



**ROMANS: WEEK 4**

**Project Supervisor:** Nick Diliberto & Becky Forkel

**Artwork:** Ever Graphics

**Editor:** Angela Ivey

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## ROMANS – SMALL GROUP SERIES

### WEEK 4: HELP OTHERS AND BUILD THEM UP IN CHRIST

**Bible:** *We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves. We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord. Romans 15:1-2 (NLT)*

**Bottom Line:** God's love in you enables you to think of others above yourself.

As with all Paul's epistles to the churches, his purpose in writing was to proclaim the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ by teaching and encouraging the believers who would receive his letter.

Because Paul was a Roman citizen, he especially cared about the Roman Church.

Since he had not, to this point, visited the church in Rome, this letter also served as his introduction to them.

### TEACH

**Read Romans 14:1-16:23.**

***14** Accept other believers who are weak in faith, and don't argue with them about what they think is right or wrong.*

***2** For instance, one person believes it's all right to eat anything. But another believer with a sensitive conscience will eat only vegetables.*

***3** Those who feel free to eat anything must not look down on those who don't. And those who don't eat certain foods must not condemn those who do, for God has accepted them.*

***4** Who are you to condemn someone else's servants? Their own master will judge whether they stand or fall. And with the Lord's help, they will stand and receive his approval.*

***5** In the same way, some think one day is more holy than another day, while others think every day is alike. You should each be fully convinced that whichever day you choose is acceptable.*

***6** Those who worship the Lord on a special day do it to honor him. Those who eat any kind of food do so to honor the Lord, since they give thanks to God before eating. And those who refuse to eat certain foods also want to please the Lord and give thanks to God.*

*7 For we don't live for ourselves or die for ourselves.*

*8 If we live, it's to honor the Lord. And if we die, it's to honor the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. 9 Christ died and rose again for this very purpose—to be Lord both of the living and of the dead.*

*10 So why do you condemn another believer<sup>[a]</sup>? Why do you look down on another believer? Remember, we will all stand before the judgment seat of God.*

*11 For the Scriptures say, "As surely as I live," says the LORD, "every knee will bend to me, and every tongue will declare allegiance to God."*

*12 Yes, each of us will give a personal account to God.*

*13 So let's stop condemning each other. Decide instead to live in such a way that you will not cause another believer to stumble and fall.*

*14 I know and am convinced on the authority of the Lord Jesus that no food, in and of itself, is wrong to eat. But if someone believes it is wrong, then for that person it is wrong.*

*15 And if another believer is distressed by what you eat, you are not acting in love if you eat it. Don't let your eating ruin someone for whom Christ died.*

*16 Then you will not be criticized for doing something you believe is good.*

*17 For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of what we eat or drink, but of living a life of goodness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.*

*18 If you serve Christ with this attitude, you will please God, and others will approve of you, too.*

*19 So then, let us aim for harmony in the church and try to build each other up.*

*20 Don't tear apart the work of God over what you eat. Remember, all foods are acceptable, but it is wrong to eat something if it makes another person stumble.*

*21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or do anything else if it might cause another believer to stumble.*

*22 You may believe there's nothing wrong with what you are doing, but keep it between yourself and God. Blessed are those who don't feel guilty for doing something they have decided is right.*

*<sup>23</sup> But if you have doubts about whether or not you should eat something, you are sinning if you go ahead and do it. For you are not following your convictions. If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning.*

### **Discussion Questions**

1. Describe the two kinds of people and their faith as mentioned in Romans 14:2.
2. Paul goes from speaking about foods to what topic in Romans 14:5?
3. What makes a person's views "holy" and acceptable to the Lord (Romans 14:6)?
4. What was the overall purpose of Christ's death and resurrection (Romans 14:9)?
5. A holy life is one which does what pleases God. How does this apply if there is no particular right or wrong way?

*<sup>15</sup> We who are strong must be considerate of those who are sensitive about things like this. We must not just please ourselves.*

*<sup>2</sup> We should help others do what is right and build them up in the Lord.*

*<sup>3</sup> For even Christ didn't live to please himself. As the Scriptures say, "The insults of those who insult you, O God, have fallen on me."*

*<sup>4</sup> Such things were written in the Scriptures long ago to teach us. And the Scriptures give us hope and encouragement as we wait patiently for God's promises to be fulfilled.*

*<sup>5</sup> May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other, as is fitting for followers of Christ Jesus.*

*<sup>6</sup> Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

*<sup>7</sup> Therefore, accept each other just as Christ has accepted you so that God will be given glory.*

