



Part 8

2 more studies in Romans

Please Note the following:

1. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
2. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL** and **NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP**

Study 1 – Living with love and in the Light of the Lord

Romans 13:8-14

(Sermon on 07-July-2024)

Read Romans 12:21 and note what Paul says

Do not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.

Read Exodus 20:1-17

1. Why does God say what He says in verse 2?

God says in verse 2: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery”

The reason God says that is to a) remind them what “saving” act He performed in bringing the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt; and how He showed His power and might as the one true God over and against the false Egyptian gods; and b) Because He is the one true God, and has entered into a covenant relationship with His people, He deserves complete allegiance and obedience to the 10 commandments, He is about to give to the people via Moses.

2. Write out the 10 commandments in summary form.

- I. You shall have no other gods*
- II. You shall not make idols/images and worship them*
- III. You shall not blaspheme*
- IV. Keep the Sabbath Day as a holy and rest*
- V. Honour/respect your parents*
- VI. You shall not murder*
- VII. You shall not commit adultery*
- VIII. You shall not steal*
- IX. You shall not tell lies*
- X. You shall not covet (want other people’s stuff)*

3. How would you summarize the first four commandments?

*The first four commandments are “**vertical**” – **about loving God**.*

4. How would you summarize the last six commandments?

*The last six commandments are “**horizontal**” – **about loving other people** (neighbours)*

Read Romans 13:8-10

1. Why does Paul use the word “**debt**” when talking about loving one another in verse 8?

In the previous verse, verse 7, Paul has just reminded us to give everyone what we owe them, whether that is tax, revenue, respect or honour.

Therefore, we should not owe people anything, i.e., always pay our debts.

However, in verse 8, Paul is saying that there is one debt we can never fully repay; and that is the “debt” to love one another.

Paul means we can never be in the position where we can say “I’ve fully paid the debt of loving someone – and I don’t owe them anymore love.” We must keep on loving as though this debt of love can never fully be paid! It’s a never-ending debt! We have an obligation to keep on loving our neighbour.

2. Why does Paul say whoever loves “**fulfils the law**”?

When we looked at the ten commandments (i.e., God’s Law) we said that the commandments could be summarised as loving God and loving others. If we take the ten commandments (God’ Law) seriously; and love God and love others, then we are following God’s Law and thus fulfilling the requirements of the Law by simply loving!

3. Which commandments is Paul dealing with in verse 9?

Paul is dealing with those commandments that deal with loving our neighbour:

- *You shall not commit adultery (#7)*
- *You shall not murder (#6)*
- *You shall not steal (#8)*
- *You shall not covet (#10)*

Note: Paul misses commandments #6, honouring our parents and #9 not to tell lies; because he is simply summarizing the “horizontal” commandments to emphasize the overarching principle of love; and not necessarily giving a comprehensive list of the commandments.

It might be easy to trick people that we are loving God but it’s not going to be easy for us to trick people if our love for them is insincere!

4. Why do you think Paul is focusing on these particular commandments? (c.f. Leviticus 19:18)

*Because Paul is focusing on the commandments that have to do with the principle of “**loving our neighbour**” laid down in Leviticus 19:18: “Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”*

That principle is to love our neighbour as ourself.

5. What does Paul mean in verse 10? What are practical ways we can demonstrate love in our daily lives?

Paul means when we truly love others, we naturally avoid doing anything that would harm them or go against their well-being. This includes not only avoiding actions like stealing or lying but also extends to treating others with kindness, compassion, and respect.

Practical ways to demonstrate love in our daily lives:

Kindness and Compassion: *Actively look for ways to show kindness to others, whether through words of encouragement, acts of service, or simply being present for someone who needs support.*

Respect and Honor: *Treat others with respect and honor their dignity as fellow human beings. This includes being considerate of their feelings, opinions, and needs.*

Forgiveness: *Extend forgiveness to those who have wronged you, just as you would want to be forgiven for your own mistakes. Forgiveness is a powerful expression of love and reconciliation.*

Generosity: *Share our resources, time, and talents with others who are in need. This could involve volunteering, giving to charitable causes, or simply being generous in our interactions with others.*

Truthfulness and Integrity: *Practice honesty and integrity in all our dealings. Being truthful and trustworthy is essential for building strong and loving relationships.*

Empathy and Listening: *Seek to understand others by listening actively and empathetically. Show genuine concern for their feelings and experiences.*

Support and Encouragement: Be a source of support and encouragement for those around us, especially during difficult times. Offer help and encouragement in practical ways.

Reconciliation and Peace: Seek to resolve conflicts peacefully and strive for reconciliation in relationships. Work towards building bridges and fostering understanding.

