate our consciences by our behavior, but let us be fully persuaded of the rightness of it in our own minds, and 2) let our actions – especially any and all changes in our belief and practice – be the product of God working in us (edification) and not anything or anyone else.

This is what it means to “eat of faith” and that is why, no matter what we are doing, if it is not a product of what God is doing in us, then it is unacceptable to Him.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Five: Summary

This session of our studies covers the edification of the assembly as a whole (Romans 14:19-23). Paul exhorts us to follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. These “things” are not just responsibilities of a stronger brother, but of every member of the assembly; therefore, we should not allow the exercise of our sonship liberty to destroy the work of God.

Within the local church God is edifying the individual members, and producing a microcosm of the creature which will have the entire body of Christ in it. The whole assembly’s conformity to Christ is measured in its ability to work together as a single body.

The meat and days issues were representative of any kind of edificational deficiency which constitutes a weaker brother. It doesn’t matter what the issue is the godly thing to do is to limit our liberty to keep our brother from stumbling. We can damage a weaker brother’s edification when he is caused to stumble. Being offended or persuaded into violating his conscience can cause him to stumble.

Change of conscience takes a while: this is a process. But, as the Spirit of God takes the word of God which we have come to hear and understand through the teaching in the local assembly, the Spirit, in connection with our proper response to the doctrine, works in us to change our conscience, so that we *see with the eyes of our understanding*.

By our godly equitable actions toward a weaker brother, we are providing for his happiness when he is not made to act in a way that violates his own conscience and at the same time, we are happy because our own conscience is free from offence because we have acted with godly equity toward our weaker brother.

Let us not violate our consciences by our behavior, but let us be fully persuaded of the rightness of it in our own minds, and let our actions – especially any and all changes in our belief and practice – be the product of God working in us (edification) and not anything or anyone else. For no matter what we are doing, if it is not a product of what God is doing in us, then it is unacceptable to Him.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Five: Self-Test

1. We should not force our _____ or _____ on others.
2. God is looking at the church as a whole and working to _____ it to the _____ of His Son.
3. When we have _____ or prevented the _____ of a fellow saint we have caused him to _____.
4. We do not practice _____ in a way so as to give _____, and produce _____ in the church.
5. We should be satisfied with _____ our liberty, and acting on it in _____, where God is the _____.
6. No matter what we are doing, if it is not a _____ of what God is _____ in us, then it is _____ to Him.
7. _____ carries the idea of being a stumblingblock by causing the weaker brother to be embarrassed, _____ or _____.
8. There is no edification working at all when a saint is _____ to _____ their conscience.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Five: 9:59 PA

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. 20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. 21 It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. 22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. 23 And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

Monday – Review

- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Do you understand your liberty in Christ? Do you understand your responsibility to the weaker brother in the faith? To the stronger brother in the faith? To the assembly? What are the consequences of becoming a tutor or governor to another in the body? Are you confident that the word of God and the Holy Spirit are able to edify the weaker brother? Do you understand the impact placing a stumblingblock can have upon another's edification? If you are unable to comfortably address these issues, or have any questions go back and review the notes from the previous sessions.
- Talk to God in prayer about the impact an adversarial relationship within the assembly could have upon the edification of every member of that assembly. Prayerfully consider the importance of the spiritual health and edification of the assembly. Ponder how important this is to God. Consider the

consequences of the assembly's failure to adhere to the doctrine in Romans 14:1-15:7 as it relates to the edification of the weak in the faith.

- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. Remember- we have liberty and grace to take the time necessary to ensure that we have a solid foundation. If you need to spend more time on an area – take the time now.

Tuesday – Peace and edification

Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. ²⁰For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. ²¹*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak. ²²Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ²³And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

- The second part of the godly living focuses on the edification of the assembly as a unit. As you read through Romans 14:19-23, do you notice a shift in the terminology? Is Paul speaking specifically about the weaker or stronger brother or about our responsibility to the assembly as a unit concerning edification?
- Consider Romans 14:19 Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.
- The context of the doctrine is still concerning the weaker brother. This doctrine builds upon the previous verses, expanding on the specific responsibility to the individual member of the body, the weaker brother. Convey to your Father your understanding of your responsibilities to the edification of the weaker brother and the impact that responsibility has upon the assembly. What is your responsibility to all the members of the assembly?

- Talk to your Father about the environment that will maintain peaceful fellowship and communion, providing an atmosphere for edification to take place within the assembly. Consider what things “make for peace” and advance the progress of edification. Read 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:3; Colossians 3:15 and 1 Thessalonians 5:13 for a better understanding of peace.

Wednesday – Let the doctrine do its work

- Recall Romans 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. This sets the stage for the second part of godly living and builds upon the doctrine addressing conduct and behavior that is inconsistent with godly equity toward a weaker brother and the adverse impact that has upon the edification of the assembly as a whole.
- Communicate to your Father your understanding of why it is important that the stronger brother not violate the edification process of the weaker brother. What would that consequence be to the work of God in the assembly as well as in the individual?
- Talk to God about what He is working to do within the local church. What does it mean to Him that you be conformed to the image of Christ? (hint-that microcosm) Do you see that work the same way He does?
- Read Romans 14:15 and contrast that with Romans 14:20. Share with God what you see as the difference between the two passages. What is the object? When a stronger brother in the faith places a stumblingblock in the path of a weaker brother’s edification (in this instance eating meat) it not only destroys the weaker brother but it destroys the work of God. What is that work? Prayerfully consider the importance of edification to God and the consequence to the assembly when edification is impeded or destroyed.
- Talk to God about the godly thing to do concerning the exercise of your liberty when dealing with a weaker brother. Think about occasions when you have had to choose between exercising your liberty (which is not restricted to eating meat) and you gladly and happily restricted that liberty for the benefit of a weaker brother, the assembly as a whole and the work of God. What was the impact?
- As godly equity is being worked out in your inner man by the effectual working of this doctrine, is your conduct and behavior in line with the

doctrine? Think about those in the assembly who are either weaker or stronger brothers in the faith. Do you see them differently? Are you valuing and esteeming them regardless of where they are in their edification? Talk to your Father about those areas where you see progress and those that might need a little work. Discuss with Him the ways in which you might work on those areas.

Thursday – stumble, offended or made weak

- Romans 14:20 For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed *are* pure; but *it is* evil for that man who eateth with offence. ²¹*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.
- How would you define evil in this context? (Consider the opposite of evil: Romans 12:21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.) Can you think of other passages that might give you a solid understanding of how God sees evil?
- Talk with your Father about how He sees that man who **eateth with offence**". Do you see that man the same way God does? Consider the term "evil" in the context of the stronger brother who eats something that causes the weaker brother to stumble or causes "offence". See Romans 5:15-20. As a member of the body, what impact does this offence have on the rest of the assembly? Think about how this might impact relationships, causing divisions in the assembly. Who is hurt?
- Communicate to God your understanding of the impact of causing a brother to stumble, offending a brother or making him weak. Express your understanding of what it is to stumble as it relates to grace. When you violate the process of edification you violate the principle of grace through faith. Your brother is no longer walking by faith or persuaded in his own mind. It destroys the process of edification for that weaker brother. You become his tutor and governor. If not persuaded in his own mind, and no longer walking by faith, what is he under?
- What is the consequence of causing offense to a weaker brother? Talk to your Father about the impact of offending the weaker brother not only as it affects your relationship with him but the impact it has on the edification of

the body as a whole. Could your brother take the correction personally or as a rebuke and become hurt, defensive toward you? Could this result in schisms or divisions between the two of you or within the assembly?

- Consider the result of the weaker brother being made to violate his own conscience or belief? Have you caused your weaker brother to sin? Consider Romans 14:23b **for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.**
- Read Luke 17:1-2; Malachi 2:1-8; 1 Corinthians 8:13
- Share with your Father your understanding of “making him weak.” What is the consequence of your becoming the weaker brother’s tutor and governor? What impact does that have on his edification? Talk to God about the consequences of abusing your sonship liberty by failing to treat your weaker brother with godly equity, love and charity. Both the stronger and weaker brother suffer. How?

Friday – whatsoever is not of faith is sin

- What is the consequence of imposing your liberty upon the weaker brother who is not yet persuaded in his own mind that it is allowed by the doctrine? Communicate to God what you see as a consequence of causing that weaker brother to stumble? (Consider that their actions or liberty would not be the result of the word of God but the result of embarrassment, intimidation or a desire to be approved by men.) What does this do to that brother’s edification? Are they being led by the Spirit? Are they being edified?
- Romans 14:22 Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth. ²³And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.
- Communicate to God your understanding of what Paul means when he writes “Hast thou faith? Have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.
- Recall Romans 14:5b **Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.** This principle values and esteems the edification process of the weaker brother and the assembly as a whole. If we value and esteem the other members of the assembly then we will sacrificially abstain from exercising that liberty which offends our weaker brother.

- Read the verses again. Talk to God about what Paul means when he says that we are to: **have it to thyself before God.**” Is the stronger brother’s liberty being violated? Think about what it means to exercise your liberty (have faith) before God but not before the weaker brother whose edification can be destroyed. Think about how this abuse of our liberty can destroy the work of God and the edification of the body as a whole. Talk to your Father about how important the exercise of godly equity toward the weaker brother is to Him and as a result, how important this should be to you. Consider that it is the exercise of godly love and charity, and the effectual working of God’s word in your inner man that motivates you to choose to value and esteem your brother over the exercise of your own liberty.
- Consider how our equitable actions or behavior toward our brother can provide for his happiness and our own. Think about how the reasons this results in happiness. Are you willing and happy to sacrifice your liberty for the benefit of the edification of the assembly and to ensure that the work of God is not destroyed?
- Consider Romans 14:9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. Christ died for godliness and when we conduct ourselves in accordance with the effectual working of godly love and charity, gladly sacrificing our liberty for the benefit of the edification of the weaker brother and the assembly as a whole, Godliness results in happiness.
- Read Titus 3:9 concerning the impact of contentions in the body; Ephesians 4 concerning the importance and benefit of unity in the body.
- Thank God for His word as you are being conformed to the image of Christ. Remember the goal is to have the mind of Christ-to think, live and labor with our Father and bring Him glory!

Galatians 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Romans Education Part 5

Session Five: Self-Test Answers

1. We should not force our faith or opinions on others.
2. God is looking at the church as a whole and working to conform it to the image of His Son.
3. When we have hindered or prevented the edification of a fellow saint we have caused him to stumble.
4. We do not practice liberty in a way so as to give offence, and produce disturbance in the church.
5. We should be satisfied with cherishing our liberty, and acting on it in private, where God is the witness.
6. No matter what we are doing, if it is not a product of what God is doing in us, then it is unacceptable to Him.
7. Offence carries the idea of being a stumblingblock by causing the weaker brother to be embarrassed, hurt or angered.
8. There is no edification working at all when a saint is influenced to violate their conscience.

Romans Education, Part 5
Godly Equity – Romans 15:1-7

Session 6a: NOTETAKER

Fig. 1: Recap of the Doctrine

Scripture	Context	Edifying Result
Rm. 12:1-2	Education	Godliness
Rm. 12:3-8	Local Assembly	Selflessness
Rm. 12:9-10	Local Assembly	<u>Lovingkindness</u>
Rm. 12:11-16	Lost & Body of Christ	<u>Tenderheartedness</u>
Rm. 12:17-21	Enemies	<u>Longsuffering/Meekness</u>
Rm. 13:1-7	Government	<u>Benevolent</u> Goodness
Rm. 13:8-10	Neighbor	SKTMB
Rm. 14:15-16	Weaker Brother	<u>Sacrificial</u> Love

Romans Education, Part 5

Session 6a: Godly Labor

GODLY EQUITY – Romans 15:1-7

Session Notes

Now we come to the godly labor section of this single form of doctrine which started back in Romans 14:1. To get started, let's read the entire passage (Romans 15:1-7).

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. ³For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. ⁴For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. ⁵Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: ⁶That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

In the first three verses we get the seventh and final feature of godly love.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. ³For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

It really takes all three verses to sum up all that is involved in this final feature of godly love.

In vs. 1, there are the dual issues of 1) bearing the infirmities of the weak and 2) not pleasing ourselves.

In vs. 2, there is the issue of the edification of another.

In vs. 3, there is the example of Christ, loyally and gladly bearing the reproach of His Father for the glory of God the Father.

So, putting these together, what do we have? In the first two verses, we have: not pleasing ourselves for the edificational good of another. Then we have the example of the Lord Jesus who did not please Himself, but in accordance with the will of the Father, he willingly bore reproach for the purpose of accomplishing His Father's will.

Take a look at verse 3.

Romans 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

We are going to unpack this verse for there is quite a lot here, but first I want us to see where "it is written." It is Psalm 69.

Psalm 69:9 For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up; And the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.

This is a Messianic psalm, which is to say, it is about the Lord Jesus Christ functioning as Israel's Messiah, but, it is also about David. The point here is that Psalm 69 is where "it is written."

We see this again in John's gospel.

John 2:13 And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, ¹⁴And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: ¹⁵And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; ¹⁶And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise. ¹⁷And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.

The "zeal for his Father's house" describes the spirit which moved His actions. Therefore, His zeal was not limited to the Temple, but extended to His Father's will, purpose and glory. The zeal that was in the Lord Jesus for His Father and all He intended to do was so great as to consume Him, like a devouring fire, which is the meaning of "hath eaten me up."

By the way, look at the play on words: zeal of my Father's house. A house is not just a building, such as the temple, but we are being edified (built up!). And isn't edification the issue in Romans 15:1-3?

1 Corinthians 3:9 For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building.

There is a companion scripture to the Romans 15 passage, found in Philippians 2:1-11. As we turn there, remember Romans 15:3, which is talking about the reproaches.

Philippians 2:1 If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. ³**Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.** ⁴**Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.** ⁵**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:** ⁶**Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:** ⁷**But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:** ⁸**And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.** ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; ¹¹And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

How is Philippians 2 a companion passage? It is because when the Son, the 2nd member of the Godhead, took upon himself the form of a servant, was made in the likeness of men, humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, those all are part of godly subordination. The Son subordinated Himself for the glory of God and, in the specific context of Romans 15, provided for our edification!

By the way, when He took on the form of a servant; that is being subservient which is part of the definition of subordination.

OED: subservient

2. That is of use or service as an instrument or means; serving as a means to further an end, object, or purpose; serviceable.

This is not subordination just out of an attitude of humility, although humility is wrapped up in it, but it is purposeful subordination. Godly subordination, which is something we might do as an equitable decision, has an objective in view, which is exactly the meaning of the word.

OED: subordination

b. The condition, state, or fact of being subordinate or subservient *to a particular end, objective, or need*.

In other words, there is purpose behind the subordination. There was purpose behind the subordination of the Lord Jesus; the accomplishment of His Father's will; His Father's plan and purpose.

And just to make sure we all understand subordination, here is the definition.

OED: subordinate

1. Dependent upon, **subservient to, or secondary to** some other (chief or principal) thing. Frequently with *to*.

What does it mean to be subordinate in this context? It means there is a feature of love whereby we may willingly choose to subordinate ourselves for the purpose of advancing the edification of another, or for the accomplishment of our Father's plan and purpose.

But I don't want to limit the label to *Subordination* because when we make ourselves subservient to or secondary to some other, it is for the purpose of achieving a particular objective (in this case, the edification of another).

Therefore, I want to make a compound out of the descriptor; *Purposed Subordination (or Subservience)*, or PS.

I say this because we can subordinate ourselves for reasons other than the edification of others and when we do, we do not necessarily think of subordination as a feature of love. By putting *Purposed* on the front of it, I am hoping it will remind us that out of our godly love, we, like the Lord Jesus, would willingly and

gladly subordinate ourselves in order to fulfill our Father's purpose; the edification of some individual saint or of the local assembly as a single body.

Since PS (Postscript) comes at the very end of a letter, it is fitting that this PS is the very last feature of godly love that we learn at the end of Paul's letter to the Romans.

That makes the acronym SKTMB S PS.

Fig. 2: Recap of the Doctrine

Scripture	Context	Edifying Result
Rm. 12:1-2	Education	Godliness
Rm. 12:3-8	Local Assembly	Selflessness
Rm. 12:9-10	Local Assembly	<u>Lovingkindness</u>
Rm. 12:11-16	Lost & Body of Christ	<u>Tenderheartedness</u>
Rm. 12:17-21	Enemies	<u>Longsuffering/Meekness</u>
Rm. 13:1-7	Government	<u>Benevolent</u> Goodness
Rm. 13:8-10	Neighbor	SKTMB
Rm. 14:15-16	Weaker Brother	<u>Sacrificial</u> Love
Rm. 15:1-3	Body of Christ	Purposed Subordination

The full acronym is now: SKTMB S, PS

Before we move on, let's talk about what that subordination might entail. Just as there was an identification of the Lord Jesus with His Father in every respect (the good and the bad), so it should be with us.

