

LESSON 11

CHRISTIAN CITIZENSHIP AND LIBERTY

Romans 13:1-15:13

Introduction

Paul concluded Romans 12 by instructing Christians to leave vengeance in the hands of God. Sometimes circumstances arise which make it difficult to wait for God to inflict punishment on wrongdoers. Evil would not be restrained if the principle of leaving punishment entirely in the hands of God was followed. Paul explained that the State is ordained of God to punish law-breakers.

Since God is all-powerful, all authority belongs to Him. Authority belonging to institutions or individuals either is derived from God or is permitted by Him. Paul was convinced that the State (government) is divinely ordained; therefore, it derives its authority from God and should be respected by Christians.

Paul enjoyed the privileges of Roman citizenship. Roman dominion was of greater value than it was hindrance to the Jews. Their religion was recognized as a *religio licita* (legitimate religion). Romans respected their Sabbath and food laws and the prohibition of graven images. Roman law prohibited military standards with imperial images attached to them. The death penalty was pronounced upon those, even upon a Roman, who trespassed the Temple law forbidding Gentiles from entering the inner courts.

Roman governors sent out by the emperors were concerned with keeping peace and not with the dispute between Christians and Jews. In Corinth about A. D. 51, Paul was accused before Gallio, the new proconsul of Achaia. Gallio decided that the accusations against Paul were matters of religious interpretation and of no concern to him. The case was dismissed. On most occasions, Paul found justice under Roman rulers. The experience in Philippi was an exception in which Paul was placed in jail without a fair trial. In the later years of his ministry, Paul depended frequently on trials before Roman magistrates.

Paul believed the State is _____ ordained. It derives its authority from _____ and should be respected by _____.

(divinely, God, Christians)

*Are these statements true or false?
Paul considered his Roman citizenship to be a benefit. _____*

The Romans did not respect his Jewish customs. _____

(true, false)

However, the decisions of Roman rulers did not always favour Christians. After the emperor declared his deity and required all subject people to worship him, Christians suffered severe persecution and injustice at the hands of the Roman rulers. Government had passed a law which conflicted with God's will. The higher loyalty of Christians to their God resulted in the frequent response that "we must obey God rather than man." Sometimes the higher loyalty resulted in the death of the Christian. These incidents have caused many to question the dependability of Paul's advice concerning the relations of Christians to the State. If the rulers are dishonest and corrupt, can it still be claimed that government is of God? Even though the decisions and laws of a particular government may be contrary to the will of God, government as an institution has been ordained by God to regulate society.

Relations of Christians to Society

Romans 13:1-10

Responsibilities to the State (13:1-7)

"The higher powers" generally is interpreted to mean the governing authorities (v. 1). Oscar Cullmann has argued that "higher powers" refers to both angelic powers and human powers. The Jews believed that angelic powers existed and influenced the affairs of state. In counselling obedience to government, Paul may have been implying obedience to the spiritual powers behind it. Paul explicitly stated that to submit to governing authorities is to submit to the authority of God who has instituted government. The power of government is exercised through human rulers, and "every person" is to be subject to them (v. 1). To be subject does not mean to submit to servitude. It is a term which is used in regard to mutual respect and submission to brothers (1 Cor. 16:16). It is also used of the Christian family in which the wife is to be subject to the husband as the Church is subject to Christ (Eph. 5:24).

Society cannot function without centralized and respected authority. Human relations require a standard of conduct. A person must know proper actions and rights to avoid infringing on the rights of others. Since human nature is sinful, it is inevitable that some people will deliberately follow self-interests in trampling underfoot the rights of others. Injustice arises even when there are attempts to maintain justice. Anarchy is the result of discrediting and rejecting authority.

Even though the decisions and laws of a particular government may be contrary to the will of God, government as an institution has been ordained by _____ to regulate _____.

(God, society)

"The higher powers" in Romans 13:1 probably referred to _____ authorities, but it might also refer to _____ powers which influence the affairs of state.

To be subject does not mean to submit to servitude, but to _____ and to _____ to brothers.

