

Romans 14:7-12

PREVIOUS

NEXT

ROMANS ROAD to RIGHTEOUSNESS				
Romans 1:18-3:20	Romans — 3:21-5:21	Romans — 6:1-8:39	Romans — 9:1-11:36	Romans — 12:1-16:27
SIN	SALVATION	SANCTIFICATION	SOVEREIGNTY	SERVICE
NEED FOR SALVATION	WAY OF SALVATION	LIFE OF SALVATION	SCOPE OF SALVATION	SERVICE OF SALVATION
God's Holiness In Condemning Sin	God's Grace In Justifying Sinners	God's Power In Sanctifying Believers	God's Sovereignty In Saving Jew and Gentile	God's Glory The Object of Service
Deadliness of Sin	Design of Grace	Demonstration of Salvation		
		Power Given	Promises Fulfilled	Paths Pursued
Righteousness Needed	Righteousness Credited	Righteousness Demonstrated	Righteousness Restored to Israel	Righteousness Applied
God's Righteousness IN LAW	God's Righteousness IMPUTED	God's Righteousness OBEYED	God's Righteousness IN ELECTION	God's Righteousness DISPLAYED
Slaves to Sin	Slaves to God			Slaves Serving God
Doctrine				Duty
Life by Faith				Service by Faith
Modified from Irving L. Jensen's excellent work " Jensen's Survey of the NT "				

RELATED RESOURCES

Romans 14:7-9

Romans 14:10-12

[Romans 14:7-12:](#)

Our Responsibilities Under Grace - Part 14

by Dr. Wayne A. Barber

For eleven chapters we have seen the great mercy and grace of God in Romans. Then in chapter 12, the Apostle Paul says "Now, God having done what He has done, here is what you are responsible for under grace." The first responsibility he points out is in our relationship to God. I want to remind you that only two verses cover that marvelous relationship. From 12:3 to chapter 14, where we are right now, is all our responsibility to one another. Imagine! Two verses with God. It is simple.

There is a book out called *The Heart of the Problem*, by Henry Brandt. In the first chapter he talks about the myth of complexity. There are a lot of people who think this world is complex. Oh, no, it is not. Line yourself up under God and you will find how simple it really is. Get out from under His Lordship, get out from under His Word and it will become complex. But when you get back up under His Word, it is very simple.

In 12:1 you take these bodies that are potentially sinful and daily present them as a love offering back to God: "present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice,... which is your spiritual service of worship." How do you do that? You start by renewing your mind. Why your mind? Well, because the mind is the facilitator of sin in the body of flesh. It has got to be changed and renewed. You have got to start thinking the way God thinks and only the Word of God can renew the mind. Then immediately your relationships change.

And, as I said, from 12:3 all the way to where we are in chapter 14, is nothing but our relationships, how we are responsible in relationships. The word "righteousness" is a relationship word. Righteousness absolutely is how you treat others. The

righteousness of God was demonstrated by His Son coming to this earth and dying on a cross for sinful, ungodly enemies of God, people like us. That is why He died. The righteousness of God was demonstrated there. The righteousness of God is demonstrated in you and in me when we walk by faith.

Romans 1:17 is the key verse, I think, to the whole book. He says, "For in it [the gospel] the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith." Then he quotes out of Habakkuk 4, "But the righteous man shall live by faith." In other words, the only way these relationships are going to be made right, the only way the righteous character of God, being under His right over us is ever going to be seen is when we are surrendered to God and walking by faith, Romans 12:1-2. Then we become very responsible. It can't happen any other way. Immediately we are responsible to serve one another. But we don't serve the same way, so stop judging somebody else. That is so important in the body of Christ. There are different gifts, Verses 3-8 tell us that. Your gift is different than somebody else's gift. You are going to serve differently. But we are to serve one another. But all that serving is couched and housed in the love that is without hypocrisy in 12:9. You see, you can fake the gifts, but you can't fake the fruit and that is what the Holy Spirit produces, causing this righteousness to be seen, causing relationships to be what God would have them to be.

Well, we are responsible to love those inside the church and to serve those inside the church, but we are also responsible to love those outside the church. We are responsible to honor and obey governing authorities. We are responsible to pay taxes. We are responsible as the stronger to treat the weaker in a right way, never to scorn, never to demean and never to shun the weaker brother. That is where we are right now. Chapter 14 deals with the stronger and his relationship to the weaker brother in the family of God. What we are going to see now will sober you. It certainly has sobered me.