Romans 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, **The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.**

Looking at Romans 15:3 we see there is an identification of the Son with the Father. What I mean by that is that the reproach of the Father reproached the Lord Jesus. The reproaches against His Father were the same as if they were cast on Him. This is a feature of subordination; to take the reproach of another. But we must keep this in context. Godly equity teaches us that there may come a time when we take on the reproach of another in order to preserve or advance their edification.

What else is wrapped up in our PS? Humility. We saw this explicitly listed in Philippians 2. The OED has, as part of its definition of humility, “the opposite of pride or haughtiness.” Just to expound on this a bit more, there may come a time in which we lower ourselves in dignity, position, condition or degree in order to benefit a fellow member, particularly with regard to their edification.

What else is included in our PS? Being abased. Paul talks about this issue for himself. In fact, this is also in the book of Philippians.

Philippians 4:12 I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

OED: abased

1. *transitive*. To lower in rank, condition, or character; to humble, humiliate, degrade.

Oh boy! Our flesh doesn't like this one. When you read that definition was there something in you that said, “Can we take out those words *humiliate* and *degrade*?” But was the Lord Jesus ever subjected to humiliating behavior when He was lied about by the religious leaders in Israel (He casteth out devils by the power of Beelzebub)? Was he ever humiliated when they mocked Him by placing the crown of thorns on his head and hailed him as King of Jews? How about when they sat him in the midst of them and took turns smiting Him in the face and spitting on Him? Isaiah says that his face was so marred from this that his face no longer appeared that of a man.

Okay, what else is in our PS? Being reviled. What does it mean to be reviled? It means to subject to insult or abuse; to talk to or criticize in an abusive, angry, or insulting manner; to rail at. This includes abuse and slander in the definitions. So what about our Savior? Did He subordinate Himself to this kind of treatment?

Matthew 27:39 And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

Mark 15:32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

1 Peter 2:23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

I have saved our apostles comments for last, for it introduces us to the last concept of subordination.

1 Corinthians 4:12 And labour, working with our own hands: **being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:**

Suffering. In all of these things there is a reward of the inheritance. I am not saying we should invent ways to suffer. We should not create subordination where there is no need. But should that case come up, that the edification of another or of the body you are a part of should require the subordinating of ourselves, this is an aspect of love we are supposed to manifest.

Now let's go back and read those first three verses.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. ³For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

This is all the work we are going to do on these three verses for now. There is more here, but in keeping with our goal of getting completely through the education once, on a foundational level we can build on later, we are going to move on. The important issue, the foundational issue is the last feature of godly love.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

I pray this is happening for this assembly. This is why we go back, just like Paul, and look at these scriptures.

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: ⁶That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Romans 15:5-7 contains a sonship checkpoint. There are three issues that we need to evaluate.

The first issue is this: Paul says that God is the God of patience and consolation. The question is: Are we sons and daughters of our Father's patience and consolation? Is what is in Him, in us? And we need to be able to assess that in ourselves. Or, to say it another way, is the patience and consolation of our heavenly Father working in us toward our fellow members.

In order to make this assessment, we need to know what is being said about patience and consolation. In keeping with the overall context, the question is: are we patient with the edification of others?

When it comes to consolation, what are we talking about?

OED: consolation

1. The action of consoling, cheering, or comforting; the state of being consoled; alleviation of sorrow or mental distress.

Again, sticking with the context, this is not just some kind of pep-talk, but this cheering and comforting is done by the scriptures. Do not think about these things outside the issue of edification. Are we using the doctrine to alleviate sorrow or mental distress?

Has the doctrine sufficiently worked so that it becomes the resource for your consolation? Now, look at the verse again.

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you **to be likeminded one toward another** according to Christ Jesus:

To be likeminded is in relation to our heavenly Father. How does he deal with our tribulations and worries and fears? By the working of His word in our inner man. If we are "likeminded" that is the remedy we also will employ for each other. It truly is supposed to be, "like Father, like son."

Also, notice that vs. 5 ends with only a colon, not a period. That connects verse 6 closely with vs. 5.

Romans 15:6 **That** ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

“That” introduces the result of being likeminded with your heavenly Father.

Romans 15:6 That **ye** may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The “ye” is the plural “you,” so I take this to be for the whole assembly (taking into account that there may be “babes” in the assembly).

Romans 15:6 **That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God,** even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here is the result of being likeminded with God in this area of patience and consolation as it concerns the edification of our fellow saints: That we glorify God with one mind and one mouth.

This terminology is pointing to something more than just our individual edification; it is pointing to the edification of the assembly as a whole, as a unit, and as a body. Stop for a moment and think about that. At this point in our education, we should, as an assembly, be able to do something (As a body, we have one mind and one mouth to the glory of God.) But what does that mean?

It means we understand something, and we are going to act out of that understanding. Let’s say it this way: We will encounter situations involving other members of the assembly. Those situations will require us to make decisions (For example - judgmental: which means there will be more than one path we can take, or equitable: which discerns the circumstances before us). Those decisions we make will “glorify God” when they continue/produce an environment conducive to the edification of every member of the body, and to the body as a whole.

So here are a bunch of individual members of a body, who are dealing with one another in a way that sees the body beginning to knit itself together by “one mind and one mouth” glorifying God by doing the same things our Father would do if He was in our shoes.

We are talking about this whole body of believers thinking (one mind) and laboring (one mouth) out of the things generated in us by the sonship education. Or, we could say, this assembly is now taking on the characteristics of our Father. And when I say “characteristics,” I am primarily talking about the issue of

edification. This is the goal of any local church. There is no other biblical reason to have an assembly of believers.

This doctrine of equity is important when you realize what God is trying to achieve in all this; and along with that, realize that this is the reason Satan is so intent upon causing strife, division and contention among the members! Satan, by these things, is keeping us from who we are supposed to be AS AN ASSEMBLY.

So, at the heart of this checkpoint is how we value and esteem the edification unto godliness, and how committed we are to being transformed by the various forms of doctrine in Paul's epistles.

I do want to say one more thing about the "one mouth" issue. Again keeping to the context of edification, this refers to the ability of the assembly to understand and articulate what we are about – what it is we are doing (education/edification) and why we are doing it. Do we understand the process and the order of things in that process? I gave that to you way back in Romans Education, Part 2, Session One.

God is glorified when we understand the process whereby we are edified unto godliness AND we engage in that process. In other words, when the life of God's Son is formed in us, when we are edified unto godliness, as we are transformed by the doctrine, as we are conformed to the image of God's Son, as our Father's wisdom is installed in our inner man, as the doctrine effectually works in our inner man – all of those ways of saying it – God is glorified.

Romans Education Part 5

Session 6a: Summary

Romans 15:1-3, identify the final feature of godly love: 1) bearing the infirmities of the weak and 2) not pleasing ourselves. Christ loyally and gladly bearing the reproach of His Father for the glory of God the Father, is an example of the Lord Jesus who did not please Himself, but in accordance with the will of the Father willingly bore reproach for the purpose of accomplishing His Father's will.

The Son subordinated Himself for the glory of God and, in the specific context of Romans 15, provided for our edification. When Jesus took on the form of a servant; that was being subservient which is part of the definition of subordination.

Godly subordination, has an objective in view, and is something we might do as an equitable decision. Godly equity teaches us that there may come a time when we take on the reproach of another in order to preserve or advance their edification. When we willingly and gladly subordinate ourselves in order to fulfill our Father's purpose; the edification of some individual saint or of the local assembly as a single body we are exercising Purposed Subordination/Subservience (PS).

Although we may have to take on the reproach of another, when we understand what God is doing in this dispensation of grace will produce a purposed zeal to labor with Him for His purposes.

Our heavenly Father deals with our tribulations, worries and fears by the working of His word in our inner man. If we are "likeminded" that is the remedy we will also employ for each other – "like Father, like son." As an assembly when we glorify God with one mind and one mouth we are being likeminded with God.

We will encounter situations involving other members of the assembly and those situations will require us to make judgmental or equitable decisions and those decisions we make will "glorify God" when they continue/produce an environment conducive to the edification of every member of the body, and to the body as a whole.

Romans Education Part 5

Session 6a: Self-Test

1. There may come a time in which we _____ ourselves in _____, position, condition or _____ in order to benefit a fellow member, particularly with regard to their _____.
2. _____ describes the spirit which _____ Christ's actions and extended to His Father's _____, purpose and _____.
3. When we make ourselves _____ to or secondary to some other, for the purpose of the _____ of another we are exercising Purposed S _____ / _____ (PS).
4. Our heavenly Father deals with our _____, worries and fears by the working of His word in our _____ man.
5. God is _____ when we understand the process whereby we are _____ unto godliness and we _____ in that process.

Romans Education Part 5

Session 6a: 9:59 PA

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. ³For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. ⁴For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. ⁵Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: ⁶That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Monday – Review

- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Do you understand your liberty in Christ? Are you confident that the godly decision-making skills and components of godly love and charity from the previous doctrine are working effectually in your inner man? Do you understand that our liberty in Christ is not confined to eating but applies to other areas of our life? Do you understand what it means to impose our liberty on another and why we should not put ourselves in the position of being a stumblingblock to another's edification or becoming a tutor and governor to one weak in the faith? Review that section of the notes to ensure that you have a good understanding of the doctrine.
- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. Remember- we have liberty and grace to take the time necessary to ensure that we have a

solid foundation. The objective for adopted sons and daughters is to bring your thoughts and actions in line with His, making godly decisions based on the doctrine and that are pleasing to our Father. If you need to spend more time on a component of godly love or the decision-making skills – take the time now.

Tuesday – please not ourselves

Romans 15:1 We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. ²Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. ³For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

- Try to summarize these three verses which comprise that 7th and final feature of godly love.
- Talk to your Father about what it means to “bear the infirmities of the weak”. Do you understand what those infirmities are? Is Paul talking about illness or weak areas in one’s edification? Note the context of these 3 verses. Paul is talking about the edification of the assembly as a whole as well as the individual edification needs of those weak in the faith.
- Talk with God about your understanding of “not please ourselves.” Paul is speaking about our sonship liberty. Communicate with your Father about your understanding of the responsibilities in the exercise of your sonship liberties. Does this apply to the weaker brother only?
- Prayerfully consider who your neighbor is in this situation. Talk to your Father about the purpose of the doctrine, to conform you to the image of Christ Himself. Each member of the body of Christ, whether the weaker or stronger brother, is to do what? Read Romans 15:2 again.
- Both the weaker and stronger brother have something in common, you are both being edified and conformed to the image of Christ. Regardless of where you are in the edification process, you are being told that you “ought” to operate on the sound doctrine effectually working in you in your interactions with members of the body of Christ for the good of his or her edification. What does “ought” convey to you? Have a serious conversation with God about how important the edification of the body is to Him and how important it should be to you.

Wednesday – The reproaches in Psalm 69

Romans 15:3 For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me. ⁴For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

- Talk to your Father about what it means to be conformed to the image of Christ. Talk about your understanding of the edification process and what it is designed to do.
- Consider Philippians 2:1-11 as you read Romans 15:3 again. Share with God about your understanding and appreciation for what Jesus Christ did for you and why you are to “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” What was the cost? Consider also what it was that enabled Him to endure the cross. Was it the doctrine? Was it the very same doctrine that is working in you? Think about that!
- Read Psalm 69:9 that is being quoted by Paul. What is your understanding of the meaning of “the zeal of his Father’s house”? What does that encompass? (hint: consume Him like a devouring fire) read John 2:13-17.
- Talk to your Father about what “the reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me” means. Christ took upon Himself the reproaches of His Father. We may be called upon to take on the reproach of another for the preservation or advancement of edification. What does this mean to you? After reading Psalm 69, do you have a better understanding of the cost of your edification? Do you understand the high cost paid for you to be spiritually fit for God’s use and to functionally live in a way that is acceptable and pleasing to Him? Does God’s word to you give you hope?
- Communicate to your Father what it means to subordinate yourself as Christ subordinated Himself for the glory of God. Consider the purpose behind Christ’s subordination. He did not please Himself. What is it that motivated Christ (and should motivate you) to willingly choose to subordinate yourself for the accomplishment of God’s purposes and plans? Consider terms such as humility, abasement, suffering or being reviled? Christ endured these things and more. (hint-component of godly love)
- Read Philippians 4:12 and then reread Romans 15:1-4

- Consider what Paul means when he says “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.” Is this our doctrine? Talk to your Father about what the difference is between scripture that is written to us and that which is written for our learning. Share with Him your understanding of why it is important for you to understand not only what He is doing in this dispensation but what He is doing in Israel’s program. (rightly dividing the word – 2 Timothy 2:15).

Thursday – The Sons of patience and consolation-like Father like Son

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: ⁶That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

- Are you fully persuaded of the importance of this edification of the body/assembly is to God? Consider what this edification is meant to accomplish in us as individuals and as the body as a whole. Communicate with your Father your understanding and appreciation.
- Talk to your Father about your understanding of what consolation is to Him in this context. How do we console or comfort each other in accordance with our edification? Consider some of the doctrine our Father has provided to alleviate sorrow and mental distress. Talk to God about where you have been successful in applying the doctrine and what areas you might need to spend a little more time. Take time and recall when others in the assembly have provided that comfort or consolation.
- Share with your Father what it means for you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus? Think about the saying “like Father like Son”. Are you being conformed to the image of the Son? Are you thinking, living and laboring like your Father? Are you patient, valuing and esteeming each member of the body? Are you committed to the edification of the body of Christ, with the ultimate objective toward glorifying God with one mind and one mouth? Talk to your Father about your commitment to operate with patience and consolation toward fellow saints for the purpose of His glory.

- Do you understand how our actions and care for each member of the assembly glorifies God? Now talk to God about what it means to Him when we are being knit together by one mind and one mouth, glorifying Him. How important is it to our Father that the whole body of believers thinks and labors with Him as a unit being generated by the effectual working of the doctrine in each member of the body? How important is that to you?

Friday – Warning! Warning! It’s a Checkpoint!

- Review Romans 15:1-7 again so it is fresh in your mind.
- Consider this Checkpoint in Romans 15:5-7 and all the doctrine that this is built upon. Talk to your Father about where you are in your edification and whether you are confident that the previous doctrine is effectually working in you. Are you utilizing the doctrine in your day- to- day dealings with neighbors, coworkers, members of the assembly? Talk with Him about successes and areas that may need some fine tuning.
- Honestly evaluate where you are concerning the doctrine (Romans 12:3-15:7) effectually working in your inner man. Are you being conformed? Do you exhibit the mind of Christ? Are you being like-minded one toward another according to Christ?
- The heart of the checkpoint is how we as a body of believers are valuing and esteeming our edification unto godliness and what our commitment is in being transformed by the renewing of our mind through the effectual working of the doctrine. Do you understand the process of edification? (Romans Education Part 2, Session 1, addresses this if you need to review)
- Communicate to your Father your understanding of what this edification process is and how it works. Do you understand the sense and sequence of the doctrine as we build upon that foundation, verse by verse, precept upon precept, Romans to Philemon.
- Read 1 Corinthians 2:12; Romans 8 (by grace through faith genuine spiritual growth takes place through the effectual working of God’s word, renewing our mind and conforming us to the image of His Son.) Talk to your Father about the importance of building upon a solid foundation based upon sound

doctrine. Is this doctrine being manifested in your thoughts, actions and godly labor?

- Have a conversation with your Father about what grace through faith means to Him. Is it doing it your way or His? As we are transformed by the renewing of our mind (through the doctrine in Romans 12:2-15:4) that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God which is the power of the living God's living word working effectually in us as well as proving the will of God through this body of believers glorifying Him with one mind and one mouth!
- Read 1 Timothy 1:10; 2 Timothy 4:3; Titus 2:1. Let us be of sound mind, sound faith and sound speech! With one mind and one mouth let us glorify God.