(governing, spiritual, respect, submit)

Since every man has his own view of what is right, he would be his own law without a centralized standard of authority and a power to enforce the standard, and continuous conflict would exist. To submit to a centralized authority means to give up personal privileges and to limit one's freedom. Man cannot live in social relations without limiting his freedom at the point where the other man's rights begin; this requires that each person live under restricted freedom. Government determines the restrictions placed upon a person, but without these limitations man would be robbed of his rights and securities by others.

Occasions arise in which the will of God is violated by the laws of rulers. Peter and John were prohibited from preaching Christ by the Sanhedrin. This classic example warns that God's will is not always followed by authoritative bodies. In cases where the Christian conscience and conviction are violated by laws of the State, the Christian's first loyalty must be to God. Sometimes loyalty to God results in persecution, but a return of the State to the will of God cannot be brought about otherwise.

There is a danger that a Christian will interpret his own self-interests as the will of God. Government is frequently criticized by those elements in society which believe that they are not receiving special privileges. The principle of Christian conduct which requires the Christian to prefer others and to rejoice with others who receive benefits will guard him against substituting self-interests for the will of God in society.

Paul warned that resisting the authorities is to resist God who instituted the State (v. 2). Whoever resists God's institution in the social order will place himself under God's judgement. The idea that restrictive authority is wrong, a concept prevalent in our day, results in anarchy which eventually leads to a loss of human rights—a state of damnation (v. 2). Restrictive authority which maintains justice secures human rights.

Those who obey the law of the land have little reason to fear rulers (v. 3). Those who break the law have reason to fear because the rulers inflict punishment upon them (vv. 3f). A ruler is a public servant whose responsibility is to punish criminals. The citizen who does good is actually served and protected by rulers (v. 3). Christians who are divinely obligated to live upright lives should have no fear of rulers.

Paul spoke of governmental authorities as servants (ministers) of God, using the same word by which Christian servants or deacons are designated (v. 4). The statement implies that people in secular

*Without a centralized standard of authority,
every man would be his own _____.*

*In social relations, man must limit his
_____ where the other man's _____
begin.*

(law, freedom, rights)

*The Christian should disobey government
when laws of the State conflict with the
_____ of _____.*

(will, God)

occupations can be in the will of God. As a servant of God, he bears the sword in executing wrath upon those who do evil (v. 4). Paul prohibited an individual from taking justice into his own hands and seeking revenge, but he did not so prohibit governmental authorities. They execute judgement and punishment for God against evil-doers. Dale Moody notes that capital punishment and God's patience did not conflict in Paul's conscience.

Paul mentioned two motives for submission to the rulers of State: avoiding God's wrath and Christian conscience (v. 5). Fear of punishment deters evil-doing to a degree. A higher motive is the Christian conviction of doing what is right. The Christian should desire to do right for the positive good of society as a whole.

Respect for government and submission to authorities require the paying of taxes (v. 6). The raising of money through taxation is required to support those who serve in governmental positions. The service of keeping law and order rendered by rulers is beneficial to the person who pays the taxes. Even conquered people benefited from the officials of the Roman State and were to pay taxes. They were to pay both tribute (a tax paid by each person to an occupying nation) and customs on goods used for building roads, bridges, markets, etc.

The Christian's responsibility to authorities does not end with the payment of taxes. He owes respect and honour at least for the office if not for the office-holder. Since they exercise punishment upon evil-doers, public authorities also are due fear and honour.

Perhaps Paul had in mind the teaching of Jesus when he gave instructions concerning the Christian's relation to government. Jesus had said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mark 12:17). The statement includes not only honesty in paying taxes but also the duty of obedience to secular authorities.

Relation to one's neighbour (13:8-10)

Just as a person is not to be in debt to the government, so is he not to be in debt to his fellow-man—there is one exception (v. 8). The Christian never fully pays the debt of love to every person even though he makes a payment of love daily. This debt is not limited to brothers in Christ. "Neighbour" includes any person in need whether he is a stranger or a friend (Luke 10:25-37). Love is more than a sentiment of sympathy, good will, or enjoyment. It is the combination of concern for the needy and the determination to do whatever is possible and

List Paul's 2 motives for submitting to the rulers of the State.