You see, so often I want to preach messages so everybody will leave just feeling great. But I want to tell you, when you preach verse by verse, you just can't skip the hard places. And folks, we are at a very hard place. This is a very hard message which remind us of the importance of what Paul is saying and what God has commanded us in our relationships. That is what we are going to see.

Well, the principle is laid out in verses 1, 2 and 3 of chapter 14. Paul says in verse 1, "Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions. One man has faith that he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats vegetables only. Let not him who eats regard with contempt him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats, for God has accepted him."

Paul is saying that the stronger brother is the one who understands the faith, the message of grace. When he says weak in faith it is not really weak in faith; in the Greek it is weak in "the" faith. He doesn't understand grace. He doesn't understand his freedom in Christ. You have a person who thinks that if he eats meat or does some of these other things that it will affect his standing in Christ with God. He is amiss in this. His thinking is all wrong. He is a weaker brother because of this.

The word *asthenes* for "weak" doesn't mean a permanent weakness but a temporary weakness. He will get better, but right now this is where he is. He just doesn't see what grace really is. The stronger brother is the one who does understand grace. In no way is the stronger brother ever to demean, scorn or put down the weaker brother. We are to encourage, instruct, pray for, love, all those things but never to shun them, never to scorn them, never in any way to demean them.

Paul says in verses 4-9, "Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and stand he will, for the Lord is able to make him stand. One man regards one day above another, another regards every day alike. Let each man be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God. For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, and if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living."

This is the whole purpose of the principle. What he is saying is, "Jesus is Lord over the strong in faith and He is Lord over the weak in the faith. Don't play the role that has not been assigned to you. Don't step in and become Lord over the one who is weak. You don't have that right." By the way, remember, the weaker brother always thinks he is the stronger one. You just can't take it one way or the other. But the emphasis is on the stronger brother. Never ever is the one who understands grace to use his freedom under grace to offend or become a stumbling block to another because both are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Listen again to the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 8:9-12: "But take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak, for if someone who sees you who have knowledge dining in an idols temple, will not his conscience if he is weak be strengthened to eat things sacrificed to idols? Well, through your knowledge, he who is weak is ruined, the brother for whose

sake Christ died. And thus by sinning against a brother and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ."

Again, the weaker brother is weak in the faith. He is not talking about a sinful brother. There are other passages to deal with the sinful brother. He is talking about the weaker brother. You have two sincere people serving God out of all the sincerity of their hearts. The weaker one in the faith doesn't understand grace. He is still hung up in a lot of the legalistic tendencies of his life. Hey, but don't put him down. Don't shun him. Don't scorn him. Bring him alongside, encourage him, exhort him, love him and pray for him because God, who is his Lord, will bring him to that understanding. Who are you to Lord over him? Then you have on the other side the stronger brother who does understand grace, but he has a responsibility under that grace to make sure that he treats his weaker brother in the right way. What I think Paul is doing here in verses 9-12 is driving home the urgency of listening to what he has just said.

You see, from Romans 12:3 to 14:9 we have our responsibility in relationships. Righteousness, which is what only God can produce in us, is a relationship word. It is housed in the love the Holy Spirit of God produces. That qualifies it. One day we are all going to be held accountable for how we have dealt in our relationships.

This is a tough message, folks. What God is saying is "You better pay attention to what I am saying. I gave my life for the people you are shunning and scorning and judging and tearing down to make yourself look good. One day you are going to stand before Me and you are going to answer for your behavior." That is what He is saying. It is not an easy message.

First of all, there is only one judge before whose throne we will all stand one day. Like we have said many times, there are two absolutes: 1) there is a God, and 2) we are not Him. Well, you can say it another way, there is a Judge and we are not Him. We are not the Judge. Jesus has been appointed Judge over all things. We are going to stand before Him one day.

Verse 10 says, "But you, why do you judge your brother? Or you again, why do you regard your brother with contempt? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God." The present tense is used here. There is that spiritual pride again. You have some of them over there that have really understood the message of grace and they are hammering the people who don't understand it, making them look stupid, making them look silly, scorning them, shunning them. Paul is saying, "You had better stop doing that." As a matter of fact, the emphasis here is kind of like, "Who are you to judge anybody? There is a Judge and you are going to stand before Him one day, but you are not Him. What do you mean judging?"

