

Do You Pressure Others?

Although we may know grace, (free, unearned favor/kindness) saints can still project their wants and expectations onto others, causing pressure and provoking wrath. Many disagreements are centered upon unspoken or unclear rules or desires. (legalism) Communication coupled with 'grace' allows individuals to live without the heaviness of the law. *"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."* (Galatians 5:1)



Do You Feel Pressured by Others?

Look objectively at interactions this year. Are they based on 'grace' or 'the law.' If centered on legalism, there may be **subtle** expectations, fortified with consequences. (i.e. Do this... or I'll be mad.)

A grace relationship is selfless love with freedom. It is not built on expectations, inflicting pressure to perform, *"...for ye are not under the law, but under grace."* (Rom.6:14). Godly love allows others to be who and where they are.

This is God's way!

Just A Minute! *With Scripture*

The King James Bible is used for references. Verses may be underlined/made bold for emphasis.



Who Is Your Master ?

Worldly knowledge naturally **forms** in man, shaping his thinking/behavior from birth. Unless Scripture is believed, worldly wisdom is magnified. Satan and his evil plan are then exalted, **conforming** individuals to lies, even to think that 'trying hard with good works' pleases God. (The Law)

The Father has designed a '**form** of doctrine,' (The grace message found in Romans-Philemon), to **transform** your inner man and 'renew the mind.' Believers are to study this and 'obey from the heart.' This produces godly living, forming Christ in you. (Romans 6:17, 12:2) In meditation, periodically step back to reflect on your life: yield and adjust. *"For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's."* (Rom. 14:8) How can this be done?

The Spirit uses the Scripture dwelling in you to teach your spirit the 'deep things of God.' *"Hold fast the **form** of sound words..."* (I Cor. 2:10-12, II Tim. 1:13) This process is like a master potter with clay, an analogy used throughout Scripture. (Is. 64:8) As you are 'led by the Spirit' in the Word, God **conforms** you to Christ's image, enabling you to grow to function wisely as a spiritual adult.



Thus, regular time in the Word is essential. When you live out what's learned, Christ is magnified: *"According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death."* (Phil. 1:20) Stay focused to avoid regression.

Satan's doctrine is ever lurking in the background, to '**form** his ways in you. Step out from under his ways as it is NOT grace, but the competing doctrine of the law. Be wise, proving all things by the Word: *"...be **conformed** to the image of his Son..."*. (Rom. 8:29) **God Is To Be Your ONLY Master!**



Roman Epistle: Designed to Establish the Body of Christ



Romans 14: Student Study Insights

Romans 14 continues to explain 'Worship and Service,' teaching saints how to apply grace. Specifically, it helps you to deal with weaker brethren. The instruction is to allow weak believers God-given freedoms such as free will, grace to live their convictions, and personal accountability to God.

The stronger brethren are not to function as their judge or governor, but rather, on Christ's behalf, 'helpers of their joy.' *"Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand."* (II Corinthians 1:24)

1. Read/reflect on Romans 14: a) What is the main theme of this chapter? b) Find the transition verse at the end of Romans 13 introducing Chapter 14. c) Name the sections, with topics for the chapter.

2. Consider Verses 1-3: Dealing with weak Christians who believe differently than yourself ought to provoke thought: What is a legalistic approach and what does a grace approach look like? Target 2-3 'legalistic words' and one 'grace word' that describes each approach in Verses 1-3.

**Newer students: Focus on 'reading' Scripture rather than on studying new insights. When you're ready, try answering a few questions above.*

3. Application: When we realize a weak saint believes error, what's our responsibility in grace? Circle one or more: a) Use verses to powerfully present the Truth, persuading them to change. b) Offer another way to view the Word, encouraging them to continue to study. c) Suggest they seek assistance from a Bible teacher. d) Accept where they are, realizing they may not yet have the ability to consider this weighty matter; God the Spirit is their teacher and judge. Focus rather, on foundational issues. e) How would 'dealing with them' benefit you: you're not obligated to get involved.

4. Think out a grace approach: a) Which of the above approaches is law oriented and which are grace attitudes? b) Is there one which avoids responsibility? c) Does your response depend on where the saint is in their understanding; how? d) Can you determine someone's maturity? Describe.

5. Look at this chapter & ask yourself questions to understand 'a grace way' to deal with the weak: Do you cause babes to sin if you 'convince/pressure them' to believe & live YOUR Truth? (Vs 23) Is this a form of legalism? Could the role of the strong simply be to encourage babes to read and study an issue out, thinking for themselves?

Romans 14:19 "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

Romans 14: A Personal Life Journey

Romans 14 contains eye-opening instruction: how to deal with those who are called, 'weaker brethren.' This is a basic application of grace living. It may help to see each believer on a 'personal life journey,' either walking and living by what is known in the Word (by faith) or not. This provides a new perspective. To determine 'the status of a brother' at this point in Romans 14, determine if they are living the doctrine in Romans 1-13. If he understands and regularly applies these teachings, he's 'strong' in 'these doctrines.' If he's not living them, he is weak or carnal.

This enables a stronger saint to know how to evaluate where someone is in their faith journey to teach and respond most effectively. The goal is not to 'just' help others know things, but to mature to 'apply doctrine' to life details; this is wisdom: the right use or exercise of knowledge. (This also helps in self-evaluation: where YOU are functioning spiritually.) What would an evaluation look like?

