

Romans 15:1~7

It's good to remember sometimes, that these chapter breaks are not always where they should be, as such is the case here. The original writings had no such breaks, they had no chapter and verse, but rather one continues flow of writing. The chapter and verse was added to enhance them, and for identification purposes. The reason I point that out is, the first six verses of this section, would be better placed in chapter 14, because these six verses, is his conclusion on the matter.

For all the reasons stated in chapter 14, Paul exhorts the *Strong* to bear the infirmities of the *Weak*.

The terms "*Strong*" and "*Weak*" here are a reference to the levels of spiritual maturity. The "*Weak*" is a reference to someone who is somewhat new in the faith, possibly a recent convert. It describes a person who is still very much in bondage, to former beliefs, resulting from *the way they were raised*, and how they were brought up to believe. Resulting in that they are very limited as to what their conscience will allow them to do. There's a lot things, that even though they are not wrong, they still have trouble with as a result of the way they were raised. Weak refers to their conscience, because there is very little they can do without feeling guilty. While on the other hand, the Strong refers to those who are stronger in the faith, those whose minds have been transformed by the word of God, allowing them to do things once thought forbidden or wrong.

The two examples Paul used here was that of *meat* and the *observance of certain days*... One felt it was wrong to eat meat, while the other had no problem with it and ate it. One showed special honor to certain days, while the other viewed every day as the same. And as you might expect, it created some tension and animosity between the brethren. The one who refused to eat, condemned the other for eating, while the one who ate, responded by telling him to "*grow up*," arguing that there's nothing wrong with eating meat. The same result happened with the issue of the days, and no doubt many more issues.

So rather than argue who's right and who's wrong, Paul resolves the matter by exhorting the Stronger to forfeit his liberty to eat meat, his freedom to eat meat, so that he does not harm his weaker brother's conscience, and to prevent animosity and dissension from rising between them.

Basically, the Stronger brother is called to forfeit his "Right to be right" for the "*Good of his brother*" and the "*Good of the Church*."

(14:17~23) Paul explains...

In verse 23, Paul declares that the weaker brother is damned if he eats, because he "*thinks*" its wrong. His conscience really bothers him. Even though it doesn't bother you, it bothers him.

(15:1~2) Knowing the potential harm to our brother, Paul exhorts the *Stronger* to bear the infirmities of the Weak...

Meaning that "*Out of Love for his brother*," the Stronger is to sacrifice his liberty in Christ, for the good of his brother and for the unity of the Church. To bear the infirmities of the weak is to relinquish our position on the issue, and take up theirs! We are to put ourselves in their shoes and walk accordingly.

It is the principle of love... Paul is simply instructing the Stronger to walk in love towards his weaker brother. The stronger is to make the sacrifice...

*We see this same principle in 1Corinthians 9...(1Corinthians 9) ⁹For though I be free from all men, **yet have I made myself servant unto all**, that I might gain the more. ²⁰And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that*

are under the law; ²¹To them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. ²²To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak:

I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.

²³*And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you.*

Paul says I do all this, in efforts that I might reach someone for Christ. I put my self in their shoes, and do everything I can to reach them. In verse 23, he says, "*that's what the gospel is all about!*" The Christian life is one of laying down our lives here, to reach our fallen brothers for Christ!

Romans 15, holds the same principle, except it is in regards to our brothers in Christ, for the purpose of keeping unity and the spirit of love within the Church. The Stronger is to consider the conscience of his weaker brother, in everything that he does. We are not to simply live to what we believe is right, we must also consider whether or not it bothers our brother. If it does, it becomes wrong for us...

Paul points to the Holy Scripture and to the pattern set by Christ as the basis of his instruction.

(15:1~3) ¹*We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.*

²*Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.* ³*For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, **The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.***

Paul exhorts that the Strong are to bear the infirmities of the Weak, based on the pattern that Jesus set!

Paul quoted from Psalms 69:9... *The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me...* which he attributes to be written about the Lord Jesus. Paul declares them to be *prophetic words*, written long before the time of Christ about Christ, how He would suffer for us, how He would bear our reproaches!

Psalms 69 is what is called a "*Messianic Psalm*." Meaning that it was written not about the writer, but a prophetic word, written about a future event yet to take place. And when you look closely at it, you find a lot of things that found fulfillment in Christ death on the cross. **Review Psalms 69**...



It's amazing as to the accuracy in which the O.T. scriptures describe the life and death of Christ.

The more and more you read the "*writings of old*", contrasted with "*the life and death of Christ*," FAITH becomes stronger and stronger! We grow in faith as we see the fulfillment of O.T. prophecies by Christ.

(Vs 4) ⁴*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.*

Everything that was *written aforetime* was written **for our edification**, **to build us up** in faith! When you read a thousand year old prophecy fulfilled, **it creates faith** in the hearer.

Faith comes by hearing...and hearing by the word of God...(Ro. 10:17)

The N.T. writings are really the "*Fulfillment*" of the O.T. Everything the O.T writings were speaking to, found fulfillment beginning with the birth of John the Baptist, then Christ himself, continuing all the way down to the fall of Israel, and the establishment of the church! All of it was "*prophesied of*" before hand, down to every last detail. And when you "*hear*" these things, comparing the writings of old to the events and life of Christ... faith is created. What begins with "*Skepticism*" evolves into "*Faith*" by simply "*hearing*" the old writings explained in light of Jesus Christ. The accuracy and detail, in which Christ fulfilled the writings of old, are staggering! You might even say unbelievable.

There have been many who have set out to “*disprove*” the scriptures...only to be converted by them... Think about that, these guys were determined in their mind that it was all a sham, and set out to prove it. But as you read and understand the writings of old, then look to Christ, and see over and over the fulfillment of those writings, ***faith is created*** without any help of the listener...

Faith is the result of hearing the scripture... *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*...

(Vs 4~5) ⁴*For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we (through patience and comfort of the scriptures) might have hope.* ⁵*Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:*

Paul says, my desire is that the “*God of that Hope*,” the God of patience (*endurance*), the God of consolation (*comfort*), would “*grant you*” or enable you to be “*likeminded*” as that of Christ.

Paul says, I pray that God will take what was written aforetime concerning Christ, how “*he took upon himself our infirmities*”...how “*he took upon himself our weakness*”, and that He would use that to transform your lives, so that you would walk the way He walked...that our lives would reflect Christ!

As Christ bare *our weaknesses*, may we too bear *our brothers weaknesses*.

In this case, knowing that CHRIST took our “*reproaches upon himself*,” knowing that he “*bore our weaknesses on the cross*,” his hope is, that by faith, we who are strong, would do likewise, and bear the infirmities of the weak. That *like Christ*, that we too would walk in love, by laying down our lives, by setting aside our rights, our wills, our desires, and live our lives for the good of our brother.

Such sacrificial love is what is pleasing in the eyes of God...and results in the glory of God!

⁶*That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

⁷*Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God.*