1 Timothy 1:5 Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and *of* a good conscience, and *of* faith unfeigned:

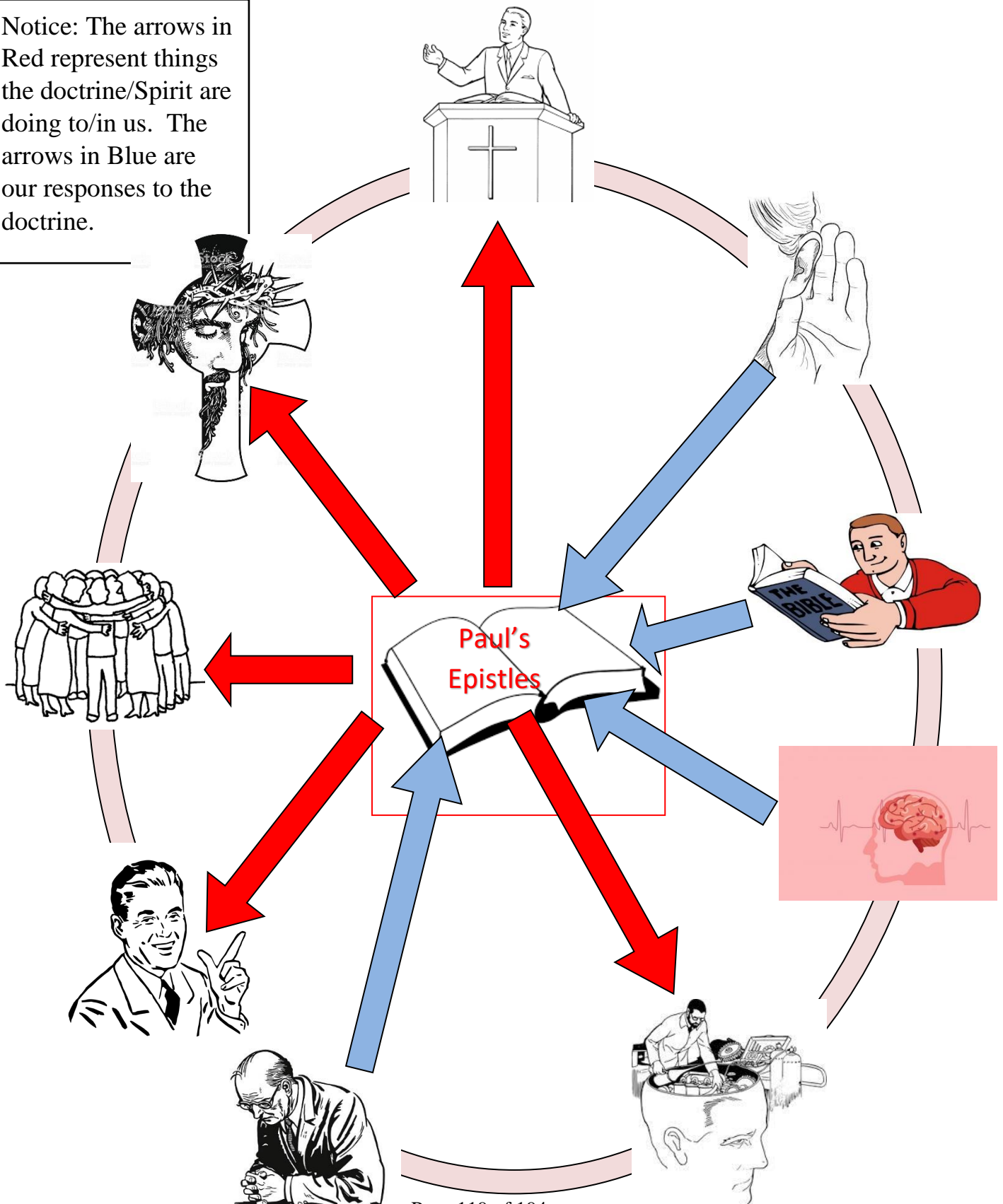
Romans Education Part 5

Session 6a: Self-Test Answers

1. There may come a time in which we lower ourselves in dignity, position, condition or degree in order to benefit a fellow member, particularly with regard to their edification.
2. Zeal describes the spirit which moved Christ's actions and extended to His Father's will, purpose and glory.
3. When we make ourselves subservient to or secondary to some other, for the purpose of the edification of another we are exercising Purposed Subordination/Subservience (PS).
4. Our heavenly Father deals with our tribulations, worries and fears by the working of His word in our inner man.
5. God is glorified when we understand the process whereby we are edified unto godliness and we engage in that process.

RE5: Session 6b NOTETAKER

Notice: The arrows in Red represent things the doctrine/Spirit are doing to/in us. The arrows in Blue are our responses to the doctrine.



Romans Education, Part 5

Session 6b: GODLY EQUITY

Session Notes

I told you that back in the beginning of our education I gave you a Notetaker describing the process of edification. For simplicity, I have included it here in your notes. When we originally saw this illustration, we were teaching in relation to the doctrine in Romans 12:3-5. So, I have amended the Notetaker slightly so that it can apply to any doctrine we are seeking to be edified unto.

The process is: we attend our local assembly where the doctrine is **Taught**.

We **Hear** the doctrine.

Then we **Read** the doctrine in God's word.

By means of the teaching, we **Understand** and believe the doctrine.

The doctrine then works to **Renew** our minds.

We pray about the doctrine in true **Sonship Prayer**. This means that we discuss with God about how we will implement the doctrine. This helps us get the doctrine in our minds.

Then we **Properly Respond** to the doctrine in our everyday lives. This means we purposefully implement the doctrine. In the beginning, you have to think about this. This action begins the process of moving the doctrine from our minds to our souls (our inner man).

As this happens, we are being **Edified**.

By the repeated living out of the doctrine, we are **Conformed** to the image of God's Son. When this happens, living out of the doctrine is our default position because it has truly transformed us so that it is now who we are! This is how Christ is formed in us.

Godly equity is going to end just like it started. How did it start?

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in the faith **receive ye**, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

And how does it end?

Romans 15:7 Wherefore **receive ye one another**, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

What does it mean to “receive” someone, especially in this context? It doesn’t just mean to let them come to the assembly. We welcome anyone who comes in the door. We invite them in, offer them a place to sit, allow them to hear the lesson and we give them materials. In that sense, we receive them. But that is not all of what Paul has in mind.

This “receive” means to extend to them the fullness of what it means to be a member of a sonship assembly where all are members one of another. It means that no matter where they are along the edification spectrum, or even if they are not edified at all, we do not dismiss them or relegate them as unimportant. They too have been given the “measure of faith!”

Specifically, within the context of Romans 15:7, we receive them on the same basis that Christ received us. We receive them to the same degree that Christ receives us. We receive them to the glory of God just as Christ also received us to the glory of God. We are patient with them as He is patient with us.

All of that means that we treat a weaker brother in a loving, godly way. It also means that we understand the edification process we are involved in. It means that we know there is a discernment that goes on as we make decisions with godly equity in mind and we employ that discernment as we deal with other members. It means that now our thinking includes the edification of the assembly as a whole and is not limited to individual edifications.

As we progress in the doctrine and the edification of the assembly advances, we will likely have more and more people at different stages of edification within the body. Some might come in the door at Monahans, others might come in at Glen Rose, while others may join us remotely. Our YouTube channel is the biggest resource we have in gaining new members.

We need to be aware of them, taking an interest in being helpers of their joy. Additionally, we need to become skillful in laboring together as a body. Both of these need to be in our minds constantly and we need to be engaged with both of them. Don’t think of it as an either/or situation.

Our sphere of fellowship will need to be enlarged and that will only happen as we find ways to do that on purpose. As we do this, we need to keep in mind what this is about. The goal of our fellowship is to enhance the body’s ability to function

together as a unit. In order to do that there must be a basis of fellowship (in some form or fashion) whereby we get to know our fellow members. Each of us will need to think of a way to do that.

As we “receive one another as Christ received us” then that process and its result are for God’s glory. We are putting something on display that most people have never seen.

Before we leave Romans 15:1-7, I want to bring up one last issue. I am doing this because I know what is coming in Romans 15:8 and following. In chapter 15, there is a point to be made which will be easier to make if we have these things, which I am about to say, in mind.

Among the believers at Rome, a good number of them were Jewish. For those who came up under the Mosaic Law, we can see how the issues concerning the weaker brother might come up; not eating meats and observing days.

While Paul does not make specific reference to the issue being one of Jew vs. Gentile, that possibility is more like a probability, so do not take that out of your reading/understanding of the passage.

For example:

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to **be likeminded one toward another** according to Christ Jesus:

This fits perfectly for an assembly with Jews and Gentiles in it. The Jews want to observe days and refuse meats which are either forbidden or not prepared according to the Law. The Gentiles, never being under such restrictions are readily engaged in their liberty. Can you see how it would be difficult for this kind of assembly to function as a body? Therefore, the instruction is for them to be “likeminded one toward another.”

Notice the first part of vs. 5.

Romans 15:5 **Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded** one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

It is God who will grant them to be patient with one another, but how will He do that? It will be done by the doctrine, which Paul has been giving them, working effectually in them.

And what does it mean to be likeminded? It means for all of them to be thinking the same things. And if one group is judging while the other group is despising, they are a long ways from being likeminded.

If they are supposed to be thinking the same things toward one another, what is it they should be thinking? Paul has already told them how to think about one another, all the way back to Romans 12:3 and following. But they don't have to go all the way back to Romans 12 (although that would be good if they did), for Paul gives them the context in which they are to be likeminded; "according to Christ Jesus."

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to **be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:**

In other words, the way they are supposed to think about each other is in accordance with how the Lord Jesus thinks about them. And He (the Lord Jesus) is not looking at Jews or Gentiles, He is looking at members of the same body who are engaged in an edificational process together. He is not looking at who is eating meat and who is not; He is looking at members of the body of Christ who are training to reign with Him in the heavenly places.

To reign with Christ up there will necessitate the ability to function together as a body. The ability to function as a body is a product of edification whereby the members look at each other and think about each other "according to Christ Jesus."

Romans 15:6 **That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God,** even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Can you see how, unless edification is taking place, it would be difficult for Jews and Gentiles to glorify God "with one mind and one mouth?"

In this context, what does it mean to glorify God with one mind and one mouth? In an assembly of Jews and Gentiles, both groups may seek to glorify God out of their ethnic distinction, instead of the doctrine. But that is not the kind of glory God's desires, in fact that would not be glorifying to Him at all, not in this DoGG and in the face of the doctrine Paul is presenting to them.

Both Jews and Gentiles would need to glorify God for the same reasons. They would be thinking the same thing (one mind) and they would be saying the same things (one mouth.)

Romans 15:7 Wherefore **receive ye one another**, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Still talking about this in the context of Jew and Gentile, the summation is “receive ye one another.” Can you see how this would be the logical thing to say if there were Jews and Gentiles in the same assembly? Again, I am having us think about this for a reason.

The Gentile cannot be thinking “These Jews are not really part of this assembly they are just hanging on to the Law. I’m going to be civil, but don’t expect me to get all buddy-buddy with these people. I mean, I’m glad they are saved, but they really put a cramp in everyone’s liberty. Maybe I should start an assembly in my own home and invite just Gentiles; we could all enjoy our liberty then. I can see how it would glorify God if all of our members understood the same things.”

The Jew cannot be thinking, “These Gentiles are so unholy, they are ruining this assembly. We have so little in common, I just don’t see how I can have much of a relationship with them. Praise God I have plenty of Jewish brethren to fellowship with. Better yet, maybe we should start our own assembly; just Jewish believers in the Messiah. Yeah, I can see how that would glorify God.”

As it has already been said, the edification is not just for individuals, but for the assembly as a whole. But the body is not edified apart from individuals being edified. This has its own challenges in the Romans assembly where there are both Jews and Gentiles.

But in an assembly like ours, the issue is not Jew and Gentile. Because we don’t have this problem, it is easier to see the flaw in ungodly thinking and living.

What is wrong with the Gentile thinking? The Jewish thinking? Talk about it.

The last part I want to talk about is about how individual edifying affects the edification of the whole.

Firstly, we have to start thinking about the assembly as a whole and about ourselves as a part of it. This thinking isn’t new, but it needs to be a part of our decisions regarding the assembly we are a part of.

Secondly, we need to consciously evaluate our decision in light of how it affects the body and manifests the doctrine working in us.

Possible Questions for Evaluating Decisions:

- Is it good for the assembly as a whole? Individually?
- Would it be damaging for the assembly as a whole? Individually?
- Is my decision edifying to the body?
- Does it reflect that I am a participating part of the body?
- What can I do to further the edification of this body?
- How can I encourage others to function as part of the body?
- How does this reflect my love for my fellow members?
- Am I insisting on my liberty?
- Does this manifest godly love and charity?

Before we get away from this, I need to tell you one more thing. In the doctrine concerning godly equity, we added two more features of godly love: sacrificial love and purposed subordination.

After Keith Blades died, his son Kenneth completed some work that Keith had done on the opening doctrines in sonship education. While he did not name these last two features, he did refer to them as non-core features of godly love. While I am not sure why Kenneth labeled them so, I agree with him completely and I want to tell you why.

Core features (SKTMB) are those aspects of love that are put into practice all the time, every day, with no exceptions. Our Father never means for those features to not be in our minds and behind our actions. For example, selflessness, kindness, etc. are always part of our decision-making, when they are applicable.

Non-core features (S, PS) are those features that only come into play when the situation requires it. For example, there is no reason to limit your liberty when there is no weaker brother or offense to him. There is no need to sacrifice when there is no need to sacrifice – do you get my meaning? In other words, these are features of love we have generated in us, but they are not automatic; they depend upon the particular circumstance.

Therefore, these non-core features are more nuanced and they require a level of discernment; more so, I think, than the other sonship skills.

Romans Education Part 5

Session 6b: Summary

As an assembly we are to be likeminded. We need to consciously evaluate our decisions in light of how it affects the body and manifests the doctrine working in us. We must begin thinking the same things toward one another in accordance to how the Lord Jesus thinks about them. He is looking at members of the same body who are engaged in an edificational process together; who are training to reign with Him in the heavenly places. So our thinking also includes the edification of the assembly as a whole and is not limited to individual edifications.

So when we receive someone, we receive them to the same degree and on the same basis that Christ receives us (to the glory of God). We are to extend to them the fullness of what it means to be a member of a sonship assembly where all are members one of another. No matter where they are along the edification spectrum, or even if they are not edified at all, we do not dismiss them or relegate them as unimportant for they also have been given the “measure of faith!”

Enlarging our sphere of fellowship will only happen as we find ways to do that on purpose. The goal of our fellowship is to enhance the body’s ability to function together as a unit. In order to do that there must be a basis of fellowship (in some form or fashion) whereby we get to know our fellow members.

There is a discernment that goes on as we make decisions with godly equity in mind and we employ that discernment as we deal with other members. Although the core features of godly love (SKTMB) are those aspects of love that are put into practice all the time, every day, with no exceptions, the features of sacrificial love and purposed subordination are situational; that is they are put into practice when the situation requires it.

Romans Education Part 5
Session 6b: Self-Test

1. Enlarging our sphere of _____ will only happen as we find ways to do that on _____.
2. When we receive someone, we receive them to the same _____ and on the same _____ that Christ _____ us (to the glory of God).
3. Our _____ also includes the _____ of the assembly as a whole and is not limited to _____ edifications.
4. Assess your understanding of the process of edification.
5. Unless edification is taking place it will be difficult to _____ God with one _____ and one _____.
6. Individual edifying _____ the edification of the _____ assembly.

Romans Education Part 5

Session 6b: 9:59 PA

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 15:5 Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: ⁶That ye may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.

Monday – Review

- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Review Session 6a. Make certain that you understand the material and doctrine covered.
- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. Remember- we have liberty and grace to take the time necessary to ensure that we have a solid foundation. If you need to spend more time on a component of godly love or the decision-making skills – take the time now.

Tuesday – Is sonship prayer necessary for our edification?

- Do you understand the process of edification? This might be an excellent time to go over the process and make certain that you grasp the importance of the living word of the living God working effectually in your inner man.
- Prayerfully consider the importance of edification to God, to you and to the assembly. Share with God your understanding of His plans and purposes with the body of Christ and with Israel and why the effectual working of His

word is essential to accomplishing His purposes both in the heavens and on the earth.

- What is the role of sonship prayer in the process of edification?
Communicate with your Father your understanding of the necessity of prayer in the process of understanding the doctrine and in the renewing of our minds.
- Do you struggle with sonship prayer? You might wish to listen to Mike's teachings on prayer. What steps can you take to increase your comfort level when it comes to praying in accordance with the doctrine? Engaging in sonship prayer while studying the lessons will help. Engage with your Father throughout the lessons and throughout the day.