Prayer and Intercession: Pray for others regularly, lifting up their needs and concerns before God. Intercede on behalf of those who are suffering or facing challenges.

Lifestyle of Love: Let love permeate our entire life and actions. Make loving others a conscious and intentional practice in our daily life, reflecting the love that God has shown to us.

Read Romans 13:11-14

6. What does Paul mean in verse 11 by “**understanding the present time**”?

*It means understanding that we **are living in the period between Jesus’ first coming and His second coming** [known as **the end-times**]. We don’t know when Jesus will return, so as Christians we must live recognizing the urgency of living faithfully and righteously in anticipation of Jesus’ return at any time.*

*We also need to understand, as Christians, we are **living as citizens of two kingdoms** – the World and Heaven*

7. Why are we to “**wake up from our slumber**” in verse 11?

This is metaphor for being spiritually asleep or complacent. Christians are called to be active and alert in their faith, not passive or negligent. As the rest of the verse says, our salvation (for Heaven) is nearer than it was when we first believed. We are not to be complacent Christians.

8. What is the “**night**” and the “**day**” in verse 12?

***Night:** Represents a state of moral and spiritual darkness – **the darkness of this fallen world**. It symbolizes ignorance, sinfulness, and a lack of spiritual awareness.*

In the context of Romans 13:12, it suggests the condition of living apart from God's truth and righteousness.

The day is almost here is the day of Jesus' return.

We are living in the tension of our salvation is "now" with Jesus' first coming but also "not yet" until Jesus' second coming.

9. Ponder: How should the pending return of Jesus impact our daily lives?

*If we don't know when Jesus will return, we should **live as though Jesus' return is today!** Our focus must be on eternal things, things that last, like – God's truth; God and His Son Jesus; relationships, love, peace and righteousness.*

Are there relationships that need to be restored/reconciled?

Are there people we haven't yet told, the Good News of Jesus?

What if Jesus returns today; do your loved ones believe? What about the community around us that doesn't believe? Shouldn't that matter to us?

10. What does "**put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light**" mean in verse 12? (cf. Ephesians 5:11; 6:11, 13 & 1 Thessalonians 5:8)

As we said already, we live as citizens of two kingdoms.

The World (darkness) and Heaven (light).

*Paul wants us to **put aside any behaviour which conforms to the pattern of this world** (as he told us in Romans 12:1-2); and to **put on the armour of Jesus** – who is the **light of the world** (John 8:12)*

*Ephesians 5:11: **Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness**, but rather expose them.*

*Ephesians 6:11: Put on the **full armor of God**, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes.*

*Ephesians 6:13: Therefore, put on the **full armor of God**, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.*

*1 Thessalonians 5:8: But since we belong to the day, let us be sober, **putting on faith and love as a breastplate**, and the **hope of salvation as a helmet**.*

11. What analogy for behaviour does Paul use in verse 13?

He uses the analogy of contrasting “daytime” public behaviour which everyone sees - with “night-time” self-indulgent partying secret, behind closed doors bad behaviour!

We are to imagine the day has dawned and Jesus is standing right before us, and ask ourselves: How, how would I behave? What is really important to Jesus? What will last forever?

12. What are we meant to do in verse 14? (cf. Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10, 12 and Galatians 5:24)

We are meant to clothe ourselves with the Lord Jesus and not think about how to gratify ourselves.

We are to put off our old dirty sinful clothes and put on Jesus’ clothes. We don’t put Jesus’ clothes over the top of our dirty sinful clothes; we remove our dirty clothes first; and then behave like Jesus would.

Basically, WWJD – what would Jesus do? What would Jesus say? What would Jesus think?

*Galatians 3:27: for all of you who were baptized into Christ have **clothed yourselves with Christ**.*

*Ephesians 4:24: and to **put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*

*Colossians 3:10: and have **put on the new self**, which is being renewed in knowledge in **the image of its Creator**.*

*Colossians 3:12: Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, **clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience**.*

*Galatians 5:24: Those who belong to Christ Jesus **have crucified the flesh** with its passions and desires.*

What’s the **BIG IDEA** of Romans 13:8-14?

Christians are called to live with a genuine love for the Lord and a genuine love for others; and to walk in the light of Jesus, shining His light to others.

OR

As our Vision says: Transform our community with the love of Jesus!

OR

Remember who we are?

What ***light globe moment*** did you have in this study?



What ***questions*** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.

Finish in prayer: Ask God to grant us the strength to walk in the light, casting off the works of darkness, and putting on the armor of light through Jesus Christ. Ask God to help us to love our neighbors genuinely and to live in a way that honors God.

Study 2 – The Weak and the Strong

Romans 14:1-15:13

(Sermon on 14-July-2024)

Read Romans 14:1-4

1. In verse 1, in what way is the person “**weak**” that Paul describes and what are those who are “**stronger**” meant to do with the “**weaker**” person?

