


Day 1

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

The Weak and the Strong

¹ Accept him whose faith is weak, without passing judgment on disputable matters.

Q1. When Paul wrote this letter to the Romans, was his intended audience primarily non-believers or Believers in Christ Jesus?

Believers? Or non-believers? Thoughts?

Romans 1:7 [NIV-1984]

To all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Q2. In verse 1, how would you characterize the person “whose faith is weak”?

Q3. How would you define “disputable matters”? How would you define “indisputable matters”?

Disputable?

Indisputable?

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- Q4. How do you classify these examples: Disputable? Or Indisputable? And why/thoughts?
- (1) Jesus' resurrection? (2) Contemporary songs (versus traditional hymns) sung in worship?
 - (3) Saturday (versus Sunday) church worship? (4) The Apostle Paul's view on homosexuality?
 - (5) Dancing (interpretive during a worship service or in a church fellowship hall)?
 - (6) Infant baptism? (7) Adult baptism? (8) Other examples?

(1) Jesus' resurrection? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

(2) Songs vs hymns? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

(3) Saturday church worship? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

(4) Apostle Paul's view on homosexuality? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

(5) Dancing? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

(6) Infant baptism? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

(7) Adult baptism? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

(8) Other examples? Disputable? Indisputable (foundational)? Thoughts?

- Q5. In review, is there a difference between discernment and "judgment"?

Discernment?

Judgment?

Differences?



This concept of discernment versus judgment is critical to the Believer's understanding of behavior within the church body compared to behavior in the world. Discernment means to recognize sin; while judgment means to recognize that sin and take action, to impose a consequence. The Bible is clear, we who believe are to judge those inside the Church (i.e., other Believers), and to discern sin in nonbelievers so that we do not act upon temptation (1 Corinthians 5:12).

If a nonbeliever is contemplating a sin, we are to walk away (Flee!) from the temptation. It could be argued that this is a judgment, but, if so, it is a judgment on me, not the nonbeliever: "For me this is a temptation to sin, and I judge that I need to walk away, so that I avoid the sin". We cannot sin to appease a nonbeliever; we are to be in the world, not of the world (John 15:18-19).

It is this commentator's belief that the most important action that we can bring to the world is our commitment to the Gospel of our Lord Christ Jesus, His Great Commission to us, and the work and actions necessary to fulfill that Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20).

Once we Believers have planted the seed of faith with a nonbeliever, it is up to God to ensure the "faith" seed is watered, nurtured, weeded, and harvested. We so often believe that we are to perform all the intermediary steps, too. However, God may use others. While God may continue to draw the nonbeliever to Him through the trust in the relationship we have developed with the nonbeliever, God may also move us to other nonbelievers, so that we will not see the fruit of our efforts in which the new Believer professes belief in the saving grace of Christ Jesus. So be it!

We are to obey and, in faith, preach, teach, and outreach. We are to be an example, a beacon of light! To lead by example! We must allow the Holy Spirit to perform His refining work in the fledgling Believer, who has embarked on a marvelous life-changing journey — a journey that begins with understanding who this Jesus really is and what His death and resurrection means for their life. Eventually the new Believer will be led to confront his or her sinful


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behavior and the impact of past choices upon his or her new-found relationship with the loving Redeemer: whether the new Believer is gay, had an abortion, fornicated outside of marriage, judged guilty and imprisoned, a skilled liar, a hardened foul-mouth, or an idol worshipper. We are not to judge and render a consequence.

Through prayer, we who believe must seek holy guidance and then, in mercy and kindness, gently guide the new Believer to prayerfully seek truth in the pages of the Holy Bible through meditative readings and Bible studies — we must not be legalistic! We want to draw the new Believer into a loving relationship with our Savior, just as we are. It is the job of the Holy Spirit to refine, to convict, and to encourage the new Believer to prayerfully confess, seek forgiveness, and repent of their sins. Our job is to facilitate, not berate; to encourage, not criticize; to [agapé love](#), not demoralize.

If you the student would like to delve into this concept of discernment versus judgment in greater detail, please review the StudySheet for [Lesson 16: Romans 10:1-13, page 4](#).

Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

² One man's faith allows him to eat everything, but another man, whose faith is weak, eats only vegetables.


Q6. What defines a “faith is weak”?

Q7. Does this passage seem to be limited to only food (and drink)? Or can it be expanded to other things and what are some examples?

Q8. If the verse begins “One man’s faith allows him to drink everything”; what might happen if a new Believer, who just graduated from Alcoholics Anonymous, attempts to emulate the drinking of your single glass of wine?

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Day 3

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³ The man who eats everything must not look down on him who does not, and the man who does not eat everything must not condemn the man who does, for God has accepted him.

