

Victoria Fellowship Church
International & Interdenominational
Bible Study Worksheet – August 27, 2023

Theme: Romans: The Power of God at Work in us Topic: Bearing with One Another

Main Text: Romans 14:1-21

Key verse: Romans 14:13 *“Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way.”* (NKJV)

INTRODUCTION: Last Sunday, we looked at Love as the means to fulfilling the Law. Our key verse referenced a statement Jesus Christ gave when questioned about which commandment was the greatest. In response, *“Jesus replied, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”* (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV). In Romans 14, Apostle Paul continues his teaching on how believers are to relate with one another; something which he started in previous chapters. The context this time is regarding secondary matters of religious practices like foods and religious festivals - holy days. Paul is talking to committed disciples and he told them to focus on peace, upbuilding and avoiding quarrels. How does this apply to us today?

1. **Read: Romans 14:1-6, 10, Mark 7:19; Acts 10:13-15. (a) What do these passages say about what to eat and what not to eat? (b) What main reason(s) does the word of God stipulate for deciding on foods and special days? (c) What is it about our nature that leads us down this path of quibbling over such issues as foods and holy days? And what are we encouraged to strive for in overcoming such tendencies?**

Often, our attitudes and reactions are based on pre-conceived ideas, myths, and opinions about something (as defined by self). We proceed to judge situations and persons based on these. Paul was addressing the attitudes of some in condemning others for their food and drink preferences as seen in verses 13-15. As Christians we are told in verse 12 of our reading, *“Yes, each of us will give an account of himself to God”*. The point here firstly is that we should all live according to our faith and consciences, honoring the Lord in all we do. Secondly that those living like this are accountable to God, not to other believers, regarding matters of opinion. We each have one master - God, and our individual primary responsibility is to work to please Him.

2. **Read: Romans 14:4, 13-18. Romans 14:14 says that *“I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself...”* (NKJV). (a) What principle do we find in this statement that will help us in how we relate with believers who may have different conviction than us? (b) What is the implication of Romans 14:10-12? And what should be our response therefrom?**

In Romans 14, it must be noted that the context is not about doctrines of salvation, or doctrine about God. Rather, it is about secondary issues. These secondary issues are often the basis for many contentions among believers and across denominations. The reality is that this Christian attitude of bearing with one another, showing patience and empathy with the ‘weaknesses’ of others is learnt or “acquired”. That is why in Romans 14:19, God enjoins us to *‘try as hard as we can to do what will bring peace. Let’s do whatever will help each other grow stronger in faith.’* (ERV). The key is for each of us to give the other the benefit of the doubt, believing that fellow brothers and sisters are sincerely seeking to honor God. In so doing, forgoing my freedom to help others not stumble, becomes easy, and then God is pleased. Our actions will lead to “peace and for mutual upbuilding.”

3. **Read Romans 14:19-23; Colossians 2:16. (a) What principle do we see in Romans 14:19-21 regarding this matter of bearing with one another? Let participants share examples of how this can be lived out. (b) Let participants identify one thing we are commanded to do and one we are to desist from in Romans 14:22-23? (c) What other questions do we have regarding these commands and how does Colossians 2:16 help us to resolve them?**

Prayer: Lord, we thank You for reminding us of what is important and what is not. May we strive earnestly for those things which are important, which lead to helping each other grow in faith. Amen