Wednesday – Receive ye one another

- Read Romans 15:7 Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.
- What does it mean to receive one another? Does it mean anyone who walks through the door? Perhaps that but what is Paul talking about? What is the context of this verse? Consider that we are all one member of another. Talk to your Father about your understanding of how we are to receive each other regardless of where one is in their edification. Consider Romans 12:3. Does that help with your understanding?
- Read Romans 14:1. We find ourselves grappling again with the issue of how we are to receive one another. Do you see the connection to the body as a whole? Does this relate to our communion and fellowship as a body of believers?
- Communicate to God in prayer how division and schisms in the body can adversely impact the edification of each member and the edification of the assembly as a whole. Consider how that fellowship and communion might become a target of the adversary in an attempt to destroy the edification of the members as well as the assembly as a whole.
- Talk to God about how we are to receive all members of the body of Christ who are part of our local assembly. Share with Him ways in which you might accomplish this. It is not just letting them join the assembly but it encompassing the way we treat each other, regardless of where we are in our

edification. We are to treat each other with godly love and charity according as Christ has received us. We are to value and esteem each member of the body.

Thursday – Who are we to receive?

- Consider what Paul means when he says to receive ye one another. It is not confined to those members seated in the local assembly. Talk to your Father about who else this relates to especially in this age of technology.
- When you admit one to fellowship in the assembly, what does that entail? Who is included in the membership of our local assembly? Talk to your Father about the ways you have worked to “receive” every member whether physically in your local assembly, on Zoom, or on YouTube and how you might improve those relationships.
- Communicate to your Father ways that you might enhance a sense or sphere of fellowship in light of the many categories of membership we are currently experiencing. What ways might you find to make Zoom, YouTube or Internet listeners feel a part of the assembly, feel welcome and valued? Are you doing this with purpose?
- Think about the example in the session of an assembly made up of both Jews and Gentiles. Consider the edificational differences stemming from religious backgrounds and traditions. Talk to your Father about the similarities of issues that may arise when dealing with differences in edification, culture, religious background. Now read again Romans 15:5-7. Does this give you a clearer or better perspective on why you are called to be like-minded one toward another, to be patient and to console one another?

Friday – Like-minded? How does that come to pass?

- What does it mean to be like-minded according to Christ? Share with your Father your understanding of what it means especially in light of how Christ sees you? Is He focused on your edificational differences? Your religious traditions? What is His focus when looking at the assembly? What should your focus be upon?
- Read Romans 15:6 again. Talk to your Father about why it is important that the assembly function as a body. What happens to an assembly if there is

division? What happens to edification and the overall health of the assembly?

- Without edification taking place in the individual and in the assembly, what would be the impact upon the body? How would those at different places in their edification interact within the assembly? How would fellowship and communion be affected? Could they glorify God with one mind and one mouth?
- What would happen to the assembly, the edification of the assembly and the ability to glorify God as a body if we are unable to see beyond their distinctiveness and not focus on what we have in common concerning the doctrine? Can you see the challenges to fellowship and body unity when we fail to value and esteem each member of the assembly and love them regardless of where they are in their edification? Do you understand the need for patience with each other?
- Take time to evaluate your decisions in light of how they affect the body. Evaluate whether or not the doctrine that is effectually working in you is being manifested outwardly in your relationships within the assembly. You might want to review the questions suggested in this session as you evaluate your decisions and how they impact the body of Christ as a whole. Now talk to your Father about the results of that evaluation and discuss ways to improve and bring Him glory.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Romans Education Part 5

Session 6b: Self-Test Answers

1. Enlarging our sphere of fellowship will only happen as we find ways to do that on purpose.
2. When we receive someone, we receive them to the same degree and on the same basis that Christ receives us (to the glory of God).
3. Our thinking also includes the edification of the assembly as a whole and is not limited to individual edifications.
4. Assess your understanding of the process of edification.
5. Unless edification is taking place it will be difficult to glorify God with one mind and one mouth.
6. Individual edifying affects the edification of the whole assembly.

Romans Education, Part Six

Session One: Romans 15:8-16:27

Session Notes

There are no more decision-making skills to learn, Paul has given us all four. So, what is Paul doing in the balance of chapter 15 and chapter 16? There are two major issues being set forth in Romans 15:8-16:27; one in each chapter. The first major issue which is found in chapter 15 concerns the dispensational change.

Romans 15:8-33 Summary Statement:

Paul reviews the dispensational change and details his apostleship in connection with it.

Romans 15:8-33 has three subparts to it:

1. Vv. 8-12: the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus and Gentile expectation in connection with the fulfillment of Israel's program;
2. Vv. 13-21: the present DoGG and Paul's distinctive apostleship in connection with it; and
3. Vv. 23-33: Paul's desire to see the saints at Rome in person and to bring them the fullness of his apostleship.

The second major issue which is found in chapter 16 is Paul's love for the saints.

Romans 16:1-27 Summary Statement:

Paul expresses his godly love for the saints at Rome and concludes with a recap of the purpose of the epistle.

Romans 16:1-27 has four subparts to it:

1. Vv. 1-16: Paul expresses his love for the saints at Rome;
2. Vv. 17-20: Instructions concerning phase 1 of the PoE
3. Vv. 21-24: Greetings to the saints from Paul's retinue; and
4. Vv. 25-27: Paul emphasizes the purpose of the epistle.

To get started, let's read the first section; Romans 15:8-12.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: ⁹And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

¹⁰And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. ¹¹And again,

Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. ¹²And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

Now, let's take this a verse at a time.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that **Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision** for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

Jesus is rightly referred to as a minister, as Matthew wrote in his gospel.

Matthew 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, **but to minister**, and to give his life a ransom for many.

When Paul says that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, he is not referring to the administration of the ritual of circumcision, for we have no record that Jesus ever administered such to anyone. It is, in its most basic sense, saying that Jesus came as a minister (servant) to the Jewish people.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision **for the truth of God**, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

What “truth” is Paul referring to? Looking at what follows; this truth would be that God has always meant to benefit the Gentiles within His plan and purpose. The very fact that God had a plan with the circumcision manifests his love for the Gentiles. And while God may have allowed them to go their own way in their rejection of Him, His unconditional covenant with Abram demonstrates that the Gentiles are still in His heart; they still have a future with God.

Genesis 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and **in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed**.

Genesis 22:18 And **in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed**; because thou hast obeyed my voice.

Genesis 28:14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and **in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed**.

As we just read, even when God was making promises to the fathers of the nation of Israel, those promises were not to Israel alone, but contained reference to his desire to bless the Gentiles as well.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, **to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:**

Notice this verse does not end with a period, but with a colon. So, before we finish with the verse, we have to connect with vs. 9.

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers: ⁹**And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy;** as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

Ultimately, God means to be glorified by the whole earth, not just His chosen people. Jew and Gentile alike will glorify Him for His mercy.

Look at what follows that declaration; four references to Israel's time past program.

1. Vs. 9 – Rf. Psalm 18:49 – the writings;
2. Vs. 10 – Rf. Deuteronomy 32:43 – the law;
3. Vs. 11 – Rf. Psalm 117:1 – the writings; and
4. Vs. 12 – Rf. Isaiah 11:1, 10 – the prophets.

If you were to read through these, you would see the theme of the first phrase of vs. 9 repeated throughout – that the Gentiles would glorify God for His mercy. Every part of Paul's bible (the law, the prophets and the writings), declares that the Gentiles will glorify God for His mercy, will sing unto His name, and rejoice with His people.

We know this future blessing of the Gentiles is part of the kingdom purpose in God's program with Israel. From Romans 9-11, we already know about the great dispensational change. So, what is Paul doing by bringing this up in Romans 15?

It is interesting that in the very next verses, Paul is going to move from the time past of Israel's program to this present DoGG. In vv. 9-12, Paul takes us back in time and suddenly, in vs. 13, he jolts us back into the present.

Romans 15:13 **Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

What is the “joy and peace” and “in believing” what? As we answer these, notice Paul gives God another title, “the God of hope.” We will talk about that shortly.

Verse 13 seems like a prayer, even though Paul does not say, “...**may** the God of hope fill you with all joy...” But, I have no doubt that Paul did pray this for them. I believe Paul did pray for God to fill them with all joy and peace, which is another way of saying “may their edification in the doctrine” produce all joy and peace in their inner man. That is how God works anything in us – by His Spirit working His word in us to transform us.

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope **fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

We know what it is to fill something, to exhaust its capacity. But what is Paul talking about when he says “all joy and peace?” This is not an expression to indicate that they have the maximum amount of joy and peace they will ever have, as though they have come to the fulness of their edification. What is being said by Paul is in reference to their capacity.

When Paul says “fill you with all joy and peace” he is talking about filling them to their present capacity. But, as they continue to mature, their edification will build and produce an expanded capacity for joy and peace. In other words, Paul thinks they have all the joy and peace that they can have at this stage of their edification. But that does not mean they have all they will ever have.

This increased capacity is seen in 1 Thessalonians 3.

1 Thessalonians 3:12 And the Lord **make you to increase and abound in love** one toward another, and toward all *men*, even as we *do* toward you:

Now, let’s look back at vs. 13 in Romans 15.

Romans 15:13 **Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing**, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

The wording of vs. 13 is an expectation which Paul now has for them in view of the doctrine he has presented. What I mean by “the doctrine he has presented” is the entire sonship doctrine beginning back in chapter 12 up to this point. Paul expects the doctrine to work in them (which he says in vs. 13) and therefore he expects the saints to “be filled with all joy and peace in believing.”

What are they believing? They are believing the doctrine he has taught them. The word “believing” is more than just thinking that what Paul has written is accurate and true, but this kind of believing means that they have put their faith in Paul’s doctrine with a full expectation that it will produce in them an edification unto godliness. This kind of believing is accompanied by action.

Verse 13 is talking about a result of their edification up to this point. What is the result of their edification at this point? Remember, there is a context to this. Too casual a reading might make us think that the whole purpose is for us to just be happy and get along (joy and peace). And while that will happen, that is not the fulness of what Paul is talking about. The result is that they may be filled with joy and peace, but in what way does Paul mean this?

Joy and peace come by believing (i.e., the expectation of edification). At this point, the saints at Rome are beginning to see their own edifications building, they are beginning to see the unity of their assembly come together. What is in their mind is: It’s actually happening; we can see it!

That encourages them to continue their education/edification.

When I say things this way, I do not mean to imply that the *joy* and *peace* are not real, or are only representative of something else. They are real, so let’s talk about them for a moment.

We have talked about edification for a long time. You have all been involved in edification, to varying degrees, for a while. When it comes to “joy,” for various reasons which we could enumerate and talk about, not everyone has joy in their edification.

For some, there is the fear of the PoE and what it might do to them if they continue to progress. They think of the worst things and are not sure they could withstand those. They certainly don’t look forward to going through the attacks of the PoE.

For others, their edification is not joyful, but clinical. By that, I mean that instead of the edification providing a vital, living, joyful life in Christ, they approach their edification in a way that is coldly detached and dispassionate. It kind of reminds me of the way people view the Law, or legalistic religion; overbearing, strict and angry. But edification is out of grace; which tends to life, not death, and joy, not dread.

Because of their failure to settle the issue of fully engaging in their edification, some do not have peace – the other word Paul mentions in vs. 13. It is difficult to have joy and peace when you are “riding the fence” with regard to your edification. Half-measures do not work. Neither do they produce joy and peace.

This is why we make the books available. This is why we do more than just print up the notes. This is why I am constantly encouraging you to do the edification work on your own during the week.

For others, they are not convinced the edification will work in them like it can in someone else. For all the wrong reasons, they are uncertain and they do not have a confident peace that this will work for them. Their doubt is not in God’s word. They don’t doubt God. They don’t even doubt their fellow members. Their doubt is in themselves. But the error is in thinking that edification is up to you.

It is the Spirit, who lives in us, that takes God’s word and works to edify us; to transform us from the inside. Remember who Paul is writing to – saints who are involved in the education. Are you involved in the education? Then you can have hope, not in yourself but in the Spirit and the word. Edification is up to God.

We have a part, yes. Go back and look at that Notetaker that describes the process of edification and look at the things which you are supposed to do. There is not one thing that you cannot do. So, stop doubting and start responding properly to the doctrine and God will do the work. God will edify you. God will fill you with joy and peace. And God will edify the body of which you are a part.

Once you see your edification happening, once you notice these sonship skills being lived in your everyday decisions, you come to the realization that this works! It really does happen!

The more we see our own joy and peace which comes by believing, the more we abound in hope of the rest of it (our edification)!

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, **that ye may abound in hope**, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

And what does all this have to do with those four OT references? (See page 135)

Think of it this way, by His promises recorded in His word, God gave hope to the Gentiles that by the fulness of Israel's program; that He would provide for them. As our God of hope, He will, by His Spirit and His word, produce an edification in us individually and (just as importantly) an edification for the assembly as a body.

So what is our hope about? It is not about our salvation for we already are persuaded of the efficacy of our justified status in Christ to keep us. Our hope is in our edification as a body, which will produce the unity of the faith in us.

Ephesians 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: ¹³ Till **we all come in the unity of the faith**, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ:

Our hope is in our being knit together in love so that we function as a single unit; as a body. And how does that take place? It takes place (any edification takes place), by the power of the Holy Ghost, working that which is in God's word in our hearts.

Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that **ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost**.

To abound in hope is to have strong expectations and confidence in that which has not yet been realized. And what would that do for someone? It would keep them from quitting their sonship education. Putting all of vs. 13 in a nutshell, while it can certainly be a prayer, based on what comes next, Paul believes this is happening to them; they are filled with joy and peace in believing.

Romans 15:14 **And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren**, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

When I studied through this, I was, at first, a little thrown off by all the “also” words in the verse, especially the first two. But, no more. Let me show you.

Paul says “I myself **also** am persuaded.” Paul does not mean that he, in addition to someone else is persuaded of some things about them, for there is no “someone else” Paul points to. Therefore, the “also” is not modifying Paul, but the things of which he is persuaded.

Now, what does that mean? It means, as we take the previous verse together with this verse, Paul is essentially saying: “I am not only persuaded that God has filled you with all joy and peace in believing (vs. 13), but also (additionally), I myself am persuaded...” of something else.

Paul is persuaded 1) they are full of goodness; 2) they are filled with all knowledge; and 3) they are able to admonish one another.

So, in what way does Paul mean these things?

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, **that ye also** are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

There is another “also.” Also means “in addition to.” So, Paul says, he is persuaded that not only are they “filled with all joy and peace” from vs. 13, but that they are “also filled with some other things,” which we will see the details of in a moment.

Full of goodness – the goodness here being their inclination to obey this doctrine Paul is giving them, to correct any ungodly thinking and conduct themselves in accordance with Paul’s instructions. It has to do with their heart attitude toward the doctrine which inclines them to “believe.” And since Paul says they are “full” of this inclination, it means they are totally committed to their edification. They are not holding back. They want this and it has value to them. They are looking at their education/edification as though they are great riches; a treasure.

Being filled with goodness is a measure of the heart’s desire to be conformed to the image of God’s Son.

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, **filled with all knowledge**, able also to admonish one another.

Filled with all knowledge – this is not to say that Paul is calling them fully educated sons. Romans is foundational doctrine, not advanced. Therefore, they are “filled” to their present capacity.

“All knowledge” is not talking about knowing how to speak all languages or knowing all the sciences; it is not “all” without exception. The “all” is in a context.

There are two ways to look at this phrase. 1) “filled with all knowledge” in the sense they have an understanding of all the things that Paul has taught them; or 2) Paul says they are “filled with all knowledge” in the sense that he has given them everything they need for this part of their edification to take place.

While I think Paul has given them all they need to have this doctrine work in them, the fact that Paul starts out the verse saying he is persuaded of some things *about them*, seems to indicate that what he is saying is this: Paul is confident they have an understanding (knowledge) of the things he is giving them; of the doctrine that edifies them.

Able to admonish one another – this ability comes from the previous two fillings; being full of goodness (the desire to be edified) and being filled with all knowledge (the sonship doctrine) gives them the ability to admonish and be admonished.

What does it mean to admonish someone?

OED: admonish

1. *transitive*. To exhort or urge (a person) *to* do something, esp. as a duty or obligation; to tell or warn (a person) *that* he or she should do something.

In order to admonish one another properly, which means without becoming their tutor or governor, without putting them under a law, and without wounding their spirit by the manner in which it is done, takes skill that is born out of love.

In order to be admonished without becoming angry, embarrassed or hurt takes humility and a heart's desire for the education which exceeds our pride. This is why being “filled with goodness” is such a big deal.

It is easy to see how admonishing a fellow brother or sister could be taken the wrong way and produce feelings of bitterness. This can happen with saints in either program. Take a look at this in Hebrews and notice that just like in our passage in Romans 15, the issue of peace is right in the middle of it.

Hebrews 12:14 Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: 15 Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; **lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you**, and thereby many be defiled;

Paul, in Romans 15, starts out with (vs. 13) “filled with all joy and peace” and then adds (vs. 14) “full of goodness, filled with all knowledge” and ends with “able to admonish one another.”