Q9. If I “look down” on someone, what sin have I just committed?

James 2:1-6 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

¹ My dear brothers, you are believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. So never think that some people are more important than others.

² Suppose someone comes into your church meeting wearing very nice clothes and a gold ring. At the same time a poor man comes in wearing old, dirty clothes. ³ You show special attention to the one wearing nice clothes. You say, “Please, sit here in this good seat.” But you say to the poor man, “Stand over there,” or “Sit on the floor by my feet!” ⁴ What are you doing? You are making some people more important than others. With evil thoughts you are deciding which person is better.

⁵ Listen, my dear brothers! God chose the poor in the world to be rich with faith. He chose them to receive the kingdom God promised to people who love him. ⁶ But you show no respect to the poor man. And you know that it is the rich who are always trying to control your lives. And they are the ones who take you to court.

Q10. Did the Apostles make mistakes in the way they treated and, by their example, taught others?

Galatians 2:11-13 [NIV-1984] [Paul Opposes Peter]

¹¹ When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.

¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

Q11. (Galatians 2:12 ↑) What beliefs might the “circumcision group” represent?

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Q12. (Galatians 2:12 ↑) Consider who Peter was and what he represented... how do you think the Gentiles felt as he “began to draw back and separate himself from” them?

Q13. (Galatians 2:12 ↑) If “judgment” implies the imposition of a sentence (a consequence), then did Peter pass “judgment” upon the Gentiles?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Q14. (Galatians 2:13 ↑) Peter’s action, of course, affected Peter and the new Gentile Believers. Did his example affect anyone else? And was that person a mature Believer or a new Believer?

Galatians 2:14 [NIV-1984]

When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?"

Q15. What could arguably be the most important phrase in Galatians 2:14?

Acts 17:11 [NIV-1984]

Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.

Galatians 2:15-16, 21 [NIV-1984]

¹⁵ "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' ¹⁶ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So, we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified . . . ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Q16. (Galatians 2:16 ↑) What does “justified” mean?

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Q17. (Galatians 2:16 ↑) According to Paul, what is the way a person becomes “justified”?

Q18. (Galatians 2:15-16, 21 ↑) How do we know that Paul states The Truth?

Acts 15:1-35 [NIV-1984]

¹ Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: "Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved." ² This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them. So, Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question. . . ⁴ When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.

⁵ Then some of the believers who belonged to the party of the Pharisees stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised and required to obey the law of Moses."

⁶ The apostles and elders met to consider this question. ⁷ After much discussion, Peter got up and addressed them: "Brothers, you know that some time ago God made a choice among you that the Gentiles [e.g., Cornelius' house] might hear from my lips the message of the gospel and believe. ⁸ God, who knows the heart, showed that he accepted them by giving the Holy Spirit to them, just as he did to us. ⁹ He made no distinction between us and them, for he purified their hearts by faith. ¹⁰ Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of the disciples a yoke that neither we nor our fathers have been able to bear? ¹¹ No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."

¹² The whole assembly became silent as they listened to Barnabas and Paul telling about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done among the Gentiles through them. ¹³ When they finished, James [Jesus' half-brother] spoke up: "Brothers, listen to me. ¹⁴ Simon has described to us how God at first showed his concern by taking from the Gentiles a people for himself. ¹⁵ The words of the prophets are in agreement with this, as it is written: ¹⁶ "'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen tent. Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will restore it, ¹⁷ that the remnant of men may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who bear my name, says the Lord, who does these things' ¹⁸ that have been known for ages.

¹⁹ "It is my judgment, therefore, that we should not make it difficult for the Gentiles who are turning to God. ²⁰ Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood. ²¹ For Moses has been preached in every city from the earliest times and is read in the synagogues on every Sabbath."

²² Then the apostles and elders, with the whole church, decided to choose some of their own men [to serve as witnesses to testify to the authenticity of the letter and the authority of Paul and Barnabas] and send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. They chose Judas (called Barsabbas) and Silas, two men who were leaders among the brothers. ²³ With them they sent the following letter: The apostles and elders, your brothers, To the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia: Greetings. ²⁴ We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. ²⁵ So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul — ²⁶ men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁷ Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. ²⁸ It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us

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not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements: ²⁹ You are to abstain from food sacrificed to idols, from blood, from the meat of strangled animals and from sexual immorality. You will do well to avoid these things. Farewell.

³⁰ The men were sent off and went down to Antioch, where they gathered the church together and delivered the letter. ³¹ The people read it and were glad for its encouraging message. ³² Judas and Silas, who themselves were prophets, said much to encourage and strengthen the brothers. ³³ After spending some time there, they were sent off by the brothers with the blessing of peace to return to those who had sent them. [³⁴ Some manuscripts include this verse: But Silas decided to remain there.] ³⁵ But Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch, where they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.

