

The Grace of God



"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us..." (Titus 2:11-12).

January 13, 2008 (Vol. 7)

CLARIFYING ROMANS 14

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Confusion has been expressed by some on the issue of Romans 14, and in particular, on why some have gone out from among us (1 John 2:19). Therefore, let us come together as brethren and garner a better understanding of this portion of God's word.

Romans 14 has **two** main threads of thought, both of which address the Weak brother and the Strong brother's conduct (see the chart on the back of this page). The first train of thought is illustrated by the eating or not eating of meats. Since all meats are clean (Rom. 14:14), then the Strong may eat and the weak may refrain and **both** are **right**. God does not require meat eating, nor does He forbid it. He allows us to have a choice, therefore we should never fuss and fight over this. I should never see you as a sinner for abstaining from meats and you should never despise me for eating meats. This is truly not a "salvation issue" when handled in the way God reveals.

The second train of thought is that when such differences of judgment/opinion arise, there is a tendency for the Strong to look down on the weak and for the Weak to judge the Strong. In other words, the non-meat eater tends to allow his judgments and opinions to color his view of the Strong brother. He tends to think the Strong brother is doing something contrary to God's will, when in fact he is not. And the Strong brother is equally tempted to despise the Weak brother, and to pressure him into doing things he is not conscientiously able to do. These attitudes and behaviors are what the Spirit condemns and forbids in Romans 14. The weak is **not** to judge or view the Strong as a sinner. Nor is the Strong to judge or despise the Weak.

As James 4:10-12 says, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall

exalt you. Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. One only is the lawgiver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbor?"

Why do people judge one another based upon human opinions? The Spirit says pride is the problem. When we start speaking against a brother or judging a brother, we "speak against the law" (violate the law) and effectively say we know better than the law. In fact we set ourselves up not as doers of the law but as lawmakers. It is a **very** serious sin to judge others in this false way. It is a sin not just against our brother, but a sin against God. When we look down on another over matters of opinion, how can we have peace and harmony? If you despise me for not eating meats, how can we truly be in fellowship? If I view you as lost for eating meats, how can we really get along?

Brethren, let us oppose and judge what God opposes and judges. And at the same time, let us be accepting and tolerant of what God accepts and tolerates. It is our great privilege to have the mind of Christ revealed to us (1 Cor. 2:16). We are thereby enabled to understand and to think the very thoughts of God, which brings stability, clarity and harmony to our thinking and peace in our relationships with each other as brethren.

PEOPLE TO REMEMBER & PRAY FOR

Sawyer Sims, Jean Gambrell (back), Johanna Fletcher, Othena Kinnard, Mag Bumbalough, Mary Cox, Monie Petty, Dave Poteet (NHC 225), Marilyn Poteet-Langford, Betty England, Thelma Klein, Joshua Hill (Ending his seizure meds), Ed Williams, Michelle Austin, Lydia Poe, Larry Bumbalough, Jake Hale, Joshua & Misty Poteet, Carolyn Williams, Kenley Streeval, Matthew Taylor (leukemia), Joyce Simmons Wagner, Lorene Myers (Rece's Grandmother), David Price (David Price's father), Bill Frazier (cancer), Michelle Cunningham (Lydia's sister), W.C. Randolph (Jamie Sims' grandfather), Emma Featherston (Adam's grandmother).

OBEDY THE GOSPEL!!!

Hear (Rom. 10:17) Believe (Mark 16:16) Repent (Acts 17:30-31) Confess (Rom. 10:9) Be Baptized (Acts 2:38)
Live Faithfully (Rev. 2:10)

CLARIFYING ROMANS 14

A "ROMANS 14 ISSUE"

Strong's Practice: Eats Meats

Weak's Practice: Does Not Eat Meats

PERPETUAL FELLOWSHIP ALLOWED

NOT A "ROMANS 14 ISSUE"

Strong's View: Despises The Weak

Weak's View: Judges Strong As A Sinner

LEADS TO AN END OF FELLOWSHIP

PERPETUAL FELLOWSHIP NOT ALLOWED

1. What two behaviors of the weak are identified in Romans 14:1-3?
2. Which behavior is acceptable (non-sinful in itself) & which behavior is not acceptable (sinful). Or are they both acceptable behaviors?
3. Does Romans 14 urge perpetual fellowship with the weak while he continues to see the strong as a sinner?
4. Does "for God has received him" (14:3) mean God receives the weak while he sees the strong as a sinner?
5. Does "Let each man be fully assured in his own mind" (14:5) mean that the weak may be fully assured that the strong is a sinner?
6. How is the weak caused to stumble when he observes the strong eat meats (14:13)?
7. How is the weak grieved by the strong eating meats (14:15)? Is it that he views the strong as sinning just by eating?
8. How is the weak overthrown by the strong eating meat (14:20)? Is it that he considers the strong as sinning by merely eating? If so, how does his merely observing him eat cause the weak to commit sin?
9. What does 1 Cor. 8:10 expressly say about how the weak is caused to stumble when he observes the strong eating meats? Is it that the weak thinks the strong has actually sinned by eating? Or is it that the weak, in seeing the strong eat, is emboldened to eat in bad conscience, thus violating his own feelings / opinion on the matter?
10. What is the infirmity of the weak that the strong is to bear with (15:1)? Is it his practice of abstaining from meats or his view of the strong brother as a sinner?
11. Thus, what does Romans 14 urge perpetual fellowship with? The weak one's practice of abstaining from meats, or the weak one's view of the strong as a sinner?
12. If Romans 14 does not urge perpetual fellowship with the weak viewing the strong as a sinner, what passage(s) teach us how to resolve this concern?

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- **Radio Program** - Every Sun. 2pm, AM 1050 WSMT
- **Home Bible Study** - Resumes Jan. 12 & 26, 2008
- **Ladies Class** - 2nd & Last Sunday Each Month
- **Business Meeting** - Sun. Jan. 27
- **GM** - Ron Daly, April 2008.
- **GM** - Lanny Smith, Oct.12-17, 2008.

[Http://frontiernet.net/~nscoc](http://frontiernet.net/~nscoc)
NSCOC@frontiernet.net