

# Romans – An In-Depth Study

## [Chapters 9-16]

### [Part 8]

**Romans 14:1-10** [New King James] *“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.”*

What Paul is referring to in this passage of scripture is **not** moral issues, which are clear cut in the mind of our Creator God; the main subject is about the eating of meat or only vegetables, also on what day of the week they choose to fast.

A person who is “*weak in the faith*” is a person who has not yet accepted the full meaning of the “*freedom*” that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ gives us, and is judging other Christians.

Such a person is still at heart a legalist following Old Covenant sacrificial laws, seeing Christianity as a life governed by rules and regulations.

The New Covenant which includes obedience to the teaching of Jesus Christ and the indwelling of an active Holy Spirit makes it very clear that certain things are clearly forbidden by the Creator.

We are given in the New Testament lists of people who will **not** be accepted in the Kingdom of God, the created family of God.

Such a person’s moral code system is totally unacceptable to God.

**Revelation 21:6-8** [NIV] *“He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practise magic arts, the idolaters and all liars, their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur. This is the second death.”*

**If your moral code allows you to practice any of these lifestyles then you are condemned by the Creator God to eventual oblivion.**

**Revelation 22:14-15** [NIV] *“Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practise magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practises falsehood.”*

The word “*dog*” which is added to the list can have two possible meanings.

a) To a Jew in the apostle John's day, a dog was **not** a household pet or even a guard dog, but a pariah animal, unclean and savage, mangy and a thieving scavenger, and was used as a symbol of all that was disgusting and unclean.

b) **Deuteronomy 23:17-18** [King James] *“There shall be no **whore** of the daughters of Israel, nor a **sodomite** of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the **hire of a whore**, or the **price of a dog**, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both **these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.**”*

**This scripture shows us that “dog” is referring to a male prostitute.**

Therefore the word “dog” denotes a thoroughly immoral person.

Human judgement within a Christian fellowship will destroy that fellowship and the person making the judgement.

**2 Corinthians 5:10** [New King James] *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”*

**Galatians 5:13-14** [NIV] *“You, my brothers, were called to be free. **But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.** The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.”*

Freedom in Christ does **not** mean freedom to indulge in sin.

**Galatians 5:16-18** [NIV] *“So I say, **live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.** For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. **But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law.**”*

**Only by being led by the Holy Spirit can we love God and our neighbour as we should.**

**Romans 14:7-10** [NIV] *“For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone. If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, **whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.** For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living. You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.”*

**Human judgement within a Christian fellowship will destroy it and the person who is making such judgements.**

**2 Corinthians 5:10** [NIV] *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.”*

**The only person who is qualified to judge and who will be the final judge is Jesus Christ our Saviour but also our judge.**

If we express the following attitudes towards another human being we are setting ourselves up as a judge, presumptuously seeking to replace Jesus Christ as judge.

**Psalms 19:13-14** [King James] *“**Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.**”*

**God looks on such an attitude as a great sin, to presumptuously believe we have the right to judge others.**

**Matthew 7:1-2 [NIV]** *“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way as you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”*

**This warning given by our Saviour should always be in the front of our mind.**

When we are confronted with a fellow Christian who is still “*weak in faith*,” and holds a very narrow view of Christian living, **not** yet experiencing the freedom we have in Jesus Christ, there are certain things we should avoid.

**We must avoid irritation** – an impatient annoyance with a person who is “*weak in faith*” will get us nowhere at all.

**However much we disagree or differ, we must first of all try to see the other person’s point of view.**

This will be showing love to them as our neighbour.

**We must avoid the attitude of ridicule** – every person is hurt mentally when what they consider is precious is laughed at.

**No person has any right to laugh at which some other person considers sacred.**

**Ridicule will never woo another to change their moral codes but will cause them to be more determined to hold on to them.**

**1 Corinthians 8:9-13 [NIV]** *“Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling-block to the weak. For if anyone with a weak conscience sees you who have this knowledge eating in an idol’s temple, won’t he be emboldened to eat what has been sacrificed to idols? So this weak brother, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. **When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ.** Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause him to fall.”*

Such an attitude that may cause another person to have his faith in God destroyed, is a sin against Jesus Christ.

**We must avoid the attitude of contempt** – every person’s views are their own and must be treated with respect.

**It is impossible to win a person over to our position unless we have a genuine respect for theirs.**

Debate and questioning will **not** always shake a person’s personal position on the change that Jesus Christ has made by His life, death and resurrection, now being our High Priest and pathway to God the Father.