*<sup>8</sup> Remember that Christ came as a servant to the Jews<sup>[1]</sup> to show that God is true to the promises he made to their ancestors.*

*<sup>9</sup> He also came so that the Gentiles might give glory to God for his mercies to them. That is what the psalmist meant when he wrote: "For this, I will praise you among the Gentiles; I will sing praises to your name."*

*<sup>10</sup> And in another place it is written, "Rejoice with his people, you Gentiles." <sup>11</sup> And yet again, "Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles. Praise him, all you people of the earth."*

*12 And in another place Isaiah said, “The heir to David’s throne<sup>11</sup> will come, and he will rule over the Gentiles. They will place their hope on him.”*

*13 I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.*

*14 I am fully convinced, my dear brothers and sisters,<sup>12</sup> that you are full of goodness. You know these things so well you can teach each other all about them.*

*15 Even so, I have been bold enough to write about some of these points, knowing that all you need is this reminder. For by God’s grace, <sup>16</sup> I am a special messenger from Christ Jesus to you Gentiles. I bring you the Good News so that I might present you as an acceptable offering to God, made holy by the Holy Spirit.*

*17 So I have reason to be enthusiastic about all Christ Jesus has done through me in my service to God.*

*18 Yet I dare not boast about anything except what Christ has done through me, bringing the Gentiles to God by my message and by the way I worked among them.*

*19 They were convinced by the power of miraculous signs and wonders and by the power of God’s Spirit. In this way, I have fully presented the Good News of Christ from Jerusalem all the way to Illyricum.*

*20 My ambition has always been to preach the Good News where the name of Christ has never been heard, rather than where a church has already been started by someone else.*

*21 I have been following the plan spoken of in the Scriptures, where it says, “Those who have never been told about him will see, and those who have never heard of him will understand.”*

*22 In fact, my visit to you has been delayed so long because I have been preaching in these places.*

*23 But now I have finished my work in these regions, and after all these long years of waiting, I am eager to visit you.*

*24 I am planning to go to Spain, and when I do, I will stop off in Rome. And after I have enjoyed your fellowship for a little while, you can provide for my journey.*

*25 But before I come, I must go to Jerusalem to take a gift to the believers there.*

*26 For you see, the believers in Macedonia and Achaia have eagerly taken up an offering for the poor among the believers in Jerusalem.*

*27 They were glad to do this because they feel they owe a real debt to them. Since the Gentiles received the spiritual blessings of the Good News from the believers in Jerusalem, they feel the least they can do in return is to help them financially.*

*28 As soon as I have delivered this money and completed this good deed of theirs, I will come to see you on my way to Spain.*

*29 And I am sure that when I come, Christ will richly bless our time together.*

*30 Dear brothers and sisters, I urge you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to join in my struggle by praying to God for me. Do this because of your love for me, given to you by the Holy Spirit.*

*31 Pray that I will be rescued from those in Judea who refuse to obey God. Pray also that the believers there will be willing to accept the donation I am taking to Jerusalem.*

*32 Then, by the will of God, I will be able to come to you with a joyful heart, and we will be an encouragement to each other.*

*33 And now may God, who gives us his peace, be with you all. Amen.*

**16** *I commend to you our sister Phoebe, who is a deacon in the church in Cenchrea.*

*2 Welcome her in the Lord as one who is worthy of honor among God's people. Help her in whatever she needs, for she has been helpful to many, and especially to me.*

*3 Give my greetings to Priscilla and Aquila, my co-workers in the ministry of Christ Jesus.*

*4 In fact, they once risked their lives for me. I am thankful to them, and so are all the Gentile churches.*

*5 Also give my greetings to the church that meets in their home. Greet my dear friend Epenetus. He was the first person from the province of Asia to become a follower of Christ.*

*6 Give my greetings to Mary, who has worked so hard for your benefit.*

*7 Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews,<sup>[U]</sup> who were in prison with me. They are highly respected among the apostles and became followers of Christ before I did.*

*8 Greet Ampliatus, my dear friend in the Lord.*

*9 Greet Urbanus, our co-worker in Christ, and my dear friend Stachys.*

*10 Greet Apelles, a good man whom Christ approves. And give my greetings to the believers from the household of Aristobulus.*

*11 Greet Herodion, my fellow Jew.<sup>[v]</sup> Greet the Lord's people from the household of Narcissus.*

*12 Give my greetings to Tryphena and Tryphosa, the Lord's workers, and to dear Persis, who has worked so hard for the Lord.*