1. _____

2. _____

(to avoid God's wrath, Christian conscience)

What does the Christian owe to government besides the payment of taxes? _____

(respect and honour)

Is this statement true or false?

The Christian never fully pays his debt of love. _____

(true).

necessary to meet the needs of the other person. A Christian can never fully pay the debt of love. Whenever he meets someone in need, he is indebted to help that person. His motivation is based on the love which has been expressed to him in Christ Jesus.

Paul explained how love fulfills the Law (v. 9). He mentioned the second table of the Ten Commandments which concerns man's relationship to his fellow-man. In addition to the seventh, sixth, eighth, ninth, and tenth commandments, he pointed out that to love one's neighbour as one's self is sufficient to fulfil any other commandment. If man is concerned for the well-being of the other person, he will not rob that person of chastity through adultery, of life through murder, of possessions through theft, of a reputation through false witness, and of good fortune through covetousness.

Paul gave a specific illustration of how love fulfills the Law. A person who is concerned for his neighbour will do no wrong to harm him; therefore, the Law is fulfilled (v. 10).

The Christian in Two Ages

Romans 13:11-14

At the time of Jesus' ascension, the promise was made to the disciples by two men in white apparel that He would return in like manner (Acts 1:11). Paul recognized that man's enemy is not of flesh and blood but of principalities and powers and rulers of this world. The death blow had been dealt to the enemy in the cross and resurrection of Jesus, but Satan's forces continued to fight and their full defeat will not come until the return of Christ. Paul lived in constant expectation of the return of Christ when the complete defeat of the forces of evil would be accomplished and the full salvation, the resurrection of the body, would be accomplished. He believed that that hour was near (v. 11).

The *kairos* was a special season in which the end of the age drew nigh. The salvation which God began with the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Jesus would be completed upon the return of Jesus. Paul's statement, "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed", indicates that he expected Christ to return soon and to raise the bodies from the dead. He had previously written to the Thessalonians that "the day of Christ is at hand" (2 Thess. 2:2).

Christians have a task assigned to be accomplished before the end of the age of darkness. Night is a symbol for the present evil age and the light of day is the symbol for the new age of God's Kingdom (v. 12). The old age is far spent and the new age is breaking in as daylight which overcomes the darkness.

To love one's neighbour as one's self is sufficient to fulfil any other _____

(commandment)

One who is concerned for his neighbour will do nothing to harm him; therefore, the _____ is fulfilled.

(Law)

Write day and night by what they symbolize in Romans 13:12.

_____ New age of God's Kingdom

_____ Evil age

(day, night)

The Dead Sea Scrolls found at Qumran divide men into those who are ruled by the angel of darkness and those by the Prince of Light. The subject of one document is "the war of the sons of light and the sons of darkness". Paul urged the sons of light to awaken and be prepared for the return of the Lord. His words are similar to the emphasis of Jesus' parables in Matthew 24 and 25. The Christian is to put on the armour of light in order to be prepared for the victory in battle which is at hand.

The Christian is not to follow the behaviour of pagans (v.13). Christians are to walk (live constantly) as honourable sons of light and of the Heavenly Father. Specific practices which need to be cast aside are revelling and drunkenness. Revelry refers to carousing in the streets with no moral restraints. It is accompanied by drunkenness which also is the result of lack of restraint. Such conduct is shameful and characteristic of pagans.

"Chambering and wantonness" could be translated "debauchery and licentiousness". Chambering refers to a bed and implies sexual relations on a forbidden bed. Prevalent parallel sins in our own society are drunkenness and immoral relations. Modern man clamours for freedom which means casting aside all restraint in order to indulge in his desires and passions. Many are discovering that unrestrained indulgence does not lead to true freedom nor fulfillment in life but to physical, mental, and moral deterioration and a life of sorrow and pain. The works of darkness are deceitful. They promise satisfaction and fulfillment in life but they bring sorrow and destruction.

