

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Romans: Charter Of Salvation Grace

Part VI: The Practical Application Of God's Spiritual Provisions To Living F. Applying God's Spiritual Provisions To Relating To Uninformed Believers (Romans 14:1-15:7)

I. Introduction

- A. What we know of God's Word is more than what some other Christians know, for every believer is at a different level of spiritual maturity, and each one has been exposed to a different amount of Bible truth.
- B. This creates a need for us to know how to relate well to a believer who means well, but who is less informed of God's truths than we are, and Romans 14:1-15:7 reveals how we should do this (as follows):

II. Applying God's Spiritual Provisions To Relating To Uninformed Believers, Romans 14:1-15:7.

- A. Paul revealed that *informed* believers must **not pass judgment** on *uninformed* believers, Rom. 14:1-12:
 - 1. The one who is "weak in the faith" in this context is not one who intentionally sins or is deceived by errant doctrine, but one who has not yet been discipled to understand Biblical truths, Romans 14:1-2:
 - a. Paul's allusions in the context to the different beliefs Christians had regarding dietary (Rom. 14:2, 17) and holy day topics (Rom. 14:5) reveals he addressed the challenge of relating well to new converts out of Judaism who held God expected them to obey His written Word under the Law.
 - b. This ignorance needed to be treated in a way that would not ruin the trust these believers had long put in the truthfulness of the Old Testament, so Paul addressed this need in Romans 14:1-15:7.
 - 2. Hence, Paul held that informed believers must not pass judgment on the uninformed, Romans 14:1-2.
 - 3. To illustrate, Paul referred to the uninformed believer who still held Scripture dictated he eat only clean animals, Romans 14:3a. Neither the untaught nor the taught should judge the other, Romans 14:3b.
 - 4. A big reason for this need was the fact that the only One Who had the right to judge on such matters of conscience was the believer's Master, not another believer; the Lord Himself was the One Who would judge every believer at Christ's Judgment Seat, Romans 14:4, 6-12! Similarly, if the untaught still held to keeping an Old Testament feast day, the informed believer must not argue with him, Romans 14:5.
- B. Paul revealed that *informed* believers must **not hinder the discipleship** of *untaught* believers by pushing advanced truths on them as they did not yet have the capacity to know or to apply such truths, 14:13-23:
 - 1. Paul revealed that, from his insight as an apostle, he was persuaded by the Lord that there is nothing edible that is Biblically wrong for the Christian to eat, Romans 14:14 (cf. Acts 10:9-16; 1 Tim. 4:3-5).
 - 2. However, if the uninformed brother new out of Judaism conscientiously held he could not eat meat that God's Word in the Old Testament directed him to avoid, the informed must not put a stumblingblock in the path of his conscience by impressing him to eat such meat he held to be wrong, Rom. 14:13, 15-16.
 - 3. After all, the kingdom of God was not to be characterized by what one ate or abstained from eating in itself, but by righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, Romans 14:17.
 - 4. Thus, we should be patient toward one another in such matters of conscience, and Christ will receive us as we seek peace in the body versus destroying one the consciences of each other, Romans 14:18-23.
- C. Thus, in summary, Biblically *informed* believers were to be long-suffering in relating to the *uninformed* rather than to please themselves, Romans 15:1-7:
 - 1. In calling believers who are strong to bear the infirmities of the weak at Romans 15:1, the context reveals this call meant the informed should be long-suffering toward errant uninformed Christians!
 - 2. As such, the informed are should edify the uninformed by not distressing them with high expectations like Christ did not please Himself, but bore the reproaches of them that reproached God, Rom. 15:2-3.
 - 3. [Paul here added that the Old Testament that predicted Christ's substitutionary atonement is for our use that we might learn patience with the weak, and be comforted in its applicable insights, Romans 15:4.]
 - 4. Accordingly, the God of patience and consolation wants His people to be long-suffering toward one another regardless of the relationship challenges produced by variations in knowledge, Rom. 15:5-6, 7.

Lesson: *Informed believers must NOT press uninformed believers on truths they are not yet able to accept, but graciously to exercise long-suffering toward them until God, their Master, disciples them!*

Application: *May we treat uninformed brethren with gracious long-suffering for God's glory!*