The word for "judge" there we have seen in verses 3, 4 and 5. It is the word *krino*. It is the word that means to come to a decision that you execute upon someone based on what you see and what you know and probably in front of their peers. Now, to apply that here in this context, the judgment is you have discerned that your brother is sincerely wrong and you have discerned that he is hung up in legalism and he is hung up in things that he shouldn't be hung up in. What you choose to do rather than love him, pull him alongside, gently instruct, gently exhort and pray for him, is you make him look stupid in front of his peers. Now, that is my own language but that is what I think Paul is saying.

Isn't it kind of fun to do that sometimes? Have you ever had a bad day and done that? Some of you have had those days in which you just won't repent and just sort of feel the luxury of ripping your brother and tearing him down and saying stuff because you have picked up a weakness in that brother and you just enjoy talking about it. By your talking about his weakness, you are making yourself look better. All of us have done that, haven't we? The Apostle Paul is saying, "Folks, you don't seem to understand." He is trying to talk to us here. God is using him here. He is saying something to us. We are going to be held accountable for the things that we say and the way we treat the weaker brother or in any other relationship of our life. We will stand before a Holy God one day. "Who are you," he says, "to judge your brother?"

He goes on and asks the second question. He says, "Who are you to regard your brother with contempt?" The word "contempt" means to treat him as if he is nothing, to despise him. Again it's the same attitude. The principle or the reason he says this is found in the last part of the verse. He says, "For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God." That is a sobering statement. If we stopped right there, every one of us would just have to start repenting. We are all going to stand. There is going to be a reckoning. There is going to be an accountability that God is going to hold us to one day in the future. And there are many Christians who treat this thing lightly. Their families are split apart. They go through life with bitter relationships. They don't really care what they say about people. They always are somehow building themselves up without understanding they are going to answer before a Holy God one day for what they have said and how they have treated their brother. We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

That is in the future tense. There is an event coming. There is an appointment you and I have to keep. We are going to stand before God one day and we are going to give an account of how we live. He says, "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God." "Stand before" is the word *paristemi*. It means to be made to stand before the presence of an authority who has the power to

judge.

I think Paul is trying to say, "Folks, do you really believe this?" I personally believe that most people don't believe this. If they did, they would live differently. They wouldn't say some of the things they say. They wouldn't do some of the things they do. We have an appointment. The Judge is coming. He has given us the freedom and He has given us the privilege and He is coming to hold us accountable for what He has given to us. That is what he is saying. We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God.

The term "judgment seat of God" is interesting. The Nestle's text says "God" but the Textus Receptus says "Christ". Now you say, "Well, isn't Christ God?" Yes, He is and there possibly isn't any real distinction, but I am going to make one.

In the Textus Receptus it says the Bema Seat or the Judgment Seat of Christ. Now the term "judgment seat" is the term Bema. You have heard of the Bema Seat of Christ. What is the Bema? Well, Bema is the word that refers to a throne that was set up above the people to give the position of authority. It was a throne of judgment. It was on a platform. As a matter of fact, it was used for many things, not just judgment. Sometimes oracles were made there and sometimes debates were held. It was a place with a high rostrum. It was always given that place of distinction.

In Acts 12:21 we see Herod in Caesarea taking his place on a throne that was elevated above the people. It says, "And on an appointed day Herod, having put on his royal apparel, took his seat on the rostrum." The term "rostrum" is Bema. It commonly meant a tribunal. It was where a judge would sit to make judgments and cast out a sentence.

Now Jerusalem and the smaller cities alike had their thrones of judgment. In Rome, the magistrate and the jury were seated together on the raised tribunal or bench. I had the privilege of going to Greece several years ago. I was there at the foot of Mt. Olympus on the Aegean Sea. I was able to go to many cities in Greece and in Macedonia. One of the places I got to go was Philippi. The ruins of Philippi were just marvelous. When I got there I got to stand on the Bema Seat, the place where the throne was set up where the public debates were held, where the judge would sit up and make his judgments and cast sentence. So the Bema was a very common thing in the people's minds. Every city had one. It was an elevated place. It was where the judge would sit. It was where the judgments were made and sentences were cast.