Vice or licentiousness is the stage of immorality which no longer is ashamed. The immoral life is exhibited in public and claims the approval of society for its acts of lewdness.

A third pair of unchristian practices is "strife and envying" or quarrelling and jealousy. Strife is built on jealousy. A person becomes envious of the position and possessions of others and determines not to take second place.

The Christian is to be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ (v.14). This means that his actions are to follow the example of Christ and his life is to be controlled by the indwelling Christ. Paul had already mentioned baptism as the symbol of dying and the burial of the old life. The lifting of the candidate from the baptismal waters pictures his resurrection to a new kind of life in Christ. Only by putting on the Lord Jesus Christ is one able to cast aside the control of the flesh. Otherwise, the lusts of the carnal nature will control one's life (v.14).

What does "walk" mean in Romans 13:13?

(to live constantly)

To be clothed with the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 14) means that the Christian's actions are to follow the _____ of _____ and his life is to be controlled by the indwelling _____.

(example, Christ, Christ)

Man's Freedom in Christ

Romans 14:1-12

The rights of the liberated (14:1-4)

Life in Judaism was burdened by innumerable inhibitions and taboos. Some of the restrictions had lost their original meaning for righteous conduct, but they were still being perpetuated. One such restriction concerned the eating of meat which had been offered to idols. Since the prophets had interpreted Israel's captivity as a punishment primarily for idolatry, the Jews were very careful to avoid any relation to idol worship. Often animals which had been used in pagan rituals were taken to the market and sold for food. Some believed that the meat of an animal used in idol worship was defiled and should not be eaten. According to 1 Corinthians 8-10, Paul concluded that the idol did not represent a real god; therefore, the meat of the animal was not affected.

Those who had scruples that meat used in pagan temples was defiled were referred to as the "weak in the faith" (v. 1). Christians who felt liberated from such doubts tended to discredit the "weak in faith" as narrow and ignorant. Some had gone so far as to abstain from all meat because of the fear that any meat which was bought in the market might have been dedicated to idols. They became vegetarians (v. 2).

Paul instructed those who had gained a fuller understanding of the meaning of righteousness to welcome those whose beliefs restricted their freedom but not for the purpose of arguing with them about proper Christian conduct (v. 1). Many Jewish Christians continued to consider certain types of meat unclean even though Jesus had clearly stated that whatever a person eats does not defile him (Mark 7:18-23; Luke 11:41); thus He declared all meats clean (Mark 7:19).

Not only was there the problem of those who had gained fuller liberty belittling the thoughts and actions of those who followed rigid rules and regulations, but the more conservative were likely to consider the liberated to be guilty of sin (v. 3). The man who eats should not hold in contempt the one who abstains; neither should the one who abstains pass judgement on the one who eats meat. Paul reminded the Roman Christians that Christ is the Master and each believer is a servant of Christ (v. 4). It is not the responsibility of servants to pass judgement on the actions of other servants since a servant is accountable only to his master. If his actions please the master, "he will be upheld" (v. 4). If

The "weak in the faith" (14:1) were those who had scruples that meat used in _____ temples was _____.

(pagan, defiled)

Romans 14:4 teaches Christ is the _____ and each believer is His _____. Servants are not to pass _____ on other servants, but all are responsible to the _____.

(Master, servant, judgement, Master)

his actions displease the master, he will fall into disfavour and punishment. In either case, it is the master's business to pass judgement on the actions of his servants.

Partaking of alcoholic beverages is a point of contention among Christians today. Some groups claim as Christian liberty the right to moderate drinking. They admit that unrestrained indulgence and drunkenness are evil. Other groups believe that even moderate drinking is wrong. Perhaps Paul's principle of abstaining or eating meat should be applied to the problem of social drinking; however, additional factors should be considered before judging even moderate drinking as harmless:

1. Many people who desire to control the drinking of alcoholic beverages are unable to do so and become alcoholics.
2. Companies which produce such beverages are dominated by their interest in making money; therefore, they use many subtle approaches to enslave people to the habit of drink. Many Christians have concluded that the industry is so possessed by evil motives and designs that a Christian should have no identification with it.
3. Even moderate drinking affects the reflexes and results in many deaths and bodily injuries in traffic accidents. Heavier drinking deteriorates the mind and body.

