

# Romans 14 - 16

*Paul has spent the last couple of chapters drawing the reader's attention to the importance of living a transformed life. In chapter 12 he spoke of Christians being a "living sacrifice" and using the gifts we have been given with cheerfulness. In chapter 13, he spoke of the importance of living "subject to the governing authorities." Now Paul turns his attention to our day-to-day relationships within the body that must work together in unity. This will take a conscious effort on our part to "pursue the things which makes for peace and the things by which one may edify (build-up) another."*

## Observation Romans 14

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1. As our study of Romans comes to a close, read these chapters several times asking the Lord to help you understand what is being said. Romans 14:1 instructs us to welcome those believers who are different from ourselves—those who have different ideas about certain matters. What did Paul mention in verse 1-2 that is not worth quarreling over?

What were some of the issues causing division among the believers in Rome?

2. Look at verse 4, what does Paul warn believers to avoid?
3. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we should think the best of one another and strive to work together in unity. God did not intend for us to go it all alone. Remember in Romans 12:5, Paul said, we are many parts of one body, each with a special function in the body but able to function together for the good of all. According to Romans 14:9-12, what is another reason we should strive for unity and peace in the body of Christ? What will we each of us do one day?
4. Instead of focusing our attention on correcting and passing judgment on our brother and sisters in Christ, to what does Paul tell us to focus our attention?
5. Paul offers his opinion as an apostle and follower of Jesus Christ in verse 14, nothing is \_\_\_\_\_. Christians are no longer under the old covenant, yet, if one thinks certain foods are not to be eaten then they should not eat them.
6. Paul said the kingdom of God is not attained by the temporal things of this world, like eating and drinking. According to verse 17, what are the keys to kingdom living, given by the Holy Spirit?
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7. We are called to live at peace with one another. What are the warnings in Romans 14:19-23?

## Observation Romans 15

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1. In Romans 15:1-7, Paul points out two sources of encouragement for believers in verses 1-7. Fill in the chart below using the verses indicated to see the great benefits and examples available to believers.

Christ's Example	Benefits of the Scriptures
vs 3	verse 4
vs 5	
vs 7	

*Dig Deeper: Look up the word "bear" found in Romans 15:1.*

2. What is Paul's stated purpose for writing to the Roman believers?
3. The apostle Paul had several long trips to distant lands on his heart. What was his intended purpose for these journeys?

## Observation Romans 16

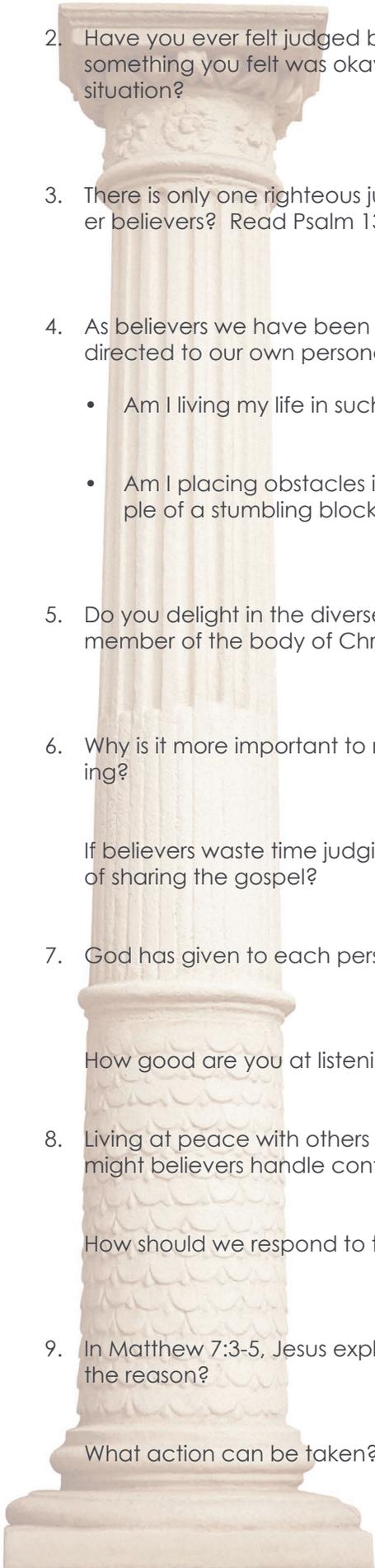
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1. This chapter closes Paul's letter with a list of people. These are brothers and sisters he loves and who have ministered alongside him over the years of his ministry. Use a highlighter to mark these names in your Bible. How many friends (plus home churches) did Paul mention?
2. Paul cannot close his letter without one last word of warning. What does Paul warn them to "watch out for" and to "keep away from them" in Romans 16:17?

## Application Romans 14

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1. Paul talked about those who are weak and those who are strong. In verse 1, he said we are to accept or welcome other believers, without getting into a quarrel over certain disputable differences. We all come from different situations and backgrounds. We all have things we feel are right or wrong. We draw the line in different places. What are some disputable matters? What are some things today that tend to separate Christians that really are not of any eternal value?

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2. Have you ever felt judged by other believers for something you did or didn't do? Perhaps it was something you felt was okay, but they considered wrong for a Christ-follower. How did you handle the situation?
  3. There is only one righteous judge, and it is not us. So why do we waste time judging the actions of other believers? Read Psalm 139:1-4 and 23-24. What would be a wiser investment of our time?
  4. As believers we have been instructed by God's word not to judge others. Our attention should be directed to our own personal walk of faith. Perhaps we should ask ourselves a few questions:
    - Am I living my life in such a way that it points to my gracious heavenly Father and offers direction?
    - Am I placing obstacles in someone's way that might make them stumble and fall? Give an example of a stumbling block that might trip someone up today?
  5. Do you delight in the diverseness of the body of Christ? If we cannot accept the differences of each member of the body of Christ, what are we really saying about God's creation?
  6. Why is it more important to maintain unity among believers than to prove you are right? Who is watching?