We are all going to stand before this judgment seat of Christ. You have to understand the context. Who is the "all" he is talking about? We know that all men will stand before God, but who is going to stand here at the Judgment Seat of Christ? The context here is believers. You have got to understand that we will all one day stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. He is going to make discernments. He is going to make judgments about how we have lived down here on this earth. So, that is the first thing. We have an appointment with Him.

Who are we to judge somebody else? Who am I to try to be lord over somebody else's life? Who am I to demean somebody and scorn somebody because they don't understand the faith? I am nobody. I am not to do it, and I am going to be judged if I do it.

Secondly then, if we are going to stand before this then it raises the question—and I know it is on our mind—"What are we going to be judged for? Come on, I thought my sin was judged at the cross." Thank God, I am here to tell you, it was and we are not going to stand in that kind of judgment. It is a different thing. It is an accountability for how we have lived life down here on this earth. Now I am telling you, folks, people don't want to hear this. They don't want to deal with their relationships. They don't want to make things right. They would rather sweep it under the rug than put it under the blood. They don't realize they are going to stand before God one day, the Lord Jesus on that throne, and they are going to give an account for how they dealt in their relationships down here on earth. It concerns the evaluation of our life on earth and its character and its works.

The context in both Romans 14 and 2 Corinthians 5 is all believers and that is what we have got to see. In 2 Corinthians 5:10 it says, "For we must all [that includes Paul, me, you and everybody] appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body." Do you know what the word "recompense" is? It means to pay back in full. In other words, if I owe you \$5, I pay you \$5, not \$4 and not \$6. Not more and not less, exactly what I owe. In other words, what we do here is going to be recompensed when we stand before Him. This should be a thrilling thing, but for most of us it is not. It is a real eye opener, a sobering thing. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one [all of us] may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

The common misunderstanding we have is that when a person dies, their life as a believer on this earth is forgotten. They step over into a state of bliss and everything in the past is gone and now it is all the same for everybody. It is "pie in the sky by and by." Oh, Lord, give me a little house over there in glory land. That is the thinking of most people. I hate to tell you this, folks, that is just not the way it is. You see, once you get saved, and are given everything for life and godliness, Peter said in his second epistle, we are

going to be held accountable for that one day. It definitely has to do with our relationships, how we treat one another, how we treat others.

Well, when we leave this tabernacle, our body goes into the ground but our spirit goes to be with the Lord. To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, he says in this same chapter. Look at 2 Corinthians 5:2: "For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven; for indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed, but to be clothed, in order that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life." The word "clothed" is a special word *ependuo*. It is a word only used in this context. There is a certain putting on of a garment. There is a certain putting on of clothes. When our spirit leaves our body, there is a covering for it.

Now hang on to something here. Don't misunderstand the resurrection body we are going to get one day. That is not a reward, folks. That is salvation. We just haven't experienced it yet. We are talking about rewards beyond this. We are talking about something entirely different. When you die, your spirit is immediately clothed with some kind of garment. We are not told what this garment will be but evidently it is a garment of identity of the bodiless spirit immediately after death. Our spirits are never left unclothed. They are not some bodiless things floating out in space. No, it is identifiable. There is a clothing, there is some kind of garment on that spirit. It is not something that is floating around in space. It is with the Lord where He is in the third heaven. ([Click](#) for more discussion of **The Third Heaven**)

To prove this look at 2 Corinthians 5:3. In verse 3 it says we are not left naked. We are never unclothed. Our spirits are never unclothed: "Inasmuch as we, having put it on [this garment], shall not be found naked." So there is something that happens immediately when we die. There is a garment that we put on and we are groaning now it says for this garment. We are longing for this garment, to get outside of the presence of sin of this body and to have this garment to be put on.

Now, the word there for covering is *oiketerion*. It is the word that could be used for house, for residence, for a garment or a covering. The etymology of the word really is just a dwelling place of something. It is also translated "habitation" in Jude 1:6. There is not a whole lot that you can say about the word except it means a residence where somebody lives. But in the context it seems to mean a garment that covers us. We live inside this garment. The spirit is inside of this garment.

