

Romans 14 - cont.

strong brother in their respective activities. If God does, then so should we.

Question 5. What are all brethren to have when they practice their scruples? Paul writes that all the brethren are to be “fully assured in his own mind” (v. 5), do his act “unto the Lord” (vv. 6-9), do it with “love ... righteousness ... peace ... joy” (vv. 16,17), do it to “serve Christ” (v. 18), do it to have “peace ... edify one another” (v. 19), and do it with “faith ... before God” (v. 22). Each brother “judges not himself” (v. 22); that is, he has no doubt and he is fully assured (doubt = eat not of faith = sin) (v. 23).

According to Paul, everyone is to (1) be fully assured in the activity he approves; no doubts about what he does, and, (2) do his activity to please the Lord.

What we learn from this great chapter is that in matters of personal “faith” (scruple / opinion), we must exercise forbearance, gentleness, and patience with each others. Be selfless and willing even to forgo a liberty in front of others when necessary.

(continued next week)

- Chris Reeves -

- Thought of the Week -

I make so many choices in life each and every day. Do I consider my thoughts and feelings as choices too? I choose whether I will be happy or sad? I choose whether I will be anxious or at peace? I choose whether I will be born down by grief or be cheerful. My emotional state is a choice I make. I may not be able to choose my circumstances in life, but I can choose how I react to those circumstances. This week I choose to be positive in my thoughts, for my sake and for those around me.

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For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.
- 2 Corinthians 10:3-4 -

Romans 14: Used and Abused - Part 2

In this week's bulletin, we continue to study the teaching of Romans 14 and we continue answering the important questions addressed in this great chapter by the apostle Paul.

Question 2. Who are the brethren under discussion in this chapter? The second group of brethren under discussion in Romans 14 are the "strong" brethren.

The "strong" brethren are the brethren who have a faith or convicted conscience which allows them to do those things discussed in this chapter. They are described this way:

- "One man has faith..." (vv. 2,22).
- "another esteems every day alike" (v. 5).
- "I know and am persuaded..." (v. 14).
- "We that are strong..." (15:1).

The "strong" brother is one whose conscience will allow him to engage in a particular activity; he is "fully persuaded". He is not stronger in conviction than the weak brother. They both have convictions, albeit different

amounts of conviction. And, he is not stronger in knowledge than the weak brother. They both have knowledge, albeit different amounts of knowledge.

As I mentioned in last week's bulletin, "faith" (vv. 1, 2, 22, 23) in Romans 14 means "full assurance"; without any doubts (vv. 5b, 14a, 22b, 23). It does not mean "faith" that comes from God's word (Rom. 10:17), or "the faith" which is the gospel (Ac. 6:7; Jude 7). When the "strong" brother has "faith" in Romans 14, he has full assurance and conviction.

Question 3. How are these brethren to treat one another with such matters? How are the "weak" and "strong" brothers supposed to act in the local church. Paul writes that they are that they are to "receive" (v. 1) one another. These brethren are to be in fellowship in matters of opinion and allow each other to exercise his conscience in personal matters of scruple and opinion.

There are also some things that Paul says they are not to do. They are:

- "Not ... set at naught" [despise] (vv. 3,10)
- "not ... judge" (vv. 3,10-12,13)

- "no ... stumbling block" (vv. 13,21)
- "grieve" ... "destroy not" (v. 15)
- "not ... good be evil spoken of" (v. 16)
- "overthrow not..." (v. 20)

The "weak" and "strong" brother are not to (1) disfellowship one another in matters of opinion, or (2) cause one another to sin by acting against one's conscience. This is important for the unity of the local church and for one's own salvation. To be willing to give up and not divide over personal opinions is sometimes hard, but it is absolutely necessary for the spiritual health and well-being of every Christian.

Question 4. What is God's view of such matters and brethren discussed in Romans 14? How does God view the brother who does one of these acts and the brother who do not? Paul writes that "God has received him" (v. 3), "the Lord has power to make him stand" (v. 4), and the brother can act "unto the Lord" (v. 6).

According to Paul, God will accept into fellowship both the weak and