

RECEIVING THE INSTRUCTION OF EQUITY (Romans 14:1-15:7).

- Following our Table of Contents in Proverbs 1—the next body of information we are to expect to receive in our Sonship Education (and godly sonship edification) is: *To receive the instruction of ... **equity**.*

- And it's no surprise that we do, in fact, find that the next body of information contained in Romans deals with this very issue of godly 'equitable' decisions and godly 'equitable' treatment **of others**.

... and in particular, those "others" are what God has the apostle call "*weak in the faith*" (:1) - and since we're dealing with a person or persons who are "*in the faith*", therefore these are individuals that are first and foremost truly saved from the debt & penalty of their sins (or truly justified unto eternal life) ...

... they are saved individuals; they are believers in Christ; they are "Christians" in truth—hence, they are others who are members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ just as you are!

- But these truly saved/justified/believers in Christ are called "*weak*" (whatever that means) - but whatever it does mean, it means that **they are in a current state or position of being weaker 'in the faith' than YOU!** (we'll deal with all of that in detail later on). [they don't have Romans 1:1-13:14 (any of it, or all of it) effectually working in their inner man as you do ... or as you should] ...

- So—because of these facts—we can accurately say that they are 'weaker brethren' or 'weaker brothers' (or sisters) "in Christ" ...

... (I'm using the word "brother" in the generic sense to include both male and female, men and women) ...

... and although the exact expression "weaker brother" is not used in this section of Romans—the general and central issue of this entire section of Romans 14:1-15:7 has to do with our relationship and personal interaction with the weaker brother!

- Therefore, even though the expression "weaker brother" is not found in this section, it is a legitimate expression to describe the general/central/main issue, and therefore it will be the expression we use to talk about its central/main issue.

- Equity is the 4th and last of the Sonship Decision-Making Skills of Level I (Phase 2) of our Sonship Education.

(even though the word *equity* is not mentioned in this section of Romans, we know from the Table of Contents for the ‘format’ of Sonship Education [back in Proverbs 1:3] that our initial *instruction of equity* is the next thing our Father is going to give us—and is, indeed, what the information in Romans 14:1-15:7 is dealing with.)

- And it brings our Level I Sonship Education nearly to its end— (there are still a couple of final matters that have to be addressed in Romans 15:8-16:27 that are unique to us as members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ in this present Disp. of Gentile Grace).

- Before we deal with the issue of *equity* in the context of our sonship education in Romans 14ff—and before we get a ‘working definition’ of it that fits our context ... let’s just talk for a moment about *equity* ... because there is a very critical issue that we MUST have in view that is going to govern everything else we ever learn in this section of Romans dealing with walking worthy of who we are “in Christ” with respect to ‘weaker brothers’ ... that governs everything we will think and do as “sons” who have gained the very rare and very valuable skill-set of being able to make godly equitable decisions, just exactly like God our Heavenly Father, and exactly like God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

- And this IS one of the most rare and valuable and grand, important, esteemed, and useful skill-set you will ever gain as God’s “son”!

- (it comes LAST for a reason! ... one of which is that it is going to take Wisdom, Justice, and Judgment in order to be able to make godly equitable decisions!)

- **EQUITY**—what is it?

- **OED** = it is used in 2 major ways— 1) In General; 2) In Jurisprudence (in a legal sense)

- 1) = the quality of being equal or fair; fairness, impartiality; evenhanded dealing; what is fair and right.
- 2) = in a legal sense—the recourse to general principles of justice to correct or supplement the provisions of

the law—such as the “equity of a statute” - which is the construction of a statute according to its reason and spirit, so as to make it apply to cases for which it does not expressly provide.

- In a legal sense—(in England and in the United States), it is a system of law existing side by side with the common and statute law—superseding these, when they conflict with the laws of equity, fairness, and reason.

- The original notion was that a decision ‘in equity’ being understood to be one given in accordance with natural justice, in a case for which the law did not provide adequate remedy, or in which its operation would have been unfair. These decisions however, were taken as precedents, and thus ‘equity’ early became an organized system of rules, not less definite and rigid than those of ‘law’; though the older notion long continued to survive in the language of legal writers, and to some extent to influence the practice of equity judges. In England, equity was formerly administered by a special class of tribunals, of which the Court of Chancery was chief; but since 1873 all the branches of the High Court administer both ‘law’ and ‘equity’, it being provided that where the two differ, the rules of equity are to be followed.

- Also—as a sub-category or sub-definition to the legal sense—the word *equity* also came to deal with the residual value of a business or property beyond any mortgage and liability—and has also come to be a term used to describe the market value of securities and stock.

- (but since we’re dealing with equitable dealings with a weaker brother, we can set aside any thinking about real estate or stocks)

- Webster 1828 = (from Old F., It., and L. roots) = equal, even, level—Justice; right. In practice, equity is the impartial distribution of justice, or the doing that to another which the laws of God and man, and of reason, give him a right to claim. It is the treating of a person according to justice and reason.

- (**William Blackstone** [wrote the Commentaries on the Law of England 1770's]) - In jurisprudence, the correction or qualification of law, when too severe or defective; or the extension of the words of the law to cases not expressed, yet coming within the reason of the law. Hence a court of equity or chancery, is a court which corrects the operation of the literal text of the law, and supplies its defects, by reasonable construction, and by rules of proceeding and deciding, which are not admissible in a court of law. Equity then is the law of reason, exercised by the chancellor or judge, giving remedy in cases to which the courts of law are not competent.

Critical Point: We are not receiving *the instruction of equity* because God's laws are not competent or flawed (whether you're talking about God's laws in the sense of the Law of Moses, or in the sense of God's word in general, or the specific part of God's word that is to be "rightly divided" - that is, Paul's epistles, the very curriculum for our Sonship Edification) ... rather, we are receiving *the instruction of equity* because of either the flaws and incompetency of men and women who, even though JUEL, still have a nature of sin still residing in their members—or because of those believers who have received damage to their "inner man" due to corrupt doctrine—or because of those believers, who through no fault of their own, are not as far along, doctrinally, as you are—hence, whatever the case, and whatever the reason, it is because of those believers who have **doctrinal estate differences** from you.

- (see **Crabb's Synonymes**—pg. 212)

- (see **Smith's Synonyms Discriminated**—pg. 388)

- "**Apprentice**" = OF someone learning; unskilled, inexperienced; one who is put under the care of a master for a period of time in which he is instructed in the knowledge of a trade or business—it's the time in which a 'novice' (a person new to a field or activity) or beginner is taught/instructed by a master with a view to learn his art, occupation, or mastery.

- "**Journeyman**" = from "journey" = Fr. **a day, or a day's work**; hence, one who has been taught by his master to have enough knowledge and skill to do a day's work himself—it came to mean one who is qualified to work at a craft or trade for wages of another—one who is in a position between an 'apprentice' and a 'master'.

- “Master” = a person who is eminently or perfectly skilled in any art, science, or occupation/business—(this is why colleges & universities give MA degrees: Master of Arts) - a **master craftsman** is so skilled in his art or business that he can produce a ‘masterpiece’ — he not only perfectly knows, and is perfectly skilled in all aspects of his craft, but he also perfectly knows all of the ‘ins and outs’ of the business so as to be successful in his craft. He is therefore qualified to teach his craft to an apprentice and duplicate his craft in that apprentice.

- Now—while two of these words are not Biblical words (not found in the Scripture) - one of them, however, IS Biblical: “master” - but even though the other two words are not found in the Bible, the concept is certainly a Biblical concept!

- Romans 14:4
- 1 Cor. 3:1-10
- Eph. 6:5-9
- Col. 4:1
- 2 Tim. 2:3-5

- So—put yourself in the place of a “master” (master craftsman):

What are you looking for in your apprentice that would make it so that you would be confident enough in him so as to promote him to ‘journeyman’?

- a lot of things—(and those things are absolutely necessary) ... but what’s the one thing he needs to go along with all that? ... what’s the one thing all of those things are tied to?

- **see Isaiah 11:1-4** (“s”pirit of world/God = system of mind control)

(the Corinthians stopped their Sonship Edification at the end of receiving the instruction of judgment—they wanted nothing to do with ‘the sufferings of Christ’) ... which is why they were so screwed up in the area of the weaker brother [equity]!

- 1 Cor. 1:10-11; 2:1-16; 3:1-3; 4:1-6; 5:2; 6:1-20; 8:1-13; 10:27-33
- 2 Cor. 3:1-18; 4:11-18; 11:1-4; 12:17-19

- Galatians—uses the “S”pirit 16X (they need a big dose of that doctrine) — uses “s”pirit only 2X! - note *the fruit of the Spirit* 5:22-26

- Eph. 1:12-18; 4:23; Phil. 1:27

- **The one thing that all of the attributes, skill-sets, qualifications, knowledge, understanding, even experience is supposed to be tied to, and emanate/stem from is the SPIRIT—and the one thing that a ‘master craftsman’ looks for that makes him supremely confident and pleased with his apprentice is that he not only has been properly taught and is properly skilled, but that his apprentice has the same “spirit” that he (the master) has!**

- (that’s because in any really good business, there is far more that makes that a good business than simply, ‘If you need to do “A”, then do “A”’; if you need to do “B”, the do “B” ...

... but what about attitude; what about all the small details ...

... most importantly, if you send a worker out on a job site, it’s a ‘fluid’ situation ... he’s going to have to confront situations & circumstances that call upon him to make some critical decisions all on his own ...

... and the idea is that his decisions will perfectly match up with his master’s!

- And it’s like that in Sonship Education—(but to a far, far greater extent!) ... “LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON”!

- the issue is not only to have the same “S”pirit; but the same “s”pirit!

- And the critical issue for us is: when it comes to making godly equitable decisions as a “son” of your Heavenly Father—especially in connection with a weaker brother—along with receiving the instruction of Wisdom, Justice, and Judgment (and all of the parallel doctrine that goes with them) - in order to make godly equitable decisions (especially in connection with a weaker brother), ... **EQUITY DEMANDS THAT YOU HAVE RECEIVED A PROPER AND SUFFICIENT “*spirit which is of God*” !!!**

- (Note to self): at this point we spent a lot of time doing some background work on the following: - “*the spirit which is of God*”

- Sonship Liberty

- *the instruction of wisdom* (esp. revisiting the 6th Component)

- and after revisiting the 6th Component of Wisdom, we then noted what is needful from the instruction of Justice and Judgment (which follows) ...

- Justice:

- Keeping issues of “justice” and “judgment” separate and straight.
- Ex., Pious Chapel made the issue of tobacco use an issue of “justice” and included it in their church constitution—banning any use of tobacco for the Pastor (apparently it’s ok for everybody else).
- Ex., how many times will you encounter a *weaker brother* who is operating upon the “wisdom of this world” when it comes to their views on politics and government? (not only their ‘view’, but the outworking of their view in their conduct & behavior? ... such as protesting? ... if half of most Christian’s time and energy were spent on their own “godly edifying which is in faith”, rather than trying to make a nation ‘godly’ (which is not what’s going on with the nations in this dispensation of grace at all), then they would be (and the body of Christ would be) far better off!
 - don’t get me wrong—human gov. is a Divine Institution, and as such it has great potential for the vocational training of our sonship lives—where, regardless of the evil involved in it, governments not only still, to this day, where *the ordinance of God* is concerned, they *attend continually upon* it—and therefore we can derive much benefit as we learn to relate to established authority according to *the mystery of godliness*.

- Judgment:

- Obvious: bringing the full complement of the 5 Core Features of Godly Love to bear upon our dealings with all men—(which will now include *the weaker brother*).
- Obvious: by *being transformed by the renewing of our mind* in connection with Time and how we spend it (both Personal Time, and in view of the Dispensational Timing of this dispensation of grace), godly edification should now take the highest priority in your life—both personally/individually, and in the life of the assembly as a whole—therefore with godly enthusiasm for godly edification at an all-time high, you are now in a proper position to be instructed in the way in which your Father would have you dealing with any *weaker brother* situation.

- not to mention that you now have the ability to make godly judgments in regard to what is a *work of darkness* and what is not.

- **Review Definition of EQUITY** —

- Condensed shades of meaning from Crabb's Synonymes and Smith's Synonymes Discriminated:

- *equity* is a law in our hearts;
- *equity* conforms to no rule but to circumstances, and decides by the consciousness of right and wrong;
- *equity* forbids us doing to others what we would not have them do to us;
- *equity* requires us to do to others what in similar circumstances we would expect from them;
- the obligations of *equity* are altogether moral;
- we are impelled to *equity* by the dictates of conscience;
- we cannot violate *equity* without exposing ourselves to the Divine displeasure;
- while *justice* is inflexible, *equity* varies with the circumstances of the case, and is guided by discretion;
- the harmony and goodwill of one man towards another are cherished by *equity*;
- while the tranquility of society, and the security of the individual are ensured by *justice*, the harmony and goodwill of one man towards another are cherished by *equity*;
- if *equity* leads to the direct violation of any law, it ceases to be either *equity* or *justice*;
- *equity* must exist wherever two individuals come in connection with each other;
- when one receives injury by another, *justice* demands reparation; listens to no palliation, excuse, or exception—but *equity* will never seek reparation if it involves the ruin of another who is more unfortunate than guilty;
- *equity* requires compassion, and binds one to do good to another, if it be in one's power;
- *equity* unites us, regarding us as members of the same body;
- *equity* is an expression of one's sentiment;
- where *justice* is the inflexible regard of the facts, *equity* will consider motives and intentions, and modify its decisions accordingly;
- *equity* always seeks to avoid at all cost the ruin of another.

- Now—with all that said—even this isn't good enough for us to be able to understand and appreciate the issue of *equity* properly—that is, the way in which we are taught *equity* by our Father ...

... what we need to do now is to add to these shades of meaning, the issue of **godliness**—and especially, **godliness according to the mystery!**

- In other words—by the effectual working of the word of God—(and especially by the effectual working of the curriculum for our Sonship Education contained in Paul's epistles) - we need to have possessed in our 'inner man' just what **GODLY equity** is according to the *mystery of godliness!*

- (not just be able to handle *equitable* decisions in general—but to handle *equitable* decisions exactly like God, our Heavenly Father does; and exactly like God the Son does; but also in accordance with God's plan, purpose, and will in connection with the revelation of the mystery of Christ—[i.e., what He is doing in this disp. of grace in which we live])

- Simply put—we need the information in Romans 1:1—15:7 in order to make **godly equitable decisions!**

- CORRESPONDING EXHORTATION: Proverbs 5:15-6:19

- PRE-DOCTRINAL EXHORTATION: (Prov. 5:15-23?)

- What's going on here? What does any of this have to do with *receiving the instruction of equity*? Why does the Father need to say these things to His son at this point in the son's education?

- There is a lot going on here that has to do with God's program with Israel—(a lot of the terminology and details connect up with what God has already set forth in His program with Israel from Gen.—Psalms and the kind of impact Israel is going to have upon the nations of the world, esp. when that Kingdom gets established on this earth).

- The Father now needs to get His son **to see some things exactly the way He does, Himself**—He needs for His son to *see* some things with the **"eyes of his understanding"**! - i.e., in view of the son having come to a particular point of attainment (*wisdom, justice, judgment!*)

- And, by what the Father brings up, and by exactly what the Father says to His son exhortation-wise, He's getting His son to recognize that first and foremost, he (the son) does, indeed, have his own **ESTATE!**

- and to see that the son's estate isn't just restricted to the Father's business—but rather, it has to do with his entire LIFE—and every detail of the son's life—(which includes the Father's business) ... home life; business life; leisure life; and all his relationships with others, and his interaction with others — wherefore, the son's estate is directly tied to his entire inheritance (being an *heir of God, and join-heir with Christ*)!

- In other words—the son has now attained to enough skill-sets and experience and knowledge and wisdom about what the Father is doing with him as an adopted son—that he now needs to have a firm and godly grasp upon what might be called his **ESTATE AWARENESS!**

- And this is **critically important** for the son to recognize—and not merely recognize it as a fact—but to recognize it with all that it implies!

- And these things are true and run parallel to any natural father dealing with his natural son that he has adopted with the view to bringing that son into his business operations ... but what we're after is, of course, what it all means in connection with us as having received 'the adoption of sons' with God Himself as our Heavenly Father and in view of His business operations for us in this disp. of grace in which we live (in view of *the mystery*).

- And while there are many reasons why Estate Awareness is critically important—perhaps the most fundamental and basic reason is so that the son (like at no other time in his sonship education) begins to know with better precision than ever, and to feel the 'weight' (so to speak) of the burgeoning REPUTATION that he is beginning to take on as he is ever more *conformed to the image of God's Son* and becomes ever LIKE his Father, as he's *led by the Spirit* through the curricula.

- The son's REPUTATION becomes critical at this point!

- Note: that's not to say that this reputation only gets underway in the *instruction of equity*—because the truth is, it's been getting underway from the very beginning—but having attained the effectual working of *wisdom, justice, and judgment* (and all the parallel doctrines that come along with it) - your reputation as an intelligent son becomes more pronounced in godly *equity* than anywhere and anytime before! (your measure of 'conformity to the image of Christ' is now on the verge of getting noticed in a big way!)

- The son is now going to be recognized by others (in our case, *weaker brothers*) as being in a position of 'higher estate' than they are ... and that's not just perception, that's not something that only 'seems' to be true - that's **reality!**

- Well, along with that 'higher estate' comes a particular **godly REPUTATION** that the son needs a firm grasp upon, and a great awareness of—and the son needs to be told some things that makes him aware not only of the fact of it—but also of the need to **maintain** it; **retain** it; and **advance** it throughout the remainder of his sonship education!

- and, of course, the adversary is going to pointedly go right after that godly REPUTATION, and attempt to DESTROY IT! (make it an ungodly reputation!)

- and that's all because the Father is going to DO something very important and very powerful with that son's REPUTATION in connection with His business operations! (Just like He does with His)

- ESTATE AWARENESS has at least 2 Major Areas that the son needs to be aware of in order for it to be used **properly**—that is, the **proper use** of his estate falls into 2 Major Areas:

1) The son's estate is to be used properly for **his own** peace, contentment, and satisfaction—(that is, for his own **godly** contentment, and **godly** satisfaction).

2) For the good of others—(the **godly** good of others) - which in our case [the case of Rom. 14:1-15:7 (*equity*)], is for the godly edification of *the weaker brother* (for his **good**).

- Therefore, along with making the son AWARE of his ESTATE in a way, and to a depth that he has never been aware of it before—along with that comes the natural issue of you now bearing the ‘weight’ of that awareness—which is to say, you now have a **RESPONSIBILITY** placed upon you to a larger degree than you ever have before!

- that is, you’re now responsible to use your estate (your sonship status as an intelligent son with the skill-sets of *wisdom, justice, and judgment*—and all that you have come to understand and appreciate as your Heavenly Father’s adopted “son” with all this inheritance [at least as far as you are made aware of it to this point in the curriculum] — you are responsible to use your “estate” in perfect keeping with your Father’s plan, purpose, and will according to the *mystery* !

- in other words, the expectation of your Father is: that you are going to utilize your godly estate—and DO with it what your Father has designed and intends for you to DO with it — to ‘deploy’ it; to manifest it; to put it to its intended USE!

- and that’s in perfect keeping with what you agreed to when you ‘presented your body as a living sacrifice’ ... it’s in perfect keeping with “*your reasonable service*”!

- like all things that your Father teaches you—it’s designed to be put into SERVICE! (there are things your Father has designed to get accomplished with your inherited ESTATE!)

- And all these issues of Estate Awareness; Reputation; and added Responsibility puts you in a new-found position of ... **ACCOUNTABILITY (an Accountability Factor has now arisen to which you are going to be held accountable for!)**

- (which is why the “*judgment seat of Christ*” is brought up for the first time in Romans 14:10)!

- And if you think about it—what is going on behind the scenes (so to speak) in the Exhortation of Pro. 5:15-6:19 are these issues of: Estate Awareness; Reputation; Responsibility; and Accountability!

- (Proverbs 5:15-21)

(:15) - The way in which this passage is commonly handled is that David is exhorting Solomon in a proverbial style—therefore, the *cistern* and the *well* are talking about the son's *wife* (as later on is mentioned in [:18]) — and the godly use of the divine institution of marriage not only has great benefit for the training of sons/daughters, but also, (by it's godly use), provides a remedy for, and a salvation from the filth and ungodly ways in which marriage relationships are handled by the world in general, and by the *works of darkness* and the Lust of the Eyes with its great sexual wantonness (*chambering and wantonness*) in particular.

- The gist of the issue is—a properly educated son is to be very much **AWARE** of his ESTATE ...

(for us, it's the issue of all that we have been made to be “in Christ” that we have become aware of by Romans doctrine—of which, are all “*the things of the Spirit*” that we are now “*minding*” - as well as the magnificent sonship *liberty* that we have been made aware of!!!)

... BUT ALSO, the son must now be told by his Father that the ESTATE he has now become keenly AWARE of **can be used in a GODLY way; or in an UNGODLY way!** (and it's entirely up to the son which way he's going to use it)

- Used in a **godly** way—that estate can now provide much godly comfort; godly peace; godly contentment; and godly satisfaction for himself—providing a rich and fertile environment for his sonship education and sonship LIFE to go on and reach it's ultimate aims, goals, & objectives.

- Also, used in a **godly** way—that estate can be properly used for the godly **good** of **others!** (even **more** important!)