The parallel word for the word *oiketerion* is a similar word but the little word *kata* is put in front of it. They are synonyms. Do you know what a synonym is? A synonym means this other word means exactly the same thing: a residence, a place where someone dwells. That is the word used *katoiketerion* which is used in Ephesians 2:22. This is very important because it shows that this dwelling, this covering, is something where the spirit lives, whether it be the Holy Spirit or whether it be a demonic spirit or whether it be our own spirit as we go to be with the Lord. It is something covering the spirit. It is a spiritual term. He says in Ephesians 2:22, "in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit." Now "dwelling of God" there is the word *oiketerion* with *kata* put in front of it. And so both words, *oiketerion* and *katoiketerion*, mean a dwelling and especially a dwelling where the spirit dwells.

That same word is used in Revelation 18:2 and there it is talking about the dwelling place of demons. It says, "And he cried out with a mighty voice saying, 'Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! And she has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.'" So these two words there distinctly mean a residence, a covering, a house where the spirit lives, whether it be the Holy Spirit or whether it be the demonic spirits or whether it be our spirit and in the context it would be our spirit. When our spirit leaves the body, it moves into a different covering and that is the word that we are looking at.

In the same passage, 2 Corinthians 5:1, he uses a word similar to *oiketerion* but changes it just a little bit that brings the point out that I want to show you. Look in 2 Corinthians 5:1. This is significant. This is what shows us that the way we are living now is making a garment that one day will be put on us when we are in the presence of Christ. In other words, what that garment is going to look like is directly determined by how we are living right now as believers. Look at what it says here in verse 1: "For we know that if the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." You say, "What is the big deal? House, residence?" The word here in verse 1 is *oikodome*. Now, that word means something. Yes, it means house. Oh, but it means a house that is under construction. It is not finished yet. We are groaning for something that is being made but hasn't been finished yet. What is determining it being finished? By the way we are living right now on this earth.

Now folks, you have got to get that in your mind. The way you live here now as a Christian has everything to do with the way you are going to enjoy where you are headed. You see, a lot of people don't believe that. I am afraid that you are going to

misunderstand it. It has nothing to do with the glorified body. It has nothing to do with your eternal standing with God. That is not what he is talking about. But what he is talking about is, there is going to be some kind of identity when we get to heaven in the presence of God that is going to depict how we lived down here. It is not a put down in any way. As a matter of fact, I think that is the garment which we will stand in when we stand before the Bema Seat of Christ. We will have no argument when the rewards are passed out. We will know immediately why this is what we received instead of this is what we didn't receive. We will know why.

As a matter of fact most of us know right now why. You see, there is a motivation to the believer that one day when he stands before God he wants to stand not ashamed of the way he lived down here. The context is all in relationships, folks, all in relationships. I have said many times that if the devil has a place in your life, if he can get in there at all, it is on your tongue. That is where it is. How you talk about and deal with people is the key. The building and clothing are in accordance with our works of faith on this earth, whether good or bad.

Second Corinthians 5:10 again says, "For we must all [and the context is believers] appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done." If you are going to be paid back for something, what is it you are going to be paid back? How are you going to be rewarded? According to the deeds done in the body, whether good—inherently good, that which only the Holy Spirit can do—or evil or bad. Some people have the question, "Well, what if we don't die and the Lord comes, what about us?" Well, what about us? In a moment we will have a brand new body. There are a lot of questions I can't answer for you. I just don't know. I am being very honest about it. But when I get to heaven one day I will understand the rewards I get or don't get because I will know immediately based on how I have lived down here.

There are responsibilities in the Christian life, folks. This puts integrity right back where it ought to be. I mean, people who say you can live like you want to live, do what you want to do, are people who do not understand the Word of God. He is coming and when He comes, we shall all stand. Thank God, it is a wonderful thing. It is for rewards. He is not out to get you. He already has you. But it is to reward you. Of course, we know the crowns that will be given and all those other things fit in here some place. But the main thing Paul is saying is, we have an appointment one day to stand before God and the way we treat each other will directly be the subject of that conversation.

Folks, you need to think about that before you say or do anything to demean or scorn a brother because God loves them and gave Himself for them. He died for us when we were ungodly sinners and enemies of God. He is going to judge us one day for how we treated brothers in the family of God.