- A weaker saint may not fully understand Romans 1-5, still questioning his salvation and eternal security.
- A weak believer may regularly put himself/others under the law, needing further clarity in Romans 6-8.
- Carnal saints lack basic thankfulness for what Christ has done for them and do not want to learn/apply Scripture. They need growth in Romans 1-5 to appreciate the crosswork, but all of Romans in order to be able to have Christ formed in them to stay motivated to serve in grace, not their own religious efforts. **(Topic Continued)**



Dealing With Weaker Brethren

Spiritually, we grow from babes in Christ to adults by processing a multitude of learnings. How does one mature in a basic doctrine? The focus is 'the mind.' (Romans 8:9-14)

- 1) **Hearing the Word:** Decide to *"...give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine..."* realizing *"...faith cometh by hearing..."*. (I Tim. 4:13, Rom 10:17) Really hearing Truth begins clarity & understanding.
- 2) **The Spirit/Word dwelling:** If *"...the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you..."*, God 'quickens' your mortal body, and your mind begins to be able to set aside fleshly issues. (Rom. 8:11) As doctrine dwells, or feels at home within, through time in the Scripture with meditation, **IT** is exalted and you gain an appreciation and a motivation to live and apply it. (This is an ongoing process to maintain.)
- 3) **Being led:** *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."* (Rom. 8:14) Saints begin to yield, led by trusting Him.
- 4) **Living wisdom:** If *"...ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."* (Rom 8:13) Mortifying (bring into subjection) renders the body dead to fleshly lusts, denying them a place. Maturity and the life of Christ in you comes as you practice using the doctrine known, expanding trust & experience, developing wisdom/conviction.

A believer may have 'head knowledge,' knowing a concept in a verse, but lack a true appreciation and trust necessary for living it. This 'weak status' can remain for years. He may not realize he's not applying what's learned, has strongholds, and/or is inhibited in some way from growing. Each also has 'a personal learning curve,' that is, the rate at which someone learns something new.

A strong believer can often perceive when a saint 'knows' a doctrine, but doesn't apply it yet. He may 'seem' rebellious, when actually he just needs time to mature and gain trust. This process happens differently for every person; some learn quickly and others can take years to attain the conviction to apply it. Most saints could use ongoing mentoring to encourage them to progress to live what's known, becoming 'fully persuaded.' (Romans 14:5)

If we pressure a saint to believe/live 'just like us,' though it is Truth, 'WE' become their authority/motive, replacing God's Word. Rather, we can point a 'weaker brother' to Truth, encouraging study to progress in his 'faith journey.'

Stronger saints ought to be careful when trying to discern 'a carnal (fleshly) Christian' from the 'weak' saint. It seems wise to be especially **gracious** with a weaker brother, giving him space to mature in his own time and way. *"...God is able to make him stand."* (Romans 4:21/14:4)

Confident & Fully Persuaded

A weaker brother is to live according to what God is teaching him, led by the Spirit. He is NOT to yield to 'what others believe.' Romans 14 teaches that believers are called to be persuaded by the Word, then walk it out in the details of life by faith. *"...Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."* (Romans 14: 5, 10)

'Stronger saints' are to 'speak the truth in love,' (Eph. 4:15) but with much patience. (avoiding legalism) Philippians 2: 16 says *"Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain."*

A person is to live his convictions based on what is believed & 'attained unto' in the Word. This is 'his rule' to govern thinking/behavior until convicted otherwise. (Study the context: Phil. 3:16) A saint's 'faith journey' is between him and the Lord.

God provides a mechanism to lead (Rom. 8:14) each believer through doctrine, learning 'how' to apply it. *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness..."* What will it produce? *"That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* (II Tim. 3:16) God is the perfect provider!



The stronger brother's role: *"...that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."* (Rom. 14:13) We can offer help for his journey in love; teach, encourage, and exhort.

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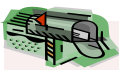
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Christ the Word

What Is The Word And Why Study It?

(Can Be Used As A Personal Study)

1. **God’s inspired words, created all things:** John 1:1-3, Romans 15:4, II Timothy 3:16, II Peter 1:19-21
2. **The Word is Christ:** John 1:1-14, I John 5:6-7, Rev. 19:11-16
3. **True/gives light:** John 14:6,17, II Corinthians 4:4-6
4. **Spiritual food:** Job 23:12, Matthew 4:4, John 6:33-35
5. **Perfectly preserved:** Psalm 12:6-7, Psalm 119:89, Isaiah 40:7-8
6. **Reveals who God is and His way:** Isaiah 55:8-11, John 14:6
7. **Powerful treasure, better than rubies:** Proverbs.1-9; 3:13-15, II Corinthians 4:6-7, Hebrews 4:12
8. **Organized/progressive:** Isaiah 28:13, Romans 6:17, II Tim. 2:15
9. **Inspired and profitable:** Romans 15:4, II Timothy 3:16
10. **Effective:** Proverbs 2: 1-5, Romans 10:17, I Thessalonians 2:13
11. **God communes individually, by the Spirit:** Romans 8:14, I Corinthians 2:10-12 (Reading/studying it is personal interaction w/God, seeing/experiencing His glory: Exodus 33 & 34)
12. **General principles/training, leading us in wisdom/discretion/discernment to apply in the details of life:** Proverbs 3:5-6,4:11-27, I Corinthians 2:10-16, Philippians 3-4

What the Word is NOT

To be used superstitiously - To be treated as an Idol - Unapproachable - A man-made book - An unorganized book - A legalistic list of do’s & don’ts to be right with God - A step-by-step manual of what to do in every situation - A formula to get what we want - To be used for fleshly desires.

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