- Used in an **ungodly** way—the son's estate can be used in a way that leads to his own RUIN—and more importantly, the RUIN of others!

- Point is—your ESTATE is designed to have great and powerful usefulness, both to **you** & to **others!**

(for us as “sons”, your ESTATE is designed to have great and powerful usefulness for godly, sonship edification—for both you, yourself, AND for others ... especially, for the *weaker brother* situation that is going to demand making godly *equitable* decisions!)

- Again—the gist is that a “son” who is properly educated to this point in his education is to become acutely AWARE of his ESTATE—and as (:15) exhorts: **he is to be satisfied and content with his own estate—he has enough to do with his own estate—and he is NOT to be unlawfully (so to speak) or wrongfully meddling or interfering in the estate of others!**

(and the application of this exhortation should be very clear to you as a “son” in your dealings with a *weaker brother*!)

(:16) - again, the terminology/details connect up with issues that God has already set forth (and will continue to set forth) in His program w/Isr.

- God as already set forth that the *fountain* is talking about the husband and wife bringing forth actual children that come from Israel—that is, Israelites come from ‘the fountain of Israel’ (Deu. 33:28; Psa 68:26).

- and those children are referred to as *rivers*—and this issue of husband/wife/children or FAMILY is a huge/massive issue in God’s program with Israel.

... and again, this is calling attention to the son’s ESTATE ... and a husband and wife having children isn’t supposed to just be something the everybody does in order to just have a happy family and populate the earth—(it’s FAR more than that!)

... over, and over, God makes it clear that He never looks at mankind as broken up into **races**—but into FAMILIES! (and one of the main reasons for that is the issue of SONSHIP [and sonship edification]!)

- That’s the primary reason God ever created the divine institution of marriage and family!

(:17) - that is, it is shameful if your children (or your estate) is unlawfully gotten—the estate is to be lawfully left to the parents own children and not to *strangers*.

- also—this points up the contentment and satisfaction issue.

- points up the fact that we, as sons, are to have godly contentment/satisfaction with our own estate—and also that we are exhorted to getting our estate in a godly manner—meaning, we get it by all that our Father has made us to be “in Christ” PLUS we get it by the effectual working of our sonship curriculum (Rom—Phile.) according to the revelation of the mystery given to Paul ... AND NOT BY OUR OWN CONCEITS!

(:18) - notice the godly contentment/satisfaction - and notice God’s own terminology for it: *rejoice* (godly JOY)

- also notice that this isn’t talking about a ‘novice’ son—but a son that has moved well along in the curriculum!

(:19) - “*hind*” = female deer (red deer) - the male counterpart is called a *hart* .

- “*roe*” = a female species of a small deer (maybe distinct by now) - the male counterpart is called a *roe buck*.

- Notice: “*at all times*” - again, emphasis upon the lawful or rightful (godly) use of the marriage relationship as part of the son’s estate ... which points up the ‘tone’ of the exhortation—the Father’s expectation is that the son will perceive the RUIN that will come to him and to his family if he leaves the paths of his godly sonship life!

(:20-21) - notice: “*and he (the LORD) pondereth all his (the son’s) goings*” — why does He need to say this? (if the son’s *ways are before the eyes of the LORD*)?? ... A: because the Father is treating His son as an adult! (it’s a REAL Father-son relationship!) [the Father delights to see what the son will do in any given circumstance with the doctrine he has received from his Father & effectually working within him]

(22) - DANGER! (hearkens back to :3-14; and back to 2:19)

(:23) - the son has become the thing he should fear the most: he's become a FOOL in his Father's sight!

- Notice also: (:22-23) the TONE of it (looking out to the son's death) - the tone of it is FUTURE—that is, there is going to be **future consequences** for the son's decisions and actions!

- and this is why, in Romans, it is not at all surprising to find the apostle Paul bringing up the issue of *the judgment seat of Christ* for the very first time!!
(Rom. 14:10)

- Now—in all this exhortation—(especially in :22-23) - the expectation of the Father is not only that His son will become acutely Aware of his Estate—and not only that His son will perceive the godly contentment & satisfaction that constitutes his positive and proper response to it—but the expectation is also that the son will become highly and suitably IMPRESSED with the kind of godly RESPONSIBILITY he now is being given ...

... and that at this point in his sonship education; and because of that greater responsibility he's now been given—the son needs to realize that he's now in a position of ENORMOUS ACCOUNTABILITY!

- Now that takes care of 2 of the 6 paragraphs that make up this exhortation for *the instruction of equity*. (1) 5:15-21; (2) 5:22-23

- The next paragraph of the exhortation is Pro. 6:1-5 ... What is going on here? ... and Why is this an exhortation for the issue of *the instruction of equity*??? What has this got to do with *equitable* sonship decision-making?

- First of all—(and probably the wisest thing to do at this point) - lets get an understanding and appreciation for a word in (:1) that we rarely (if ever) use: **“surety”** - (and this will give us a particular context for what is being said and done in this passage ...

- **“surety”** = very basic & in general, it means someone or something that is in the condition of being SURE—in the sense of safe (from danger or from an enemy); to make someone or something safe and secure; therefore the certainty of an end or result aimed at; certainty of obtaining something.

- (the idea of ‘certainty’ is the most common way in which we use the word *sure*—as in being certain or *sure* of something where we are comfortable and un-anxious [i.e., settled and confident])

- But the word *surety* has another meaning that not only retains the basic/general sense of the word—but comes to be used in a **LEGAL SENSE**.

- (such as: security against loss or damage; security for payment) - and as such it goes from the general issue of “a condition of being sure” to “the MEANS of being sure” [the “MEANS” = someone other than the primary debtor]

- “*surety*” = (as a legal term) = a person who undertakes some specific responsibility on behalf of another, and by doing so takes the responsibility of the one who is primarily liable, and becomes liable himself; one who makes himself liable for the default or miscarriage of another, or for the performance of some act on his part (e.g., payment of a debt, appearance in court for trial).

- as Webster’s 1828 puts it: “In *law*, one that is **bound** with and for another; one who enters into a bond or recognizance to answer for another’s appearance in court, or for his payment of a debt or for the performance of some act, and who, in case of the principal debtor’s failure, is compellable to pay the debt or damages”.

- And that is very much the idea and the issue as it appears in Proverbs 6:1!

- Lets set the “cast of characters”:

- 1) The *surety*
- 2) The *friend*
- 3) The *stranger*

- 1) The *surety* = the **son** (who has taken on the debt of another [his *friend*]—**he** is now liable for another’s debt)

- 2) The son’s *friend* = the primary debtor/liable person.

- 3) The *stranger* = the **creditor** to which the son’s *friend* owes a debt to (money or otherwise).

- Now it's important to recognize (before going on any farther), that all of the details of both the context and the terminology have primarily to do with God's program with Israel—and there has already been a great deal said about being a *surety* (and *striking hands*, i.e., a 'handshake') and being indebted to other parties, that has great significance in Israel's program ...

... in fact, there are some very strong **prohibitions** sitting back in The Old Covenant (the Law of Moses) that deals with the issue of lending money, and borrowing money, and becoming a *usurer* (a word that is closely related to *surety* [**sur**]) ...

- Exodus 22:25-27

... *usury* = lending someone money that has to be paid back **with interest**—and in a legal sense, it is used today as a moniker (or term used to describe) a **crime**—that is, *usury* is the **criminal act** of making someone pay back a loan with interest that is so high as to be **illegal!** (charging a higher rate of interest than the law allows).

- Nehemiah 5:1-13 (pg. 583)

... and often times (due to not "*rightly dividing the word of truth*" and improperly handling God's word)—many Christians today have a lot of confusion concerning the issue of going into debt **for any reason.**

- It's often said: "A good Christian should never go into debt!" "A good Christian should never take out a loan!" "It's not a proper testimony!"

- Well, that's pretty good advice—even for a **lost** person ... but is it biblical? is it according to Scripture?

- and passages from the Bible are often appealed to, such as ...

- (*usury*) Lev. 25:35-38; Deut. 23:19-20 [:20, oops!]

- (*surety*) Pro. 11:15; 17:18; 22:26 ...

... and even Romans 13:8 is often appealed to.

- So—does the Bible prohibit a Christian from going into debt for any reason? ... well, we've already seen that Deu. 23:20 certainly presents a situation for *usury* that God, Himself deems right, proper, and legal.

... but what about this passage? ... Heb. 7:14-22 (:22)

... but you may be thinking—Well, all those passages are out of God's program with Israel—Paul makes it clear that a Christian should never go into debt for any reason ... right?

... what about this passage? Philemon 1:19!

- (back to Pro. 6:1-5)

1 My son, if thou be surety for thy friend, if thou has stricken thy hand with a stranger,

2 Thou art snared with the words of thy mouth, thou art taken with the words of thy mouth.

(i.e., you've gotten yourself into a jam—you've gotten into a trap that you can't easily get yourself out of—you're no longer free; no longer 'your own man' - you're now under legal obligation to pay your friend's debt if he can't—[you shook hands on it] - witnesses are involved—you're '**on the hook**' for your friend's debt and if he doesn't pay up, the **stranger/creditor is coming after YOU!**)

3 Do this now, my son, and deliver thyself, when thou art come into the hand of thy friend; go, humble thyself, and make sure thy friend.

(i.e., with godly humility, go to your *friend* and kindly press him; urge him; stir him up to pay the *stranger/creditor* as soon as possible—or at least, to see if there is any way to discharge the son from his obligation and pay the debt some other way.)

4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.
(so important so as to leave no stone unturned; no method untried to settle this matter.)

5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

(i.e., be quick about it! Get yourself free from this obligation as fast as you can!)

- ok—So what’s going on with this portion of this Fatherly exhortation to a son that is designed to exhort the son to getting the doctrine necessary for him to *receive the instruction of equity*?

- What does this (Pro. 6:1-5) have to do with that (*equity*)?

- Why does the Father have to say this to His son at this point in the son’s education?

- Why does a son need to hear this kind of an exhortation prior to getting his *instruction of equity*?

- Why do YOU need this kind of an exhortation in order for the effectual working of Romans 14:1-15:7 to do its job?

- And of the first 3 parts of this exhortation—(the first 3 making up the Pre-Doctrinal exhortation), my understanding is that this part is the **most critical of all** for the son’s ‘inner man’ to be properly ‘primed’ / prepared to receive the upcoming doctrine of *equitable* sonship decision-making. (and getting the effectual working of Rom. 14:1-15:7)

- Why is that? ... any ideas????

- To find out the answer—you have to be able to discern / perceive the ‘radical root element’ (so to speak) - or the most basic and general underlying issue that is going on with this exhortation ...

... and to help out—you have to think about this exhortation FROM THE FATHER’S PERSPECTIVE/VIEWPOINT!

... what is it that HE knows; what is it that HE sees; that is so critical to be in His son’s mind, that ‘primes’ his ‘inner man’ in order to make this upcoming doctrine a permanent and ever sensitive issue that gets written on *the fleshy tables of his heart*?

... and also—to help you out—don’t think so much about any of the details in Pro. 6:1-5—think about this passage as an **example** to the son so that he perceives something very important about where he is at this point in his sonship education ... (not that there are a bunch of examples, rather this is the **prime** example, the **prime** exhortation)

A: - The ‘radical root element’ - the most basic and general issue that the son is expected to grasp and perceive in this exhortation is ...

... the whole underlying principle behind a son putting himself in the position of being a *surety for his friend* and *striking his hand with a stranger* (the creditor) - is that when you put yourself in the position of a *surety*

YOU ARE PUTTING YOURSELF UNDER THE
POWER OF ANOTHER!

(you are putting yourself IN the POWER and UNDER the POWER of another) ...

... You’re putting yourself under the **power** of someone OTHER than your FATHER ... and HIS plan ... and HIS purpose ... and HIS will!!!

- 1 Corinthians 6:6-12 (:12)

- 1 Corinthians 10:23

- 2 Corinthians 1:19-24 (:24) - *dominion* (both in Greek and in English) = **to be lord of**—a king has a *dominion*—*dominion* = the **power** or right of governing & controlling; sovereign authority; lordship; rule; sway; control; influence.

- At this point in your sonship education, the Father’s expectation is that you are supposed to “see” (from His perspective; and with “the eyes of your understanding”) that **your successful godly sonship education (to this point) has been successful by being under the power of your Father (the word of God your Heavenly Father; and the *leading of the Spirit* through it) — and NOT by being under the power of any one else!**

- **And when it comes to dealing with the *weaker brother in godly equity*—you will never, ever attempt to put him under YOUR power!**
... because if you do, you will DESTROY his godly sonship edification!!!

- **ROMANS 14:1-15:7—The Instruction of EQUITY**

- (30 verses)

- We know—from Rom. 1:1, that we are dealing with some information that God gave to the apostle Paul—an apostle that is NOT one of the “12” - he is NOT a replacement for Judas Iscariot—he is NOT a “13th” apostle to go along with the other “12” - rather, Paul is a UNIQUE apostle with a UNIQUE message & ministry.

1 Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God,

- and we know—from Rom. 1:1 that Paul has a **unique aspect** to his apostleship as not only *a servant of Jesus Christ*, and not only *called to be an apostle*, - and that unique aspect to his apostleship is that he was ***separated unto the gospel of God***—and right there, at the very beginning of Paul’s epistle to the Romans, we are confronted with the issue of an apostle (and a message given to that apostle) that is **“SEPARATED”** - that is, a DIVISION is made—and if we have any hope of getting the proper understanding and appreciation of this information—we are going to have to acknowledge the reality of the information given to and through the apostle Paul as needing to be ***divided*** from the other information in the Scripture!

(2 Tim. 2:15) Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. (‘divided’ does NOT mean ‘ripped out’!)

- and we also know—from Rom. 1:11 what the **purpose** for the book of Romans is, and what **all** of its information is going to be about:

11 For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that ye may be established;

- and we will see that, as the book of Romans ends—that by means of Romans doctrine doing its effectual work in our ‘inner man’ (i.e., once that *spiritual gift* has been given by Paul and received by us), that a slight shift has taken place with our e-stablishment:

*16:25 Now to him that is of power to **stablish** you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,*

- We are supposed to recognize that we are going from being *established* to *stablished*!

- *established* and *stablished* are very closely related—but there is a shade of meaning that *stablish* has, that goes beyond the issue of merely being *e-established*.

... these are both BUILDING terms—and as you go through the book of Romans, you eventually come to another ‘building’ term that describes what is going on in our ‘inner man’ (in our *heart*, our *soul*, and our human *spirit*) as this building process gets underway: and that term is: edify / edification (Rom. 14:19 [*edify*]; 15:2 [*edification*] - both are in our present body of information of Rom. 14:1-15:7)!

... and I bring this out, just to say that the core issue in *edification* is = “to BUILD; to construct a place in which to dwell!”

- *established* = firmly founded (Webster 1828); to firmly set and fix the foundation of a building; laying the initial foundation of a structure. - (and once that initial foundation has been laid, it never needs to be laid again).

- *stablish* = to take that firmly set foundation and make it ‘stable’ - to settle the foundation so as to make it **permanent** and **properly prepared** for the building to be erected upon it.

- Wherefore, terminology like *establish*, *stablish*, and *edification* tells you that what YOU, as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, and as a member of this here-to-for unknown entity called *the body of Christ*—what you are supposed to be involved with in with Paul’s epistles is a spiritual, edification building project!

- Therefore, since this book (and all of the epistles of the apostle Paul) is dealing with our spiritual edificational building project—that there must be (there **demands** to be) a proper sense & sequence to it—a proper pattern that must be followed—or a ‘**blueprint**’ (so to speak) for getting that spiritual building project founded, built, and completed ... and there is! ... that’s why the epistles of the apostle Paul are arranged by God as they are (from Rom—Philm)

... and this is true of all 66 books of the Bible!

- And we know that the ‘pattern’ or ‘blueprint’ God lays out in the book of Romans first of all deals with Ch. 1-5 — which establishes us and edifies us regarding our Justification (our justified position “in Christ”) and its results ...

... beginning in Romans Ch. 6, God begins to establish and edify us regarding our Sanctification (our sanctified position “in Christ”) and its results ...

... following that ‘blueprint’ regarding our sanctified position “in Christ” - God establishes and edifies us in 3 major areas that is ours by virtue of the Holy Spirit baptizing (fully identifying) us *into Christ*

1) We are *dead to sin*; [which allows for us to be able to Think like God does];

2) we are *alive unto God*; [which allows for us to be able to Live like God lives];

3) we have *received the Spirit of adoption* (the adoption of adult sons); [which allows for us to be able to Labor with God in all that He is presently doing].

- Our adoption as God’s “sons” is the ‘capstone’ of our sanctified position “in Christ”!

- Therefore we also know that the remainder of Paul’s epistles (in general) ... (and Romans — 2 Thessalonians, specifically — [Paul’s letters addressed to other churches]) **all have to do with our establishment, stablishment, education, and godly edification as the adopted “sons/daughters” that we are to God our Heavenly Father!**

... we’ve also come to understand and appreciate that godly sonship adoption is NOT something unique to this disp. of grace in which we live—but is something that God desired to do, (and will do), in His program w/Israel. (Rom. 9:4)

- And due to that being the case—God has already spoken about and written about (and laid out the ‘blueprint’) for exactly how it is that He educates and trains His sons— (which is sitting back in the book of Proverbs).

- So it is perfectly VALID and necessary that we look at the book of Proverbs in order to gain some appreciation and understanding of the proper ‘sense and sequence’, or proper procedure and the proper order (‘Table of Contents’ or ‘Syllabus’) that God Himself created and carefully thought out by which He educates and trains His sons to labor together with Him in all that He is doing ...

... all the while being very clear that we are **not** going back to Proverbs to get the doctrine we are supposed to have for our godly edification—rather, we are only interested in the FORMAT that God has laid out for educating & training His “sons” (regardless of which program or dispensation).

- **format** = the shape of a thing; the manner of its arrangement; the mode of procedure.

- (only Paul’s epistles can provide us with the proper doctrine that we need for our sonship edification as members of the body of Christ that we are)!

- And one of the things that all that means is—that a properly educated son **knows in advance** what he is going to receive education-wise ... and that means that you, as a member of the body of Christ in this disp. of grace are supposed to **know in advance** what is coming up in each book of the apostle Paul; and what to expect to be coming up in the sense and sequence of the doctrine contained in Paul’s epistles! (properly educated Pastors/Bishops are to know that, too!)

- NOW — I’ve said all that, just to say that there is a **biblical reason for why we know in advance** that this next body of information that we now encounter in the book of Romans (14:1-15:7) is designed to establish and edify us as “adopted adult sons” in the decision-making skill of EQUITY! (the final of 4 sonship decision-making skills)

- and by consulting the ‘Table of Contents’ in Proverbs 1:2-6, we find that *receiving the instruction of equity* **is** the next major body of instruction our Father provides for us as “sons”. (and it perfectly matches up with Rom. 14:1-15:7!)

- see Def. Equity / Working Def. of Equity

- EQUITY (WORKING DEFINITION): receiving the instruction of *equity* as a “son” in this dispensation of grace gives you the capacity for making godly decisions as to what is fair and impartial in your dealings with others who have estate differences that are different than your own. This is especially true of edificational estate differences of *weaker brothers*, for which our ultimate aim/goal is to be profitable and beneficial to them so as to ensure that their godly edification as “sons” takes place under the authority of God (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit) and the word of God rather than you as their “tutor and governor.” Godly sonship *equity* ensures that the local assembly will continue in its own godly edification with peace, concord, fellowship and communion; and without conceit, division, or schism.

- Now—in looking back at the information we’ve gone over just to ‘set the stage’ for our *receiving the instruction of equity*—we have covered enough so that by now you should have a better appreciation for the ‘weighty’ business that *equity* is to your Heavenly Father; and the heavy demands that making *equitable* sonship decisions calls for and requires of you ...

... and that is what the whole business of, and the whole reason for what the Pre-Doctrinal Exhortations are all about—and why the Father has crafted those exhortations the way He has in Proverbs 5:15-6:19.

- So, really, at this point, you should be *crying Abba, Father* all the more—with the same level of godly ambition, zeal, and enthusiasm to get this doctrine of Rom. 14:1-15:7 effectually working in your ‘inner man’ - just as your Father has that same zeal and enthusiasm to give it to you!

- Now, this body of information (like many others that we have covered in *wisdom, justice, and judgment* [Rom. 12:3-13:14]) - this section of Romans is easy to read through and only get a fraction of its full, effectual working!

- In other words—this portion of God’s word is easy to get the obvious—and conclude that “Well, we shouldn’t argue over “non-essential” things (whatever that means); and we are supposed to get along with each other and not hinder or be a problem to other people in church ...”

... and the truth is, a lot of corrupted thinking and corrupted doctrine ends up coming out of it—such as: “It really doesn’t matter what anybody believes” ... “don’t be a ‘nosy-nelly’, or a busy-body—stay out of other people’s affairs” ... and the BIG corrupted doctrine of: “As long as you stick to the **“fundamentals of the faith”**, that’s all that matters! don’t focus on the **non-essential doctrines!**” (which is where the whole idea of **“fundamentalism”** comes from)!

Q: Ok, which doctrines in Scripture are non-essential **TO GOD**? which ones doesn’t He care so much about??? (this is plain stupidity!)

- This is NOT what Rom. 14:1-15:7 is doing!!!