So how should we live? In light of all this, how should we live? Well, that is the whole point that Paul is making here. To me the only reason he brought it up was to give some urgency to what he is saying. Look at what he is saying here. How shall we live? We are not to cause each other to stumble. Look in Romans 14:11. He reminds them of something from the Old Testament. "For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.'" He quotes out of Isaiah 45:23. You can also go back to Numbers or Psalms. There are all kinds of verses that say this. Paul is saying there has never been a time in the period of man's existence on this earth when God has not told him there is going to be a day of reckoning, a day of accountability. God has been faithful to say that from the Old Testament all the way through the New Testament. Why we think because we are under grace we are not going to have to be accountable for what God has given us under grace baffles me. But the way we live directly has to do with what is going to happen one day when we stand before Him.

Verse 12 says that we will stand alone and we will answer for ourselves. Watch this. "So then each one [no one is exempt] of us shall give account of himself to God." That is very, very significant.

Recently I took my son to Colorado on a skiing trip. I noticed that somehow we ran into some of the most obnoxious people I had ever met! I mean, people were rude and horrible. There were times on this trip when somebody would just act like you were an idiot because you didn't do something, right or wrong, and I just wanted to take my ski pole and cram it clean down their throat. There were other things I felt like doing while I was there.

But you know, Romans 12-14 has so drastically affected me, it was like God was saying, "Son, you are not going to be held accountable for what they did to you. But son, you are going to be held accountable by Me for how you responded to what they did to you." You know what it made me do? It made me stop and rethink, "Okay, die to self." Immediately I could say, "Lord, I can't and You never said I could. Now Lord, You give me a kind word, give me a peaceful word, give me something to say that will build up and edify, not tear down."

I started practicing that on that trip. I want to tell you something, I guess maybe I have done it over the years but not with the intensity of Romans 14 hanging over me because I know that one day I am going to be held accountable. You see, folks, we don't

understand that because we live in wicked bodies of the flesh and our mind says, "Well, I have a right to treat him that way. Look at what he did to me." You do not have that right. Period. And neither do I. We are not our own, we are bought with a price. We don't have the luxury that the lost people have, but we have the privilege of being able to trust God and treat them the right way. Respond to them the right way. One day we are going to stand before God and it is going to be brought out before everyone as to how we lived. It may surprise you what you see.

Verse 13 says, "Therefore, let us not judge one another anymore." Can't you hear Paul? That is kind of like I want to say to you today. Oh, come on, folks, let's just quit judging everybody. "Come on, he says, "let us not judge each other anymore, but rather determine this." Let's make up our minds. Wouldn't it be great if we could all just join hands and say, "This is one body of believers that is not going to criticize each other. We are going to pray for each other, exhort one another, encourage one another, instruct one another, but nobody in this body is going to be treated in a demeaning way or shunned in any way. We are going to join hands and trust God that He will work a unity in this body that will be a witness to this world and we will not be ashamed when we stand before Jesus one day at the judgment seat of Christ."

That is what Paul is saying to the church at Rome: "but rather determine this, not to put an obstacle or a stumbling block in a brother's way." In other words, by your attitude you thought you had a right to it. It might have just put a stumbling block in a weaker brother's way and we have no right to do that. Again, they are sincere on both sides. We are not talking about a sinful brother. That is a whole different message. We are talking about sincere people seeking to work and to live like they are supposed to live, one weak in the faith and one strong in the faith. Neither are to become a stumbling block to the other, but join hands and encourage and exalt one another.

I am going to ask you a question here and see if you will answer it. Doesn't it hurt you when you find out what somebody said about you? Anybody who says it doesn't is not being honest. I mean, it affects us all, especially when it is a friend, or somebody you thought was a friend. They found out you had a weakness and they so scorned and demeaned you that it made you look like a fool because it made them look like they had arrived at a certain point. Doesn't it?

Well, righteousness is a relationship word and it only comes by faith. That is why there are only two verses in our relationship with God that covers everything: walk by faith and present your body a living sacrifice. The result is a righteous love which will cause you to respond to that which has hurt you differently than you used to respond and will make you not ashamed one day to stand before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Bema Seat of Christ. You will look forward to the rewards that will come. It is not a bad thing, folks, it is supposed to be a good thing. The problem is, we live so far over in left field, all of us are scared to death of it. It ought to be a good thing; look forward to it. Romans 12:1-2—live that way. Forget the fear of this thing and look forward to it. It is a wonderful day.