These three factors indicate that the drinking of alcoholic beverages is not an exact parallel to the eating of meat offered to idols. The meat of Paul's day had no bad effects upon the body and life itself. Paul's principle of emancipation did not advocate participation in activities which lead to physical deterioration and moral degeneration.

Principles regarding special days (14:5-9)

Judaism had a long tradition concerning the Sabbath which was a special holy day. The Sabbath is the last day of the week which was established as holy by the Fourth Commandment. When the Gospel was carried to Gentiles, their religious customs were not based on the Jewish Law. Although Christianity grew out of the Old Testament and is closely related to it, the important day for Christians is the Day of Resurrection instead of the Sabbath. Many Jewish Christians believed that it was necessary to continue worshipping on the Sabbath. Gentiles uninfluenced by Jewish Law preferred Sunday, the

*Is this statement true or false?
Drinking of alcoholic beverages is an exact, modern-day parallel of the eating of meat offered to idols in Paul's day. _____*

(false)

Give 2 reasons the Gentiles preferred to worship on the first day of the week rather than the last (Sabbath).

1. _____

2. _____

(Compare your answer to the text.)

first day of the week. Apparently, conflict existed in Rome among the Christians concerning the day to be esteemed (v. 5). In addition to the weekly Sabbath, the Jews as well as Gentiles had special festival days throughout the year.

Another principle prohibited participation in pagan religious rituals; therefore, Christians were not to revert to the special days in which they honour pagan gods. On the other hand, Paul advised the exercise of liberality and mutual respect regarding special days. While some esteemed one day above others, others esteemed every day alike (v. 5). Perhaps Paul held the position that every day belongs to the Lord; nevertheless, he respected the person who had a different conviction. Instead of one side attempting to convert the other, Paul advised that each man be satisfied in his own mind and conscience. The person who enjoyed greater liberties should not despise or consider spiritually immature those who regarded some days more sacred than others. The observance of days should be to the honour of the Lord just as he who eats should eat to the honour of the Lord (v. 6). The one who eats meat gives thanks to the Lord for it and one who abstains does it in honour of the Lord. Quarrels among Christians would be practically eliminated if they were controlled by the attitude of honouring the Lord instead of by personal rights and desires. The principle of living to please one's Lord rules out the life of legalism and negativism.

Each person lives out his life in Christ's sight and as His servant; therefore, his life is not lived to himself nor does he die to himself (vv. 7-8). If each Christian focused more on his life in Christ's sight, he would find greater harmony with his fellow-man. Man is no longer separated from God and under the dominion of sin and death. While living, the Christian is under the dominion of Jesus as Lord, and when he dies he is in the hands of the Lord. Because of these facts, his life should be dominated by what he thinks is pleasing to his Lord. Christ's death and resurrection make Him Lord of all of life (v. 9). Through Christ's resurrection, His lordship was established over the realm of death as well as life.

Accountability to God (14:10-12)

The judgement seat of God is introduced for two reasons: (1) to caution the man who tends to despise and judge his Christian brothers; (2) to restrain the use of liberty to those actions which are pleasing to God. It is likely that the person with greater scruples will pass judgement and despise his Christian brother who lives a liberated life. The person who holds prejudice against his brother should remember that he will stand before the judgement

Concerning the observance of special religious days, Paul seemed to advocate that every _____ belongs to the _____ (v.5).

Concerning social activities and regarding days, the Christian should seek to honour the _____.

(day, Lord, Lord)

Why did Paul mention the judgement seat of God in Romans 14:10?