- Now—in order to make sure that this body of information carries the kind of ‘weight’ that it needs to have—and in order to recognize that this ISN’T something that you’re already familiar with so that you can just ‘breeze’ through it—you need to recognize that you’re going to have to be **instructed** about making *equitable* decisions as members of the new creature of the church the Body of Christ: **decisions that are NOT known about by natural men or even by Christians who haven’t received the Sonship Education they’re supposed to have received** —

— and the thing that gives this body of information that proper ‘weight’ and to properly recognize the critical nature of it as something that no natural man operates upon (and that most Christians don’t operate upon) - is that our Heavenly Father must **INSTRUCT** us as to what *Equity* is **to Him**, and how we are to make *equitable* sonship decisions!

- And what I’m after here is that word **“instruction”** - we are to *receive the **instruction** of ... equity*. And it’s been a long time since we looked at it—but reminding ourselves of what *instruction* is, will ‘set our bearings’ (so to speak) so that we do have the proper approach to this next Form of Doctrine & get started on the right foot!

- So in (Pro. 1:3) we have, **“To receive the instruction ...”** — and we need to really understand and appreciate what that means beyond just getting the education.

- “**instruction**” = when you basically think of *instruction* or *instructions* you most often think of a set of directions (like the directions on how to build a model—or directions on how to put a bicycle together—or something like that).

- Or teaching on how to do something.

- An instruction book; an instruction manual.

- OED Definition: *the imparting of knowledge or skill; making known to a person what he is required to do.*

- And really that’s one side of the coin (so to speak) - but there’s another aspect to *instruction* that’s vital to coming to a real understanding and appreciation of it—especially in the context of this sonship education you’re now getting from your Father.

- Because this ‘other side of the coin’ is what *instruction* implies or a shade of meaning of what *instruction* is driving at.

- And it’s this other implied meaning that is significant to the word *instruction* that really makes the impact on (or sets the stage for) just what you’re to expect as you get taught those Sonship Decision-making skills.

- And it’s important that you appreciate that *instruction* isn’t merely teaching—because teaching can be an informing of the understanding about things you may already know, but just how to use it differently.

- Also, teaching is the more proper word to use when dealing with strict academics (science/art)—not to mention the fact that you don’t even need a person at all to be taught—for example, history can teach you things.

- But *instruction* is personal—in fact it is the most excellent and proper word to use when referring to a child be taught by his parent/parents—a son is properly *instructed* by his father!

- The critical issue that *instruction* is driving at (a shade of meaning, if you will) - is that when you dealing with *instruction*, you’re dealing with a body of information that you do NOT innately possess and you’re going to be getting knowledge that you do NOT just

automatically know—and you’re going to be taught, therefore, things that do not necessarily or naturally fit in your thinking—and so adjustments are going to have to be made—and that’s the concept we ran into there in Romans 12:1-2 —the mind is going to start being renewed.

- And really the critical thing about *receiving instruction* is that you are now going to get information that up to this time you are **ignorant of!**

- And we need to put both concepts together in order to really get the appreciation of what it means for us to *receive instruction* in all 4 of those following areas of *wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity*.

- So when you’re talking about *instruction*—and *receiving instruction* in this context of our sonship education - it’s:

1) The receiving of directions or a body of information on **how to do something that you don’t know how to do**; with the ability to do something that you don’t naturally have the ability to do; and,

2) This body of information (or *instruction* that I’m receiving) on how to do something— is information that prior to me receiving it, **I was totally ignorant of!**

- And when it comes to “*receiving the instruction . . .*” — you need to realize that the information your Father is going to give you is information that you are ignorant of, and it’s going to provide you with the ability to do some things. (And without that information, you **won’t** properly do the things you’re supposed to do—[you won’t be able to put all the parts together—in the right order] and so forth).

- And that makes that information contained in the “*instructions*” not merely ‘helpful’ (as most Christians—and some non-Christians view it) - this is **ESSENTIAL** information/*instruction* that has to be precisely followed—followed in the right order—and not one part of it taken lightly or set aside just because YOU don’t see how it works, or YOU see/imagine a better way to do it (translation: a short-cut)!!!

- GENERAL BREAKDOWN OF ROMANS 14:1-15:7

- The 30 verses that comprise this body of information is most basically designed for us as adopted “*sons*” of our Heavenly Father to *receive the instruction of equity*—the 4th & final sonship decision-making skill.

- But more specifically—as members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace in which we live—this body of information that makes up our next form of doctrine in our on-going Level I Sonship Education—deals with us receiving a portion of the word of God—and by the “*leading of the Spirit*” through it—it will end up with us as the *saints & sons* that we are, being even *LESS conformed to this world*, and being even *MORE transformed by the renewing of our minds* in order to THINK, LIVE, and ultimately LABOR with our Heavenly Father in the business operations He is involved in at the present time of this dispensation of Gentile grace.

- Therefore, our old, corrupted Thinking that has been under the influence of the *wisdom of this world* is going to be **challenged**, confronted, up-rooted, dismissed, and replaced by Godly Thinking ...

... and that Godly Thinking will have provided for it a ‘natural outlet’ that can take that doctrine and deploy it in our Godly Conduct and Behavior ...

... and as a result, that Godly Thinking and Godly Conduct & Behavior will then be immediately put to use in some Godly Labor with our Father whereby we can then enter into even more of His business operations.

- And in view of exactly **what** God says through the apostle Paul in these 30 verses—and in view of the **way** He says it—my understanding is that there is only **1 Component** to the entire section!

- And since there is only 1 Component—and since *edification unto godliness* is what is ALWAYS the case with any and all forms of doctrine in our Sonship Education—that means, therefore, that there is going to be a portion of these 30 verses that is designed to be our Godly Thinking; followed by a portion of verses designed to be our Godly Living; and lastly a portion designed to be our Godly Labor.

- (this is due to the fact that there is only 1 general issue being dealt with in the entire 30 verse section—therefore, the **context** tells me there is only 1 Component to it—and as you read through all 30 verses—what emerges isn't so much a bunch of Components to the form of doctrine; rather, there is a clear moving from godly Thinking, to godly Living, and then to godly Labor).

- My understanding is that the most basic & simple breakdown of Rom. 14:1-15:7 is ...

- 14:1-12 = Godly Thinking [12 verses]
- 14:13-23 = Godly Living (Conduct & Behavior) [11 verses]
- 15:1-7 = Godly Labor [7 verses]

- So—if you were to take the entire 30 vs. section and put an overall (short) statement as to what it's all about ... what would you say?

... (what would you say that goes beyond the merely obvious that this deals with the 'weaker brother' situation; and "we should all just get along" ... type stuff???)

- My short summary statement: Romans 14:1-15:7—Godly equitable decisions in our dealings with other sons so as to be helpful to their successful godly edification; and to provide for the continuing edification of the local assembly in peaceful communion and fellowship.

- Notice: that statement **has 2 Issues to it** (or 2 sides to it) - and that's because the context demands these 2 issues:

- 1) Godly equitable decisions in our dealings with other sons so as to provide for their successful godly edification;
- 2) and to provide for the continuing edification of the local assembly in peaceful communion & fellowship.

... and the reality and truth of that is found when the godly Thinking gets deployed and put into effect in our godly Conduct & Behavior—where you have:

- 1) (:15) *Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.*
- 2) (:20) *For meat destroy not the work of God.*

- By what (:15 and :20) says—you're supposed to perceive that there is something **far more** going on here than the idea that the membership of the local church should all get along well with each other (like any other successful organization in *the ungodly world* does), so that the church can:

- meet its budget goals;
- get the new Worship Center built;
- get the new choir robes;
- get more talented band members; etc., etc.
- the basic idea being ... “after all, who wants to go to a church with all that bickering and in-fighting?
... **who wants to give money to that??** (bottom line)

- NO—rather, godly *equitable* sonship decisions are designed to have as their goal: the successful godly edification of *the weaker brother*; as well as having a grasp upon this other operation (or *work*) of God that has to do with the continuing edification of the local assembly as a whole—and that all has to do with the *tempering* of the body—which is going to lead to the development of the peaceful communion & fellowship of the local assembly — **and that is going to make it so that the assembly becomes *compacted and knit together in love!***

- and even **THAT** is not the end of it—**that** is going to get accomplished so that out in Level II Sonship Edu., both our individual and our collective *conversation* is going to **leave** this world and **enter** into the heavenly places ...

... and by doing that, a particular environment is going to get establish—and by the **power** of that environment (or culture), we can have a very powerful impact upon the heavenly realm, **even while we are still physically here on this earth!**

- And along with all this—we are to recognize that not only is our Father developing His Son's *image* in us (as we are *conformed to His image*) - but that *image* is supposed to be formed in the **whole** body of Christ ... not only on this earth, but in the heavenly places as well ...

... and that makes it so that every local assembly becomes a 'model' or miniature version of what is to ultimately be taking place in the *creature* when we come to *deliver it from its bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!*

- (think of it—you can have actual, physical areas on this earth [in properly functioning local churches—sonship churches] where, at least to some degree, and in practice, it is being *delivered from its bondage of corruption*—from its *groaning and travailing in pain*)

- (this is what I mean when I say that there is **far more going on here than merely being told not to ‘judge’ one another!**) - [which is how this passage is most commonly dealt with!])

- Along with the **corrupt** doctrinal idea of **fundamentalism**, another corrupt doctrine often gets taught—because by a shallow understanding of this passage (and by mis-handling it) - it often gets taught that, “God (and the Bible) teaches us to just LOVE one another—and not to JUDGE one another—and if you really LOVE me, you won’t JUDGE me!”

- **WRONG!** (see Philippians 1:9)

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment:

- truth is—**godly love is all about judging!!!** and if you’re NOT judging in a godly way, then you’re NOT loving the way God does!!!

(this is the great FAILURE of *the world* when it comes to their poor, ungodly understanding of LOVE!)

- Again—just to confirm/verify the fact that our short summary statement as to what this entire body of information contained in Rom. 14:1-15:7 is all about—and that it has **2 Major Issues** to it (and not merely 1 issue) — that is:

1) it deals with Godly equitable decisions in our dealings with other sons (with other saints/believers/members of the body of Christ who have estate differences; and primarily who have edificational estate differences, and are therefore *weaker brothers*) so as to be helpful to their successful godly edification; ...

.... (that’s the **1st Issue**)

2) it deals with the issue of Providing for the continuing edification of the local assembly in peaceful communion and fellowship...

.... (and that's the **2nd** Issue)

- And those 2 Major Issues are not only confirmed by (:15 *Destroy not him* (the weaker brother) *with thy meat, for whom Christ died.*) ... and (:20 *For meat destroy not the work of God.* [not just the work that God is doing in the life of the *weaker* brother, but the work God is doing in the edificational life if the whole assembly]) ...

... but it's also confirmed by what is said in (:3) —

3 *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.*

- Notice that you have **BOTH** the *weaker* brother **AND** the *stronger* brother being addressed here!

- (actually the *stronger* brother is addressed 1st, and then the *weaker* brother is addressed last)

- in other words—(:3) makes it clear that godly *equity* goes **BOTH WAYS**: the *strong* are going to make godly *equitable* decisions toward the *weak*—and the *weak* are going to make, (in a very limited way), decisions that can be considered *equitable* to a degree, toward the *strong*.

- **Note**—half of (:3) contains an exhortation that is specifically directed to the *weaker* brother—and while he is not expected to be at the edificational level of the *stronger* brother ...

... the *weaker* brother **is** provided with some information that is designed to make it so that the assembly as a whole can continue its godly edification **in peaceful communion & fellowship!**

... interesting—while the *weaker* brother (doctrine-wise; and edification-wise) isn't supposed to be in Rom. 14—he does get addressed here, and he does get some information to operate upon here—hummm...

- Note some interesting, eye-catching details:

- lots of “*let*” —

	1) (:3) <i>Let not ...</i>
G1	2) (:3) <i>let not ...</i>
_____	3) (:5) <i>Let every man ...</i>
	4) (:13) <i>Let us not ...</i>
G2	5) (:16) <i>Let not ...</i>
_____	6) (:19) <i>Let us therefore ...</i>
G3	7) (15:2) <i>Let every one of us ...</i>

- “*Let*” = **in view of something**—maybe to Think a certain way; or Behave a certain way; or Work/Labor a certain way.

- (:6) - the issue of **giving God thanks**—there’s more going on here than the merely obvious—(see 2 Cor. 4:15)

- lots of “*Lord*”s —

- used 10x in 14:1-15:7

- a cluster of them is used in the Godly Thinking aspect — (**8x total**— 4x in :6; 2x in :8; 1x in :9; and 1x in :11)

- We also have some Thought-Provoking-Questions —
(question mark = Interrogation Point)

- (:4) *Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.*
(interesting use of the question mark in the middle of a sentence!)

- (:10) [a double Thought-Provoking-Question]
By why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.
(another interesting use of question marks within a sentence!)

- (:22) [again, the use of the question mark within a sentence] *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.*

- **BREAKDOWN OF ROM. 14:1-12—THE GODLY THINKING:**

- (:1) — Sets the Stage for receiving the godly Thinking of Equity.

- Each of the 3 aspects of Godliness (G1,G2,G3) will have a “stage-setting” statement that is designed to put your Mind; your Conduct & Behavior; and your Labor with your Father in the particular **CONTEXT** that God wants it in, in order for the words He tells you to do their effectual job.

- (:1) not only ‘sets the stage’ for receiving the godly Thinking—but it serves another purpose in which it ‘sets the stage’ for the **entire** body of information contained in Rom. 14:1-15:7 ... every verse and every word of this passage deals with making godly equitable decisions between other members of the body of Christ where edificational estate differences occur.

- and this is **critical** to recognize, understand & appreciate—because the **CONTEXT** is going to **govern every word you read**; and **every thought you think**; and **everything you are expected to do** in view of that thinking.

- and that’s going to be very important—because you already have probably had some questions pop up in your thinking about what you have already said to other saints you’ve come into contact with—and maybe you’ve even started forming some erroneous thinking before this doctrine has even gotten started!

- (:1) also is going to **define** exactly what a *weaker* brother is; and exactly what it means TO GOD Himself!
(which we haven’t really nailed down yet) (we’ve just hinted at it)

- (:2) — Illustration #1—the first Illustration of two Major Dilemmas that can occur that has the possibility of bringing to RUIN the *weaker* brother and the RUIN of the local assembly in connection with operating in the further business Operations of God (in Level II).

- and God only needs to utilize **2** Illustrations—because all of the issues that would bring ruin to the *weaker* brother (and, by default to the local assembly) can be summed up in you becoming either a “tutor” and/or a “governor” to the *w* bro.

- The 1st Illustration is one of “*eating*” or “*not eating*” certain foods that could be considered **right** or **wrong**; **approved** or **disapproved** ...

... an Illustration that would end up with you becoming a “**tutor**” to another brother in Christ.

- a “Dilemma” = a situation that requires a choice between options that are or seem equally unfavorable or mutually exclusive; a difficult or doubtful choice; a state of things in which evils or obstacles present themselves on every side, and it is difficult to determine what course to pursue.

- (:3) — Godly Exhortation—contained in this exhortation are the problems that will occur without Godly Equitable Thinking.

- Along with this exhortation the particular kind of thinking is set forth that would occur by the *stronger* brother’s ungodly thinking toward the *weaker* brother; or the *weaker* brother’s ungodly thinking toward the *stronger* brother.

- (i.e., *despising* and *judging*)

- (:4) — Solution to the Dilemma—1st Thought-Provoking Question—Corrective Doctrine—the Godly Thinking. (with a couple of very powerful *sayings*)

- Verses 2,3, & 4 can therefore be thought about as being grouped together —

- in this 1st Illustration—you have the Dilemma; an Exhortation; and the Solution (the corrective doctrine of the godly thinking).

- and that same pattern is going to be followed in the 2nd and final Illustration as well.

- (:5a) — Illustration #2—the 2nd Illustration of the two Dilemmas that can occur that has the possibility of bring to RUIN the *weaker* brother and the RUIN of the local assembly in connection with operating in the further business operations of God (in Level II).

- The 2nd Illustration is one of *esteeming* a certain *day* (or by implication certain *days*) *above* another *day* (or *days*) - and by doing so, regulate or govern what that persons does or doesn’t do; what he wears or doesn’t wear; where he goes or doesn’t go, etc.

... therefore, this 2nd Illustration would end up with you becoming a “**governor**” to another brother in Christ!

- and either of these 2 Illustrations (becoming a “tutor” or a “governor”) - [or both of these Illustrations] are **disastrous** to a son!, to sonship education/edification!! ... they are **destructive**—they will **destroy** both the *weaker* brother **and** the *work of God*!

- (:5b) — Godly Exhortation—preparation of the human spirit (mind) and priming it, in order to properly receive the upcoming doctrine of the godly Thinking.

- (:6) — Solution to the Dilemma—Corrective Doctrine—the Godly Thinking (with some additional information that is going to be very powerful in our working together with God in the further operations of His business: “*giveth God thanks*” 2x

- (:7,8,9) — Expanded & Amplified Solution to the Dilemma—further needful doctrine of the Godly Thinking we should have one toward another when we encounter other “sons” who are at some disadvantage, and therefore in a *weaker* condition edification-wise.

- (:10-12) — Additional information that acts as a Final Concluding Matter to getting any remaining vestige or trace of ungodly Thinking concerning the *weaker* brother uprooted, dismissed, and replaced with the Godly Thinking.

- and again, we have 2 more Thought-Provoking Questions that are designed to bring to the surface any remaining ungodly thinking.

- And central to this Final Concluding Matter is the issue of “*the judgment seat of Christ*” - which is going to put you in the position of not only greater responsibility to function with your Father in all that He is doing—but also, it puts you in a position of **greater accountability** to your Father!

- a very serious “Accountability Factor” gets reached with the *instruction of godly equity*! ... and because of what it is doing (preparation-wise) for being able to go on to Level II Sonship Education—the adversary will NOT let this go down without a fight! (hello *distress*)!

- **ROMANS 14:1-12**—receiving the instruction of godly *equitable* Thinking in connection with our personal interaction with disadvantaged or *weak* members of the body of Christ.

- While at the outset, it seems on the surface that the information contained in Ch.14 is a somewhat dramatic ‘shift’ from the flow and the sense and sequence of Ch.13:8-14—the truth is, this information of Ch.14 is actually the smooth, seamless, next, natural thing that our Father would say to us, having completed our *instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment*.

- But in order to grasp the reality of the naturalness of this information coming immediately after *receiving the instruction of judgment* (13:8-14) - you really have to “see” this body of information with “the eyes of your understanding” - that is, you have to perceive that there’s **more** going on here than the simple and obvious issue that has to do with our dealings with *weaker* brothers in the church. (not to minimize that issue in any way at all)

- And this doesn’t require just any old perception—this requires SONSHIP PERCEPTION!

- If you don’t see what’s going on here from the perspective of your Sonship Education—then you’re **not** going to get the full-effectual working of this great passage!

- In fact—you have to perceive this passage not only from the perspective of Sonship Education—but from the viewpoint of the Father Himself as to exactly why He’s giving you the *instruction of equity* in this particular way—i.e., with these 2 particular Illustrations.

- (because if all He’s wanting to do is to get all the members of the church to ‘Just get along’ - He could say that in a whole lot fewer words!)

- But by understanding & appreciating that everything about your Sonship Education is in perfect keeping with what God is currently doing in this Disp. of Grace in which you live—(which is 1 of the BIG things you always have to keep in mind) ...

... and by understanding & appreciating the aims,

goals, and objectives of the information your Father is giving you that is in perfect keeping with your being educated by Him as His “son” in order to ultimately work with Him and labor with Him as “Father and Son” - that is, in the context of Sonship Education—and with a proper understanding of what our Father is doing with us as His “sons” in His plan, purpose, and will for this Disp. of grace in which we live ...

... then this information contained in (Ch.14ff) makes not only perfect sense—but it’s also the next, natural thing that has to be taught to us—(in other words, it not only makes perfect **sense**, but it also is in perfect and proper **sequence** with the aims, goals, & objectives of our Sonship Education.

- And all of this got underway in earnest back in 12:3 when we began *receiving the instruction of wisdom*—and from that point on, we have been confronted with the fact that there are 2 aspects to the issue of edification: 1) Individually; 2) as a BODY!

- and the truth is—everything you’ve been taught from 12:3 to this point has touched upon those 2 aspects of what you might call ‘godly development’ (or godly edification).

- And really—going all the way back to Rom. 6:1—8:13 - where you first learned that not only did God justify you in order that you would be made the Righteousness of God “in Christ” - but He did much more than that; He also sanctified you in order that you would be made the **Holiness** of God “in Christ” ...

... and that’s where that ‘mind-blowing’, life-changing thought first entered your mind that: God’s plan, purpose, will, and desire is to **extend His holiness through YOU!**

- Then you learned that God not only wants to extend His holiness through **you**—but through **every other member** of this *one body in Christ* that you are members of! (and body thinking became the ‘Order of the Day’)!

- But God has also already told you some things that makes it so that (even if you don’t understand any of the details), you should at the very least have a basic appreciation for the fact that God didn’t just justify you to be made the +R of God “in Christ”; and didn’t just

sanctify you in order to become the Holiness of God “in Christ” - but you also should know/perceive that God has done something (you may not know what to call it yet) - but He has done something for you in order that you might become the **GLORY** of God “in Christ”!!!