The person described is weak in faith.

The stronger person is meant to accept the weaker person without quarrelling over disputable matters.

2. What example of a “**disputable matter**” does Paul use in verse 2?

The example of a “disputable matter” is what a person eats; a person with stronger faith will eat anything (i.e. meat and vegetables) whereas someone whose faith is weak might not feel comfortable eating meat, and eat only vegetables.

3. Why is judging in these “disputable matters” a problem in verses 3 & 4?

Judging in “disputable matters” is a problem; because it’s a subjective matter and people should not judge a person on such matters because God has accepted them. Besides they are also servants of God, and they will stand before God, who is the ultimate judge.

Read Romans 14:5-9

4. What example of “**disputable matters**” does Paul use in verses 5 & 6? Can you think of any examples of this today?

The example of a “disputable matter” is how a person considers one day more sacred than other; one person might consider a particular day sacred, and another considers every day alike.

Paul says in verse 6 such matters are subjective. Whether a person considers a particular day sacred or not, and whether a person eats meat or not; they do so for the Lord and they give thanks to the Lord.

Examples of “disputable matters” today might be: Abstaining from eating meat on Friday; Baptism by full immersion or sprinkling; frequency of the Lord’s Supper; acknowledging the Old Testament festivals (Passover, Pentecost) in our Church Service; which version of the Bible to read; what diet we follow; what we wear to church; what styles of music; what we do and don’t do on the Sabbath; what form

of worship; speaking in tongues; church governance; end times interpretations and so on...

5. What reasons does Paul give for not getting bogged down in such “**disputable matters**” in verses 7 to 9?

The reason Paul gives for not getting bogged down in such “disputable matters” is because we all live and die for the same Lord. Jesus is Lord of us whatever we eat and whatever day we celebrate. Jesus is Lord of us all.

Read Romans 14:10-18

6. What reason does Paul give for not judging our brothers and sisters in verses 10 and 12? Where does Paul quote from? (cf. Isaiah 49:18; 45:23 and see Philippians 2:10-11)

The reason Paul gives for not judging our brothers and sisters is that we ourselves will have to stand before God’s judgment seat. He’s the ultimate judge; not us! And each of us will have to give an account of our own behaviour.

Isaiah 49:18 says – “as surely as I live” – there is nothing surer that God’s Word, oaths, promises and judgments on all things

Isaiah 45:23 says – “By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear” – God doesn’t need to swear by anything but Himself; He is the ultimate source of truth! And, every one will one day will have to bow before God in judgment.

Philippians 2:10-11 says – “that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”

Paul confirms what Isaiah says – that one day everyone will bow before Jesus, as Lord of all, and be judged!

7. What might we cause by “**passing judgment**” in verse 13?

By “passing judgment” we may become a stumbling block or obstacle to a brother or sister’s faith and Christian walk!

8. What action might we have to take in verses 14 and 15 if someone is uncomfortable with what we are doing? Give an example.

If someone is uncomfortable (distressed) because of something we are eating because they see it as unclean; then we are no longer acting in love – and we may destroy their confidence or affect their faith.

Examples: If someone does not drink alcohol or is an alcoholic who has given up drinking; then not drinking in front of them, would be a loving thing to do.

Other examples: a person might not eat certain foods; a person might have certain entertainment choices [movies, music, books] they find offensive; what people spend their time or money on should not be judged; different cultures and traditions should not be looked down upon.

9. What principle does Paul lay down in verses 16 to 18?

The principle is that we should let what is good (to us) to be spoken of as evil.

The reason being is that the Kingdom of God is more than what we eat or drink or the days we celebrate – it's about righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. If we do the latter, we will both please God and receive human approval as well.

Read Romans 14:19-23

10. What principle does Paul lay down in verses 19 to 21?

The principle Paul lays down is to make every effort to do what leads to peace and mutually edifies us and the other person.

Even though Jesus has declared all food is clean; we are to not eat anything that causes another Christian to stumble; rather we are to abstain!

We are to be mindful not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything which will cause a fellow brother or sister in Christ, to stumble and fall. We are to be about peace and mutual edification.

11. What principle of faith does Paul lay down in verses 22 to 23?

Rather than making a scene about “disputable matters”, we are to keep this between ourselves and God. What we believe in these matters is between God and us. It's important what we believe about these matters is consistent with how we act in these matters; otherwise we're being hypocritical. It's about living out our faith in a consistent manner!

12. **Ponder:** Can you see any area of your life in which you may be a weaker believer (to do so takes great self-awareness!)?

I might be a bit more conservative about what I wear to worship on Sunday than most other people in our church.