*13 Greet Rufus, whom the Lord picked out to be his very own; and also his dear mother, who has been a mother to me.*

*14 Give my greetings to Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters<sup>[w]</sup> who meet with them.*

*15 Give my greetings to Philologus, Julia, Nereus and his sister, and to Olympas and all the believers<sup>[x]</sup> who meet with them.*

*16 Greet each other with a sacred kiss. All the churches of Christ send you their greetings.*

*17 And now I make one more appeal, my dear brothers and sisters. Watch out for people who cause divisions and upset people's faith by teaching things contrary to what you have been taught. Stay away from them.*

*18 Such people are not serving Christ our Lord; they are serving their own personal interests. By smooth talk and glowing words they deceive innocent people.*

*19 But everyone knows that you are obedient to the Lord. This makes me very happy. I want you to be wise in doing right and to stay innocent of any wrong.*

*20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. May the grace of our Lord Jesus<sup>[y]</sup> be with you.*

*21 Timothy, my fellow worker, sends you his greetings, as do Lucius, Jason, and Sospater, my fellow Jews.*

*22 I, Tertius, the one writing this letter for Paul, send my greetings, too, as one of the Lord's followers.*

*23 Gaius says hello to you. He is my host and also serves as host to the whole church. Erastus, the city treasurer, sends you his greetings, and so does our brother Quartus.*

In Romans 14, Paul gives more instructions to believers about living together in harmony.

Because of the diverse backgrounds, religious and cultural, on the part of both Jews and Gentiles, many problems arose that threatened the unity of the body of Christ.

He discusses the problem of criticizing other believers and causing others to sin because of your actions.

Not all believers have the same level of spiritual growth.

We need to recognize this and accept all believers.  
God has accepted all believers based on the death and resurrection of Christ.

The stronger or more mature believer should not look down on the younger or more immature believer.

Paul distinguishes two groups of people: Strong and weak.

Paul lines himself up with “the strong.”

So, what is Paul’s point?

All of you...strong or weak...stop judging one another.

Stop despising one another.

Stop quarreling.

Romans 15 goes on to say, the strong believer should help the weak believer understand and outgrow his spiritual weaknesses.

The weak were Jewish converts who were still stuck in either the Jewish food & festival laws and customs, and/or converts from Paganism who were still stuck with superstitions of their various cults about foods and holy days.

The strong were converts from either group who realized that they had immense freedom in Christ.

In Romans 14 and 15, Paul is telling the strong how to interact with the weak.

Why? Because there were problems in the early church.

1. What do you think it means to please one's neighbor rather than one's self (verses 1 & 2)?
2. Why is it so difficult for you to think of others over yourself?

3. Why is it important for us live in unity as Christians? How could you bring unity to a difficult situation?
4. What did you learn about giving and generosity from Romans 15?
5. What did you learn about prayer from Romans 15?

**Read Romans 16:25-27.**

*<sup>25</sup> Now all glory to God, who is able to make you strong, just as my Good News says. This message about Jesus Christ has revealed his plan for you Gentiles, a plan kept secret from the beginning of time.*

*<sup>26</sup> But now as the prophets foretold and as the eternal God has commanded, this message is made known to all Gentiles everywhere, so that they too might believe and obey him.*

*<sup>27</sup> All glory to the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, forever. Amen.*

Let's talk about Paul's closing thoughts.

The last three verses of the book of Romans are what we usually call a *doxology*.

The word *doxology* comes from the Greek words *doxa*, which means *glory*, and *logos*, which means word.

So, a doxology is a word that ascribes glory to God.

Everything exists and everything happens to draw attention to the glory of God.

Paul makes the glory of God the ultimate goal of the Gospel.

1. What are some facts you learn about the gospel in verses 25-26?
2. In verse 27, Paul gives glory to God through Jesus Christ. How is God glorified through Jesus Christ?
3. What final warning does Paul give to the Romans?
4. What is the most important thing you learned from studying the book of Romans?

The Book of Romans tells us about God, who He is and what He has done for humanity.

It tells us about Jesus.

It tells us about ourselves, what we were like before and after we trust in Jesus. Paul points out that God did not demand men have their lives straightened out before coming to Christ.

While we were still sinners Christ died for our sins.

There is nothing we can do to save ourselves.

God expressed grace and mercy by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross in our place.

When we turn our lives over to Christ, we are no longer controlled by our sinful nature, but we are controlled by the Spirit.

If we confess that Jesus is Lord, and believe that He is raised from the dead, we are saved, born again.

We should live our lives offered to God as a living sacrifice to Him.