We can see that the ability to admonish as well as the ability to be admonished requires some edificational steps, (joy and peace, goodness, knowledge) as well as some wisdom and love in doing it.

Notice, Paul is not talking about admonishing a weaker brother, that is what you don't do. He is talking about admonishing a brother who has “all knowledge” which refers to the sonship education.

Romans Education Part 6

Session One: Summary

In Romans 15:8-16:27 Paul reviews the dispensational change: the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ and Gentile expectation in connection with the fulfillment of Israel's program; the present DoGG and Paul's distinctive apostleship in connection with it and his desire to see the saints at Rome and to bring them the fullness of his apostleship. He expresses his love for the saints at Rome, instructs them concerning phase 1 of the PoE, greetings from the saints who were with Paul, and the importance of the purpose of the epistle.

Paul's writings are to saints who are involved in the education and it is the Spirit, who lives in us; that takes God's word and works to edify us; to transform us from the inside. If you are involved in the education then you can have hope, not in yourself but in the Spirit and the word. Edification is up to God.

Joy and peace come by believing and the more we see our own joy and peace which comes by believing, the more we abound in hope of the rest of it (our edification)! When Paul says "fill you with all joy and peace" he is talking about filling them to their present capacity. In other words, Paul thinks they have all the joy and peace they can have at this stage of their edification. But, as they continue to mature, their edification will build and produce an expanded capacity for more joy and peace. To fill them with all joy and peace, is another way of saying may their edification in the doctrine produce all joy and peace in their inner man.

Full of goodness has to do with our heart's attitude toward the doctrine which inclines us to "believe." Being admonished without becoming angry, embarrassed or hurt takes humility and a heart's desire for the education which exceeds our pride. This is why being "filled with goodness" is such a big deal.

To abound in hope is to have strong expectations and confidence in that which has not yet been realized. This keeps us from quitting our sonship education. Our God of hope, will by His Spirit and His word, produce an edification in us individually and (just as importantly) an edification for the assembly as a body. Our hope is in our edification as a body, which will produce the unity of the faith in us.

Once we see our edification happening, once we notice these sonship skills being lived in our everyday decisions, we will come to the realization that this works! It really does happen!

Romans Education Part 6

Session One: Self-Test

1. What are the two major issues being set forth in Romans 15:8-16:27?
 1. _____
 2. _____
2. God has always meant to _____ the Gentiles within His plan and purpose.
3. Ultimately, God means to be _____ by the whole _____, not just His chosen people. Jew and Gentile alike will glorify Him for His _____.
4. How does God work anything in us?
 - By His _____ working His _____ in us to transform us.
5. Being filled with goodness is a _____ of the heart's desire to be _____ to the _____ of God's Son.
6. Being full of goodness (the desire to be _____) and being filled with all knowledge (the sonship doctrine) gives them the ability to _____ and be admonished.
1. To admonish one another _____ takes _____ that is born out of _____.

Romans Education Part 6

Session One: 9:59 PA

The 9:59 section of this book is designed to help you spend 9 minutes and 59 seconds interacting with God's word so that it effectually works in your inner man to produce the life of Christ in you; which is your edification. This is the Practical Application of the doctrine.

In order for you to receive the most benefit from this section, please make sure you have 1) read the Student Notes, 2) looked over the Summary, and 3) taken the Self-Test.

Romans 15: 8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: ⁹And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. ¹⁰And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. ¹¹And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. ¹²And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust. ¹³Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost. ¹⁴And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. ¹⁵Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, ¹⁶That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost. ¹⁷I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. ¹⁸For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, ¹⁹Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: ²¹But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall

see: and they that have not heard shall understand. ²²For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. ²³But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; ²⁴Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your company. ²⁵But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. ²⁶For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. ²⁷It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. ²⁸When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. ²⁹And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. ³⁰Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; ³¹That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which I have for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; ³²That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. ³³Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.

Monday – Review

- Read the notes
- Take the self-test
- Review session 6a and 6b. Make certain that you understand the material and doctrine covered concerning the process of edification.
- Review the checkpoint in Romans 15:5-7. Are you ready to move on or do you need to spend a little more time on this checkpoint?
- Any areas still need work? Communicate to God in prayer the areas that are effectually working and what areas need a little more study. Remember- we have liberty and grace to take the time necessary to ensure that we have a solid foundation. Take the time that you need to go back over any areas in Romans 12:3-15:7 that need a little more attention.

Tuesday – Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision-

Romans 15:8 Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers: ⁹And that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name. ¹⁰And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people. ¹¹And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people. ¹²And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

- Do you understand what Paul means when he says that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision? Share with your Father in prayer your understanding of who and what Paul is referring to here. Consider the context. Is Paul speaking about the dispensation of grace or the time past program with Israel? What point is he trying to convey?
- Think about what Paul means when he calls Jesus a minister of the circumcision. How is minister defined in this context? Read Matthew 20:28. Jesus was authorized and approved of God, sent to the Jews/Circumcision with a message of hope. Paul is authorized and approved of God, sent to the Gentiles/Uncircumcision with a unique message of hope.
- Consider the truth that Paul is speaking about in this opening verse. Talk to your Father about this unique ministry given to Paul and the distinctions being made concerning the Circumcision (Israel). Share with Him the importance of understanding the differences between the two programs. Consider who Jesus Christ came to minister to. Who was Paul's ministry to?
- Do you understand the significance of the passages quoted in Romans 15:9-12? Talk to God about the importance of understanding that those promises to the fathers also included the blessings to the gentiles through the agency of Israel. The whole earth, Jews and Gentiles alike are to glorify God for His mercy! Paul quotes 4 passages in Romans 15:9-12. (Psalm 18:49; Deuteronomy 32: 43; Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:1, 10). Do you understand the significance? Tell God what it means to you to know that you shared in those promises.

Wednesday – The God of Hope!

- Read Romans 15:13 Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.
- Recall being introduced to the God of patience and consolation and what that meant. Now we are introduced to the God of hope. Talk to your Father about what your hope is in.
- Consider this hope in connection with Psalm 18:49; Deut. 32:43; Psalm 117:1 and Isaiah 11:1, 10 as well as Romans 12:3-15:7. Remember the context of Romans 15 (edification). God gave hope to the Gentiles that He would provide for them through His promises to Israel. God continues to give us hope through the effectual working of His word producing in us as a body, unity of faith. Read Ephesians 4:12-13.
- What has produced your hope? Share with your Father whether your response to the doctrine is producing that hope Paul is speaking of?
- Communicate to God your expectations and confidence in the effectual working of the doctrine He has provided through His word. Do you believe the doctrine? Has this confidence and belief in the doctrine produced joy and peace? Share with your Father your appreciation for His word and what it has accomplished in your inner man.
- Talk to your Father about how you see edification. Do you have a godly attitude and respect for the doctrine and what it will produce in you? Does this bring you joy, peace and hope?
- Prayerfully consider your commitment to the edification process. Are you responding properly to God's word? Are you trusting that the power of the Holy Ghost is able to fill you with all joy and peace? Do you have hope? Remember what it is that produces that joy, peace and hope. Do you have faith and confidence that God's word has the power to transform you from the inside out?

Thursday – Full of goodness and filled with all knowledge

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

- Talk to your Father about what it means to be “full of goodness.” Do you understand what Paul is saying in relation to the context of your edification? Consider your commitment to the edification process and whether your heart attitude toward your edification is what it should be. Are you committed to obeying the doctrine and allowing it to correct any ungodly thinking or conduct?
- Prayerfully consider whether you value and treasure your edification? What does it mean to you? Is your heart’s desire to be conformed to the image of Christ?
- Do you understand what Paul means by “filled with all knowledge”? Talk with your Father about where you are currently in the edification process. Are you confident that it is effectually working in you? Do you understand the context? Paul is referring to being filled with all knowledge based on where they are in the edification process. They have what they need for edification to take place.

Friday – To admonish one another

Romans 15:14 And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

- Review the definition of admonish. Do you understand Paul’s meaning? Recall that Paul is not speaking here of admonishing a weaker brother. Who is he speaking of in this context?
- Do you understand what Paul means when he says that the effectual working of the doctrine gives us the ability to “admonish one another”? Talk to God about what must be present for you to properly admonish another? Refer

back to your understanding of the definitions of “all goodness” and “all knowledge”.

- Talk to your Father about the consequences of admonishing another member of the assembly when “all goodness” and “all knowledge” is lacking. What can that do to the edification of the individual and also to the edification of the assembly?
- Consider times that you may have been exhorted, admonished, urged to do something as a duty or obligation. What was your initial or immediate reaction? Have you had occasion to admonish another? Think about how it was given or received. Was it godly?
- When Paul talks about all goodness and all knowledge he is referring to the effectual working of the previous doctrine. This consists of Romans 12:3-15:7. Are you persuaded that the doctrine is effectually working in you? Are you able to admonish a brother in Christ out of godly love and charity, valuing and esteeming him? Are you able to receive admonishment in the spirit it is given, without anger or embarrassment?
- Consider what impact pride can have on your ability to receive admonishment? Consider the impact of pride on the unity of the assembly and on edification.
- Talk to your Father about why it is important that the assembly function as a body. What happens to an assembly if there is division? What happens to edification and the overall health of the assembly?
- Without edification taking place in the individual and in the assembly, what would be the impact upon the body? How would fellowship and communion be affected? Could they glorify God with one mind and one mouth?
- Can you see the challenges to fellowship and body unity when joy, peace, goodness and knowledge are not effectually working in us? When we fail to love value and esteem each member of the assembly we are unable to come into the unity of the faith.

Romans Education Part 6

Session One: Self-Test Answers

1. What are the two major issues being set forth in Romans 15:8-16:27?
 1. The dispensational change
 2. Paul's love for the saints
2. God has always meant to benefit the Gentiles within His plan and purpose.
3. Ultimately, God means to be glorified by the whole earth, not just His chosen people. Jew and Gentile alike will glorify Him for His mercy.
4. How does God work anything in us?
 - By His Spirit working His word in us to transform us.
5. Being filled with goodness is a measure of the heart's desire to be conformed to the image of God's Son.
6. Being full of goodness (the desire to be edified) and being filled with all knowledge (the sonship doctrine) gives them the ability to admonish and be admonished.
7. To admonish one another properly takes skill that is born out of love.

Romans Education, Part 6

Session Two: Romans 15:8-16:27

Session Notes

Romans 15:15 Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God, ¹⁶That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

In surveying these two verses, we basically have three issues: 1) Paul admits his writing to them is bold, 2) Paul tells them why that is, 3) then he tells them how that benefits them.

Paul comments that his writing style to the saints at Rome is bold, which I take to mean presumptuous; “who is he to tell us what to do?” Just recall the things that Paul has been saying to them since Romans 12:1.

Next, Paul explains that his boldness is a result of the office which Jesus Christ called him to; the apostle to the Gentiles. This is where Paul gets his authority to write “more boldly.” Truth be told, if these saints have the word working in them, there probably isn’t too much kickback to the things Paul has written to them in this epistle.

Again, Paul has never met most of these people, so he “puts them in mind of the grace given unto him by Jesus Christ.”

Lastly, Paul writes that his bold writing is ultimately for their good, that they might be acceptable in the sight of God in two ways. The first way is to be acceptable to God by their believing Paul’s gospel. That is in connection with their justification.

But Paul has a second way in which his writing will benefit them; in connection with their sanctification. If Gentiles are going to be acceptable to God in their living and in their service, then it must be in accordance with what the Holy Ghost is producing in them...by the effectual working of Paul’s doctrine. Those two are never exclusive of each other.

Romans 15:17 I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God. ¹⁸For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, ¹⁹Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. ²⁰Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: ²¹But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Summary Statement: An enumeration of the success which God has given to Paul as the apostle (minister) of the Gentiles.

Romans 15: 17 I have therefore whereof **I may glory** through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

In what way is Paul talking about glory?

If it wasn't for my search to define "glory" I would never have looked at the Greek. Still, the only reason I bring it up is because this word in Greek is usually translated "boasting." Paul himself uses this word in lots of places where it is translated "boasting." The translators this time (and this is not the only time they digressed from boasting) translated "glory."

Usually, when we think of boasting, we think of a bad thing. We think of pride and ostentation; bragging on yourself. But, there is also a definition of "boasting" which is not out of pride.

OED: boast

4. ...to make (one's) boast: to boast *of*, to glory *in*;

Notice "boast OF," or "glory IN."

Paul uses *boast* or some form of it a number of times in his various epistles and when he does, he sometimes is speaking of himself.

2 Corinthians 10:8 For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed:

The “boast” here (and in the other places) is not a prideful, self-centered bragging, but rather (as is the case in Romans 15) an evidential setting forth of the office which Paul has been given by Jesus Christ. It is for the purpose of establishing his authority and is not for his personal promotion, but for the edification of the body of Christ.

Paul is not boasting; “look what I have done.” Rather, I see this as Paul exulting not only in the honor of being a minister of the Gentiles, but also in the great success which God has granted his ministry. When I say Paul “exults” I am saying he is “rejoicing exceedingly and triumphing” in these things which God has done (his calling) and is doing (his ministry). The “glory” of vs. 17 is the setting forth of the truth that Paul is a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles and the rest of the passage is an enumeration of those things which serve to authenticate Paul’s claim of apostleship.

Just as Jesus produced the hallmark signs of the kingdom to authenticate His message that the kingdom was at hand, so Paul has been given authenticating “things” to verify his claim of authority over Gentile believers.

Romans 15:18 **For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me,** to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

Paul is saying a couple of things in this opening phrase: 1) Paul will refuse to speak of anything that was not done by him. Why is Paul saying this? The implication is that there were false teachers circulating which claimed to have done things which were not done by them at all. So, the first issue is that Paul is going to tell the truth of those things which he accomplished; he is not going to take credit for someone else’s work or deeds.

There is a second aspect to this: 2) Paul will not mention anything he did do, unless Christ was the one doing it through him. Do you see that? In other words, Paul may have done some things, but the only things that count are the ones that Christ was doing through him. No wonder Paul counted all that other stuff (Philippians 4:3-8) as worthless, as those were not things done by Christ in him. The things which Paul alone did mean nothing. By the way, there is an application here for us as well. We may not be glorying in our apostleship, but we can certainly glory in what Christ is doing in us and through us.

Both of these concepts are important. Putting in the positive, Paul says he will only speak of those things done by Christ through him.

Romans 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, **to make the Gentiles obedient**, by word and deed,

So, here is the first thing which Christ accomplished through Paul; to make the Gentiles obedient. First, obedient to the gospel and second, obedient to the faith.

Romans 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, **by word and deed**,

Notice the commas bracketing the phrase “by word and deed.” Those commas tell us the *word and deed* is not connected with the Gentiles’ obedience, but rather that it was Paul by his *word and deed* which God used to bring the Gentiles to obedience.

Just to point it out, the *word* would be Paul’s preaching and teaching. Paul’s *deed* would be his example of behavior, his living of the doctrine in front of them. What Paul said and what Paul did was a match!

Verse 19 continues with more of the “things” which attest to Paul’s authority.

Romans 15:19 **Through mighty signs and wonders**, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

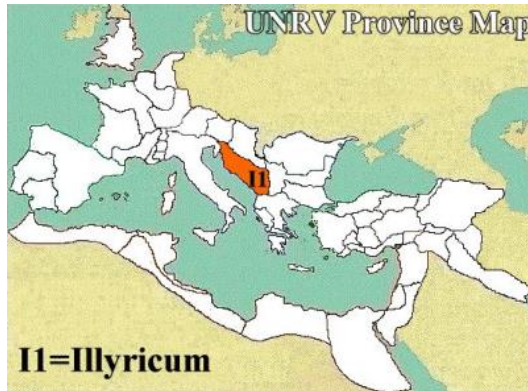
As it was for Jesus, so it was for Paul, the signs and wonders were the evidence of the truth of his message. And in that transition period of the book of Acts, Paul has all the signs of an apostle working in him, even when God had stopped doing such signs and wonders through Israel’s apostles (Peter, James, John, etc.)

Romans 15:19 Through mighty signs and wonders, **by the power of the Spirit of God**; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Putting it all together, the Gentiles coming to Christ, Paul’s preaching and example of life, the mighty signs and wonders of healing the sick, casting out devils and raising the dead, all of these were done “by the power of the Spirit of God.” None of it was a product of the deceiving work of Satan, the wisdom of men or Paul’s fleshly abilities.

Romans 15:19 Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; **so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.**

Let's look at a map to see where Paul is referring to.