Read Romans 15:1-4

13. How should those who are “**strong**” behave towards those who are “**weak**”?
Why?

Those who are “strong” ought to bear with those who are “weak” and have some understanding and not just please ourselves, but consider the “weaker” brother or sister. By pleasing our “weaker” neighbour, we will build them up.

14. What example did Jesus set according to verse 3? (cf. 2 Corinthians 8:9; Philippians 2:5-11 and Psalm 69:9)

Jesus did not put Himself first, but considered others first.

2 Corinthians 8:9 says: For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.

Philippians 2:5-11 says: He didn’t use His equality with God for His advantage. He made Himself nothing and took on the very nature of a servant. He humbled Himself, was obedient to God even to death on a cross.

Psalm 69:9 which Paul quotes here in verse 3 says: David took the insults directed towards God upon Himself; which points to Jesus taking the insults directed towards God upon Himself. We are expected to do the same.

The example Jesus gives is one of a humble servant who is other-person centred.

15. What is the purpose of the scripture according to verse 4?

The purpose of what was written down in scripture in the past was: to teach us so that we learn the lessons of the past and don’t repeat the sins and mistakes of the past; and to teach us endurance and perseverance; and to encourage us; and to give us hope for the future.

Read Romans 15:5-6

16. What is Paul's prayer in verses 5 & 6? (cf. Romans 12:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:3; Philippians 2:2; Colossians 3:14; 1 Peter 3:8)

Paul prays: God will give us endurance and encouragement; and give us the same attitude of mind towards each other that Jesus had; so that with that one mind and one voice, we may give glory to God, the Father.

Romans 12:16 says: Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited.

1 Corinthians 1:10 says: In the name of Jesus Christ, agree with one another.

2 Corinthians 13:11 says: Finally brothers and sisters, rejoice! Strive for full restoration, encourage one another, be of one mind, live in peace. And the God of love and peace will be with you!

Ephesians 4:3 says: Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Philippians 2:2 says: Make my joy complete by being like-minded having the same love, being one in Spirit and of one mind.

Colossians 3:14 says: And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

1 Peter 3:8 says: Finally all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

Read Romans 15:7-13

17. What does Paul say we should do in verse 7 and why?

Verse 7 says we are to accept one another because Christ accepted us and in order that we bring praise to God!

18. What do we find out about Christ's mission in verses 8 and 9?

Christ's mission was to be a servant of the Jews on behalf of God's truth and the covenantal promises God made to patriarchs of Israel might be confirmed.

And Christ's mission was in order that also the Gentiles receive God's mercy and glorify God.

19. Which Old Testament passages does Paul quote from in verses 9, 10, 11 and 12? Why does he quote all these references?

Verse 9 quotes 2 Samuel 22:50 and Psalm 18:49 which both say: God will be praise amongst the Gentiles!

Verse 10 quotes Deuteronomy 32:43 and Isaiah 66:10 which both say that Gentiles will rejoice with God's people!

Verse 11 quotes Psalm 117:1 – calling the Gentiles to extol God!

Verse 12 quotes Isaiah 11:10 – who promises that a Root of Jesse (Jesus) will spring up; one who will arise to rule of the nations; in Him the Gentiles will hope.

All these references show that even in the Old Testament, God's plan of salvation includes both Jews and Gentiles.

20. What's Paul's concluding prayer (Benediction) in verse 13?

*"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that **you may overflow with hope** by the power of the Holy Spirit"*

21. What's the overall purpose of Romans 15:1-13?

The overall purpose of Romans 15:1-13 is to encourage believers to live in harmony, to follow the example of Christ in serving one another, and to praise God for His mercy and faithfulness in bringing unity among believers from different backgrounds. Paul underscores the importance of mutual acceptance and glorification of God for His inclusive plan of salvation through Jesus Christ.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of Romans 14:1-15:13?

Romans 14:1-15:13 teaches Christians to embrace diversity in personal convictions while maintaining unity through love, acceptance, and mutual edification. It challenges believers to prioritize the spiritual well-being of others over asserting personal freedoms and preferences, ultimately aiming to glorify God together as one body in Christ.



What **light globe moment** did you have in this study?

What **questions** do you have about the passages in this study?

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Romans 14:19 - Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification

Finish in prayer: Thank God for Christ's servanthood. Ask God to help us to be humble servants; to seek to maintain unity and to follow the example of Jesus!

Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke
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Resources:

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

Romans 8 to 16 for you (Timothy Keller)

The Message of Romans (John Stott)

Romans (Geoffrey B. Wilson)

Romans 1 to 8 (William Hendrikson)

The Epistle to the Romans (Floyd E. Hamilton)

The Epistle to the Romans (John Murray)