1. _____
2. _____

(Compare your answer to the text.)

seat of God to give account of his unchristian attitudes (v.10). The liberated brother who comes to despise the one who lives the restricted life must also give account of his attitude and words to the Lord. Man's self-judgement of his own actions and judgement of others or by others do not substitute for God's judgement (v.12).

Restrictions to Freedom

Romans 14:13-23

In addressing the strong Christians, Paul emphasized the influences which their conduct in morally indifferent matters may have on less enlightened people. The principle which must guide them is not the knowledge that something is permissible but love and consideration for the weaker brother.

Instead of criticizing others for their narrow or broad position, they were instructed to avoid putting an obstacle or hindrance in the way of the weaker brother (v.13). Even though the stronger Christian knew that eating meat would not hinder his own spiritual life, his liberty might become the occasion for dissension and ill-feelings on the part of the weaker brother. Also the weaker brother who considered some meat unclean might be hindered if he was influenced by the stronger brother to eat it. By eating the meat which he believed God had prohibited, he would be in an attitude of rebellion against God.

Paul sided with the emancipated Christians who followed the teachings of Jesus "that there is nothing unclean of itself" (v.14). However, if a person thought that certain meats were unclean and ate them anyway, he would be in rebellion against what he understood to be God's will. In this manner, conduct which is permissible could become the occasion for sin. Sin is usually the perverted or excessive use of the good. False witness is the perverted use of the tongue. Adultery is the perversion of holy relations in marriage. The unrestrained use of Christian liberty can ruin the weaker brother (v.15). One who uses his liberty in eating food to the extent of destroying his weaker brother is not walking in love (v.15).

To walk in love means to be willing to sacrifice self-benefits for the good of the other person. If eating certain foods and drinking certain beverages are hindrances to the other person, the stronger in faith who is controlled by love will sacrifice his liberty for the benefit of the other. Otherwise, his Christian liberty which is good can become the occasion of wrong or evil (v.16).

What principle should guide the Christian in the matter of freedom? _____

(love and consideration for the weaker brother)

Christians are instructed in 14:13 to avoid putting an _____ or _____ in the way of the _____ brother.

(obstacle, hindrance, weaker)

Is this statement true or false?

Sin is usually the perverted or excessive use of the good. _____

(true)

Another restriction of freedom for the Christian is to be controlled by _____ which is concern for the good of the other _____.

(love, person)

The Kingdom of God often was used by Paul to describe a future inheritance. The Kingdom will come in its fullness with the return of the King and the resurrection of the dead. The Kingdom of God has already come in power and is a present reality through the indwelling Holy Spirit. The Spirit is God's presence and power with His people; however, the Kingdom has not come in its fullness and glory. As a present reality, Paul reminded the Romans that "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (v. 17). Preoccupation with meat, drink, sensual pleasure, and merriment is characteristic of Epicureans whose philosophy is of this world. The wisdom or meaning of life for Christians does not focus on the realm of meat and drink but on the spiritual realm of righteousness, peace, and joy. Righteousness has been provided by Christ and is appropriated by man through faith. Peace is the result of God's acceptance of man who has become righteous through faith (cf. 5:1). Joy is the constant experience of the person who lives in victory over evil through the power of the Spirit.

The life which is controlled by love (consideration for the other person) and which is lived in the power of the Holy Spirit is acceptable to both God and man (v. 18). Love has been described as the fulfillment of the Law (13:8-10). Paul further described it as the means of serving Christ and pleasing God. Whoever loves his brother by showing respect for his scruples serves Christ. Whereas liberty can be abused to the point of creating dissension within the Church and causing criticism by those outside the Church, the life of love establishes peace within the Church and approval by men from without (vv. 18-19). Paul encouraged the Roman Christians to follow the life which brings personal peace and which builds up the Church and the Kingdom of God. He instructed the Romans not to hinder the work of God for the sake of food (v. 20). Even though God created all animals and all food is therefore clean, it is sinful for one to eat even clean food if it causes others to fall (v. 20).

Verses 20 and 21 are restatements of preceding teachings. The eating of food here becomes more definite as meat, and drinking takes on a special reference to wine (v. 21). Paul's instructions go beyond food and wine to include "any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (v. 21).