The area Paul refers to is from Jerusalem on the lower left and Illyricum, which is the red circle at the top; everywhere short of Rome! Paul not only preached the gospel of Christ, but planted churches.

Romans 15:20 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation: 21 But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

Paul's heart's desire was to preach the gospel in places where it had never been heard before. Paul was blazing a trail for others to follow.

This ends the second subpart in Romans 15:13-21. Now, we begin the third subpart which are vv. 22-33.

Romans 15:22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you. ²³ But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; ²⁴ Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*. ²⁵ But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

²⁶For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem. ²⁷It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. ²⁸When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. ²⁹And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. ³⁰Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; ³¹That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; ³²That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. ³³Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Summary Statement: Paul's desire to see the saints at Rome in person and bring them the fullness of his apostleship.

Romans 15:22 For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

Paul's missionary work of preaching Christ where no one has heard is the reason he has not had time to visit those saints at Rome.

Romans 15:23 **But now having no more place in these parts**, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you; ²⁴Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

"Now having no more place in these parts" means that there are no more places that have not heard. What is "in these parts?" It is the areas just described from Jerusalem to Illyricum.

Romans 15:23 But now having no more place in these parts, and **having a great desire these many years to come** unto you; ²⁴Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey,

and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

This is simply an expression of Paul's "great desire" to see them and he plans to do so when he takes his journey into Spain, where the gospel may or may not have yet taken root.

When Paul says, "if first I be somewhat filled with your company," he is saying "but before I go on to Spain, I plan to stop and enjoy your company, for I expect to be refreshed and have much spiritual pleasure from your fellowship."

There is no settled answer to the question as to whether or not Paul ever got to Spain. Some say that between his two appearances before Nero, Paul was able to make that trip. I don't want to get into the logistics of it in this study. I will only say that while there is room for debate, I tend to lean in the direction that Paul did make that trip.

Romans 15:25 But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints. ²⁶For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.



In 44 BC Julius Caesar reestablished Corinth as a Roman colony. The new Corinth became the administrative capital of the Roman province of Achaia.

Paul says he is going to Jerusalem to carry an offering. The saints at Jerusalem, which Paul has in mind, are members of the believing remnant of Israel. The

contribution (collection) is evidently for the poor saints at Jerusalem, and not all the saints.

This contribution would be in keeping with Paul's doctrine written to the Galatians, probably the first epistle that Paul wrote.

Galatians 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

It is true that under Claudius Caesar the church of remnant at Jerusalem suffered. Relief was sent by the saints at Antioch in the form of a collection.

But this is a different collection; this one (Romans 15) was made years after the previous one. For the members of the remnant, some of them suffered joyfully the spoiling of their goods by their own unbelieving countrymen, knowing they have a better and more enduring reward. The situation is that believers in Judea were under heavy persecution by the Sanhedrim. As a result, they were opposed by both Gentile rulers and persecuted by the people of Israel.

Acts 8:1 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

Acts 12:1 Now about that time Herod the king stretched forth *his* hands to vex certain of the church.

Paul sought to relieve them by this offering and at the same time, promote fellowship between them and the Gentile Christians, which is part of what Paul is setting forth doctrinally in Romans 14-15.

Others willingly sold their possessions and put the money into a common fund for all the church, which supply was now exhausted. And although these Jewish saints live far away and are not personally known by the saints in Macedonia and Achaia, the Gentile saints heard of their distress and cheerfully gave to relieve them because of the spiritual relation they have in God and with Christ. When we study Corinthians, we will see much of the details behind this circumstance, as Corinth was also one of the contributing churches.

Romans 15:27 **It hath pleased them verily**; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things. ²⁸When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. ²⁹ And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

The giving was not done by constraint, but it was freely done. Neither was it done for show or the praise of men, but from their love for the saints, an awareness of their poverty, and their godly desire to alleviate their suffering. They did it cheerfully and bountifully. Their giving was in accordance with the doctrine.

I think it is worth noting that the Gentiles were not giving to relieve the poverty of the apostate nation, but of Jewish believers in Christ. These believers thought the kingdom was about to appear. According to all they knew, they were on the brink of Daniel's 70th week which would be followed by the Messiah and His kingdom. Instead, as Paul writes Romans, the DoGG has been going for almost 25 years.

Acts 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. ⁴³And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles. ⁴⁴And all that believed were together, and **had all things common;** ⁴⁵**And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need.** ⁴⁶And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, ⁴⁷Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

What was the gospel they believed? The kingdom of heaven is at hand! From Daniel they knew that their Messiah would come, and would be cut off. They saw His death on the Cross. So, what else were they expecting from Daniel's prophecy? That the antichrist prince would come and Daniel's final week would start? Seven years later, their Messiah would return, put down His enemies, retrieve them back into the land and set up His kingdom.

But that was all 25 years ago and now the money had run out. No doubt they had questions.

In 2 Peter 3, Peter addresses the issue of “where is the promise of His coming?” He tells them:

2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. ¹⁰But **the day of the Lord will come** as a thief in the night...

2 Peter 3:11 *Seeing* then *that* all these things shall be dissolved, **what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,**

2 Peter 3:14 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. ¹⁵And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even **as our beloved brother Paul** also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you; ¹⁶As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

If you are a member of the believing remnant, those words “hard to be understood” are an understatement. If you are a justified Gentile engaged in the edification process, and you realize that your program put theirs on hold, and as a result they are suffering, it would be the godly desire to give generously.

Most of the commentators identify the “debt” the Gentiles owe as being: 1) Jesus was a Jew, so be grateful for the Jewish people, 2) the scriptures came through the Jews; so be grateful again. And I am not saying there is nothing to that, but really, God did those things (the scriptures and the Messiah) for Israel. Yes, the Gentiles would become beneficiaries but (in Israel’s program) after Israel turned to their Messiah in faith, or (in this DoGG) after they rejected their Messiah.

Romans 15:27 It hath pleased them verily; and **their debtors they are**. For **if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things**, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

Those saints who gave to alleviate the suffering of Jewish saints are debtors, for if the Gentiles have been made partakers...and they were made partakers, then they have a duty to those saints who are suffering because their program was put on hold, to their hurt. And I think the reason most people don't see it this way is because they do not realize there has been a dispensational change.

Romans 15: 27 It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, **their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.**

And since the little flock is diminishing, and since their immediate needs are material, the duty is to minister to them in carnal things.

Romans Education Part 6

Session Two: Summary

Paul explains that his boldness is a result of the office which Jesus Christ called him to; the apostle to the Gentiles. This is where Paul gets his authority to write more boldly and it is for their benefit: to be acceptable to God by believing Paul's gospel and in accordance with what the Holy Ghost is producing in them. Paul not only preached the gospel of Christ, but planted churches. His heart's desire was to preach the gospel in places where it had never been heard before.

The first thing which Christ accomplished through Paul was to make the Gentiles obedient; obedient to the gospel and second, obedient to the faith. God used Paul by word (his preaching/teaching) and deed (his living of the doctrine) to bring the Gentiles to obedience. All Paul did was by the power of the Spirit of God. Nothing was a product of the deceiving work of Satan, the wisdom of men or Paul's fleshly abilities. What Paul taught is what he lived!

Believers in Judea were under heavy persecution by the Sanhedrim and as a result, they were opposed by both Gentile rulers and persecuted by the people of Israel. Paul sought to relieve them by this offering and at the same time, promote fellowship between them and the Gentile Christians, which is part of what Paul is setting forth doctrinally in Romans 14-15.

These Jewish saints believed the gospel of the kingdom, and were waiting for Daniel's 70th week which would be followed by the Messiah and His kingdom. They sold their possessions and put the money into a common fund for all the church; and the fund was now exhausted. They were unaware that God had ushered in the dispensation of grace, and their program was put on hold.

The Gentile saints were giving to alleviate the suffering of Jewish saints in Christ; not to the apostate nation of Israel. They'd heard of their distress and cheerfully gave to relieve them because of the spiritual relation they have in God and with Christ. At that time, the Gentile saints were debtors because they had been made partakers of the Jewish saints' spiritual things, so out of love and not constraint, they had a duty to those saints, since their program was put on hold, to their hurt and since the little flock is diminishing, and since their immediate needs are material, their duty is to minister to them in carnal things.

Romans Education Part 6

Session Two: Self-Test

1. If Gentiles are going to be _____ to God in their _____ and in their _____, then it must be in _____ with what the _____ is producing in them...by the effectual working of Paul's _____.
2. We may not be _____ in our apostleship, but we can certainly _____ in what Christ is _____ in us and _____ us.
3. The first thing which Christ accomplished through Paul is to make the Gentiles _____; obedient to the _____ and second, obedient to the _____.
4. The *word* would be Paul's _____ and _____.
5. Paul's *deed* would be his _____ of _____; his living of the doctrine in front of them. What Paul said and what Paul did was a _____!
6. Being acceptable to God by _____ Paul's gospel is in _____ with _____.

Romans Education Part 6

Session Two: Self-Test Answers

1. If Gentiles are going to be acceptable to God in their living and in their service, then it must be in accordance with what the Holy Ghost is producing in them...by the effectual working of Paul's doctrine.
2. We may not be glorying in our apostleship, but we can certainly glory in what Christ is doing in us and through us.
3. The first thing which Christ accomplished through Paul is to make the Gentiles obedient; obedient to the gospel and second, obedient to the faith.
4. The *word* would be Paul's preaching and teaching.
5. Paul's *deed* would be his example of behavior; his living of the doctrine in front of them. What Paul said and what Paul did was a match!
6. Being acceptable to God by believing Paul's gospel is in connection with justification.

Romans Education, Part Six

Session Three: Romans 15:8-16:27

Session Notes

Romans 15:28 When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain. ²⁹And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.

In verse 28, Paul again expresses his intent to see the saints at Rome on his way to Spain.

In verse 29, “the fulness of the blessing” is a Hebrew mode of expression whereby a noun performs the purpose of the adjective. So what does this mean? It means “with full or abundant blessing.”

“Of the gospel” is not limited to the blessings of salvation from the debt and penalty of sin (which is what is normally thought of when speaking of the gospel). The gospel, in this use, has within its scope the entirety of the mystery, of which salvation is only the entrance. Just as we have said before, your eternal life begins once you have trusted Christ. Don’t think of eternal life as something you don’t get until you die, but connect it all up and think about living your eternal life right now. That does not mean you are already laboring with God in the heavenly places, but your labor with Him here on this earth will simply transition into the heavenly places upon the death of your physical body.

In a very similar way, Paul is not limiting “the gospel of Christ” to the message of salvation, but he connects it with everything salvation makes possible. Coming to the knowledge of the truth should be the seamless transition from being saved.

One more illustration; think of how Paul uses the phrase “the faith.” We usually think of faith as connected with salvation; we are saved by grace through faith. But in verses like Romans 14:1 and 1 Corinthians 16:13, he uses it to describe the whole of the doctrine of the mystery of Christ.

Romans 14:1 Him that is weak in **the faith** receive ye, *but* not to doubtful disputations.

As you know, the faith concerns his edification in the doctrines of Paul.

1 Corinthians 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in **the faith**, quit you like men, be strong.

Here, Paul is not saying to stand fast in your salvation, but stand fast in the doctrines which you have learned. Just as Paul uses the term to encompass more than justification, so it is in Romans 15:29 when he uses the gospel of Christ to include more than just the message of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection.

Putting it all together, Paul is saying that when he comes to see them on his journey to Spain, he will come in the fulness of the spiritual blessings which are theirs by the gospel of Christ.

Romans 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; ³¹That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; ³²That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. ³³Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

First of all, understand the circumstance which Paul is anticipating. He is going to go to Jerusalem to carry the offering to the poor saints there. As he wrote in verse 28; "When therefore I have performed this...I will come by you into Spain."

Then, in the passage at hand, he asked for prayers for three separate issues: 1) deliverance from his enemies in Judaea, 2) the acceptance of the offering to the poor, and 3) that he may meet with them in a way that is profitable to both him and them.

The only one of these that presents any kind of issue is the first one. Since we were taught back in Romans 8 that God is not going to intervene in the physical circumstances of life, most of us already know that Paul is not asking for that in Romans 15.

Romans 8:35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? *shall* tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

Romans 8:37 Nay, **in all these things we are more than conquerors** through him that loved us.

We know that in the time past of Israel's program God used His omnipotent power to do all sorts of things in the physical world: create from nothing, the plagues of Egypt, parting the Red Sea, rain down manna, water from the rock, etc. People read about those things and think God continues to do miracles today.

But educated sons and daughters not only understand that God is not doing that today, but they also understand why He isn't.

Not only that, but we don't think God is short-changing us by refusing to intervene in the way He did with Israel. When Christians hear that we do not think God is intervening to arrange things, protecting us, or miraculously providing things, they get the idea that we think that God is not doing anything. But we are not Deists. We do not think God just wound up the world like a toy and now He is hands off, just watching it all do what it does without His interference.

Quite the opposite, we think God is quite busy. But if he isn't using His omnipotent power to intervene and change circumstances, then what is He doing? This is what happens when you think God's omnipotent power is His only power.

The truth is, God is still intervening, just not the way He did with Israel and not using the same means to accomplish it. Instead of intervening in the outward circumstances, God is intervening in us, transforming us from the inside. He is putting *the excellency of the power* of His grace on display in our inner man. That is what the Bible calls it; the excellency of His power. It means grace is the greatest power God has. And how is it that this is the greatest power God possesses; how is it greater than omnipotent power?

- Because grace does something which omnipotent power cannot do. It is the only power God possesses which has the capacity to effectually work in our soul and spirit to transform us into the very image of His Son. It is the only power that allows God to be in the man.

- Because the power of God's grace is manifested in a different form. What I mean is, God does not exercise the power of His grace by a thought or the wave of His hand and suddenly, it is done. Grace is a power which God has vested in His word. It is always available and in order for God's ultimate purpose with us to be accomplished, it is not dependent upon His intervention by His omnipotent power. On the other hand, omnipotence, without the transforming power of grace, can never fulfill God's purpose with us.
- Because properly educated sons and daughters embrace suffering for what it is and therefore they do not need/want God to intervene by omnipotent power. As we experience the various sufferings that stem from living in this fallen world (SoPT) and confronting the Adversary (SoC), we can bring God His greatest glory because we are setting forth, by our godly patient endurance of those sufferings, who the rightful possessor of heaven and earth is! And that is something that is not done when God miraculously intervenes to deliver us from some kind of bad situation.

Well, these are things we have already been taught. Knowing these things should impact your understanding of Paul's prayer request. He isn't suddenly contradicting everything he has been teaching us up to this point because he has some enemies in Judaea.

But, if you are unclear what Paul is asking when he asks the saints at Rome to pray for him "that [he] may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea," let's lay out the doctrine. In this context, we cannot step aside for very long, but we can certainly look at the big picture.

The Lord Jesus certainly did some miraculous things which intervened in the physical circumstances of life. And while we could get into the details of the difference between signs, wonders and miracles, we are going to skip that for now. What I am after is that God's miraculous intervention with Israel changed as the earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus moved through its various stages. For example, when the Lord began His earthly ministry, He was healing *everyone* He came in contact with. Healing was one of those hallmark signs of the kingdom, so the Lord authenticated His message that the kingdom was at hand by the performance of these miracles.

The point here is that in the beginning, it did not matter if you were a believing Israelite or an unbelieving Israelite; the Lord would deal with you the same when it came to healing or casting out unclean spirits (miraculously intervening in the physical circumstances of life).

Matthew 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing every sickness and every disease among the people.**

Matthew 14:14 And Jesus went forth, and saw **a great multitude**, and was moved with compassion toward them, and **he healed their sick.**

But as his ministry moved into the next stage, the Lord began to change how He was dealing with the people. He spoke in parables so that only the believing remnant would understand. And, He also only provided His miraculous interventions for those who believed; the members of the little flock. In other words, He limited His ministry of healing to believers only.

Principle #1: Every sign, wonder and miracle is performed for a purpose which has to do with the accomplishment of the program in view.

Since we are starting with Jesus' earthly ministry, we know we are talking about God's prophetic program with Israel. That means that every miraculous thing that was done was for the purpose of accomplishing some objective in God's prophetic program with the nation of Israel.

Not understanding this advancement in the program and in the ministry of Jesus has led to some bad doctrine such as: *God can't give you a miracle unless you have enough faith.*

A proof-text for that error would be Mark 6:1-6.