- we have already been confronted with ‘hints’ of this:

- 3:23; 5:2; 8:17-18; 8:30; 9:22-23;
(and even our present portion of Scripture ends up with this issue: see 15:6-7)

- even 8:19-21 has caused us to perceive that there is something about God’s GLORY that He seeks to extend through us to *the creature*!

- and NOTE: the word *glory* (or any of its variations) does NOT come up in ANY of the information contained in Rom. 12:3-13:14 (i.e., *wisdom, justice, or judgment*) ...

... it only comes up again at the END of our *instruction of equity*!!!

- My point in all this is—that if you were to take the issue of the Righteousness, the Holiness, and the Glory of God, and put them all together—what you have is the general, basic understanding of the entire **LIFE OF GOD**!

- and that final aspect of those 3 issues (the **Glory** of God) is what the Father can now squarely confront us with at the end of *the instruction of equity*!

... simply put—*equity* is the final basic Sonship Decision-Making skill that we need to have, in order to put the very **LIFE OF GOD** into effect—or to put it another way, *equity* is the final thing we need in order for God to be able to extend His GLORY through us (individually, and as a BODY)!

- And the really exciting thing about what we get in Rom. 14:1-15:7 is that it not only nearly completes our Level I Sonship Education, but it prepares us in advance for Level II Sonship Education—(which is where the focus gets put upon that GLORY issue in a BIG way!)

- And in order to put the entire LIFE OF GOD into effect through us in the realm where God has designed for it to be put into effect (in the *creature*) - that is going to demand that it be done **not merely individually**, but **as a BODY!**

- And (without going into any details about it at this point), that is going to demand & require *fellowship, communion, concord*—as well as being *tempered, compacted*, and *knit together!*

- and those things do NOT take place individually, but collectively—not only are they to take place in the body of Christ as a whole, but even in the local assembly—the local church where a local gathering together of the body of Christ occurs!

- And the exciting thing about all this is that you are supposed to perceive that the job of *the instruction of equity* (Rom. 14:1-15:7) is to prepare the local assembly for becoming a miniaturized model of what we will be doing in the business Operations of our Father when we are placed as His “sons” in the *creature* and *deliver it from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!*

... we will be able (as a BODY), to put the very LIFE OF GOD into effect upon a physical portion of this earth (which, itself *groaneth and travaileth in pain*) — as a ‘practice field’ for when we will one day be utilized by God to put His LIFE into effect in the heavenly places!

(and if that doesn’t cause you to think that a local church is designed by God to do a whole lot more than what is normally thought ... then nothing will!)

- That’s what I mean by this section of Rom. 14:1-15:7 being the next, natural *instruction* of the Father to His sons!

- (:1) - The Stage-Setting Statement.

- Again—this verse not only “sets the stage” for the receiving of the godly Thinking in (:2-12) - but it also “sets the stage” for the entire section of *receiving the instruction of equity* in (14:2-15:7).

- 1 *Him that is weak in the faith ...*

- The word of God has no problem using a masculine term as a “generic” word that is used to describe a particular group of people regardless of their gender—and this is one of those times.

- (by the way, that is the PROPER use of the English language, and it DOESN'T need to be ‘dumbed-down’ to accommodate the hyper-sensitive or stupid!) [enough said]

- “*Him*” = any person (male or female).

- the verse then goes on to describe this person ...

- “*that is weak in the faith*”

- Although only 6 words—this phrase provides us with a lot of information—enough to be able to understand and appreciate just what a *weaker* brother means to God.

- And first and foremost—my understanding is that it is right and proper to gather from the wording here that we really are talking about a person who is justified unto eternal life—they are saved from the dept & penalty of their sins—they are NOT in need of justification or salvation because they have already come to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as their only and all-sufficient Savior. (they have responded positively to the gospel of Christ)

- And one of the things contained in this very phrase that causes me to think that is the little word “*the*” ...

... this is NOT a person that is *weak IN faith*—
rather, this is a person that is *weak in THE faith*.

- And that fact can be proven by what gets said later on in (:10) - *But why dost thou judge by **brother**? or why dost thou set at nought thy **brother**? ...* (an unbeliever is **not** a brother)

- The issue of being either *weak in faith* or *strong in faith* was dealt with back in Romans 4 (Abraham) - and in that case, being *weak in faith* (no def. article “*the*”) is accurately describing one who is NOT justified/saved.

- What is being described in this opening phrase is a person who is truly saved/justified—but one who is (for whatever reason) *weak in the faith* (or weak in the doctrinal education they are supposed to be receiving from the apostle Paul).

- *weak* = has a whole bunch of different meanings—but given the **context** in which this word sits—and given the **BOOK** in which this word sits—God has already confronted us with something that should immediately come to mind that perfectly fits the use of the word *weak* in this context, and therefore corrals our thinking and prevents our thinking from running all over the place and ends up giving the word *weak* a different meaning and a different sense than how God intends for it to be used in this case.

- *weak* = basically means **a want of strength**; it could be a want in physical strength (i.e., undeveloped; unable to support a weight, load, or force placed upon it) - it could be a want in some other kind of strength—such as a want of skill; a want of moral strength (such as courage or will); a want of physical health; a want of the mind or mental faculties; a want of qualifications (being ill-qualified); a want or lack of ingredients (like 2% Milk) - and many, many other ways in which the word *weak* can be used.

- but the basic issue in anything that is being described as *weak* is the issue of being **deficient** or **wanting** or **insufficient** in some part, some element, or some characteristic which is necessary to being complete.

- And we're **not** left to make 'guesses' as to what kind of *weakness* or deficiency is being talked about here—because God tells you exactly what kind of *weakness* is being talked about here in the very next 3 words ... ***in the faith***.

- and the wording is very important and very precise: *in THE faith* is NOT *in faith*—in other words, we're **NOT** talking about a person's **active faith**; or their belief! ... in fact, the person's active faith (or what they believe) is very **strong!**

- (which is why [:2] immediately says, *For one **believeth** ... they very firmly believe something; and they have the convictions of their belief, because they are ACTING upon that belief!*)

- The word *faith* is most commonly used and thought of as talking about a person's **active belief in something** (such as we talk about when we say that we are "responding positively & properly" to the doctrine that we have received from God's word) —

— but the word *faith* can also be used in its **objective** sense—that is, it can be used to talk about the object of a person's faith or belief—simply put: **WHAT** he believes ... rather than the fact that he DOSE believe.

- The objective use of the word *faith*, therefore, is talking about **a doctrine or a system of doctrine that someone believes**.

- In fact, this is the sense of the word *faith* when we describe Christianity as "**The Christian *faith***" - or Judaism as "The Jewish *faith*".

*** a good example of the apostle Paul using the word *faith* in its objective sense (see Galatians 1:20-23 [:23])

- But the truth is—God NEVER uses the word *faith* as a synonym for *doctrine*—that is, He never uses the Greek word πίστις for the English word "*doctrine*"!

- And what I did in the past (when I was a "Bible corrector"), was to re-translate the objective use of the word *faith* to say, 'doctrine' or 'Bible doctrine' ... Corr. Trns. 'A person that is deficient in Bible doctrine' ... (wow) ... (truth is, that is Incorrect & weakens & corrupts the meaning!)

... but rather than showing my own shallow stupidity—you have to recognize that the KJ Translators had the word "doctrine" readily available to them (and they used it a lot) ... so the real question is, Why did they use the word *faith* here, and not "doctrine"? (viz., "Him that is weak in the doctrine")

... recognizing that this is accurately & flawlessly translated by the most excellent of all English words possible as "*weak in the faith*" ... Why is *faith* more excellent than *doctrine*?

- Granted, this is talking about a believer—a saint—a Christian - who is *weak* (or deficient, or wanting, or incomplete [**in a particular context**]) *in the faith* (in the doctrine that makes up Biblical Christianity) ... true enough ...

... so isn't it confusing to use *faith* in one place for active belief, and using *faith* in another place for what IS believed? ... couldn't we make a "better" "easier-to-understand" translation?? NO!!!

- So why use *faith* in (:1) instead of 'the body of information that is believed' (or "Bible doctrine)? ... especially when *faith* really is being used in its objective sense? ... does it even matter?

- It does matter—and there is a very important (and doctrinal) reason for using the word *faith* here in (:1) instead of 'doctrine' - especially in light of the **context** of dealing with a *weaker* brother!

- First of all—we know by the exactness of the terminology that we are dealing with a truly saved/justified member of the body of Christ—because he's described as *weak IN the faith*—if he wasn't saved/justified, he would not be described as *IN the faith* at all (plus he's called a *brother* later on).

- Secondly—this saint's *faith* is not *weak* in the sense of having a 'wavering', unsteady, indecisive, 'back-and-forth' type of wishy-washy belief.

- And that tells you a lot about just how it is that God Himself defines what a *weaker* brother is ...

... a *weaker* brother is a saved person who is deficient, lacking, or wanting (to put it in general terms) in the doctrine of the Christian faith.

- And to put it more precisely—*Him that is weak in the faith* is a saved person who is *weak* (lacking or wanting) **in the sound doctrinal education they are supposed to be receiving from the epistles/letters of the apostle Paul!**

- (and that is probably even more accurate than saying that he is *weak* in his Sonship Education/Edification) ... although that is very true.

- And I say that because it may be that a *weaker* brother may not even be properly educated in Romans 1-5 — he may be truly justified, but he may not be properly educated in all of the **results** of his justified position "in Christ"!

... so he may be in need of the doctrine of Rom. 1-5.
 ... for instance, he may be in need of the doctrine of his permanent “*at-one-ment*” - or the doctrine of the “*one man*” - or the doctrine of *grace abounding* and *grace reigning* (that makes it so his desire is to go on and get that grace abounding in his functional life—hence, the doctrine of his sanctification “in Christ” and its results).

- He may be lacking in the sound doctrine of Romans 6:1-7:25 ... (being *dead to sin, and alive unto God*—and never utilizing the Law in order to put his functional/sanctified life “in Christ” into practice [**which is a problem for many**]) ...

... he may be lacking in the sound doctrine of Romans 8:1-13 (on just how it is that he is supposed to deal with personal sin; and how to properly put his sanctified life “in Christ” into practice ...

... or he may be lacking the sound doctrine of his adoption as a “son” - and his sonship status as found in Romans 8:14-39

... or he may be lacking in the sound doctrine of Romans 9-11 (basic dispensational understanding)

... or he may be lacking in his Sonship Education of Romans 12:3-13:14.

- And I’m going over all this—to this degree—just to underscore the fact that the one who is describe here in (:1) as *weak in the faith* is talking about THOSE KIND OF ISSUES—(that’s what *Him that is weak in the faith* IS—that’s what a *weaker* brother IS) ...

... in other words—and just to say it from the **opposite** approach of what the *weaker* brother is NOT—*Him that is weak in the faith* is **NOT**:

- a **sinful** brother; or a **disobedient** brother; or a **rebellious** brother—or a brother that is being **disorderly** ...
 - he is NOT being **deceived**; or **bewitched**; or **beguiled**; or **corrupted** in his mind!

- And this is a HUGELY IMPORTANT distinction to make! (because there is a lot of abuse that comes from this passage!)

- This passage is most commonly mis-understood and mis-handled—for example in nearly every ‘study Bible’ on the market, you will have a title given to this chapter such as ‘The Christian and debatable things’ or ‘The law of love concerning doubtful things’ — which gives you the idea that there are some doctrinal issues (or some issues of “the faith” **or some issues of the Bible**) that are “doubtful” or “debatable” WHICH IS NOT ONLY NOT TRUE—IT IS NOT WHAT THIS IS TALKING ABOUT OR DEALING WITH!!!

(THAT’S FUNDAMENTALISM! [standing for the “fundamentals” of the faith] - which is biblical garbage!)

- Now—going back to our question—Why use the word *faith* here instead of *doctrine* (or Bible doctrine, or sound doctrine)?

- What is the discrimination difference between the phrase, “*weak in the faith*” vs. ‘weak in the doctrine’?

- after all—the word ‘doctrine’ = a body of information that is designed to materially affect the way in which you think; which, in turn materially affects the way in which you live; and as a result, affects the way in which you spend your time (or labor).

- The phrase “*THE faith*” does, indeed, gather up everything that the word *doctrine* indicates—but it does something else that the word *doctrine* does NOT do ... (what is it?)

- *faith* (in its objective use—using the def. art. “the” - *the faith*) tells you that this particular brother **BELIEVES** the doctrine ...

... it focuses upon what that saint is OPERATING upon; what he is ACTING upon!

- And there is something you’re supposed to acknowledge about the issue of what he **BELIEVES!!!**

- The *weaker* brother is actually acting upon or operating upon some degree of actual, proper, real, sound doctrine!

- (it may be a very little—a teeny, tiny bit—but it’s sound doctrine, none the less!)

- in other words—his refusing to eat certain things, and esteem one day above another is NOT the definition of what a *weaker* brother is!!!

(those are illustrations of what a *weaker* brother may be doing that manifests his lacking in the sound doctrinal education he is supposed to be receiving from the epistles of the apostle Paul—but those are not the definitions of *Him that is weak in the faith!*)

.. truth is—those illustrations are for YOU.

- And if you don’t get this right—(get started off on ‘the right foot’) - then you’ll never properly understand what (:23) is talking about!

- by the way— “doctrine” (even “sound doctrine”) while even meaning what it does—doesn’t mean that it ever gets BELIEVED!

- the *weaker* brother doesn’t have ‘wavering faith’ - he has firm faith in what he believes—the issue with him is that he’s just not as far along edification-wise than you are at this point!

- and that’s going to naturally manifest itself in some ways that are going to be inconsistent with sound, advanced doctrine — and that can pose a lot of serious problems for the fellowship, communion, and concord of the assembly.

- but he’s operation upon a firm and full belief (or *faith*) in what he’s doing ... and you need to tread lightly when you’re dealing with what a saint/brother believes! it’s going to take some real godly skills to not end up ruining him!

(REVIEW)

- Point is—by saying it the way God has the apostle Paul say it (and by **exactly & precisely** what he says) - i.e., *Him that is weak in the faith* — it properly SETS THE STAGE for the kind of dilemma that is going to be encountered by having a *weaker* brother in a local church situation.

- And it needs to be acknowledged and recognized that having a *weaker* brother in the local assembly **does, indeed,** pose a **POSSIBLE** problem to that assembly ...

... but it is only a **possible** problem ... it's a problem ***if*** the situation is not dealt with by real and genuine godly love and charity!

- And just by those 7 simple words (*Him that is weak in the faith*) you're told a lot about how God Himself looks at the *weaker* brother, and what a *weaker* brother is from the Father's perspective!

- And by saying that this brother (or sister) is *weak in the faith*—you know that:

- he's a justified, saved, individual;
- he's *weak* in the sense of having SOME measure (or some degree) of proper, correct, sound doctrine that is effectually working in his 'inner man';
- however, he's lacking in the sound doctrinal education he is supposed to be receiving from the epistles of the apostle Paul;
- and the excellency of using the word *faith* instead of 'doctrine' (or something like that) - is that the word *faith* tells you that what this *weaker* brother IS operating upon; or acting upon is something that he has come to fully and firmly BELIEVE!

- and the truth is—there are some things that he believes that are 100% accurate and true; and there are some things that he believes that are NOT according to, or in keeping with Pauline doctrine! **yet!**

- But the BIG ISSUE is that the word *faith* tells you that the *weaker* brother BELIEVES (fully, firmly believes) what he is operating upon!

- And THAT is the dilemma!

- What a person **believes** is a HUGE and delicate issue—it's a huge and delicate issue to God the Father, and it should be a huge and delicate issue to you as a "son"!

- The dilemma is that the *weaker* brother is *weak in the faith* — that is, while he may be operating upon a very minimal amount of proper, correct, sound doctrine; and while he may be operating upon some doctrine that is NOT in keeping with or consistent with Pauline doctrine — the point is, whatever he's operating upon, it is something that he firmly **believes**.

... and the dilemma, therefore, is: **HOW DO YOU GET THE WEAKER BROTHER TO BELIEVE DIFFERENTLY THAN HE DOES?**

1) How do you get the *weaker* brother to believe more and more of Pauline doctrine?

2) How do you get the *weaker* brother to no longer believe what he does that is inconsistent with Pauline doctrine, and then believe what IS consistent with Pauline doctrine?

- To put it in a 'nutshell' — how do you get *godly edifying which is in faith (1 Tim. 1:4)* to take place in a *weaker* brother?

- **ANSWER:** You don't! You are NOT the one who is in charge of godly edification! God Himself IS!

- When you're talking about what a person **believes**, you've entered into the realm/territory of his 'inner man' and what is going on there!

- And that territory (if there is going to be godly edifying going on) - that territory is the sole domain of the **Lord** God Almighty Himself ... not YOU acting as the **Lord** God!

- that's not how **you** were dealt with when you were a *weaker* brother—(or when your godly edification took place, and still is taking place) — and that's not how you're going to 'straighten out' the *weaker* brother!!! (by acting as the Lord God Almighty!)

- The truth is—by this point in your godly Sonship Education—you have enough understanding and appreciation of how godly edification works, so that you fully and firmly grasp the issue that it can **only** be GOD HIMSELF, by His Holy Spirit leading a saint [*weaker* or not] through the written word of God—bringing the living words of the living God to LIFE within the ‘inner man’ of a saint [*weaker* or not] — and ultimately getting that living word of God written on the *fleshy tables* of that saint’s heart, that accomplishes godly edification!

- And that tells you something else about the *weaker* brother (definition-wise, in the perspective of the Father) - it tells you that the *weaker* brother is someone who has **honesty of heart!** — and will, presumably deal with the text of God’s word honestly as well!

- The point of this entire section of Romans 14:1-15:7 (*receiving the instruction of equity*) acts as a TEST (so to speak) for just how much we properly understand and appreciate 2 Major issues:

- 1) our sonship status, and the sonship status of other members of the church, the body of Christ;
- 2) **godly love & charity.**

- It is going to be a tremendous display of godly love & charity that is going to get put on display as we handle *weaker* brothers properly.

- And if we do **not** handle them properly—then we are going to end up criticizing, despising, and judging *weaker* brothers with ungodly judgment—and what is going to get put on display is that we **do not** value and esteem them as we ought to!

- Truth is—it’s actually that issue of failing to appreciate the **sonship status** of ourselves and the **sonship status** of the *weaker* brother that ends up with either a very shallow understanding of this section of Romans, or an abuse of it ...
... or both! (sonship status is what gets totally missed here!)

- The fact is—the display of godly love & charity towards the *weaker* brother can only be surpassed **by laying down your life** for an individual out of godly love & charity! (that’s how BIG this is!)

- THE GODLY, BIBLICAL DEFINITION AND IDENTITY OF THE WEAKER BROTHER: ***(**the term *weak* is NOT being used as a rebuke or as a reproach to the weaker brother!!!**)***

- By being called *weak* IN THE FAITH— the words ***in the faith*** tells you that we are dealing with a person who is saved/justified.

- The words ***in the faith*** also tell you that this is a person who is, to some measure or to some degree, responding positively to the sound doctrinal education he is supposed to be receiving from the epistles of the apostle Paul. (otherwise, he could not be described as being *in the faith* at all).

- (he's just *weak* IN it; he's just wanting IN it; he's just lacking IN it ... but he **IS IN** it!!!

- **Clarify**: ***in the faith*** is NOT merely an expression used to describe a believer! ... the context won't allow that! ... it's describing a particular **kind** of believer!

- And there's a **significance** to the **context** in which this expression sits—the significance of bringing up *Him that is weak in the faith* all the way back in Ch. 14 also tells you that this is a saved person that is positively responding to his sonship status—(even though **he** may not know anything about it ... but **you** do!)

- In other words—while that expression *weak in the faith* can be used in a very broad (and really, **secondary**) way to describe any believer who is, for whatever reason, in a position of not being to the point you are (edification-wise) ...

... my understanding is that this is NOT talking about just any believer lacking in godly edification!

Rather, my understanding is that we need to **narrow** that broader definition - and if my understanding is correct, what we're talking about here is a brother who has come into the assembly—and who has 'checked us out' (so to speak) - and he has heard something about godly edification (even sonship education) ... and he has determined that he wants to be a part of that!

- and what we have previously said about the *weaker* brother perfectly fits this narrowed down definition ... he still may be *weak* in Rom. 1-5; or 6:1-8:13; or 8:14-39; or 9-11; or 12-13.

- This is talking about a believer who views this local assembly as the localized *pillar and ground of the truth* (*I Tim. 3:15*)

- This is talking about a believer who, through no fault of his own—is in a position of **sincere ignorance of the doctrine** (Pauline doctrine; sonship doctrine)!

- And my understanding is that this is the **primary** way in which we are expected to understand & appreciate the expression *Him that is weak in the faith* ...

... given the **exactness** of the expression (and paying close attention to it) - **and** given the **context** in which it sits (and paying close attention to it)!

- Now—with that more narrowed understanding—the question arises: Is this talking **only** about a believer who physically comes into this physical assembly? or can it also be talking about a believer who can't physically be in our physical assembly, but who can participate via other means (such as the internet; or long-distance interaction with you)?

- Well, since the very next words in the verse are *receive ye*, my understanding is that the **primary** (and the **highest** and **best**) situation is that they **are** physically here in our physical assembly—**BUT**, since godly *equity* is what we are being *instructed* in, I believe this verse perfectly fits with an internet listener who is dedicated to receiving his godly, sonship edification along with the rest of this assembly, albeit a long-distance type of fellowship & communion.