Show love to this person who is “*weak in faith*” by seeking to understand their beliefs and form of worship, thus showing real friendship **not** contempt.

**Romans 14:11-19 [NIV]** *“It is written: “‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord, ‘Every knee will bow before me; every tongue will confess to God.’” So then, **each of us will give an account of himself to God.** Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling-block or obstacle in your brother’s way. As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil. **For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in***

*this way is pleasing to God and approved by men. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.”*

**We need to focus on the important things in Christian living.**

**Righteousness** – through faith in what God has done for us in Jesus Christ, to be credited with His righteousness **not** relying on our own righteousness which is **not** acceptable to God the Father.

**Isaiah 64:6** [NIV] *“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and **all our righteous acts are like filthy rags**; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.”*

**This is how God views our efforts to be righteous through personal works, obedience to rules and rituals.**

**Romans 4:18-24** [NIV] *“Against all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead, since he was about a hundred years old, and that Sarah’s womb was also dead. Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. **This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.”** The words **“it was credited to him”** were written not for him alone, but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness, for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.”*

This is how we become righteous before God.

**Peace –**

**John 14:27** [NIV] *“Peace I leave with you; **my peace I give you**. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.”*

Peace in our lives and the whole world will **only** come through Jesus Christ being accepted as the Prince of Peace. [**Isaiah 9:6**]

**Joy in the Holy Spirit –**

**Galatians 5:22** [NIV] *“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,”*

**Joy is only ours through the work of the Holy Spirit in us.**

**Happiness** can be attained by possessions and physical pleasure, but only lasts while they last. Continually fading in their bringing of happiness, or vanishing when situations change.

**Joy** is eternal because physical circumstances do **not** affect the presence and work of the Holy Spirit in us.

**Philippians 4:11-13** [NIV] *“I am not saying this because I am in need, **for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances**. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*

**Paul had learnt this joy of contentment that came by accepting the work of the Holy Spirit in him, who was sent by Jesus Christ to empower us to live a Christian life. [John 14:15-18]**

**Romans 14:20-21** [NIV] *“Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a man to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. **It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother to fall.**”*

We are **not** to hinder the work that God is doing in those who are still “*weak in faith*” by being a bad example of Christian love and compassion.

**Sin is not a private matter.** Everything we say or do will affect others.

We have to remember constantly that God has called us to be an inter-dependent family, **not** isolated orphans, independent of other human beings.

**Romans 14:22-23** [NIV] “*So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the man who does not condemn himself by what he approves. But the man who has doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.*”

We ought **not** to act against our consciences.

**1 Timothy 4:1-2** [NIV] “*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*”

Before our being called our conscience was “*seared,*” that is **not** productive of anything good.

Our mind was too influenced by the evil spirits that rule the human world at this time. [**1 Corinthians 4:4; Revelation 12:9**]

**Hebrews 10:22** [NIV] “*let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*”

**Our conscience has to be cleaned by two things.**

“*Sprinkled*” – this is referring to the blood that was sprinkled on the mercy seat for the atonement of the sins of the people. [**Leviticus 16:14-15**]

This is a direct reference to the blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ our Saviour.

“*Washed with pure water*” – referring to God’s Word, the Christian Bible.

**Isaiah 55:8-11** [NIV] “*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.*”

God’s Word the Christian Bible will make new our mind as the Holy Spirit uses it to cleanse us of evil thoughts and practices.

Making our new minds productive and bearing the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

**Only then can we use our now-cleansed conscience to guide our decisions.**

Paul’s advice to the person who is “*weak in the faith*” is **not** to defer to their conscience, but to God’s Word the Christian Bible.

We sometimes do something because everyone else is doing it, and we do **not** wish to stand out as a minority of one.

We sometimes do things because we do **not** want to be different to our friends and relatives.

We sometimes do things to avoid ridicule and unpopularity.

Paul's answer is that such actions are sinful, because we have gone against our cleansed conscience and once again it will become dead to the prompting of the Holy Spirit.

Such actions must be repented of and cleansed by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

**Romans 12:1-2** [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship. **Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is, his good, pleasing and perfect will.**”*

**We then surrender our lives again to Jesus Christ and become a living sacrifice that allows our minds and conscience to be renewed.**

Cleansed from the influence of this evil world in which we have to live our physical lives, but **not** our spiritual lives.