Mark 6:1-6 And he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were

offended at him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*. And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

The issue in Mark is the timing in the program and in the ministry of the Lord. Remember that previously, there was no discrimination in who Jesus would miraculously deal with. It did not matter how much faith they had. Now, all of a sudden, there is a difference being made. But the problem is not with Jesus' ability to heal. And the problem is not that He is incapable of healing when someone does not have faith, for He has already been doing that. What changed? What changed is that now Jesus is holding the nation accountable for it has seen Him do. He has exhibited the credentials of the Christ, but the nation at large has not been converted.

Therefore, from this point onward, He will not intervene for those who do not have faith – not faith that He can heal, but faith that He is who He says He is, the prophesied Christ of Israel. And if you don't realize that, you will misread the Mark 6 passage to mean that God does not have the power to heal you unless you have faith you can be healed. The truth is Jesus could not heal anyone who was part of the apostate nation because the program's advancement (the 2nd stage of His ministry) now called for Him to make a division between believing and unbelieving Israel. It wasn't that He did not have the power, but that He could not do it without violating the program. He was not able to do many mighty works because of their unbelief was not about the limitations of His power, but the limitations of the program.

The few he did heal were the few that believed in Him as Messiah. Who else did they think had to power to do those things? No one.

Here is the problem: modern Christianity has read the word "enough" into the text when it never appears there. The issue is not did they have "enough" faith, it was "did they have faith." Did they believe or not? It was not their insufficient faith, but their unbelief that eliminated them from being dealt with.

So what were they believing? They believed the VRS promoted by Israel's religious leaders. What did they reject? They rejected the preaching of John the Baptist, the preaching of Jesus, the preaching of the twelve, and all the signs, wonders and miracles which Jesus performed.

Now let's advance to the time of this DoGG. At the beginning, there is an overlap. The little flock is not raptured out and then God starts the body of Christ. For a while, they are both here at the same time. Also, God wants Paul to go to the Jew first with the message of the interruption of their program and God's work with the Gentiles apart from the agency of Israel.

During this time of overlap, Israel's apostles no longer have the ability to produce the miracles like they did before, but Paul does have all the signs of an apostle working in him. Why? To authenticate the message. At the start of the DoGG, God was giving evidence, through these miracles, that God had turned from His program with Israel and had now turned to the Gentiles, just as Paul was preaching. Remember Romans 15:18-19?

Romans 15:18 For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, **to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,** ¹⁹**Through mighty signs and wonders,** by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

Secondly, God was using Israel's things to provoke them to jealousy.

Romans 10:19 But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will **provoke you to jealousy** by *them that are* no people, *and* by a foolish nation I will anger you.

Romans 11:11 I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather* through their fall salvation *is come* unto the Gentiles, for **to provoke them to jealousy.**

Romans 11:14 If by any means I may **provoke to emulation** *them which are* my flesh, and might save some of them.

Here is the thing: miraculous interventions only confirm the truth for those with honesty of heart. For everyone else, it hardens their heart. Parting the Red Sea did

not edify the nation of Israel. They whine and complain about not being back in Egypt, they make a golden calf when Moses is out of sight, and they worship the gods of the Babylonians.

Miraculous interventions will not edify us either. The body of Christ needs a power beyond omnipotence working in us to edify us. But don't take my word for it, let's look at what Paul has to say about the work in our inner man through the power of God's word and how we should view our suffering and adverse circumstances.

2 Corinthians 1:3 Blessed *be* God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; ⁴Who comforteth us **in all our tribulation**, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. ⁵For as the **sufferings of Christ abound in us**, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. ⁶And whether **we be afflicted**, *it is* for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same **sufferings** which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, *it is* for your consolation and salvation.

2 Corinthians 4:7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that **the excellency of the power may** be of God, and not of us. ⁸*We are troubled on every side*, yet not distressed; *we are perplexed*, but not in despair; ⁹Persecuted, but not forsaken; **cast down**, but not destroyed; ¹⁰Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. ¹¹For we which live are always **delivered unto death** for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. ¹²So then **death worketh in us**, but life in you. ¹³We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak; ¹⁴Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present *us* with you. ¹⁵For all things *are* for your sakes, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God. ¹⁶For which cause **we faint not**; but though our outward man perish, yet **the inward man is renewed** day by day. ¹⁷For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; ¹⁸While we look not at the things which are seen, but at **the things which are not seen**: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the **things which are not seen are eternal**.

Ephesians 3:13 Wherefore I desire that ye **faint not** at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. ¹⁴For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; ¹⁷That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸May be able to comprehend with all saints what *is* the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; ¹⁹And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. ²⁰Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, ²¹Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

Colossians 1:11 **Strengthened with all might**, according to **his glorious power**, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;

2 Timothy 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the **afflictions of the gospel** according to the power of God;

What God values is the edification of our inner man (the product of His grace working in us) so that we endure our sufferings to His glory – and that is the kind of deliverance that Paul is praying for.

Romans 15:30 Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me; ³¹That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints; ³²That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed. ³³Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.

Essentially, it is not a prayer to be delivered from his enemies from finding him or acting against him, but to be delivered from the spiritual effects of what they might do. In other words, this is a request for the saints to pray that Paul will not faint under the attacks. The deliverance is not from the attack, but the intended effects of the attack.

Romans Education, Part 6

Session Four

Session Notes

Breakdown of Romans 16:

- Vv. 1-16 – Salutations and affections for the saints in the various house churches at Rome
- Vv. 17-20 – Warning concerning the PoE
- Vv. 21-24 – Greetings to the saints from those with Paul
- Vv. 25-27 – Paul ends the epistle by underscoring the purpose of the epistle

Romans 16 begins with various salutations. Now, you can read through these and I hope you will. We are only going to breeze through this. Although there is no doctrine here in the sense of the decision-making skills, it really is worth paying attention to. In a way, this is Paul's way of having the saints at Rome come back out on stage and take a bow. I love that. It is a sort of *Who's Who* in Rome. It's a bit like those on Zoom hearing the names and activities of other saints in the assembly which they would otherwise not know.

This really is quite a list and by the way Paul talks about these people, we can tell they were very much in his heart. The things that are said about them are sometimes incredible. I can almost hear Paul saying, "you have no idea what this person has done, or how much this couple means to me personally, or how much that person has made my ministry what it is;" things like that.

The first one Paul mentions is Phebe and what is interesting is that Paul is not sending her a greeting, but he is introducing/commending her to the assembly in Rome. That means that Phebe is the one carrying Paul's letter to the Roman assemblies. Since she is, it makes sense that the first one to be introduced in this portion of the epistle would be the messenger carrying the letter; Phebe.

Romans 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea:

Cenchrea is a small seaport village about 9 miles from the isthmus of Corinth. Paul writes the letter to the saints at Rome while he is at Corinth, so Phebe is 9 miles away in Cenchrea. It is interesting to me that when Paul dispatches someone to carry his letter to the saints at Rome, it is this woman to whom he entrusts the

task. In my mind, I think she must have volunteered, wanting to be involved in the ministry. To Paul, she had earned a reputation of trustworthiness by the way she served him and the church in Cenchrea. But I think there is one more thing in Paul's mind; she must have actively engaged in the edification process. Who else would you trust such a task to? She was important to Paul and to the assembly of which she was a part, which is evident from vs. 2.

Romans 16:1 I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: ²that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.

The last thing to say is to describe what Paul says about her, "she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also."

OED: succour

1. To help, assist, aid

†3. to relieve or remedy (a state of want, weakness, etc.); to relieve (a diseased condition)

4. To shelter, protect.

I think all of these were probably true of Phebe at one time or another.

Lastly, Phebe isn't just carrying Paul's letter. Why do I think this? Look at what Paul says in vs. 2: "assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you..." It looks like Phebe is not just delivering a letter, but once that is done, she has some kind of "business" to attend to in Rome. Was it secular? Or was it spiritual, something to do with the church at Rome?

When Paul says she is "a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea, I think he is describing an official capacity rather than just "she helps out a lot." For example, the word "servant" in vs. 1 is the same word (diakonon) that is otherwise translated "deacon." This has led some commentators to think that Phebe was a deaconess.

While the Bible translates the word as "servant" with Phebe, it is interesting that in church history, there is record of women who were known as deaconesses. For example, in vol. 3 of the Apostolic Constitutions, it says "ordain a deaconess who is faithful and holy, for the ministries toward women." These deaconesses appear to have all been aged and experienced widows, sustaining a fair reputation and fit

to guide and instruct those who were young and inexperienced. I could find no record of a deaconess being a married woman.

Some of the scriptures that are viewed as having this office in view are:

1 Timothy 5:3 Honour widows that are widows indeed.

1 Timothy 5:9-11 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry;

Titus 2:4 That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

One more historical note on this issue, a letter which was written by Pliny the younger to Trajan. First, a little history of who is who.

There was a Roman named Pliny the Elder. Among other things, Pliny the Elder wrote the world's first encyclopedia. His *Natural History* contained over a million words in 37 volumes. Pliny attempted to document all known facts about the natural world and his *Natural History* was an authority on scientific matters up to the Middle Ages.

Pliny the Elder reared and educated his nephew, Pliny the Younger.

Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus, best known as Pliny the Younger, was a successful Roman lawyer prosecuting corruption, government official (including in the treasury), and author of famous letters that paint an important picture of the Roman world around his lifetime. Some of those letters were written to the Roman Emperor, Trajan. Trajan was the Roman emperor from 98 to 117.

The reason for bringing this up is to document this issue of deaconesses, for it shows up in Pliny's letter to Trajan. At the end of these notes, I have included a copy of that letter which is very interesting to read. The part I am after here is as follows: "Therefore I placed two women, called "deaconesses," under torture, but I found only a debased superstition carried to great lengths, so I postponed my examination, and immediately consulted you. This seems a matter worthy of your

prompt consideration, especially as so many people are endangered. Many of all ages and both sexes are put in peril of their lives by their accusers; and the process will go on, for the contagion of this superstition has spread not merely through the free towns, but into the villages and farms. Still I think it can be halted and things set right.”

Again, historically, according to Albert Barnes, and I quote:

The reasons given for their appointment are:

(1.) The females were usually separate from the men. They were kept secluded, for the most part, and not permitted to mingle in society with men, as is the custom now.

(2.) It became necessary, therefore, to appoint aged and experienced females to instruct the young, to visit the sick, to provide for them, and to perform for them the services which male deacons performed for the whole church. It is evident, however, that they were confined to these offices, and that they were never regarded as an order of ministers, or suffered *to preach* to congregations, 1Ti 2:12; 1Co 14:34.

At any rate, this is some of the reasons why so many scholars refer to Phebe as a deaconess. No matter, she is important to Paul and his ministry, and certainly to many others as well.

After Phebe, the first ones to be greeted by Paul are a couple; Priscilla and Aquila.

Romans 16:3 Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: ⁴Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. ⁵Likewise *greet* the church that is in their house.

This is quite a statement. These two are on Paul’s side no matter what. And, they have a church meeting in their home, not unlike some of you!

You can read the rest of them down through vs. 16.

Now we come to the next section, vv. 17-20. These verses have to do with the policy of evil and they start the transition into the next book as it appears in your Bible, 1 Corinthians. In each of Paul’s epistles, there is a transition made at the

end of each letter which segues you into the next, so there is a natural flow of the doctrine.

Romans 16: 17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. ¹⁹For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. ²⁰And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Can you put together a single sentence summary of the passage? Did you look for the verbs? We actually find them right up front. What are you being asked to do? In vs. 17, you are being asked to do two things: 1) mark, and 2) avoid. These both pertain to a particular kind of person. Now, look back at vs. 17.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, **mark** them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

To “mark” means to take notice of, to observe, to pay attention to. This is a thinking issue as the definition also includes “to take notice of mentally.”

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark **them which cause divisions and offences** contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

Who are we supposed to mark? We mark “them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned” from Paul. This can have application to those within the assembly, and it can apply to those outside the assembly, but in either case, this is mainly pointed at men who are teachers of doctrine.

To “mark” them means to notice what these people are doing; they are causing divisions and causing offences within the assembly by teaching doctrine which is contrary to what Paul taught.

Obviously, this is not referring to the weaker brothers whose edification has not yet advanced to fully inform their thinking in the doctrine. Neither is this talking about your Christian friends who have never heard of right division or grace or sonship. Most believers are in that boat, but that is not who Paul has in mind when he says to “mark” and “avoid” these people. What should we be doing with those kinds of believers? We should be using the questions (back in Romans 13) to develop a sufficient relationship to talk to them about their edification.

But that is not what we are to do with these who are causing divisions within the assembly by their doctrine.

Within the assembly, this hearkens back to the obvious problems which could arise between Jews and Gentiles. Some Jewish converts, who insist on observing the rites of Moses, would constantly press their Christian brethren to the Law, claiming it to be of greater purity and orthodoxy of life. These things produced dissensions and strife between members. For example, the Jew would form parties on the pretense of superior holiness.

But the Gentiles might bully a believer into actions which violate his conscience; causing him to sin, just as we saw back in Romans 14:15. These can cause divisions and offences, but Paul has already dealt with that issue. What we are looking at here has something more in mind.

So, what is difference between divisions and offences? Divisions are just what they seem to be; factions or groups. The result of the doctrinal teaching of these men was to create division within sonship churches for the purpose of halting their edification. Ultimately, this is an attack of Satan’s PoE.

The false teacher may not have, as his agenda, the cessation of edification; he may not even know what that is. But it is the goal of the Adversary, and he uses this man’s teaching as a tool to accomplish his purposes.

Offences are different. Offences are those things which give occasion for others to fall into sin; a course of life which would lead others into sin.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences **contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned;** and avoid them.

Not only is the false doctrine contrary to Paul's doctrine, the creation of division and offences within the assembly is also contrary to Paul's doctrine.

If these false teachers are part of an assembly, this is very dangerous. These false teachers would have been through the doctrine, but for whatever reason, they have decided not to obey it. It gives them a platform that says, "I have heard what you have heard but I have rejected it." That does away with the idea that they just don't know about Paul's doctrine. These are wolves in sheep's clothing and they will scatter the flock. By that I mean, they will destroy the church so it does not meet any more and everyone's edification will stop.

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **avoid them.**

But, these false teachers can also be outside the local assembly. In today's world their false doctrine is readily available through books, electronic media and the internet. In fact, you can be influenced by these men without ever meeting them in person.

So, let me give a few scenarios. Suppose a brother within the assembly holds a bible study as a platform to teach doctrine that is contrary to Paul's. By such teaching, he is promoting divisions and offences within the assembly. What is the response? Do not take part in it. Just don't attend. Love this brother and pray for his recovery, but do not even give the appearance of agreement with his agenda.

Suppose you have been listening to a man outside of the church that is teaching doctrine contrary to Paul's. You may think, well, I can't avoid him because I am never around him. But Paul is saying to avoid them "as teachers." Do not promote their teaching and do not support their ministry.

Romans 16:18 **For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ,** but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

There are a couple of things in this verse that demonstrate that these dividers are teachers or leaders. Firstly, they "serve not our Lord Jesus Christ." The service is not about the general "we should serve the Lord" but the service is more official,

as in some office of ministry. Also, the fact that they serve not our Lord is why we call them false teachers.

Romans 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, **but their own belly**; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

To serve “your own belly” is to serve yourself. Compare this to Philippians 3:19.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. ¹⁸(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: ¹⁹Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Look at vs. 17 where Paul says to *mark* those who were followers of him. In other words, observe, pay attention to and identify those who followed Paul. So, we have two kinds to look at (mark); those who teach contrary to Paul’s doctrine, and those who follow Paul’s doctrine. If they are contrary, avoid them. If they follow Paul, imitate them.

Paul says this because (vs. 18) many do not follow Paul. They are enemies of the cross of Christ and their belly is their God. In other words, they are the most important thing in their universe. They are selfish, and what they do is in service to themselves. Even when they appear to do good for someone else, there is a self-serving interest behind it.

Romans 16:18 For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and **by good words and fair speeches** deceive the hearts of the simple.

This is another reason I see these as mainly teachers and leaders. The verse indicates that this is more than just casual conversation where they are expressing a view (although they may do it there too). It is in their speeches; therefore it seems more official.

Also notice, it is the “simple” who are deceived by these. No matter how you see the word “simple” it certainly refers to those who are not advanced in their edification. Good words and fair speeches are designed to deceive. Knowledge of sound doctrine and spiritual discernment will expose these for what they are; fraudulent.

Romans 16:19 For **your obedience is come abroad unto all *men***. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. ²⁰And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

This is very similar to how Paul started the epistle.

Romans 1:8 First, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that **your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world**.

The saints at Rome did not hide their faith, but declared it publicly. Not only that, but their faith was spoken of throughout the Christian world. Now back to Romans 16.

Romans 16:19 For **your obedience is come abroad unto all *men***. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil.