- It can be done—(and it is being done) - although an internet listener has to be **very disciplined** in his approach—(and a bit creative, too).

- And not only does the exactness of the words used here convince me of that; and not only does the context in which they sit convince me of that—but I'm also convinced of that because of how God has the apostle Paul deal with other believers who **are** experiencing problems with their godly edification that are **NOT** brought on by simply being *weak in the faith!* (or by being 'sincerely ignorant of the doctrine')

- And this is why I've said that *Him that is weak in the faith* is **NOT** talking about

- a believer who is *disobedient*
(see Titus 1:7-16 [:16])

- a believer who is willfully sinning and stubbornly obstinate about it (such as the incestuous believer in Corinth—[1 Cor. 5])

- a believer who is rebellious and *disorderly*
(see 2 Thess. 3:6-11)

- a believer who has been *bewitched* (Gal. 3:1)

- a believer who has been *beguiled* (2 Cor. 11:3;
Col. 2:4, 18)

- a believer who is dishonest (not *weak*) in his faith
(see **2 Tim. 3:1-6 ... see Rom. 8, pgs. 338-342**)

- that's much different than what was said
back in 2 Tim. 2:25!

- Point is—proper, godly handling of the *weaker* brother is **only 1 of many ways in which other members of the body of Christ are to be handled!**

- and it's absolutely critical that you do NOT get the *weaker* brother situation confused with one of these other situations!

- The Godly, Biblical Definition & Identity of the Weaker Brother:

- One who is saved/justified;
- desires godly edification in the local assembly (and if its not possible to be physically in the local assembly, then dedicated to one local assembly via recorded Bible classes);
- but one who is sincerely (honestly & innocently—without hypocrisy) ignorant of the doctrine.

- 14 *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, ...*

- “*receive*” = the English word *receive* can be used in a whole bunch of different ways, and in a range of ways— that is, it can be used in a more passive sense (or a less intense sense); and it can range all the way to a very **active** (or in a **highly intensified** sense).

- And in the book of Romans we have already encountered the word *receive* in its passive (or less intense) sense ...

- Rom. 4:11; 5:11,17; 8:15; 13:2

- And we have encountered the more intensified sense of the word *receive* ...

- Rom. 1:27; 11:15

- And by the context dealing with the highness of the nature of godly edification individually AND as an assembly as a whole—and because the context is dealing with our personal and interpersonal dealings with other members of the body of Christ—the ‘highness’ of the context demands that we are dealing with the active, intensified sense of the word *receive*!

- Generally/basically, *receive* = to take; to get; to take in; to take into one’s hand, or into one’s possession.

- *receive* (used in a bunch of different ways) = to take something offered or sent; to accept; to take as a reward; to take intellectually; to catch; to take in the transmission of something (TV, Radio) ...

... and you can go on and on ...

... but an exhaustive word analysis wouldn't do us any real good ...

- What we’re after is what God Himself means when He tells us, *Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye ...*

- And by means of the context and the choice of words (or vocabulary control) - when you’re talking about a localized group of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ gathering themselves together for the purpose of individual godly edification, and the godly edification of the whole group of believers—(in other words, when you’re talking about ...

... a **local assembly** or a **local church** situation) - the ‘radical root’ issue to the word *receive* in our phrase, *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye*, ... is the issue of **admission** —

... the meaning of *receive ye* in the context of Rom. 14:1 is **to admit**.

- **Careful**: often the idea of *receiving* the one who is *weak in the faith* is often taken to mean: welcome him; meet him; greet him — (which is where churches often have a “Greeter” and a “Welcoming Committee” ... and a new person is often given some kind of a ‘card’ to fill out ... and there’s some kind of time where you are supposed to hug them and tell them you love them ... or whatever ...)

- But while the ‘welcome’ concept **is a valid one**—this context is NOT merely talking about making a person new to the assembly feel welcome or ‘feel right at home’ and then that’s the end of it (so to speak) ... [it says, *weak*, not ‘new’!]

- The major issue with the word *receive* in the context of Rom. 14:1 is the issue of **TO ADMIT INTO FELLOWSHIP** (or membership)! [as in Webster’s 1828—Webster then quotes Rom. 14:1]!!!

- And while the *weaker* brother *is* to be ‘welcomed’ into the local church—the much more critical issue is that he be admitted into the FELLOWSHIP of the local assembly—and that word “fellowship” means a lot more than merely being allowed to sit in a chair/pew with the rest of the assembly!

- And it’s that “**fellowship**” concept that makes the word *receive* take on that more active, and intensified sense—because you’re NOT supposed to be *receiving* the *weaker* brother in some **passive** way—rather **you are supposed to have fellowship with him—you are supposed to interact with him—and ultimately BE A HELP to him in his godly sonship edification (which is what *you* are honestly attending the local assembly for; and which is what the *weaker* brother is honestly attending the loc. ass. for in the first place)!**

- The local church is NOT supposed to be merely a fellowship of believers—(it is that, but it’s **far more** than that)

... nor is it merely a fellowship of “like-minded” believers (because that doesn’t mean much of anything—you can be ‘like-minded’ in corrupted doctrine, or unsound doctrine, or false-doctrine—or because you are all fans of some Pastor [Dear Dr. So & So] - or because you are all Yankee fans).

- don’t get me wrong—being ‘like-minded’ is a very good, vital, and essential thing for a local assembly—but only when the same thing that we ‘mind’ is ***sound doctrine*** from ***sound words*** (i.e., **Pauline!**)

- The local assembly is supposed to be a fellowship of “sons” of God whose **only** objective is to be *edified unto godliness **which is in faith*** (1 Tim. 1:4)! (i.e., according to the *revelation of the mystery*— see Rom. 16:25)

- And more than that—you know that the fellowship of the local assembly isn’t just any old ‘fellowship’ (showing that we can get along well together just like any other ‘fellowship’ [Moose; Masons; Elks; Odd Fellows; Rotary]) ...

... rather, the fellowship (or the kind/nature of the fellowship) of the local assembly is supposed to be [or become] **THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE MYSTERY!** (see Eph. 3:8-10)

- “*The fellowship of the mystery*” is misunderstood by most Christians today—and therefore is almost NEVER accomplished by churches today—(and if you are in a denomination, it is impossible to ever be accomplished)!

- God the Father’s expectation is that by YOU *receiving the instruction of godly equity*—YOU will, therefore, ***receive*** the *weaker* brother (*Him that is weak in the faith*) ...

... that is—you will admit him into fellowship with you and the rest of the local assembly in order for him to get his godly Sonship Edification along with the rest of the body of Christ!

- (because—by meeting God’s own definition of what the *weaker* brother is: THAT’S WHAT HE’S THERE FOR!) [he’s not there making trouble; or being disorderly; or any of the things we’ve looked at before!]

- **NOTICE**: he is to be *received* (admitted) into the **fellowship** of the local assembly WITHOUT ANY MORE QUALIFICATION THAN THAT HE IS “**IN THE FAITH**” ...

... the ONLY Biblical requirement to *receive* someone into the local church is that he is *in the faith* ... (any other requirement is totally and completely MAN-MADE [made up by denominations]!

... that is, he does **NOT** have to be water baptized; or walk down an aisle; or come forward; or sign a pledge card; or make a confession; or go through some ceremony; or take some classes; or get a ‘membership certificate’; or any of the other non-biblical monkey business that many churches [and most church denominations] want a person to go through!

- (when it comes to having the government impose corporate structure and corporate organization upon a local church [501-C3], then being a so-called “voting member” is another matter — but it is NOT a Biblical matter at all!)

- So we have: *1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, ...*

- “**ye**” - (very specific) — **see charts** ... and John 3:7

- *ye* = 2pp Nom. case of the English personal pronoun— and means, in general, every person in the local assembly—but more specifically, the *strong* “sons” that make up the bulk (or core) of the local assembly—the ones who have accomplished getting Romans 1:1-13:14 effectually working in their ‘inner man’!

- Now—having dealt with the details of the first phrase of (:1), we should have the understanding & appreciation for the Definition and Identity of a *weaker* brother as defined and identified by GOD HIMSELF:

- *Him that is weak IN THE FAITH* ...

- **Plus**, you should have the general (yet critically important) way in which God our Heavenly Father expects you (as a “son”) to **handle him**:

- ... **RECEIVE YE**, ... that’s what you are to do; that’s how you handle him in a godly way; that’s what is consistent with *your* sonship status and *his* sonship status; and that’s what is consistent & compatible with **godly love & charity**!

- Again, I want to stress that you have to go by what God Himself says as to what one who is *weak in the faith* is—**and not to confuse** a *weaker* brother with a sinning brother; or a disobedient-to-the-doctrine brother; or a rebellious brother; or disorderly brother; or bewitch brother; or beguiled brother; or any of the other many, many categories of saints that are dealt with **differently** than by *receiving* him into the edificational fellowship of the local assembly!

- Remember—*receiving* a *weaker* brother into the edificational fellowship of the local assembly does NO HARM to the local assembly (**if he's received properly**)! ...
... but *receiving* into the edificational fellowship of the loc. assembly a brother in some other category will be HARMFUL to the edificational fellowship of the loc. assmb!

- the issue of fellowship, communion, and concord is now getting to be a BIG DEAL!

- I ... *but not to doubtful disputations.*

- The final clause in the sentence begins with the word *but* (adversative conjunction)—and sets forth specific information as to **how** (or **what manner**) the one who is *weak in the faith* is to be *received* into the edificational fellowship of the local assembly.

- And the first, most obvious thing you notice about this final clause of (:1) is the second word of the clause: the word **not** - it tells you **want NOT to do!** it tells you how **NOT** to *receive* the *weaker* brother; it tells you what you are forbidden to do!

- And the manner in which the *weaker* brother is to be *received* is set forth in one, single matter of just 5 words — and those 5 words covers and encapsulates anything and everything that can **possibly** go wrong when the *weaker* brother is NOT *received* properly (as a properly educated “son” would do; as one who is *strong in the faith* would do).

- **Only when the issue of what one who is *weak in the faith* (what the *weaker* brother is) as defined by and identified by and described by GOD HIMSELF!** ... once that is properly understood and appreciated ... then ...

... this single negative phrase—this one thing stated negatively—under this single “*not*” will fall every possible case; every possible situation; every possible circumstance that could ever arise when a *weaker* brother is *received* into the edificational fellowship of the local assembly!

- and really, it’s all summed up on just 2 words:
 “*doubtful disputations*”!

—This serves as a **dire warning** to the ones who are *strong* (primarily), as well as the *weak in the faith*:

- this is what YOU generate!;

- if the *weaker* brother is NOT received properly, and *doubtful disputations* arise—the fault is squarely YOURS—a fault lies with YOU—and one that will have negative consequences at the Judgment Seat of Christ!

- (that’s not to say that this warning and the consequences that it can have at the JSC is exclusive to the *strong*, because as we will see in (:3 & :10), the *weaker* brother is in view, too—but the tone of the warning is that in all these things—the *strong* brother bears the greater weight of responsibility!)

... how many Christians, do you suppose, ever fear the issue of *doubtful disputations* at the JSofC?

- Now—before going on to deal with the issue of *doubtful disputations* — the question may have occurred to you: If I’m told in this opening ‘Stage-Setting Statement’ that the entire issue of how to properly handle the *weaker* brother is to *receive him* ...

... and then further information is given to me as to how NOT to *receive him* ...

... then that begs the question, just how DO I properly *receive* the *weaker* brother into the edificational fellowship of the local assembly?

- And, of course, the answer to that is what you are going to be taught in the remaining 29 verses ... but ...

... later on in the curriculum for Sonship Education, this issue is going to be brought up in a very interesting passage—and in that passage, it will take all of the sound doctrine of these 30 verses—and it will compact all that into 1 single word ...

- see 1 Thess. 5:11-14 (:14)

- In (:14) we have a passage that describes a number of different categories of brothers in Christ.

- Within this one verse it is recognized that members of the church, the body of Christ can be, and will be in different situations and at different levels of edification—and they need to be handled differently.

- You have 3 of them:

- ***unruly*** ones who are to be ***warned*** (and these are not *weaker* brothers);

- ***feble-minded*** ones who are to be ***comforted***;

- and ***weak*** ones (the *weaker* brother) who are to be ***supported!***

- and “***support***” gathers up the entirety of Rom. 14:1-15:7 into 1 single word!

- And when it comes to either the *unruly*, the *feble-minded*, or the *weak*—a properly educated “son” recognizes each category, one from the other; and distinguishes one from the other—because you have to handle each one differently—and godly love & charity DOES handle them differently!

- ... *but not to doubtful disputations.*

- (Just as an ‘aside’ — does this mean that you are NEVER to have *disputations* with anybody?)

- Acts 9:26-29 (:29) - Acts 15:1-2 (:2)

- Acts 17:16-17 (:17); Acts 19:8&9—and others ...

... Michael *disputed* with the devil about the body of Moses (Jude 9)

... but note: 1 Cor. 1:20; Phil. 2:14; 1 Tim. 6:3-5 (:5)

- the point is—*dispute / disputations* is NOT forbidden for a believer to ever be engaged in ‘across the board’ (so to speak) ... rather, (as is almost always the case), *disputation* is a **context-sensitive word!**

- However—it is NEVER to be engaged in with a *weaker* brother WITH NO EXCEPTION!

- (see how important it is to be able to identify and perceive these various situations? ... do you see how things are starting to get a bit more complex? ... and do you see how making *equitable* sonship decisions requires & demands an awful lot of **work** to be really skillful at it?)

- So *doubtful disputations* is a huge NO-NO in the godly way in which we are expected to handle a *weaker* brother.

- and *doubtful disputations* are what can arise between the *strong* ones *in the faith* and the ones who are *weak in the faith*.

- and—as will be seen in the following verses of Rom. 14, *doubtful disputations* are POISON to the edification of the body of Christ in the local assembly—and they are equally poisonous to the edification of the *weaker* brother!

... so, what are “*doubtful disputations*”?

- Let’s see what it is **NOT** talking about —

- The **context** is dealing with a saint (believer) who is getting the 4th Decision-Making Skill in his Sonship Education, *receiving the instruction of equity*—moreover, the **context** is dealing with instruction being given both to the saints who are *strong* in the faith, and to the saints who are *weak in the faith* (not *weak* in the sense of ‘wavering’, but *weak* in the sense of not being as far along edification-wise as the ones who are *strong*). But both the *weak* and the *strong* are in the local assembly together, in order to get their godly sonship edification—THAT’S THE CONTEXT!

- Therefore, by keeping this in the context in which God put it, you can rule out much of the mis-handling of this passage.

- And what I'm after here, (especially) concerns that word *doubtful* — and I'm after the erroneous way in which this is commonly dealt with—which is to say that what Paul is talking about here are “*doubtful THINGS*” or “*debatable THINGS*” (Study bibles: NIV, NASV, New & Old Scofield)

... as if certain THINGS are *doubtful* or ‘debatable’!

... which is often taken to mean that there are certain THINGS in the Bible that are doubtful or unclear ...

... or the idea that there are just some things that you can do that are not clearly spelled out in the Bible—and are ‘gray areas’ in the Bible! ... as if you are going to run up to a situation where You are doing one thing, but I'm doing another thing—and the Bible isn't really clear on the matter, so when that's the case, we shouldn't get in a debate or argument over it ... so, let's just “celebrate our differences!”

- We're NOT talking about *doubtful THINGS* at all!

- What we ARE talking about is clearly spelled out in the very verse itself—which are *disputations* ...

... the word *doubtful* is describing *disputations* that are apt to arise between the *weak* ones and the *strong* ones in the loc. assembly!

... and it's NOT that we're talking about *disputations* that can arise between saints over *doubtful things*! (totally wrong!)

- So if we're not dealing with *doubtful things*—then where does the *doubt* lie???. ... (in the *disputations*—right?) ... well, do **things** dispute each other? (no—right?) ... so what (or who) *disputes*? (**people** do—right?) ... (a person *disputes* with another person—right?)

... and is there a person mentioned in the immediate context?

... yes there is: *Him that is weak in the faith—the weaker brother!*

- So it's the *weaker* brother who is caused to *doubt* because of the *disputing* with a *stronger* brother! ... it's NOT talking about *doubtful things*—it's talking about a *doubtful person* (the *weaker* brother) - it's talking about a *stronger* brother being the cause of a *weaker* brother to *doubt* what he believes! (that's the issue!)

- Well, what's wrong with that? Isn't that what's supposed to happen? ... If the *weaker* brother is ever going to change his mind about what he is believing and doing that isn't in accordance with sound Pauline doctrine, won't the *weaker* brother have to come to the point where he *doubts* or questions what he is believing and doing?

... ye he will! ... but that's NOT the point/issue!

- The issue isn't that the *weaker* brother NEVER *doubts* what he believes—the issue is that **YOU are the one who is causing him to doubt, and NOT the Spirit of God by means of the word of God!!!**

- That is IMPROPERLY HANDLING the *weaker* brother!!!

... and that can RUIN him!

- And that's why the phrase, "*but not to doubtful disputations*" covers EVERY case / situation / circumstance that could **ever** occur when the *strong* ones in the *faith* do not handle the ones who are *weak in the faith properly!*

... and that's why this verse Sets the Stage for everything else in Rom. 14:2-15:7!

- (:1) summarizes the whole section of 14:2-15:7—and (:1) acts in such a way that it might not make all that much sense to you at first—it may be fuzzy at first—but (:2—15:7) is designed so that by the time you get to the end of 15:7, you should understand & appreciate the reality of (:1) exactly as your Father does ...

... and by the time you get to 15:7, (:1) ought to make perfect sense—and you ought to say that the only consistent thing to do as a "son" is to receive him, *but not to doubtful disputations*—that is, as a "son" you ought to admit him into full edificational fellowship and deal with him as another "son"-in-training (and member of your body)!

- Truth is—this should be one of your *sayings!*

- Really, there's no big mystery surrounding the actual words (*doubtful disputations*) - but let's just look at them in detail —

- *doubtful* = full of doubt—the word *doubt* comes from the F., L., It., Armoric (Gauls) composed of *duo* (two) + *bito* (to go), hence, “to go two ways” —

- the sense/meaning of *doubt* in this case = to question; to be uncertain; to hesitate to believe; to become unsettled in your mind; questioning what is true—the subjective state of uncertainty as to the truth or reality of anything—especially as to the uncertainty as to the truth of Christianity or some other religious belief or doctrine.

- and of course, the English suffix *full* = one who is full of; or marked by, or **of the nature of** ... *doubt*.

- Again—this is NOT talking about *doubtful things*, but a *doubtful person* (the *weaker* brother)!

- This is describing one who is *weak in the faith* being caused to be **full of doubt** because of the *disputations* he became engaged in with one who is *strong* in the faith!

- *disputations* = the action of disputing or debating; (really, *disputing* is more forceful than debating; = a controversial argument; verbal contention (implies controversy or contrary doctrine) .

- From *dispute* = L. & Eng. prefix *dis* (away) + L. *puto* (to throw, cast, strike, or **drive**) - hence, **to drive away**—the idea in *dispute* is to ultimately drive away something (such as certain beliefs) or drive away someone!

- Remember—this can be used in a **godly** sense, and in an **ungodly** sense—it's **context sensitive!**

- *disputation* is so strong of a word that it often signifies a formal, sustained attack—and signifies an attack that can end up in a FIGHT or “**STRIFE**”!

But the underlying, radical-root issue in the word *dispute* is: TO TAKE OPPOSING SIDES—OPPOSITION! (which is **not** what you are to **ever** be to the *weaker* brother—because that's what the Adversary is!!!

- And what can end up happening is that—by the *stronger* brother *disputing* with the *weaker* brother ... and by that *stronger* brother being the **producer** of the *doubt* in the *weaker* brother (rather than the word of God) - you can easily end up in a situation where the *stronger* brother is actually **opposing** the *weaker* brother ...

... and that **opposition** can end up in **strife** existing in the assembly ...

... **strife**, being one of the *Works of Darkness* that the Adversary utilizes under the category of The Pride of Life—in order to destroy the Divine Institution ‘Pillar’ of the local church—and replace it with a church and a religion of his own!

- And the reason why this is such an extremely hateful & abhorrent thing in God’s sight is because it is a direct attack upon the **AUTHORITY of God’s word!**

- Put simply—if you are not properly educated and *instructed* as a “son” in being able to make godly *equitable* decisions—you can easily end up **doing the work of the adversary, himself! ... (and the ‘kicker’ is), you won’t even know you’re doing it ... in fact, you will think you’re doing ‘God’s work’!!!**

- **PRINCIPLE** (of this *saying*): You are **never**, under any circumstances, to be the **producer** of *doubt* in what a *weaker* brother believes!

- If you do—you are usurping the Authority of God Himself! (and *you* become the *wb*’s authority!)

- The producer of ‘repentance’ (changing the mind) of the *weaker* brother (and all that entails, viz., questioning, doubting, challenging corrupt thinking, jettisoning corrupt thinking, and replacing corrupt thinking with sound doctrine, and many more details that make up all the machinations that go on in the human heart) - the **producer** of all that is **God the Holy Spirit by means of the written word of God!** (i.e., *the leading of the Spirit!*)

- A *strong one in the faith*—a properly educated “son” - a son with *the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity*—and a son with godly love & charity would NEVER do that—would NEVER usurp the authority of God and God’s written word!