Q19. (Acts 15:20 ↑) Was pagan-idol worship and the sacrifice of animals to those idols prevalent at this time in history?


Q20. (Acts 15:29 ↑) How might animals sacrificed to idols be disposed/discarded/consumed? (Do the idol-worshippers consider their sacrifices ‘holy’?)

Q21. If I was a new Christian, fresh out of idol worship, and I saw a mature Christian eating meat that had been sacrificed to my former idol, might I become confused and possibly come to combine the rituals of pagan worship with worship of the one true God?

Yes? } Thoughts?
No? }

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Day 4

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

^{4a} Who are you to judge someone else's servant? ^{4b} To his own master he stands or falls. ^{4c} And he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Q22. To what kind of person is Paul referring in this chapter? A Believer? A non-believer? A person with strong faith?

Believer? Non-believer? Other (please define)?

Q23. If my church organization has a tradition that prohibits dancing, for example, am I to shun all other church organizations that allow dancing? (See Day 1 questions, specifically Q4.)

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Q24. In verse 4a is Paul suggesting that we are not to challenge someone's behavior when he says, "Who are you to judge"? (Hints: what does "judge" mean? What does Jesus instruct in Matthew 18:15-17?)


Yes? } Why?
No? }

Q25. In verse 4b Paul writes, "To his own master he [the servant] stands or falls". What "power" does a master have?

Q26. Has anyone ever experienced the Lord's power to enable you to stand? Would you share that experience with us?

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Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

⁵One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

Exodus 20:8-10 [NIV-1984] [The Fourth Commandment:]

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. . ."

Q27. Does verse 5 mean that we no longer need to keep this Commandment?

Yes? } Thoughts?
No? }

Matthew 22:36-38 [NIV-1984]

³⁶ [A Pharisee, who was an expert in Jewish law, asked Jesus:] "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

³⁷ Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment.

Q28. "*Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.*" Who/what/how is the person convinced? (How should a Believer discern the Truth of God, of Christ Jesus the Word?)

⁶ He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord. He who eats meat, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who abstains, does so to the Lord and gives thanks to God.

Q29. As you read verse 6, what are the key phrases?

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Q30. (Personal) Do you give thanks to God before a meal? Are there times when you do not? And why not? Self-conscious? Or preoccupied? Worried about ridicule?

Yes? }
No? } Why?

⁷For none of us lives to himself alone and none of us dies to himself alone.

⁸If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. So, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

Q31. What does this mean, “*if we live, we live to the Lord*”?

Q32. And conversely, what does this mean, “*if we die, we die to the Lord*”?

Q33. What promise do you see in verse 7 or 8 that should give you great peace?

2 Corinthians 1:21-22 [NIV-1984]


²¹Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, ²²set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.

Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV-1984]

¹³And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

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Day 6

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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.

Q34. What is the “For this very reason, Christ died”?

Q35. When Paul talks about the “dead” is he referring to those “dead” to Christ (non-believers) or those who have physically died (Believers and/or non-believers alike)? (See Philippians 2:11 ↓)

Believers? Non-believers? Others (specify)?

¹⁰ You, then, why do you judge your brother? Or why do you look down on your brother? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat.

Q36. Is the question, “*why do you look down upon your brother?*” the same as a judgment?

Yes? }
No? } Why?

Q37. Apologetics: we all know that God is love... what is this “*judgment seat*” stuff? I am a good person!

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¹¹ It is written:

" 'As surely as I live,' says the Lord,
'every knee will bow before me;
every tongue will confess to God.' " [Isaiah 45:23]

Q38. Will this actually happen? And does this include Satan?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Isaiah 45:23 [English Standard Version (ESV)]

By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return:
'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.'

Philippians 2:5-11 [NIV-1984]

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹² So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

Q39. Do both Believers and non-believers have to worry about “*giving an account of himself to God*”?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Revelation 20:10-15 [English Standard Version (ESV)] [The Books of John and Revelation were written by the Apostle John:]

¹⁰ and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

¹¹ Then I [John] saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. ¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. ¹³ And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. ¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. ¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

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Q40. What does the Book of Life represent and whose names are written on its pages?

Revelation 3:1-5 [NIV-1984]

¹ "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: "These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead.

² "Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. ³ Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. ⁴ Yet you have a few people in Sardis who have not soiled their clothes. They will walk with me, dressed in white, for they are worthy. ⁵ He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before my Father and his angels.

Matthew 10:32-33 [NIV-1984]

³² "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven."

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