The obedience mentioned here is to Paul's doctrine. Christians everywhere heard of the saints at Rome and their faith; their obedience. Paul is not only encouraging them and "boasting on their behalf," but he is also reminding them that the Christian world is watching.

Romans 16:19 For your obedience is come abroad unto all *men*. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet **I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil**.

In this context, the "good" is Paul's doctrine and the "evil" is the false teachings of those who are contrary to Paul and his doctrine. When Paul says he wants them to be wise concerning the good and simple concerning the evil, he is talking in the context of their being influenced by false teachers and doctrine contrary to his.

See how he says it: Paul says, "Everyone knows of your obedience to the doctrine I have taught you." Then he says, "I am glad that you have been so receptive." But then he says, "But yet, I would have you..." So now, he is talking about the future! "Even though you have believed my teaching, and I am glad for that because that ultimately works to your benefit (not Paul's), but yet (which puts the issue into the future), I would have you... (this is my desire for you).

In other words, “If I had my way, you will continue to be edified by my doctrine, and all the false doctrine circulating out there will have no effect on you to hinder your edification.” I am saying it this way so you can get the sense of it.

Pliny the Younger’s Letter to Emperor Trajan Regarding the Christians, and Trajan’s Response

From the Internet History Sourcebooks Project and W. S. Davis, ed., Readings in Ancient History (1912-3)

Pliny to Trajan:

It is my custom, Sire, to refer to you in all cases where I am in doubt, for who can better clear up difficulties and inform me? I have never been present at any legal examination of the Christians, and I do not know, therefore, what are the usual penalties passed upon them, or the limits of those penalties, or how searching an inquiry should be made. I have hesitated a great deal in considering whether any distinctions should be drawn according to the ages of the accused; whether the weak should be punished as severely as the more robust, or whether the man who has once been a Christian gained anything by recanting? Again, whether the name of being a Christian, even though otherwise innocent of crime, should be punished, or only the crimes that gather around it? In the meantime, this is the plan which I have adopted in the case of those Christians who have been brought before me. I ask them whether they are Christians, if they say “Yes,” then I repeat the question the second time, and also a third – warning them of the penalties involved; and if they persist, I order them away to prison. For I do not doubt that – be their admitted crime what it may – their pertinacity and inflexible obstinacy surely ought to be punished. There were others who showed similar mad folly, whom I reserved to be sent to Rome, as they were Roman citizens. Later, as is commonly the case, the mere fact of my entertaining the question led to a multiplying of accusations and a variety of cases were brought before me. An anonymous pamphlet was issued, containing a number of names of alleged Christians. Those who denied that they were or had been Christians and called upon the gods with the usual formula, reciting the words after me, and those who offered incense and wine before your image – which I had ordered to be brought forward for this purpose, along with the regular statues of the gods – all such I considered acquitted – especially as they cursed the name of Christ, which it is said bona fide Christians cannot be induced to do. Still others there were, whose names were supplied by an

informer. These first said they were Christians, then denied it, insisting they had been, “but were so no longer”; some of them having “recanted many years ago,” and more than one “full twenty years back.” These all worshiped your image and the god’s statues and cursed the name of Christ. But they declared their guilt or error was simply this – on a fixed day they used to meet before dawn and recite a hymn among themselves to Christ, as though he were a god. So far from binding themselves by oath to commit any crime, they swore to keep from theft, robbery, adultery, breach of faith, and not to deny any trust money deposited with them when called upon to deliver it. This ceremony over, they used to depart and meet again to take food – but it was of no special character, and entirely harmless. They also had ceased from this practice after the edict I issued – by which, in accord with your orders, I forbade all secret societies. I then thought it the more needful to get at the facts behind their statements. Therefore I placed two women, called “deaconesses,” under torture, but I found only a debased superstition carried to great lengths, so I postponed my examination, and immediately consulted you. This seems a matter worthy of your prompt consideration, especially as so many people are endangered. Many of all ages and both sexes are put in peril of their lives by their accusers; and the process will go on, for the contagion of this superstition has spread not merely through the free towns, but into the villages and farms. Still I think it can be halted and things set right. Beyond any doubt, the temples – which were nigh deserted – are beginning again to be thronged with worshipers; the sacred rites, which long have lapsed, are now being renewed, and the food for the sacrificial victims is again finding a sale – though up to recently it had almost no market. So one can safely infer how vast numbers could be reclaimed, if only there were a chance given for repentance.

Trajan to Pliny:

You have adopted the right course, my dear Pliny, in examining the cases of those cited before you as Christians; for no hard and fast rule can be laid down covering such a wide question. The Christians are not to be hunted out. If brought before you, and the offense is proved, they are to be punished, but with this reservation — if any one denies he is a Christian, and makes it clear he is not, by offering prayer to our gods, then he is to be pardoned on his recantation, no matter how suspicious his past. As for anonymous pamphlets, they are to be discarded absolutely, whatever crime they may charge, for they are not only a precedent of a very bad type, but they do not accord with the spirit of our age.

Romans Education Part 6

Session Five

Session Notes

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

Unfortunately, we could not include vs. 20 with the previous verses to which it is connected. So, let's look at them altogether now.

Romans 16: 17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. ¹⁸For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. ¹⁹For your obedience is come abroad unto all men. I am glad therefore on your behalf: but yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil. ²⁰And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.

Vs. 17 – mark and avoid purveyors of false doctrine

Vs. 18 – they are false teachers whom Satan uses to deceive

Vs. 19 – you saints at Rome have done well in your edification, please continue

Vs. 20 – And...(implied – if you do...!)

Before you read verse 20, get the summary statements working in your mind, especially vs. 19. Their obedience to the doctrine is commended by Paul. But what is happening when you obey the doctrine? You are being edified unto godliness. Paul then says, that he would have them yet “wise unto that which is good” which means continued edification; and “simple concerning evil” which means not hampered in their edification by false doctrine.

And if they do that...if they continue with their edification...look what will happen as a result.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly ...

Notice that there are two entities at work here in the bruising of Satan. The God of peace and our feet. Now, we are not going to bruise Satan, God is going to do that. In his epistles, Paul never instructs us in this DoGG to rebuke the devil, to cast out unclean spirits, to plead the blood or any such thing. The way Satan is defeated is by our edification unto godliness!

And why does Paul use the title “the God of peace” in this instance? Well, what is peace? Or, better yet, what is happening in the context of vv. 17-20? We haven’t called it this yet, but you know this already. What do we call it when Satan, through the false teaching and doctrines of men, seeks to move us from the truth? What is that called? It is called Phase 1 of the attack of the PoE. And what is the phase one attack? It is “attack the message.”

Romans 16:17-20 is describing the phase one attack against the truth of Paul’s doctrine. Now, if we are under attack, there is a conflict going on. Is the God of peace an indication that Satan will cease his hostilities toward us? No. But it is a description of the peace in our hearts as we confront that attack! Call it phase one of the “peace that passeth understanding!”

Instead of being anxious about the attack, we focus on vs. 20, which is a promise of what God will do to Satan every time we endure those attacks without being defeated by them, discouraged by them, overwhelmed by them, victimized by them...the God of peace will bruise Satan under our feet!

When an individual saint who withstands the attack against the message and continues his/her edification, God bruises Satan under his/her feet. When an entire assembly withstands the attack against the message and continues its edification, God bruises Satan in a much larger way under the feet of the entire assembly. At least that is how I see it. And guess what? That is working together as a body! That is part of getting our conversation in the heavenly places.

What is Satan’s aim by attacking the message? Sure, he wants to stop the truth. Yes, he wants to publish his untruth. But ultimately, he wants to stop edification from continuing within an assembly. That is the goal! By the way, that is the goal of everything Satan is doing as far as the saints are concerned.

But consider this, if that attack fails, it isn't like there is no consequence to him. We are in a battle, after all, and battles are two- way streets. Not just one side gets to attack.

People get to looking at this like it is all one sided. They think: Satan does what he wants and we have to endure it. But they act like there is no recourse against Satan; there is no way to retaliate. But there is a way to "return fire" against the Adversary. God is not letting Satan's attack go without consequence.

We can't see Satan and attacking his messengers is not the same as attacking him personally. The only way to really impact Satan is for 1) God to do it, and 2) for it to be done on the basis of spiritual warfare, not physical. That means, any impact on Satan or his realm will be accomplished by something spiritual. And I don't mean just any old thing we call spiritual. I am talking about what Paul is talking about; our edification. That is the spiritual trigger that causes God to bruise Satan.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall **bruise** Satan under your feet shortly...

Now, let's talk about what it means to bruise Satan. We all know what a physical bruise is. But when we talk about a bruise in the Bible, in the context Paul is using in passages like Romans 16:20, he is using the word "bruise" to talk about something that is destructive and damaging.

Genesis 3:15 And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.

But the other idea behind the Bible's use of the word "bruise" is that the blow is not fatal. A bruise is not the end. It is damaging and it does have an effect, but it doesn't kill. Here is the idea: when God bruises Satan under our feet, it is a defeat for him, but that is not his final defeat. That will not come until the final judgment.

But that is way we should look at it. The bruising of Satan is a defeat to his strategy, a defeat to his plans to attack the message of truth and move us away from it. But here is the really humiliating part of it; Satan is being bruised "under our feet." Oh, that has got to sting! God does the bruising, but He does it "under our feet." I would love for God to put Satan under the feet of our assembly. But it won't just happen because we like it. This happens every time we stand fast in the

doctrine. This happens every time we mark them which preach contrary doctrine and avoid them. This is why it is so important to turn away from those who oppose Paul's doctrine. The "marking and avoiding" constitute a defeat of Satan's attempt to move us away from the truth. This is why it is so important not to be moved by slick talking preachers who do not RDW or understand grace or know the time in which they are living or are engaged in edification unto godliness as presented by Paul.

If an assembly is affected by the attack on Paul's doctrine, then edification stops and Satan conquers the assembly. If an assembly stands strong and continues their edification while rebuffing the phase one attack, then God bruises Satan – under our feet. I would love for that guy to be black and blue before it's all over; one big bruise from head to toe.

(By the way, it is that accumulation of bruises that eventually move him to phase two; attack the messenger.) Look, continuing our edification (which is being wise concerning the good) and doing so unaffected by the phase one attack (which is being simple concerning evil), is one of the ways we carry out spiritual warfare.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet **shortly...**

Since the bruising is not referring to the ultimate destruction of Satan and his PoE, then "shortly" cannot be referring to it either. "Shortly" describes the time between our continuance in edification and when God bruises Satan. So how long is shortly? How long does it take for the individual saint or the assembly to be attacked and to rebuff that attack by continuing in Paul's doctrine to edification? That is how long "shortly" is.

If you withstand the attack immediately, then the bruising is immediate. If it takes a while to cast it off, then the bruising takes however long that takes. I wish we had more time to talk about this, but you can take the time to think this through. Besides, effectual working of this doctrine is not based on how long you listen to me talk about it; it is about properly responding to the doctrine with your heavenly Father.

Romans 16:20 And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you. Amen.

There is the benediction. One thing to say about the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ; grace is a power, the greatest power God possesses. It is the power for God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. But in this context, this grace has to do with our overcoming the attack of the PoE to move us away from Paul's doctrine and stop our edification. And we cannot do that on our own. Edification is something God does in us, not something we produce. Putting on the armor of light is putting on the doctrinal armor which keeps us from being overcome by the attacks of the Adversary. And that is a work that God also does in us. Just like He is the one who bruises Satan under our feet. That is all a product of grace, and Paul is praying for that grace to be with them.

Verses 21-24 are greetings to the saints at Rome sent by those who are with Paul. There are eight individual names listed and whole churches, but we will not take the time to examine the list, but you should.

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, ²⁶But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: ²⁷To God only wise, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

These are the verses that are printed on the sign that is sitting at the front of our property. I am not going to spend time on them like you don't know them, of course you do. But they are wonderful.

But I do want us to get a sense of what Paul is doing in these last three verses.

It opens with "Now to him..." The "him" is referring to God.

What follows is a description of God's power and what that power has accomplished. God's power has the power to stablish us. It stablishes according:

- to my gospel
- and the preaching of Jesus Christ
- to the revelation of the mystery,
 - which was kept secret since the world began
 - but now is made manifest

- and by the scriptures of the prophets
- according to the commandment of the everlasting God
 - made known to all nations for the obedience of faith

And now we finally get to the “Him” of vs. 25...

1. To God only wise,
 - Be glory through Jesus Christ for ever.
 - Amen.

Now, did you get that? You are established and stabilized by Him that is of power to do so. And how does He establish us? By five means:

1. **According to my gospel** (we are established in the faith by the gospel of Christ (for salvation) which includes all doctrine and exhortations given through Paul (for edification))
2. **According to the preaching of Jesus Christ** (we are established in the faith by learning about and possessing the unsearchable riches of Christ, which are all the riches that Christ provided for the body of Christ through His death, burial and resurrection – beginning with the mercies of God and including the *manifold* riches of His glory (Romans 9:23). [By the way, do you know what this includes? Take a look at Colossians 1:27. Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **Christ in you, the hope of glory;** this would mean that we are established and made firm in the faith by learning about the riches of the glory of this mystery which is “Christ in you!” In other words, how to get Christ to live His life in us!]; the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God (Romans 11:33); the riches of His grace (Ephesians 1:6); the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints (Ephesians 1:18); and the riches of the full assurance of understanding (Colossians 2:2) all of which are accomplished by Jesus Christ, hence the preaching of Jesus Christ)).

And just to step aside to illustrate this for a moment, to show you the power that these have to establish and stabilize us, look at these references where we receive strength in our inner man to endure sufferings by the riches of His glory...

Ephesians 3:16 That he would grant you, **according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;**

...and we gain the ability to abound and to be abased, to be full and to suffer need, to be content in whatsoever state we are in.

Philippians 4:19 But my God shall supply all your need **according to his riches in glory** by Christ Jesus.

These are things Paul is talking about when he says that we are established and made firm in the faith according to the preaching of Jesus Christ; it is the preaching of what Christ accomplished and freely provided for us as members of His body. (And I say the manifold riches of His glory because the riches of His grace perform a multiplicity of functions in us.)

Now back to the rest of the ways by which we are established and made steadfast in the faith.

3. **According to the revelation of the mystery** (firstly, as set in distinction to the prophetic program – we are established in the faith by all that was revealed to Paul by Jesus Christ which was kept secret from the foundation of the world concerning what God is doing when He ushered in a DoGG, and how that fits into His eternal purpose; which, for example, would include: the mystery of His will (Ephesians 1:9-10), that God's whole purpose is the gathering together of all things into one in Christ and under Jesus Christ; the fellowship of the mystery (Ephesians 3:9); the manifold wisdom of God (Ephesians 3:10))
4. **By the scriptures of the prophets** – (Paul is not talking about the OT prophets, but that we are established in the faith by Paul's inspired writings which were verified to be scripture through the spiritual gift of a prophet, those gifts given at the outset of the DoGG for that purpose; in the sense that we are established by the effectual working of those scriptures in our inner man – in our soul and spirit)
5. **According to the commandment of the everlasting God** (We are established in the faith by those things which God has commanded (ordained) before the foundation of the world, such as being chosen in Him before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4), being predestinated unto

the adoption (Ephesians 1:5), making us accepted in the beloved (Ephesians 1:6), that we should be to the praise of His glory (Ephesians 1:12), just to name a few.)

Paul's last three verses are one sentence. The gist of the sentence starts in vs. 25 and ends in vs. 27. It would look like this:

Romans 16:25 Now to him...*be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

Everything in between those two bookends are revealing the power and the wisdom of God that has made all of this (which Paul revealed in Romans) possible.

Romans 16:27 **To God only wise**, *be* glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.

To God only wise is the issue of the rightful possessor of heaven and earth (PoHE). In view of everything Paul lists here, God is the only one capable of being the rightful PoHE; only His wisdom can do it. This is a fitting end to the book of Romans.

ACRONYMS

A.V. – Authorized Version

CoP – Course of Punishment

DI – Divine Institution

DoGG – Dispensation of Gentile Grace

FED – Fully Educated Daughter

FES – Fully Educated Son

JSoC – Judgment Seat of Christ

JUEL – Justified Unto Eternal Life

OED – Oxford English Dictionary

OT – Old Testament

PA – Practical Application

PoE – Policy of Evil

RoK – Reservoir of Knowledge

SKTMB; S; PS– **Selflessness**, Loving**kindness**, **Tender**heartedness,
Longsuffering/**Meekness**, **Benevolent** Goodness; **Sacrificial** Love; **Purposed**
Subordination/Subservience

SoC – Sufferings of Christ

SoPT – Sufferings of this Present Time

VRS – Vain Religious System