- This is why our Father, (when He gives us our *instruction of equity*), He does so by using the issue of the *weaker* brother — because of all areas where decisions of *equity* are demanded, NONE are so complex, NONE are so delicate, and NONE have more at stake than this issue of how to properly handle the *weaker* brother!

- And this, again, puts on display the great power of godly love & charity—that powerful ‘Divine Guidance System’!

- A *strong* one who already knows a lot about how godly sonship edification works—and who has the effectual working of godly love & charity within his ‘inner man’ — is going to value & esteem the *weaker* brother as one who God the Father is treating as a “son” **just like He is treating you!**

- And there are some things that God will have the apostle Paul say to us in this passage that are **inconsistent** with godly love & charity and our sonship status — and there are going to be some things that God will say that are **consistent** with godly love & charity and our sonship status in our handling of the *weaker* brother.

- But when *doubtful disputations* arise—it’s due to a *strong one in the faith* trying to get the *weak one in the faith* to stop doing a certain thing, or to stop being involved in a certain thing, or to stop thinking a certain way when that *weaker* brother **doesn’t have any doctrinal capacity yet to make those kind of discernments**, and come to that kind of judgment as a *strong one in the faith* is able to do.

- You have a frame of reference from sound doctrine learned that gives you that insight and perception and advantage and capacity to discern and *prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* in these matters—but the *weak one in the faith* doesn’t have that capacity yet.

- It’s not that what you are telling him is necessarily wrong—it’s just that the *weak one* **hasn’t learned it yet.**

... which brings up a **very important/critical point**:
You MUST bear in mind that everything that's being said here has the EDIFICATION PROCESS in view!!!

- And by definition (*Him that is **weak IN the faith***)
the weaker brother is coming to the local assembly for the express purpose of getting his godly edification!

- And when *doubtful disputations* arise between the *strong* one and the *weak* one *in the faith*—it's like you're trying to come along and **speed up the edification process for him**—and bring him into your understanding and appreciation for edification matters ...

... but instead of speeding up his edification process, the entire edification process gets by-passed!

- Truth is—God has designed it so every member of the church, the body of Christ is SUPPOSED to go through the edification process!

- And the way in which God says what He does in (:1 *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, **but not to doubtful disputations.***) - that final phrase is designed to be a **warning** to the *strong* ones in the assembly; as well as a firm **reminder** to the *strong* ones ...

... a **reminder** as to just how it was that the edification process took place within their 'inner man' to bring them to this place of being the *strong* ones that they are ...

... a **warning** to NOT do anything to the *weaker* brother in any manner that would be inconsistent with the edification process taking place in that *weaker* brother as it did in them!

- And if a *strong* one *in the faith* produces *doubtful disputations* in his dealings with the *weaker* brother—(regardless of the details), the general / basic issue is that the *stronger* one is NOT letting the divine design for godly edification to take place with the *weaker* brother!

- note that, the intentions of the *strong* one may be good & sincere—but what he's doing is out of line with godly sonship edification as well as godly love & charity!

- It's as if you're trying to bring him up to speed with YOU; but not allowing the divine design for godly edification to take place GOD'S WAY!

... and when you do that, IT CAUSES BIG PROBLEMS!

... and it goes to prove the fact that YOU don't have godly love & charity operating in you the way it should be at this point (with all of those 5 core features)!

... it's inconsistent with godly love & charity because **you are NOT valuing and esteeming that edification process the way your Father does ...**

... and it's inconsistent with your sonship status and the weaker brother's sonship status **because you are NOT allowing the edification process to be the means by which that weaker brother makes his decisions!**

- And everything our Father is going to say from now on to the end of 15:7 is going to be in view of THAT! (i.e., honoring and valuing and esteeming the divine design for the edification process!)

- THAT SETS THE CONTEXTUAL STAGE FOR THE ENTIRE BODY OF INFORMATION!

- From now on—everything our Father tells us (and instructs us in *equity*-wise); everything He exhorts us to think, live, and labor in, is going to be about what is consistent with that, and what is NOT consistent with that.

- Everything our Father tells us in 14:2-15:7 is going to be in accordance with how He (God Himself) has designed His edification process to take place in ALL His saints! (sons)

... it took place with you in order to get you to the position of being *strong in the faith*—and now He's telling you to let that same process take place with the weak one—and let **IT** (not you) bring him to the point of *strength in the faith* with you!

- And there is ENORMOUS DANGER (and misconduct upon the *strong* ones) who try to by-pass and NOT allow that normal edification process and sonship responsibility to take place with that *weak* one—and really, be enjoyed by that *weak* one *in the faith*.

- The **result** of by-passing the divine design for the edification process **IS** *doubtful disputations* between the members of the body!

- It's far more than merely 'an unfortunate situation' ...

*15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. **DESTROY NOT HIM with thy meat, for whom Christ died.***

*20 For meat **DESTROY NOT** the work of God.*

- The *weaker* brother can be **destroyed** and **ruined**—(and that's talking about his godly sonship edification) - because the *weaker* brother ends up NOT functioning as a "son" by following YOUR example, rather than making a decision based upon sound doctrine (no matter how little it is) that he has learned!

- And, again, you become his Tutor and Governor—and he looks at you as his Tutor and Governor!

... and nothing is more incompatible with godly sonship edification than that!

- QUESTIONS? (Is the 'stage set' [the **contextual** stage] for getting the rest of 14:2-15:7?)

- Once the Stage-Setting Statement of (:1) has done its job to set the particular and specific CONTEXT for all that's going to be said in the remainder of chapter 14 and the first 7 verses of chapter 15—we're now ready to move on to the details of how we are to deal with the *weaker* brother as properly educated "sons" - and as a properly educated "son", how we are to deal with a *weaker* brother with godly EQUITY!

- And what we need to be always aware of as we go through these details is that the further details we are given are the details of how we are to *receive Him that is weak in the faith, but not to doubtful disputations*.

- Again, you have to bear in mind that everything that is going to be said in the next 29 verses—all those details—goes to making (:1) a living fully-proven reality and **fully operational means** by which you will now and forevermore handle the *weaker* brother situation!

- (that's why those English "Words of Logic" are what they are in the 29 remaining verses—and that's why (:2) starts off with the word "*For ...*" - which begins setting forth the explanation and amplification of all of the details of (:1)!

Romans 14:2

For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

- "*For*" sets forth the beginning of the explanation and amplification of the Stage-Setting Statement of (:1)

- This is all dealing with the Godly Thinking—and therefore since the entire issue of godly edification is to provide for "godliness" to take place in you as God's son—and since the curriculum for Sonship Education deals with the issue of *transforming you by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* — what is now going to be set forth are things that will **challenge** and **provoke** some old, ungodly thinking; **uproot** that old, ungodly thinking; and **replace** it with your Father's own thinking as to how to deal with the *weaker* brother situation.

- And when you look at (:2) grammatically—(which is a big help) - not only does that first word "*For*" stand out as one of those English "Words of Logic" - but there is another issue of English grammar that catches your attention ... (what is it?)

A: You have 1 complete sentence or thought, but it is made up of 2 major clauses—(separated by that colon [:]).

- And that colon tells you something—since there is only 1 issue following it (and not an enumeration of several things), this colon is functioning as that 2nd most powerful **pause** in the English language. It's telling you to pause long enough to get the **full impact** of what's being said before moving on.

- And what our Father is now going to do—(in order to get His godly thinking produced in us) — is to begin with an Illustration— (the 1st of 2 Illustrations)—that is designed to provoke and bring to the surface any ungodly thinking within us concerning the *weaker* brother.

- In other words—God is going to give us an **Illustration** that will immediately produce within your thinking a **dilemma!**

- An “illustration” = lighting up; illuminating—and we’re not talking about physically lighting up a physical area—rather, we’re talking about lighting up your mind (your **human spirit**)!

- A “dilemma” = a situation that requires a choice between options—and it’s only a dilemma because at first, (based upon faulty, ungodly thinking), you perceive that the dilemma (or the problem) seems to defy a satisfactory solution.

- And that’s what’s going on here—

- The Illustration is designed to go right after your faulty, ungodly thinking—and with that faulty, ungodly thinking this illustration presents a dilemma or a problem that at first, you can’t resolve without harming one or the other person mentioned in the illustration!

- But then—after presenting the dilemma, (:3 & :4) will provide you with the godly thinking and the **godly solution** to the dilemma given in the illustration.

- And the solution is the corrective doctrine and the *instruction in righteousness!*

- And that same pattern is going to be followed in the 2nd Illustration in (:5ff).

- And 2 Illustrations are sufficient to cover the entire issue of how you are to properly handle any and all *weaker* brother situations with godly Equity!

- So since a “dilemma” by nature demands a choice between options — there are 2 options presented in (:2) - hence, the 2 clauses!

- Let’s look at the 1st option —

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things:

- Now—before getting to the finer details—when you read this—and when you think about it creating a problem or dilemma between the *strong* and the *weak in the faith*—the question is, WHY does this pose a problem?

- We obviously know that the “*one*” being mentioned in this 1st clause is the *strong* one in the faith (the *stronger* brother) ... because in the same verse and in the very next clause we’re told “*another who is weak, eateth herbs*”.

- So we are supposed to perceive that the 1st clause is setting forth what the *strong* one in the faith *believes* ...

... and there is NOTHING WRONG in what he is believing and NOTHING WRONG with what he is doing based upon his belief!!!

... in fact, you are going to have to realize that, given the Biblical, godly definition/identity of the *weaker* brother (from :1) - there is NOTHING WRONG in what the *weaker* brother is thinking at the moment or with what he is doing based upon what he believes and thinks!

- (it’s not a Right/Wrong issue—it’s an **edification** issue!)

- And that’s the real core issue when you are dealing with EQUITY—the issue isn’t Wrong vs. Right—the issue is Right vs. Right (so to speak—that’s not the best way to say it or to think about it) ... but for now you have to have it dawn upon you that a situation can arise where problems can occur in your dealings with other members of the body of Christ that demand far more than Justice-type thinking—and demand more than even Judgment-type thinking—**but demand Equitable-type thinking!**

- The DILEMMA of (:2) [of the 1st Illustration] is NOT that there are some in the local church that believe they can *eat all things*, but others in the local church that believe they should only *eat herbs!!!*

- The DILEMMA is that edificationally STRONG ones in the faith believe that they may eat all things [such as meat], but one who is edificationally WEAK in the faith believes he should not eat *all things* [like meat], but only *eats herbs!*

- In other words—the ‘dilemma’ set up by this 1st Illustration is NOT about what one eats vs. what another eats—the ‘dilemma’ is about what one who is edificationally STRONG believes vs. what one who is edificationally WEAK believes! ... and that issue of the STRONG vs. the WEAK makes all the difference!!!

- Now—before getting too far into the finer details—let’s go back to our question: Why does a *stronger* brother who *believes that he may eat all things* pose a potential problem in his dealings with a *weaker* brother?

- In other words—what does that 1st clause of (:2) imply?

- What does “*For one believeth that he may eat all things:*” imply? ... what does it imply that the *stronger* brother knows, and *believes*, and is operating upon?

A: It implies that he understands & appreciates and believes and is operating upon his basic establishment in the doctrine of the Dispensation of Gentile Grace now in effect (from Romans 9, 10, and 11)!

- and it further implies that he is operating upon the doctrine of godly Judgment contained especially in Rom. 13:11-14—the Dispensational Timing of this Disp. of Grace)!

- whether it comes from the pagan, heathen Gentile religions—or from the Mosaic Law — he’s been properly educated and edified as to WHAT TIME IT IS!

- 2 For one [the **strong** one in the faith] **believeth** that he may eat all things:

- “**believeth**” = to have full confidence in; to be fully persuaded; to fully trust

- *Belief* is a product of **faith**—and **faith** is a product of **hearing** (*Rom. 10:17 So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*)

- This person—this **strong one in the faith** has responded positively and properly to some Pauline doctrine that has been written to us and for us and about us in this Disp. of Grace!

- The godly edification process has effectually worked within his ‘inner man’ so that this *stronger* brother recognizes what is going on in God’s program with Israel that is different and distinct from what God is doing NOW according to the *mystery* (the *dispensation of the grace of God*).

- And based upon that *belief*—the *stronger* brother knows that the *members* of this *one body in Christ* don’t have any dietary commands to operate upon in this Disp. of Grace.

- The *strong* brother knows that we are not, for example, operating today upon Lev. 11

- By now you should be getting a better understanding for just how easy it is to get this passage screwed up—and how easy this passage can be mishandled & abused.

- But more importantly, you should be getting a far better understanding and appreciation for the gravity, the weight, the hugely important issue this is to both your Father and to you as His “son/daughter”!

... by now you should begin to get the feeling that this issue is not only critically important to the entire sonship edification process—but you should also begin to ‘**feel**’ that this thing is **really complex**! ... it demands and requires a lot! ... and it does!

... and you should also be getting the idea that this is going to be very vulnerable to the attack of the Adversary! ... and it is!

- and it's the issue of what God is going to do with us as a local church in the edification process—and for His unique plan, purpose, and design for the body of Christ that makes us realize what and where and why this is so vulnerable to the attack of the adversary ...

... namely, that issue of *fellowship*, *communion*, and *concord* ...

- (see Colossians 2:1-23)

- (again) *2a For one believeth that he may eat all things:*

- This is 'Part 1' of the Illustration-Dilemma—(or the 'Party of the First Part) = the *stronger* brother; the *strong one in the faith*.

- And the 1st Illustration-Dilemma that is designed to provoke the faulty, ungodly and **inequitable** Thinking that resides in your human spirit (mind) - your Heavenly Father utilizes the issue of Sonship, Disp. of Grace **Liberty** as a properly edified and properly educated Level I "son" who has reached the point of attainment of being a *strong one in the faith* - over against a *weaker* edified and *weaker* educated "son" who believes that what he eats is restricted by dietary laws.

- And according to this 1st Clause—(or the Party of the First Part) - the *stronger* brother *believes that he may eat all things* — now he may be a member of the body of Christ that is a saved/justified Jew (by nature); or he may be a saved/justified Gentile (by nature) ...

... since my understanding is that the majority of the ones that make up the local assembly (or assemblies) in Rome were justified Jews (by nature) - it seems very understandable that God is going to lean heavy towards terminology that would speak to the issues of dietary laws under the Law of Moses (ex. Lev. 11) ...

... but even the Gentile religious systems had dietary regulations regarding foods offered to idols—therefore this Illustration-Dilemma ingeniously deals with both Jews and Gentiles!

- Now—for ‘Part 2’ of the Illustration-Dilemma (or the ‘Party of the Second Part’) = the *weaker* brother; the *one that is weak in the faith* ...

- This, now, is going to set up a situation that demands a decision to be made between 2 Options—that at first, seems to have NO satisfactory solution—no solution that wouldn’t result in one or the other being harmed

2b ... another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

- *Weaker* brother:
 - 1) Saved/justified;
 - 2) Honest desire for godly edification along with other members of the local assembly;
 - 3) Honest lack of Pauline doctrine.
- he may have become a recent member of the body of Christ;
- or he may have been saved for some time, but due to teaching that either wrongly divided the word of Truth, or teaching that mishandled the Scripture—(or both);
- by definition, the *weaker* brother has an **honest** lack of Pauline doctrine.
 - Therefore he honestly does not understand and appreciate properly this brand new Disp. of Grace that he is living in, and the change of program that has taken place.
 - He has an edificational need to be taught that! He needs to learn that he is, indeed, *weak in the faith*—compared to the *strong* brother who does understand and appreciate those things!
 - And therefore, the *weaker* brother says, “Based upon what I’ve been taught from God’s word—and based upon what I **believe** from God’s word—I should not eat meat, rather, I should eat *herbs*.”

- Now, again, because of the precise wording here—my understanding is that you have both Jewish and Pagan Gentile issues in view.

- (note: it doesn’t say he’s abstaining from certain meats ...
... rather, he’s abstaining from eating meats altogether!)

- In other words—the precise nature of this dilemma is that the *weaker* brother isn't just abstaining from certain meats (such as what is “kosher” = conforming to the dietary laws of Judaism) — that is, he's not saying he's going to eat beef, but not pork — he's saying he's not going to eat any meat at all.
- “*another, who is weak, eateth herbs*” - i.e., he eats only vegetables (albeit, an *herb* and a vegetable isn't always exactly the same thing ... but you can have fun with that on your own).
- Why? why does the *weaker* brother (in this situation) abstain totally from eating meat, and only eats *herbs*?
 - One reason may be that he's been taught some things out of the book of Genesis where Adam and Eve originally didn't eat any meat at all, but rather ate only *herbs* and fruit — (see Gen. 1:29-30) - [note: Interesting, God uses the word “*meat*” - why? — because if you eat any kind of meat at all, you have to SHED BLOOD to do it!]
 - But more likely, the *weaker* brother abstains from eating any meat at all (and only *herbs*) because of some things he's been taught from the Law of Moses.
 - The Pagan Gentile world had so affected Rome that by this time the vast supply of meat had become mixed up together with certain meats that had been offered to idols in their pagan religions and pagan religious cults!
 - And the Law has a lot to say about that issue!
 - Based upon being brought under the Law in what he's been taught—(as most Christians are even to this day)—when this *weaker* brother would eat at home, or go to a friend's house to eat, or eat at the local market (ancient McDonalds)—he could never be certain if the meat he was offered wasn't at some time had been meat that was offered to the Pagan Roman Gentile idols!
 - And you can compound that issue with the fact that, by the *weaker* brother operating upon the Law—in this Pagan Roman Gentile world, he can't tell whether the meat he is eating is from a “*clean*” or an “*unclean*” animal! (or whether its blood had properly been dealt with)!

... and even if it had been properly prepared; and even if it was from an animal that was considered “*clean*” under the Law—even if a *clean* animal was one that was offered to an idol, then it became *unclean*!

- So, just to be on the “safe side” - this *weaker* brother refuses to eat any meat at all.

- And that’s probably because he’s been taught some things that are sitting back in the Law that has to do with violating the Law’s commandments **even in ignorance!**

- **Lev. 4:1-3; 5:14-16** (Moses deals with it again over in Numbers 15—and you have a similar thing going on in Daniel 1)

- All that is to once again state the obvious—in this Illustrative Dilemma, the *weaker* brother doesn’t eat *meat*, but only eats *herbs*.

- The **unobvious** (and most importantly, the **context**) makes it so that you ‘see with the eyes of your understanding’ - that is you perceive properly that this is NOT an issue of Right vs. Wrong ... the *weaker* brother isn’t being disobedient, or stubborn, or rebellious, or unruly, or anything along those lines ...

... as a justified/saved member of the body of Christ who is desiring to be ‘edified unto godliness’ in the local assembly; **it is simply a matter of Edificational Estate Differences—it is simply the issue of having in the same “Classroom” Stronger ones (Edification-wise) and Weaker ones (Edification-wise)!**

- It’s just like what went one 100 or more years ago when we had the old One-Room Schoolhouse!

- The one who falls under the Biblical definition of a *weaker* brother is simply **honestly ignorant of the doctrine written to, for, and about us in this Disp. of Grace as found in Romans-Philemon.**

- The simple matter is, the *weaker* brother just hasn’t learned better, yet.

- Based upon this Illustrative Dilemma—the *weaker* brother is functioning under the Bible (under Scripture), but under the Law Contract with Israel. (the Bible mishandled)

- Therefore it's no surprise that he is honestly ignorant of the change in program God has made when He saved & raised up the apostle Paul—and turned from His program that deals with the repossessing the Earth from the adversary and his cohorts—but is instead now operating upon His “*mystery*” program (or dispensation) that deals with repossessing the Heavenly Places from the adversary and his cohorts!

- And there can be a lot of problems when you get 2 people in the same “Classroom” - and one of them is operating upon God's program with Israel to repossess the Earth; and the other is operating upon God's program to repossess the Heavenly Places with a brand new entity that had been kept *secret* until Paul, called, the “one new man”, the “new creature of the church, the body of Christ.”

- and really, the only way that dilemma is going to be able to be handled correctly & properly—and make it so that there IS a real and godly solution whereby no one is harmed in the process is: **GODLY LOVE & CHARITY!** (but we'll get to that later)

- For now—you need to be **very aware** of the Biblical Definition of what a *weaker* brother is—and then to understand and appreciate that on the basis of that, this circumstance of (:2) not only CAN exist, but in all likelihood WILL exist in the local assembly where godly sonship edification is going on. (if not the exact circumstance, one very similar to it)!

- It might be good to remind ourselves of something here concerning a *weaker* brother in this situation—that is, one who is operating under the Law—and that is, that one of the primary differences between a saved individual operating under the Law and one who is operating *under Grace* and the edification process for a saint in this dispensation of grace—is the issue of being under the Law, God deals with you by means of *tutors and governors* as a CHILD in childhood; but under Grace, God deals with you as a Father to an ADULT in adulthood!

- So why bring that up?

- Because there are things that go on in the mind and in the spirit and in the heart of an individual who is a “child” and who is being treated as a “child” that are far different than what goes on in the mind, and in the spirit, and in the heart of an “adult” and one who is being treated as an “adult”!

- And those things are going to factor in to the nature of the inconsistencies that God will have Paul set forth in (:3) when He exhorts us in a particular way.

- An example of that is how you, as a *strong one in the faith*, by now are supposed to have a firm understanding & appreciation for:

- 1) the edification process;
- 2) for the meaning & significance of being adopted, adult sons/daughters;
- 3) the differences between being dealt with as adult sons rather than children;
- 4) and that *under grace*, you are not held in **bondage** under the *rudiments* of the Law contract.

