



# A Study of Romans

## Advent 2: Romans Chapter 13:8 – Romans 14

### Faithful Citizenship and Fulfillment of the Law (13:8-14)

### The Weak and the Strong in Rome (14:1-23)



### Overview

The second half of Romans Chapter 13 (8-14) is Paul's continuation of practical instruction on daily Christian living. Paul counsels his readers that they should owe nothing to anyone except the indebtedness of expressing love as the fulfillment of the law. Paul emphasizes that we need to change our habits quickly because the end of the world itself is near. He uses metaphors of slumber, night and day, and clothing oneself in Christ to correct our sinful nature and make ourselves ready for final judgement.

In Chapter 14 Paul addresses the issues in Rome regarding Jewish food restrictions and feast days by dividing the congregation into two groups, which he calls "the weak" and "the strong". Paul describes the weak as persons who abstain from meat and wine, and who follow a calendar that treat some days more important than others. By contrast, Paul describes the strong as those who have an unrestricted diet and make no special distinction between one day and another. Despite these differences in rituals, Paul warns us not to pass judgment on one another and not to destroy the work of God for the sake of eating and drinking, but make every effort to do what leads to peace, mutual edification, righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

# Chapter 13:8: Faithful Citizenship and Fulfillment of the Law

## 1. Love as Fulfillment of the Law (13:8-10)

- 8 *Be indebted to no one, except to one another in love. For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law.*
- 9 *The commandments “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and any other commandments, are summed up in this one decree: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*
- 10 *Love does no wrong to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

### Key Points:

- Paul counsels his readers that they should owe nothing to anyone except love.
- Paul sums up the 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> commandments with Christ’s Great Commandment.
- Paul cites that love is the fulfillment of the law.

### Questions:

1. What does Paul mean by “indebtedness”?
2. How does having no debt to anyone make us better Christians?
3. Are we in debt to expressing love?
4. How does love fulfill the Law in regards to Christ’s two Commandments?

## 2. Putting on Christ (13:11-14)

- 11 *And do this, understanding the occasion. The hour has come for you to wake up from your slumber, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*
- 12 *The night is nearly over; the day has drawn near. So let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*
- 13 *Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.*
- 14 *Instead, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the desires of the flesh.*

### Key Points:

- Paul gives a reason for changing our habits in that the end of the world itself is near.
- Paul uses the metaphor of waking up from sleep to describe a Christian life.
- Clothing oneself in Christ is another metaphor used to describe faithful conduct.

Questions:

1. How does “waking up from slumber” describe the Christian life?
2. What does it mean to “lay aside the deeds of the darkness and put on the armor of light”?
3. How does “clothing oneself with the Lord Jesus Christ” express spiritual decency?

## **Chapter 14: The Weak and the Strong in Rome**

### **1. Welcoming the Weak (14:1-12)**

- 1 *Accept the one whose faith is weak, without quarreling over disputable matters.*
- 2 *One person’s faith allows them to eat anything, but another, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.*
- 3 *The one who eats everything must not treat with contempt the one who does not, and the one who does not eat everything must not judge the one who does, for God has accepted them.*
- 4 *Who are you to judge someone else’s servant? To their own master, servants stand or fall. And they will stand, for the Lord is able to make them stand.*
- 5 *One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind.*
- 6 *Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Whoever eats meat does so to the Lord, for they give thanks to God; and whoever abstains does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.*
- 7 *For none of us lives for ourselves alone, and none of us dies for ourselves alone.*
- 8 *If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.*
- 9 *For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the Lord of both the dead and the living.*
- 10 *You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God’s judgment seat.*
- 11 *It is written:*  
*“ ‘As surely as I live,’ says the Lord,*  
*‘every knee will bow before me;*  
*every tongue will acknowledge God.’ ”*
- 12 *So then, each of us will give an account of ourselves to God.*

### Key Points:

- Paul categorizes people as weak and strong based on eating habits and observance of sacred days.
- Weak and strong should live out their choices being fully convinced in their own mind.
- Neither weak nor strong should condemn the other, for all should live for the Lord and give thanks for the choices we make.

### Questions:

1. Who are the “weak” people that Paul describes?
2. What is Paul’s point of making two factions of people, then warning us about judgement?
3. Are we considered “weak” people for observing Lent, Feast days, the Sabbath Day; or if we choose not to eat meat?

## **2. Loving the Weak (14:13-23)**

**13 Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another. Instead, make up your mind not to put any stumbling block or obstacle in the way of a brother or sister.**

**14 I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean.**

**15 If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died.**

**16 Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil.**

**17 For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit,**

**18 because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval.**

**19 Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.**

**20 Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble.**

**21 It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.**

**22 So whatever you believe about these things keep between yourself and God. Blessed is the one who does not condemn himself by what he approves.**

**23 But whoever has doubts is condemned if they eat, because their eating is not from faith; and everything that does not come from faith is sin.**

Key Points:

- The “us” in “...let us stop passing judgement” is inclusive of the weak and the strong.
- Paul teaches that the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, love, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- Paul warns us not to allow what you eat cause the ruin of one for whom Christ died.

Questions:

1. How does our faith in Christ help us to stop passing judgement on others?
2. Why is Paul “convinced... that nothing is unclean in itself”?
3. What does Paul mean that “everything that does not come from faith is sin”?

----- **END OF LESSON** -----

NEXT WEEK– read Romans 15: Paul’s Final Appeal and Future Plans

Covering: Oneness in Christ; Welcoming All in Christ; The Priestly Service of the Gospel; Jerusalem, Then Rome, Then Spain