Faith describes man's relationship to God (v. 22). It means that man is submitted to God's control and lives by what he believes to be God's will. The strong Christian believes that God has granted him liberty in certain actions. This faith or conviction should not be imposed on others but should be used

Another principle concerning Christian freedom is to focus on the _____ realm of _____, _____, and _____.

(spiritual, righteousness, peace, joy)

Verse 18 says a life which is controlled by _____ and is lived in the power of the _____ is acceptable to both _____ and _____.

(Love, Holy Spirit, God, man)

to evaluate his own actions before God. If he can hold to his own actions with a clear conscience, Paul pointed out that he would be a happy person (v.22). But if doubts arise concerning his conduct with regard to food, his conscience condemns him because he does not live according to his faith (v.23). His life is not submitted to what he believes to be God's will for him. To live in rebellion against the will of God is sin (v.23).

Christ's Example for Christian Behaviour

Romans 15:1-13

The concern of Christ (15:1-6)

It is easy for a man to respond to his critics by saying, "I'll please myself." Although he may claim the right to do so, his attitude is not that of Christ. Christ considered others first and denied self-interest in order to help others in every way possible. He never put His own interests or welfare first.

For the strong in faith to follow the example of Christ means they are patient to bear the failings of the weak (v.1). They do not please themselves but strive to please their neighbours, that is, to think and do things which are to the good of their neighbour and which will build him up (v.2). Even Christ did not choose His own pleasure but showed loving respect for the scruples of others (v.3). He put the interests of others before His own, but He put the will of God first of all. He was willing to take the reproaches of others upon Himself. In depicting Christ as an example, Paul quoted Psalm 69:9 which was early interpreted in the Church as a prophecy of Christ's passion and of the retribution to overtake His persecutors. The quotation means that Jesus endured reproach and insult in order to do the will of God.

Paul believed that the Old Testament had its fullest meaning for Christians (v.4). Whatever had been written previously was for the instruction of Christians to give them steadfastness and encouragement that they might keep on having hope. The source of their steadfastness and encouragement is God who enables them to live in harmony of mind, to be in one accord, and to have harmony of voice which glorifies God. Although the Church is made up of members with very different backgrounds and degrees of maturity, harmony is possible when the example of Christ is followed. If Jews determined to have their own way according to their customs, there could be no harmony because of the requirements of their Law to remain separate from Gentiles. If Gentiles insisted on continuing their immoral

Put the following concerns in the order numerically as Christ lived them.

- Will of God*
- His own will*
- Interests of others*

(1, 3, 2)

Is this statement true or false?

Paul believed the Old Testament had little meaning for Christians. _____

The Old Testament has its fullest meaning for _____; whatever has been written is for the _____ of Christians.

(false, Christians, instruction)

pagan lives, there could be no harmony with Jewish brothers. Turning from self-interest to concern for others made it possible for the two groups to find harmony in their thoughts, to be of one accord, and to bring glory to the name of God.

Christ's acceptance of those who differ (15:7-13)

Paul encouraged the Jews and Gentiles to welcome one another after the example of Christ who has received us (v.7). Neither Jew nor Gentile deserved the welcome given to them by Christ, for He was with God and equal with God but became a servant (v.8). By becoming a servant in obedience to His Heavenly Father, Christ showed the truthfulness and faithfulness of God who had promised the Patriarchs that their descendants would be His people (v.8). The promise included the responsibility of Abraham's descendants to make the name of Yahweh great among the Gentiles who would come to glorify God for His mercy (v.9). The Jews' and Gentiles' acceptance of one another brought glory to God.