- and to that end—

- see Rom. 8:14-15 (:15)

- “***the spirit of bondage***” = the law is a multi-faceted, multi-functional entity—but it has a component to it that produces **the bondage of childhood**—and the particular portion of it that does that (or the essence of it that does that) is described as ***the spirit of bondage***.

- And even though the actual words, “*tutors and governors*” aren’t in (:15), they **are** there in that expression, “*spirit of bondage*” — because it’s the job of the *tutors and governors* to take that *spirit of bondage* and **apply it** to the child!

- So that “*spirit of bondage*” is the issue of being under the Law and childhood training administered by *tutors and governors* rather than being *under grace* and adulthood sonship training administered by the Father!

- (actually, you first learned about the *spirit of bondage* back in Romans 6:14-7:25!)

- And the reason why I bring this up is to try to get some thing going in you mind (human spirit) as to the nature of the reaction of a *weaker* brother who looks at your status as an adult son—and reacts to it in the way described in (:3) ...

... what is it, specifically, that he's reacting to?

... **see 2 Cor. 3** (whole chapter if time permits), if not (:17) ... **LIBERTY** (sonship liberty)!

Mini-Review:

- The Stage-Setting Statement for *receiving the instruction of equity* and for our dealings with the *weaker* brother:

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.

- The core issue of Rom. 14:1-15:7 has 2 parts:

- 1) to make godly *equitable* decisions in our dealings with other saints/sons so as to be helpful in the success of their godly edification;
- 2) at the same time, provide for the continuing edification of the local assembly in peaceful communion & fellowship.

- 1st Illustration of the Dilemma—presents a situation that has 2 options, but seems no satisfactory solution is possible without harming one or the other:

2 For one believeth that he may eat all things (that's the stronger brother): another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

- Now, for the godly, Fatherly Exhortation—which comes in the form of a **warning!**

3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.

- Now—before going into the details of (:3) - I want to pause for a moment and talk about a “parallel doctrine” that is getting accomplished as we go through this portion of our curriculum for Sonship Education.

- and when I say, “parallel doctrine”, I mean that it's just like what

took place when we went through our *instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment* in Romans 12:3-13:14.

- Because, while the godly sonship decision-making skills of *wisdom, justice, and judgment* were obviously being taught to us—at the exact same time, our Father was also instilling and installing within us the “parallel” doctrinal issue of Godly Love & Charity, as well as Godly Hatred, Abhorrence and Disdain. (actually, there’s always **many parallel doctrines being taught to us all the time**)

- This portion of our curriculum that gives us the *instruction of equity* in Rom. 14:1-15:7 also has a “parallel” doctrinal issue that our Father is instilling & installing within our hearts. (and, by the way, we’re going to need 2 more features of Godly Love & Charity in order to fully accomplish that!) [that is, to fully accomplish our *instruction of equity* AND this other “parallel” doctrinal/edification issue].

- And this “parallel” doctrine that is now going to get sufficiently developed within your ‘inner man’ - (sufficient for accomplishing Level I Sonship Edification) - is the issue of **FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION**.

- and (:3) begins getting the “eyes of our understanding” open to it, and seeing it! ... because (:3) is going to tell you in no uncertain terms how the *stronger* brother and the *weaker* brother are going to “**get along**” [which is an awful expression, yucky expression, and an expression that is full of the wisdom and ungodly thinking of lost men in this present, evil world] ...

... better to use God’s terminology: *fellowship and communion!* (not that those words haven’t also been pilfered by this lost world and are used in a very ungodly way, because they have) ... but we’re going to deal with those words as God Himself does!

- And I know that (at the outset), this may not seem to be a very exciting or enthralling doctrinal issue—but the truth is, it will end up as one of the most powerful and meaningful and magnificent doctrines that you’ll ever learn!

- in a very godly way, you’re being ‘set up’ for something!

- (Review charts #57—60)
- The reason I want you to think about this is that you need to recognize and acknowledge a very basic and very fundamental and practical issue—and that is that when you are dealing with your *walk*, your *fellowship*, your *communion*—all of that is the basic issue of taking your Position in Christ and putting it into Practice.
- Basically and simply put—*fellowship* and *communion* is putting your Position in Christ into Practice **in your assembly life**.
- And this is nothing new—because for a long time now (in the edification process) we have been putting our Position in Christ into Practice in life in general (Rom. 12:3-13:14).
- And you have many areas of “life” - family “life”; parental “life”; home “life” (including children); business “life”; recreational “life”; private “life”; public “life”; dating “life”; marriage “life”; even sex “life” — but now the focus of attention is upon your assembly “life” (or local church “life”).
- And godly Sonship Edification is designed to take your Position in Christ and put it into Practice in EVERY category of “life” you live!
- But for now—the issue before us is the issue of taking your Position in Christ and putting it into Practice in you **assembly “life.”**
 - And when you are doing that—you are having real, godly *communion* and *fellowship*!
- And when it comes to your individual godly edification—(as you well know), the big issue is to *conform you to the image of God’s Son*, (the Lord Jesus Christ) [Rom. 8:29] — in other words, God’s intention in the edification process is to produce a particular IMAGE in you, individually.
 - And the same thing is true for us collectively as a local assembly—because by means of the edification process, God intends to produce a particular IMAGE in us as a local assembly [Eph. 3:10].
 - And central to that issue (the core of that issue) is the issue of the *fellowship* and *communion* of the saints/sons within local assemblies—and ultimately with the entire body of Christ all over the world.

- And when properly edified sons take their Position in Christ and put it into Practice in the local assembly (and as a local assembly), that is **godly communion** and that is **godly fellowship!**

- And the thing that makes it **godly communion & fellowship** is not only putting your Position in Christ into Practice in the local assembly and as a local assembly—but the thing that makes it most godly of all is that it is the communion and *fellowship of the mystery (Eph. 3:9)*—it’s the **mystery of godliness** at work! (1 Tim. 3:16)

- The issue is to get the Positional Elements that God has made you to be “in Christ” put into Practice!

- And where your “assembly life” is concerned—that “Practice” is supposed to be thought about and accomplished in **godly fellowship & communion!** (among other things)

- When you’re dealing with your “assembly life” (or “church life”) - the Elements of the Positional become Practiced (or Practical) **in the communion and fellowship of those Positional Elements in the local assembly!**

- And God had produced a method (a godly methodology) for getting all that accomplished—and He has done so **by grace, through faith!**

- BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH He has:

... baptized (fully identified) you into Christ—(by means of God the Holy Spirit);

... He has made you to be all that you are “in Christ” - and that has to be understood and appreciated for not only the Position it is “in Christ” - but it also has to be understood & appreciated **dispensationally!**

- but how do we take our Position “in Christ” and put it into Practice in keeping with “*by grace, through faith*”? (and not get into ‘legalism’/energy of our flesh)

... God has given us His **completed word**, plus He has made us beneficiaries of the **New Testament!** (2 Cor. 3:6)

- Q: How do we take something that is invisible and intangible (incapable of being perceived by the senses), and make it Practical (or put it into Practice), or make it **visible** and comprehensible or understandable (able to be seen and heard)? [even felt]? ... and truth is, even smelled and tasted?

- A: With the **word of God** and with our **bodies!** — this is how we can gain access to and enjoy the *fellowship* and *communion* of all of the Positional Elements we have “in Christ” in our assembly life! (and do so, *by grace, through faith*)

- **The word of God** is the tangible and perfect image of Christ—the Lord Jesus Christ is present there via the work of the Holy Spirit—this is where the real transforming power is.

This is where Christ is to be found (see John 6:47-51; 53-63).

And of special importance to us—this is where the New Testament is found—and as beneficiaries of that NT, we possess the **spiritual elements** we need to take what is contained in the word of God and move it from an invisible, intangible Position, and put it into visible, comprehensible Practice!

- **Our bodies** are the imperfect image of Christ—they are ‘works-in-progress’ (so to speak). Our body contains our soul and our spirit—and the entire thing (body, soul, and spirit) has to be *transformed* by the effectual working of the word of God—and over time, *transformed* and *conformed into the image of Christ*.

- and our transforming occurs from the inside, out! (from our human spirit, to our soul, to our body) ...
... or as Paul puts it [see 2 Tim. 3:16-17, *thoroughly furnished unto all good works*].

- And this *transforming* and *conforming* process involves 2 major components:

- Our **inner man**—our human spirit and our soul is what the “inside” parts are—and our ‘inner man’ gets transformed by the *leading of the Spirit* as we read, study, and understand God’s word ... and which Rom. 8:1-9 deals with [see/read] ...

- And our **body** (our ‘outer man’) - which involves the physical use of our body—and with it we can take all that we have been made to be “in Christ” Positionally & invisibly and put it into Practice in a visible, tangible way ... in all our various categories of “life”! — and especially important to us in Rom. 14, in our ‘assembly life’ - in our *communion and fellowship* with one another!

- (and Rom. 8:10-13 deals with our body being made ‘fit for use’ - that is, properly *furnished* to do *all good works!*) [see/read]

... but it doesn’t end there! ... this issue of being *conformed to the image of Christ* doesn’t end with us, individually being *conformed*, or even with our local assembly (or the world-wide body of Christ) ...

... because, if my understanding is correct—we **can actually bring our very ENVIRONMENT into conformity to the image of Christ as well!** (God can produce through us a godly, god-like, CULTURE (cultural environment) that carries the very ‘image of Christ’ as well!)
[see Gal. 3:10; Eph. 2:19]

[There’s a lot more to the word *house/household* than is commonly thought]

- a “house” is a place of fellowship and communion!

- a “household” is a habitation, a habitat or an **environment!**

(or as Webster’s 1828 puts it: “a manner of living; a **table**”)

- God has so designed for godly sonship edification to work so that **every** “Life-Aspect” is to bear the image of, and to manifest the **image** of Christ, as per your Position “in Christ”! (more specifically, your Dispensational Position “in Christ”!)

- now, not every “Life-Aspect” has been specifically addressed by the Curriculum as of yet—but enough of them have so that you are expected to recognize how corrupt and dishonest and ungodly and inconsistent it is to live “Christ-like” (we’ll say) in certain “Life-Aspects”, but not in others! (i.e., to your own ‘picking and choosing’!)

- And bringing every “Life-Aspect” into being *conformed to the image of Christ* are our “practice-fields” while we are here on this earth to be trained and equipped and qualified to put our Position “in Christ” - (or to say it another way), to put the very Life of Christ into effect and into Practice **in the heavenly places!**

- And to that end—that’s what Paul describes as “*the mystery of godliness*” is all about!

- see again— 1 Timothy 3:14-16

- (:16) - “*godliness*” is not a “*mystery*” ... but there is a *mystery* aspect to *godliness*—an aspect of *godliness* that is according to the *revelation of the mystery!*

- it’s the *godliness* that gets manifested in us as “sons” of God and members of the one new man of the church, the body of Christ in this Disp. of Grace!

- and (:16) is a summary of that *godliness according to the revelation of the mystery*—and the ‘list’ is a list of “Life-Aspects” (so to speak) that are the core relevant “Life-Aspects” that Paul has just gone over with Timothy from the beginning of the letter—(but especially from Ch. 2) on. [and really, from all the way back to Romans!]

- actually, every “Life-Aspect” can fall under these 6 categories! - theses are the “Life-Aspects” of every “son” from God’s perspective!

- This is a summary of Dispensation-of-Grace-Godliness when a “son” has the effectual working of the Sonship Curriculum within his ‘inner man’, and **behaves consistent with that** in his ‘outer man’!

- And the means by which that’s done—or the godly methodology for that—the godly mechanics for that to take place was first taught to you back in Rom. 6:1-8:13! (Sanctification has to address both your MIND and your BODY)!

- Therefore the issue of *God was manifest in the flesh* is NOT talking about Luke 2! when God the Son enfleshed Himself into the line of the seed of David!

- Rather, my understanding is, this is talking about YOU as God's adopted "son"

- *godliness* isn't just about what's going on in your head or your spirit or your soul or your heart — it's MORE than that — it's about God's life being MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH!

- When Jesus Christ was born into this world back in the gospel accounts—in connection with that He was called the "*only begotten*" (*John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9*) — and He was called the "*Word*" (*John 1:1, 14*).

- The Lord Jesus Christ WAS and IS God in the flesh—He WAS and IS the Word made flesh ...
... **but we are neither!**

- However, the Lord Jesus Christ is also something else—especially in connection with this present Disp. of Grace — He is the ***firstborn*** among many brethren (*Rom. 8:29*)!

- And not only that, but by having the complete word of God in our possession—and by means of being beneficiaries of the New Testament ministry of the Holy Spirit today in this Disp. of Grace—we have the ability to **manifest** the divine "words of God" in the flesh!

- **And that's what our Sonship Liberty is for!!!** (i.e., to manifest the divine "words of God" in every Life-Aspect—that is, to bring the very LIFE OF GOD into existence in every area of life!) [His Righteousness; His Holiness; and His Glory!]

- And when all this takes place properly by a properly educated, edified "son" - there is a ***justification*** that takes place ***in the Holy Spirit*** of God — He is 'justified' in our **walk**, in the manifestation of godliness in our Life-Aspects as we put our Position in Christ into Practice! ... And He can be 'justified' ... OR NOT!

- Remember, God is dealing with us today as a real Father to a real son—therefore, in that kind of a relationship, God is ‘justified’ only when that Position we have “in Christ” becomes **manifested**—(seen & heard in our **walking** after the Spirit)!

- this doesn’t mean that God is not “true” if we don’t manifest godliness—because He remains “true” if we do or not (Rom. 3:4-6)

- this issue is true, even in God’s program w/ Isr— with the members of the Remnant who will operate under the New Covenant as “sons” - (Luk. 7:29, 35)

- And it’s this issue of God being made “*manifest in the flesh, and justified in the Spirit*” that is what is **seen of angels!**

- and the ramifications of that are HUGE!

- Romans 14:3

- In this verse—both the *weaker* brother AND the *stronger* brother are going to be addressed by the Father.

- And the reason for that is because of the Illustrative Dilemma the Father just set up in (:2)!

- and at this point you have to think about the CONTEXT this whole issue of the *weaker* brother (and godly *equitable* sonship decision-making) is sitting in, in ALL of 14:1-15:7!

- You’re talking about a **Biblically** defined and **Biblically** qualified *stronger* brother—and you’re talking about a **Biblically** defined and **Biblically** qualified *weaker* brother. (that’s the ONLY situation and the ONLY circumstance that you’re dealing with here!)

- (that knocks out about 99.999% of all other believer-to-believer [or Christian-to-Christian] relationships and dealings) - [they are NOT being dealt with here at all!] ...

... of course, you’re not talking about believer-to-unbeliever dealings at all, either!

- So the context goes something like this:

1) You have a local assembly (local church) that is dedicated to godly edification!

- You've got a Bishop that has been educated as a "son" himself, and he is now functioning as a 'surrogate father' and is helping & supporting and studying and teaching that same sonship edification process from the Sonship Curriculum in the word of God as found in Rom-Phlem—and in that exact order ... **(if you don't have that—you're not talking about Romans 14)!**

- You've got Deacons in that assembly who are dedicated to the overseeing of that sonship edification process—and helping, assisting, and supporting the saints in that assembly for the primary purpose of the success of their godly sonship edification ... **(if you don't have that—you're not talking about Romans 14)**

- And you've got the saints—the individual members of that local assembly who's primary reason for even being there is for the success of their own, individual godly sonship edification (at the very least), and for the success of the godly edification of the assembly as a whole (if so be that they've progressed that far) ... **(if you don't have that—you're not talking about Romans 14)!**

2) You have a local assembly of saints in which the "core" of the assembly has progressed in their sonship edification from Romans ch.1—ch.13.

- In all likelihood there already exists in that local assembly some Edificational Estate Differences—but it could be that those Edificational Estate Differences are very few, or there are none at all.

- But the issue is that there exists a "core" of saints in the local assembly who have come through Romans doctrine up through ch.13 ... **(and if you don't have that—you're not talking about Romans 14)!**

3) Into that local assembly (where a Biblically qualified Bishop is studying & teaching according to the edification process for saints in this Disp. of Grace; and where the Deacons of that assembly are assisting & supporting that edification process; and where the “core” of the assembly has progressed from Romans 1—14) ... into that local assembly comes a believer in Christ who has determined and desired to acquire his godly edification in that local assembly and with the saints of that local assembly ... and this person is *Him that is weak in the faith*—this person *is* the *weaker* brother ... **(and if you don't have that—you're not talking about Romans 14)!**

- So you've got this situation that is very much like a “one room schoolhouse” that contains a mixture of students that are at different stages in their learning.

- Now—in that particular context—the exact situation may arise, (or one similar to it), that is presented in (:2) - *one* (the strong one) *believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.*

- And in this EXACT context—and in this kind of Illustrative Dilemma—the Father addresses His “sons” ... BOTH of them!

- Why both of them? Because they are both there in order to get their godly sonship edification—and if they **both** fail to THINK about each other properly (i.e., exactly as the Father Himself does) - then they will fail to deal with each other properly—and end up destroying the edification process for themselves (individually) AND for the assembly as a whole!

- In other words—failure to deal with a *weaker* brother situation can occur by the *weaker* brother AND by the *stronger* brother ... this all boils down to making godly, sonship decisions in our dealings with (and our fellowshiping with, and our communion with) other members of our body!

- And all that is to say that there is a natural reason why the Father has to address both the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother in the manner of a Fatherly, Warning-type Exhortation in (:3).

3 *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.*

- First—notice you’ve got 3 clauses:

- 1) *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not;*
- 2) *and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth:*
- 3) *for God hath received him.*

- The first 2 clauses are separated by a semicolon—but the 3rd clause is separated by a colon.

... (so it’s a Clause + [medium pause] followed by a 2nd Clause + [strong pause] followed by a 3rd Clause)

- The structure of the English, and the style of the English language here is one of those instances where by how it is stated, the use of the colon begs the question, Why?

- 1st Clause of the Fatherly Exhortation & Warning:

- *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not;*

- “**Let not**” - there are numerous times in which this expression is used — and it’s not limited to either G1, G2, or G3—rather, it’s found in all 3 aspects of godliness:

G1	1) (:3) <i>Let not ...</i>
_____	2) (:3) <i>let not ...</i>
_____	3) (:5) <i>Let every man ...</i>
G2	4) (:13) <i>Let us not ...</i>
_____	5) (:16) <i>Let not ...</i>
_____	6) (:19) <i>Let us therefore ...</i>
G3	7) (15:2) <i>Let every one of us ...</i>

- When you use the word *let* in the way it’s being used here, there is an **implied meaning** in view—and what it implies is that when the one who hears it (the *stronger & weaker* sons), it acts as a kind of a summary of things or a summary of events—and is used almost as a “*therefore*” - in fact, it’s very common (as in :19) to find a “*therefore*” included in the expression ... it’s not exactly the same as a “*therefore*” because *let/let us*, while not being an outright command,

functions as a rather forceful term of counsel and direction, or guidance. And in that way, the “*let us*” expressions are in perfect keeping with an adult Father addressing his adult, adopted sons!

- all of the “*let us*” expressions are sonship language! [adulthood language as opposed to childhood language]

- But the thing that these “*let / let us*” expressions imply is that the upcoming counsel, direction, and guidance that is going to be given by the Father—it’s to register in the son’s mind that what the Father is saying to him is in view of something ... in view of something already known, or in view of something that has already gone on before!

- So, the question is: In view of what?

- And the **context** provides the answer for both the *stronger* brother, and the *weaker* brother.

- Stronger: in view of the effectual working of the doctrine of the Sonship Curriculum you’ve received from Rom. 1-13—and in view of understanding and appreciating the edification process (individually, at least; individually & collectively, at best) ...

... that’s what has gone on before—and in view of that ... **Let not** ...

- Weaker: in view of your desire & determination to be edified unto godliness (or better, in view of responding positively & properly to the edification process) ...

... that’s what has gone on before—and now, in view of that ... **Let not** ...

... in either case, or in both cases, **in view of what has gone on before**, here is the counsel, the direction and the guidance of your Father.

- and in this case, it’s counsel, direction & guidance that, (in view of what has gone on before), here’s what you are expected to **THINK!**

... here’s your **Father’s thinking** on the matter ...

- and while both the word *despise* and the word *judge* can be manifested in a person's conduct & behavior—these are words that are THINKING terms ... you *despise* and *judge* in your **mind** before you put them into action.

- So, the Father first of all addresses his *stronger-in-the-faith* son as to how (in view of what has gone on before) - "Son, here is how I am expecting you to THINK regarding your *weaker* brother ..."

- *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not;*

- "*him that eateth*" = the *stronger* brother.

- And the whole issue of *eating* is a matter of the genius of God in how He goes about educating **both** categories of sons in this passage and at this point in the edification process.

- The focus upon *eating* serves well on MANY levels. (the most obvious and important of which is the fellowship and communion that is supposed to take place)

- *Let not him that eateth* (stronger brother) *despise him that eateth not* (the weaker brother);

- "**despise**" - is a very **strong** word! (and it's intended to be a strong, repulsive, and ugly word)

- *despise* = (seems to be derived from the OF, but it may come from the Sp. & L.), but it is commonly believed to come to us from the L. Prefix *de* = down + the L. *specio* = to look, hence, **to look down!**

OED = to look down upon; to view with contempt; to think scornfully or slightingly of.

