

God's Good News about Righteousness

An Inductive Study of the Book of Romans

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The Application of God's Righteousness in the Believer's Relationship to Debatable Matters. (Romans 14:1-15:13)

Study 23. Part 2: The Principle of Not Being a Stumbling Block. (Romans 14:13b-23)

- A. INTRODUCTION: The Writer, the Readers, and the Good News (Romans 1:1-17). Study 1.
- B. CONDEMNATION: The Unveiling of God's Wrath against Man's Unrighteousness (Romans 1:18 – 3:20). (Studies 2-5).
- C. JUSTIFICATION: The Declaration of Righteousness through Faith (Romans 3:21 – 5:21). (Studies 6-10).
- D. SANCTIFICATION: The Outworking of Righteousness in the Believer's Experience (Romans 6-8). (Studies 11-16).
- E. VINDICATION: The Vindication of God's Righteousness in Setting Aside National Israel in Order to Save the Nations (Romans 9-11). (Studies 17-19).
- F. TRANSFORMATION: The Application of Righteousness in Specific Areas (Romans 12:1 – 15:13).
 - 1. The Application of God's Righteousness to the Believer's Daily Conduct. Romans 12 (Study 20)
 - 2. The Application of God's Righteousness in the Believer's Relationship to the State. Romans 13 (Study 21)
 - 3. The Application of God's Righteousness in Relation to Debatable Matters. Romans 14:1 – 15:13
 - a. Part 1. The Principle of Non-Judgmental Acceptance. 14:1-13a. (Study 22)
 - b. **Part 2. The Principle of Not Being a Stumbling Block. 14:13b-23 (Study 23).** Paul concluded the previous section with this exhortation: "Therefore let us not judge one another" (Rom. 14:13a). That exhortation accurately summed up the first principle we need to follow in the area of debatable matters" – The principle of non-judgmental acceptance of one another. Now Paul begins a second principle, along with its implications in this discussion. Here it is – **Do not be a stumbling block.** This Principle divides itself into five sections as follows:

1) **Do not Place a Stumbling Block or Obstacle in Your Brother's Way! 14:13-16**

- a) Instead of judging one another, we are to determine not to put an _____ or a _____ in a Christian brother's way (14:13b).
- b) Next Paul began to illustrate by sharing his own conviction, one which He had from Jesus, about food (14:14a). What was Paul's conviction? "_____ is _____ in itself."
- c) Next, Paul applied the concept that, in debatable matters, one's own perception becomes a reality. Here's how he stated it: "To him who _____ anything to be unclean, to him it _____ unclean" (14:14b). There follow some discussion questions:
- i For the sake of discussion, as far as Paul was concerned, what was the correct theological principle about food in the eyes of God? _____
 - ii If one followed Paul's view, would he have greater or lesser freedom in eating? _____
 - iii Opposed to Paul's view was the view that certain foods are unclean, and therefore not to be eaten. In Paul's view, was this the correct theological view about food? _____
 - iv Would the Christian who followed the view of Paul's "opponent" have greater or lesser freedom than Paul. _____
 - v In your view, who is usually viewed to be the more "spiritual" Christian? – the one who is more liberated in his practice or the one who has more restrictive scruples? _____
 - vi Does your study of this passage so far *confirm* or *challenge* your view of spirituality? _____

d) Paul continued to expand his teaching that, out of love, we ought not to flaunt a position that would damage a Christian brother (14:15).

i What if the position you take on food hurts your Christian brother? In that case you are not walking (living) according to _____. (14:15a)

ii What does Paul warn us *not* to do with our personal food policy?

_____ (14:15b)

e) Paul next expanded his teaching with another statement: “Therefore do not let what is for you a _____ thing be spoken of as _____” (14:16a).

i What does he mean by that? _____

ii If one follows what Paul is teaching in this particular case, which Christian will have to give up his practice (not his belief) about eating food?

2) **What the Kingdom of God is about. 14:17-18**

a) To support his command of not placing an obstacle in a brother’s way, Paul offered a contrast (14:17):

i The kingdom of God is *not* about _____ and _____.

ii What *is* the kingdom of God about?

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____ in the _____

iii What does Paul’s talk about the kingdom of God mean? _____

iv How do his statements affect the Christian brother who sincerely believes he can eat any kind of food? _____

b) Paul made a qualitative statement next (14:18). He said that a Christian brother who in this *way* serves Christ (by giving up his right to eat certain foods) has a positive impact:

i What is he in regard to God? _____

ii What is he in regard to men? _____

3) **Pursue Peace! 14:19.** What kind of policies are we Christians supposed to pursue with one another (in regard to what we eat and which days we observe and other such debatable issues)?

a) Policies which make for _____.

b) Policies which result in _____ of one another.

4) **Do Not Destroy the Work of God! 14:20-21**

a) Paul gives another over-arching policy: Do not _____ the work of God for the sake of _____. (14:20a)

b) The correct view is that all foods are _____. (14:20b)

c) But if by exercising my right to eat all foods I cause offense to a brother, that privilege becomes _____ for me! (14:20c)

d) Here is what is good: It is good not (14:21)

i To eat _____

ii Or to drink _____

iii Or to do anything that causes my Christian brother to _____.

5) **Pursue a Clear Conscience! 14:22-23**

- a) If I have faith about a certain debatable matter, I should have it as my own personal _____ before God. (14:22a)
- b) The man whose conscience does not _____ in that which he approves is _____. (14:22b)
- c) The person who has doubts about whether he should be eating something is condemned. (14:23)
 - i Why? Because he is not eating in _____.
 - ii Whatever is not done in faith is _____.
 - iii Why is faith so important in the Christian life? (See Hebrews 11:6.) _____
_____.

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