If believers waste time judging one another and arguing, will we be able to properly carry out the task of sharing the gospel?

7. God has given to each person a conscience. What is the purpose of the conscience?

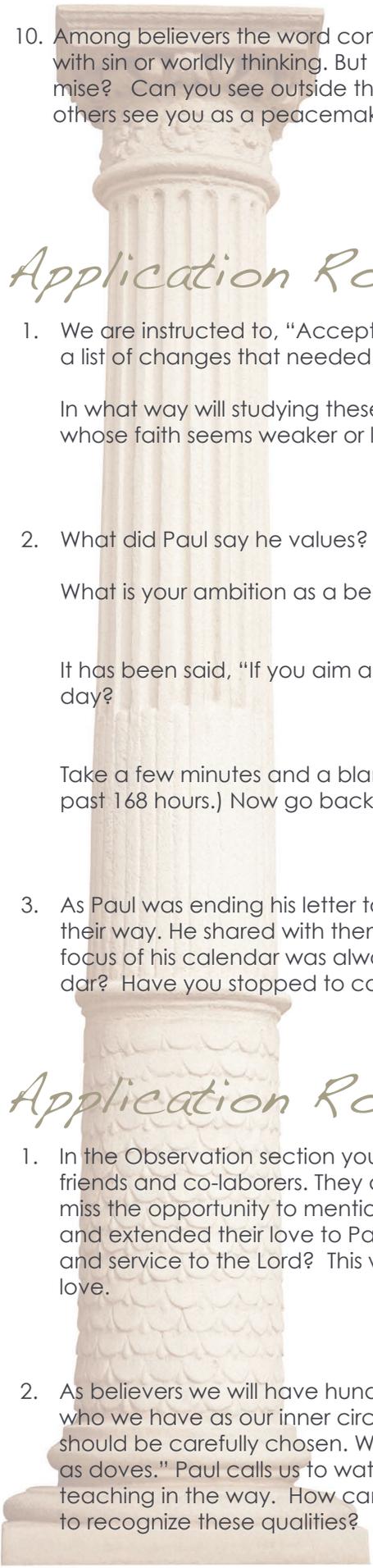
How good are you at listening to your conscience and making wise choices?

8. Living at peace with others does not mean we condone or agree with everything they choose. How might believers handle controversial issues to build up the church rather than critique it?

How should we respond to these differences?

9. In Matthew 7:3-5, Jesus explains why people are sometimes judgmental of others. What did he say is the reason?

What action can be taken?

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10. Among believers the word compromise can be something we try to avoid. We must never compromise with sin or worldly thinking. But there will be issues where we should be flexible. How are you at compromise? Can you see outside the box in order to work things out when needed? Read Matthew 5:9. Do others see you as a peacemaker?

## Application Romans 15

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1. We are instructed to, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you." Did the Lord hand you a list of changes that needed to be made in order to have a relationship with him?

In what way will studying these verses change your focus when you are with a brother or sister in Christ whose faith seems weaker or less mature than yours?

2. What did Paul say he values? What has been his aim and ambition as a follower of Christ?

What is your ambition as a believer? What do you hope to accomplish of kingdom value?

It has been said, "If you aim at nothing - you will hit it every time." What do you give your time to each day?

Take a few minutes and a blank piece of paper and make a list of your activities this past 7 days (the past 168 hours.) Now go back with a highlighter and mark the things of eternal value.

3. As Paul was ending his letter to the Roman believers, he told them how often he had wanted to come their way. He shared with them his plan to go to Jerusalem and then visit them on his way to Spain. The focus of his calendar was always a kingdom focus. Do you have any upcoming trips on your calendar? Have you stopped to consider who you might share the gospel with while you are there?

## Application Romans 16

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1. In the Observation section you were asked to highlight the names of those who had been Paul's friends and co-laborers. They did not serve Christ or assist Paul for the accolades, but Paul does not miss the opportunity to mention some of the sacrifices these believers have made as they served Christ and extended their love to Paul and to others. Who would you like to thank for their Christian friendship and service to the Lord? This would be a good time to write them a quick note of appreciation and love.

2. As believers we will have hundreds, if not thousands, of acquaintances, but we should be careful who we have as our inner circle of friends. Those who have a great impact on our service for Christ should be carefully chosen. We are to be discerning, Jesus said to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves." Paul calls us to watch out for those who cause division and put a stumbling block of false teaching in the way. How can we prepare our hearts and minds to be wise and discerning and able to recognize these qualities?



# Extra Verses

◆ *Psalm 139:1-4*

*O LORD, you have examined my heart and know everything about me.<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit down or stand up. You know my thoughts even when I'm far away.<sup>3</sup> You see me when I travel and when I rest at home. You know everything I do.<sup>4</sup> You know what I am going to say even before I say it, LORD.*

◆ *Psalm 139:23-24*

*<sup>23</sup> Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.<sup>24</sup> Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life.*

◆ *Matthew 7:3-5*

*Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye?<sup>4</sup> Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when there is the log in your own eye?<sup>5</sup> You hypocrite first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*

◆ *Matthew 5:9*

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.*