The quotation of four passages in verses 9-12 shows the universality of salvation. David counted Gentiles as part of his kingdom (Ps. 18:49-v.9). God's promise to Abraham included a blessing for the Gentiles, and the Gentiles were called upon to rejoice with God's people (Deut. 32:43-v.10). God's blessings upon the Gentiles which brought rejoicing also caused them to praise the Lord (v.11). For Gentiles to praise the Lord along with Jews meant that He is the God of all people (Psalm 117:1). The next quotation from Isaiah 11:10 revealed that the Gentiles were part of God's Kingdom since they would be under the rule of the "root of Jesse", a Messianic statement (v.12). These verses reveal that the Gentiles shared in the same hope as the Jews. The God who gives this hope to all people is also the source of joy and peace (v.13). The Gentiles as well as the Jews had received the power of the Holy Spirit who gave the believers the power of the Kingdom, joy, peace, and hope. In Galatians 5:22, Paul mentioned that the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

The promise to Abraham included the responsibility of his descendants to make God known to the _____ who would come to glorify Him for His _____.

(Gentiles, mercy)

Five evidences in 15:9-12 of the universality of salvation are:

- 1. David counted Gentiles as part of his _____.*
- 2. God's promise to Abraham included a blessing for the _____.*
- 3. The Gentiles were called upon to rejoice with God's _____.*
- 4. Gentiles were under the rule of the "root of Jesse", a Messianic statement.*
- 5. Gentiles as well as Jews received the power of the _____.*

(kingdom, Gentiles, people, Holy Spirit)

Home Study Exercise

Basic activity (Levels 1, 2, and 3). After reading the study guide text, answer the following questions.

1. Why did Paul look with favour upon the Roman government? _____

2. When should Christians disobey government? _____

3. Who are the "higher powers" of Romans 13:1? _____

4. Why is centralized authority important? _____

5. Name two motives for Christians' submitting to the rulers of the State. _____

6. What does respect for government require? _____

7. What debt does a Christian constantly owe? _____
8. How does love fulfil the Law? _____

9. What is the meaning of the "works of darkness" and the "armour of light" in Romans 13:12?

10. What is the meaning of "put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ"? _____

11. Who are the "weak in faith"? _____

12. Interpret Romans 14:4. _____

13. Why did Gentiles prefer worship on the first day of the week instead of the last? _____

14. What was Paul's view concerning the importance of each day? _____

15. What principle should guide Christians concerning social activities and regarding days? _____

16. Why did Paul mention the judgement in Romans 14:10? _____

17. What restrictions did Paul place upon freedom? _____

18. Summarize the principle which controlled Christ's life. _____

19. How important is the Old Testament for Christians? _____

20. Using a Bible with centre references, give the four Scripture references which Paul referred to in Romans 15:9-12 to prove that God's promise to Abraham included the Gentiles. _____

Supplementary activity (Level 2):

1. Read pages 112-124 in The Epistle to the Romans by Hunter.
2. Why is the State not a terror but a benefactor for the Christian?
3. In what way does Hunter suggest a Christian doctrine of the State must go beyond Romans 13?
4. Explain how "weak Christians" can sin by eating meat which is permissible for Christians to eat.
5. What principles should guide the conduct of Christians?

Advanced activity (Level 3):

1. Read pages 231-258 in The Epistle of Paul to the Romans by Bruce.
2. What special Jewish practices were safeguarded by Roman law?
3. What disadvantage did Christianity have in the eyes of Roman law? Did this affect Paul's doctrine of the State?
4. What was Paul's view of the two ages? (See Romans 13:11-14.)
5. How can a permissible action for Christians become an occasion for sin?
6. What customs made it difficult for Jews to share in a meal with Gentiles?

Seminar Discussion

1. What were Paul's basic beliefs concerning the State which affected his attitude towards it?
2. What appears to have been Paul's personal attitude towards Roman government and how did his attitude differ from that of other Jews?
3. Can a state which persecutes Christians also be described as "ordained" of God?
4. Are sins usually acts which are always wrong or are sins the misuse of that which is right such as the eating of meat under certain circumstances?
5. What principles should guide Christian conduct?
6. Why did the Jews' and Gentiles' acceptance of one another fulfil the "promise" and thus glorify God? (See Romans 15:8-9.)
7. Is there Scriptural basis for Christians to disregard the Jewish laws pertaining to clean and unclean meats and to the Sabbath?