- so you have *despise* and some similar terms: *contempt*, *scorn*, *despicable*, *disdain* and such ...

... but there is a 'radical root' element to all these words ... (?) ... and that is that the one doing the *despising*, *contempt*, *scorn*, *disdain* sees the object of his *despising* as **WEAK!**

- and in a context such as this—with a *stronger* brother who is a ‘freshman’ nearing that ‘sophomore’ stage—the tendency for one who is ‘stronger’ or ‘higher’ in his learning is to look at one who is ‘weaker’ or ‘lower’ in his learning **and look DOWN UPON HIM!** ... or *despise* him!

- And that word *despise* is designed and intended to make some things “click” in the *stronger* brother’s mind/thinking.

- He’s expected to connect that word *despise* (since it means to look DOWN upon) ... it’s expected to ‘connect’ in the *stronger* brother’s thinking with the issue of being **high-minded!** (Rom. 11:20; 12:3!)

- And he’s expected to connect that with the issue of PRIDE (the POL—from which comes *strife & envying—the works of darkness*)

- this is how you can easily end up doing the adversary’s bidding/work, all the while thinking you’re doing God’s bidding/work!

- And all of this points to or drives at ONE thing: the *stronger* brother’s LIBERTY—(Sonship Liberty)! and his proper or improper use of that liberty! — and this is where real godliness (and becoming ‘Like Father, Like son’ gets honed and crafted and polished)! [i.e., the use of one’s liberty]

- So, while at first, the word *despise* may seem to be a bit harsh or severe or overstating the issue—but when you really pause to think about it, it’s actually a most appropriate word to describe the improper thinking that can occur in a “son” who is nearing his sophomore stage in his education—it’s an accurate, fitting, and proper way to express faulty sonship thinking! (thinking that doesn’t come from what the Father has taught the son, but rather from what the ‘wisdom of this world’ has taught the son!)

- What you have going on in (:3) is a simple, Fatherly exhortation and warning to BOTH sons (the *strong in the faith*, and the *weak in the faith*) ...

... and it seems to be very simple (and, indeed, it is):

Let not him that eateth (the *strong* bro. who, based upon Romans doctrine, is operating upon his Sonship Liberty whereby he is free to eat anything he wants [no eating restrictions of any kind under **grace**])

- And the core issue that is in play here is that issue of SONSHIP LIBERTY—which means that this *stronger* bro. has an very good grasp upon the change that took place in God’s pro./w/Isr when He suspended it and saved/raised up the apostle Paul as a brand new apostle for a new and distinct dispensation that has as its objective the repossession of the heavenly places from Satan and his cohorts back to God.

(he has a good grasp upon) ...

- “Rightly dividing the word of truth”;
- Under/Apprec. the Disp. of Gentile Grace;
- U/A his justified/sanctified position “in Christ”;
- Putting his Position “in Christ” into practice by means of the edification process;
- Sonship Liberty; godly love & charity ...

... these (and many more) are the characteristics & features of the *strong* bro. in the faith!

- And if the *stronger* bro. fails to utilize godly equitable thinking—but instead, utilizes his own natural, ungodly thinking (taught to him by the “wisdom of this world”) - then he is going to end up *despising* his *weaker* bro.! (*him that eateth not*)

- i.e., he will LOOK DOWN upon him;
- he will see the **weakness** of the *weaker* bro. and see that weakness **AS A BAD THING**;
- and instead of operating upon godly equitable thinking, he will operate upon his own PRIDE and ARROGANCE of being in a superior/stronger position edification-wise, and he will become **high-minded** and end up in some way viewing his *weaker* bro. with contempt, scorn, abhorrence, and anything else that falls under the category of *despise*.
- and the result will be to refuse & withdraw godly edificational fellowship from his *weaker* bro.

- simply put—instead of receiving him (:1), he will **reject** him—he will **cast him off**, just like he has done with *the works of darkness*! (that’s how terrible and ungodly this is!)

- This is what happens when you fail to utilize godly equitable thinking in the local assembly!

- So—the first Clause of (:3) ...

Let not him that eateth (the stronger bro.) *despise him that eateth not* (the weaker bro.);

- and the semicolon tells you that this is a pretty powerful thought—and could almost stand as a complete thought or complete sentence on its own ... but it's supposed to be closely connected with the next thought.

- And the next thought is the 2nd Clause ...

and let not him which eateth not (the weaker bro.) ***judge him that eateth*** (the stronger bro.):

- And the colon tells you that you're expected to make a longer pause at this point—because there is something of great importance for you to perceive in this warning-exhortation — and it's not something that is outright stated—you have to THINK about it—you have to use the 'eyes of your understanding' to see it!

- And to start with—there's only 1 word in this 2nd Clause that we really need to focus upon: the word ***judge***.

- This 2nd Clause is directly said to the weaker bro. — the Father is now speaking directly to his *weak-in-the-faith* "son".

- And because of the nature of the Illustration/Dilemma being about what one "eats" or does not "eat" - and because there was a large presence of Jewish believers that made up the local assemblies in Rome—the average *weaker bro.* situation would be one of the *weaker bro.* operating under the Mosaic Law—or the Old Testament Law.

- and, of course, this sets up the kind of dilemmas you can have when saints gather together for godly edification and some of them are operating *under grace* (and Sonship Liberty), and some of them are operating under the Law.

- What we need to do now—is to get the 'eyes of our understanding' to **perceive** what is the not-so-obvious thing our Father expects us to perceive by what He says to us here.

- Let's look at that word ***judge*** ...

- ... *and let not him which eateth not **judge** him that eateth:*

- My understanding is that the word *judge* is not being used here in the sense of ‘administer’ or ‘to have jurisdiction over’ or ‘to govern’ or ‘rule’ or anything along those lines.

- Rather, *judge* is being used here in its most common way.

- **judge** = to make a decision; to pronounce a sentence upon someone; to pronounce what is right or wrong; to distinguish truth from falsehood; **to condemn**.

- all of which makes sense, if you’re talking about a person who is operating upon the Old Testament Law.

- And this would be the likely reaction of the *weaker* bro. who is operating under the Law’s eating commandments and is put in a situation where he is in close edificational fellowship with a *stronger* bro. who is operating under grace and Sonship Liberty.

- But I don’t think we need to go much beyond that simple understanding of *judging* here to be one of ‘passing a sentence of condemning’ the *stronger* bro.

- What I want to do now is to draw your attention to the 2 words that are the focus of attention in the 2 Clauses:

1) **despise** *Let not him that eateth **despise** him that eateth not;*

2) **judge** *and let not him which eateth not **judge** him that eateth:*

- Of the *stronger* bro., it is said he will **despise** his *weaker* bro.

- Of the *weaker* bro., it is said he will **judge** his *stronger* bro.

- Now—the words *despise* and *judge* are NOT just ‘randomly’ chosen words ... rather, they are carefully chosen! ... they are not imprecise, but precise!

- In other words, the word *despise* is the fitting and appropriate word God the Father has chosen to describe the faulty, ungodly Thinking of the *stronger* bro. towards his *weaker* bro. in this situation.

- you may think you would NEVER *despise* anyone, let alone a *weaker* bro. in Christ! (you may justify your ‘high-mindedness’ to be something other than *despising*, but the truth is ... that’s what it is!)

... and the word *judge* is the fitting and appropriate word the Father has chosen to describe the faulty, ungodly Thinking of the *weaker* bro. towards his *stronger* bro. in this situation.

- But for now—let’s set aside any “personal” feelings or “subjective” thoughts you may have at the moment—and let’s look at this objectively—and from the Father’s perspective!

- **Why** does God use these 2 terms (*despise* for the *stronger* and *judge* for the *weaker*)?

What is it about these 2 terms that goes right at the issue of godly EQUITY?

- What is our Father trying to get us to see beyond the merely obvious? ... to see with the ‘eyes of our understanding? ...

A: In order to perceive this issue of ‘Why these 2 terms?’ — let’s focus upon the term used when the Father addresses the *weaker* bro.

- **judge**—

— let’s take the case of a *weaker* bro. who is operating upon the OT Law — and he comes into contact with, and has to deal with a brother who is not operating upon the OT Law, but is operating upon Sonship Liberty outside the constrictions of the OT Law; and (to him), breaking the commands of the Law ... **what is going on in that weaker brother’s heart (or ‘inner man’)?**

- **What causes him to “judge” the stronger bro.?**

- Let’s remind ourselves of some things

- Remember that we are *receiving the instruction of equity* — and if that's not clearly understood & appreciated, and if that's not the expected thing to know is going on here (from the Table of Contents of Sonship Education) - then you are very likely to miss this completely.

- So what is it about *equity* that makes these terms make sense? ... more specifically, what is it about *equity* that makes the word *judge* the appropriate word to describe what the *weaker* bro. Thinks toward the *stronger* bro.?

- Remember what we talked about and went over back when we were first coming to understand what *equity* is all about?

- Crabb's English Synonymes—

... "The obligations to *justice* are imperative: the observance of its laws is enforced by the civil power, and the breach of them is exposed to punishment: the obligations to *equity* are altogether **moral**; we are impelled to it by **the dictates of conscience**; we cannot violate it without exposing ourselves to the Divine displeasure."

... "We see in contracts, and other dealings, which daily pass between man and man, that, to the utter undoing of some, many things by strictness of law may be done, which *equity* and honest meaning forbiddeth. Not that the law is unjust, but imperfect, nor *equity* against but above law; binding men's consciences in things which law cannot reach unto."

... "*Justice* is that which publick law requires; *equity* is that which private law **or the law of every man's conscience** requires."

- The answer as to Why does the Father uses *judge* as the Thinking of the *weaker* bro. towards the *stronger* bro. is because what he observes the *stronger* bro. doing in his Sonship Liberty has "pricked" his CONSCIENCE! (or **bothered** his **conscience**)!

- **CONSCIENCE** is the thing you are supposed to perceive with the 'eyes of your understanding' here!

- And in one case, the conscience has NOT been bothered; but in the other case, the conscience HAS been bothered!

- In the case of the *stronger* bro. — his conscience isn't bothered one bit by eating whatever he wants to eat because he knows he has the Liberty as a "son" to do that. He has a 'clear conscience' in that case.

- But in the case of the *weaker* bro. — he's operating upon the OT Law—and based upon what he believes from that OT Law, he refuses eating meat, because to do so would not only be a violation of the Law, but it would violate his own **conscience!** (and he *judges* the *stronger* bro. because the *stronger* brother's *despising* of him is perceived to be a 'strong-arm' tactic in order to get him to eat meat!)

... and that just doesn't 'fly' with his conscience—he can't do that "in all good conscience"!

- And this issue of one's **conscience** is what our Father wants us to "get" - to see with some real perception and understanding at this point.

Why? — see, for example **John 8:1-11 (:9)** [Jesus gives them the "*finger*"!]

- (:9) = 1st use of the word *conscience* in the Bible.

- But while the word *conscience* is 1st used here—it's not the first time in God's word where the **issue** of *conscience* has been dealt with.

- Note the audience here—the Lord has just come from the Mount of Olives down to the temple in Jerusalem—and the audience is made up of:

- "the people"
- "the scribes and Pharisees"
- "a woman taken in adultery"

- The *scribes and Pharisees* are the 'Bible Scholars' of their day—(nothing has changed) — and already in God's word, you have encountered the fact that they have a *conscience problem*—or, better, they have a problem properly dealing with others where the *conscience* is concerned.

... here's what I mean ... #68 — (see **Mat. 23:23-33**) -
[*Woe* 5,6,7, & 8]

- The problem that the *scribes & Pharisees* had with the issue of one's *conscience* is that: **they didn't recognize it!** ... that is, rather than operating upon the *conscience* issue—they were operating upon what might be called SCRUPLES!

- “scrupulous” = a little stone that gives pain in walking, or makes the way sharp.

- And where the *conscience* deals with issues of right & wrong from the ‘inner man’ — ‘scruples’ deals with issues of right & wrong from the ‘outer man’!

- (Charles Smith, Smith's Synonyms Discriminated) —
 “If a person were found *scrupulous* in all things, it might then be said, that *conscientiousness* is one form or aspect of *scrupulousness*; but the fact is, that *scrupulousness* is often of a **different character** from *conscientiousness*. It leads men sometimes to be exact in one direction, and to attend to minute matters, **omitting weightier**; as the Pharisees, according to the representations of the Gospel, must have been exceedingly *scrupulous*, and yet un-*conscientious* also. Where *scrupulousness* springs from *conscience*, it denotes excessive sensibility of *conscience* exercised on unimportant matters. It is a morbid respect for the details and minutia of conduct. The *conscientious* man trusts his *conscience*, the *scrupulous* man distrusts it.”

- (back to John 8) — the difference between what Jesus did and what the *scribes and Pharisees* did is the difference between *scruples* and *conscience*!

- The *scribes & Pharisees* are all about FORCE—i.e., ‘outer man’ FORCE—which denies and by-passes the edification process altogether!!!

- What the Lord did was **write** something and **say** something — and by what He **said** and **did** (“see and hear”), He gained access into the people's human spirit and made an appeal to their *conscience*—and by means of any vestige of “right and wrong” that was in there, He got them to do what was “right” WITHOUT FORCE!

- The Lord acted like a SON! - He functioned as a properly educated and properly edified SON!

- The *scribes & Pharisees* acted like CHILDREN! - they functioned as childish ‘tutors & governors’ and treated “*the people*” as children who needed to be **forced** to do something ... and they treated the Lord that way, too!

- “*the people*” were being “convicted” by the scruples of the *scribes & Pharisees* ...

... but when the Lord got done with them, “*the people*” were “**convicted by their own conscience**”!

- The Lord really gave these guys a lesson in godly edification—(which was in preparation for their own ‘adoption of sons’)!

- Paul talks a lot about the *conscience* ...

- Acts 23:1-2
- Acts 24:16
- Rom. 2:15; 9:1
- 1 Cor. 8:7-13
- 1 Cor. 10:23-29
- 2 Cor. 1:12; 4:2
- 1 Tim. 1:5-7; 19
- 1 Tim. 3:9; 4:1-2
- 2 Tim. 1:3
- Titus 1:15

- So, what is the *conscience*? How would you define it?

- *conscience* = (OED) In ME the word *conscience* took the place of the earlier term INWIT.

= Prefix *con* (together) + *science* (knowledge) - hence, putting knowledge together (in your mind/human spirit).

= knowledge within oneself; inward knowledge; inmost thought!

- Most commonly, the *conscience* is considered to be our “evaluator” (so to speak) when it comes to making a decision.

- Some conclusions:
 - Every person is born with a conscience — (you don't get it sometime after you're born; it comes as a 'package' of inner-man features common to all men and women);
 - Over-simplified: your conscience is your inner-man knowledge of what is right and wrong;
 - Because of that, the conscience is where **moral virtue** is located in the 'inner-man';
 - Morals is a virtue (or an effective **force** or **power**) of some beneficial quality to mankind;
 - Morals, therefore deals with the 'inner-man' qualities that pertain to distinguishing between right & wrong; good & evil; virtuous or vicious in connection with the actions, volitions, or character of responsible men.
 - Obviously there is a major, built-in (so to speak) problem with the conscience —
 - since the conscience makes evaluations based upon moral virtue—and upon certain norms & standards that a person has obtained—the conscience exists and functions in the Lost person, and the Saved person; it can be shaped and filled with *the wisdom of this world* or *the wisdom of God*; it can function under the influence of the adversary, or under the influence of the Heavenly Father—and a whole bunch of other opposite distinctions between that which is ungodly & that which is godly. (viz., righteous or unrighteous, holy or unholy, glorious or inglorious)
 - Wherefore, along with the human mind (or the human spirit), the conscience is intended to be a very powerful part of the 'inner-man' that God invented, created, and designed to be used for His plan, purpose, & will for man.
 - However, because the conscience deals with moral virtue; with right & wrong; with evil or good; with Norms & Standards; with responsible or irresponsible; etc., etc., ... and because those things can either be godly or ungodly—this means that the conscience (just like the humans spirit/

mind), must be rescued/reclaimed (***purged***) from the ungodly wisdom of men and the ungodly wisdom of this world, and transformed by the wisdom of God and the Norms and Standards contained in the word of God, and especially the curriculum and doctrine for Sonship Edification contained in Rom-Philem. (or for Mem/Rem/Isr, Heb-Jude)

- The conscience is therefore tied to, and has a roll to play in Wisdom, Justice, and Judgment.

- However, the most demanding roll of the conscience, and the place where the work and use of the conscience shines the brightest is in the decision-making skill of **Equity!**

- Therefore the conscience of a properly educated “son” is directly tied to the New Testament—(both, a son in God’s prog. w/ Isr, and a son who is a member of the new creature of the church the body of Christ in this Disp. of Grace.

- Why? Because the benefits of the NT provide for the Holy Spirit of God to be given to a saved person, and therefore for all of the ‘inner-man’ issues (or issues of the “heart”) to be rescued & reclaimed (***purged***) by God through being *transformed by the renewing of your mind* by means of the word of God utilized in the godly edification process!

- There is a powerful connection between the NT and the conscience (your Evaluator when it comes to making a decision) ...

- which is why Paul is an *able minister of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.*

(2 Cor. 3:6 compare w/ 4:1-2)

- which is why we are made to be beneficiaries of the NT!

- (notice this connection between the conscience and the NT in God’s prog. w/ Isr)

[see Heb. 9:1-15 (:9, 14)]

- SEE ROMANS 13:5 — (Rom. 13; Vol. 1; pgs. 87-90)

[I intentionally skipped this verse our ‘rundown’ of verses]

- (1st Clause of the Fatherly Exhortation/Warning) - Godly Thinking:
3 Let not him that eateth (the stronger brother) **despise him that eateth not** (the weaker brother);

- (2nd Clause)
and let not him which eateth not (the weaker brother) **judge him that eateth** (the stronger brother): [long pause]

- (3rd Clause)
for God hath received him.

- These 5 words are **the** critical issue in the Godly Thinking of Equity regarding our dealings with *weaker* brothers!

- In fact, everything else in the Godly Thinking section of (:4-:12) is going to address this single issue: “*for God hath received him*” ...

... THAT is the Father’s thinking about the *strong* **and** the *weak ones in the faith*—THAT is His thinking about EVERY “son” who (in this context) desires to get his godly sonship education and edification ...

... and everything in the next 9 verses is going to go towards *the renewing of your mind* **with** that godly Thinking so that by the time you get to the end of (:12), the effectual-working **power** of these 5 words (*for God hath received him*) will become your thinking as well! (and for the same reasons)!

- And therefore, when it comes to your dealing with a *weaker* brother—(and by default, every member of the local assembly) - your mind & heart will **match** your Father’s mind & heart in this matter so that you, too, will forever view that fellow member of your local body of believers who equally desire their godly sonship edification by those 5 words: **FOR GOD HATH RECEIVED HIM!**

- Again, the construction and style of the English language in this verse (and with these clauses) makes it so that, by the time you come to this 3rd & final Clause—and after the colon—the construction of the verse is such that it makes a question arise in your thinking ...

*Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: ... **WHY?***

- And what you get here is the simple, direct, and broad answer—an answer that should become one of your *sayings!*
- **“for”** = the ‘causal’ used of the word *for*—meaning that it gives the reason or cause for something—i.e., it answers that ‘raised question’ of Why? ... Why should the stronger brother not THINK in terms of *despising* the weaker bro.; and Why should the weaker bro. not THINK in terms of *judging* the stronger bro.?
- There is a governing, overriding, Principle of godly Thinking that is designed to tear down and dispel this kind of faulty, ungodly Thinking ... and here it is!
 - (Actually, this is a marvelous example of the style of the English language in its ‘golden age’ ... because in a case such as this, it is able to present this issue in a very **dramatic** manner ... and as any ‘drama’, it causes the reader to mentally [and a even physically] **lean in** to hear what comes next!)
- **“God”** - notice the use of *God* instead of “the Father” - and that’s because the emphasis the Father wants here is to be placed upon His ULTIMATE AUTHORITY in the matter of the edification process with His sons!
 - By putting the emphasis upon His Creative, Ultimate and Ultimately Powerful Authority—it really gets you to kind of “shut up” — and confront the issue that, if you go down the lines of this Illustration, you are perilously close to putting **yourself in the position of God!** (of Ultimate Powerful Authority in the edification process)!
 - And by doing so—and by saying it the way He says it—the Father is actually ‘drawing a line’ **for** you—He’s drawing a line, whereby if you step over it, you have then put yourself in His position—you are attempting to become the God of godly edification yourself! (big No, no)
- **“hath received him.”**
 - Notice the Past Tense—God has already *received him* before you ever came into the picture! And if God doesn’t have a problem with him (and can deal with him) why in the world can’t you?! (tears down any ‘high-mindedness’!!)

- And the **“him”** here is BOTH the stronger AND the weaker bro.!

- **“received”** - is the exact same word you have up in (:1) when you were told, *“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.”*

- In (:1) you were told to *receive* the weaker bro. into the Edificational Fellowship of the local assembly.

- Meaning that you are to deal with a weaker bro. in such a way so as to accord him all of the ‘fellowship features’ (so to speak) that you accord to every other bro. & sis. “in Christ” that you have been dealing with.

- Bottom Line: You are there for godly sonship edification, and so is he. One may be edification-wise and doctrinally farther along than another, BUT SO WHAT? **that does NOT matter in the slightest!**

- In this particular context: the weaker bro. is:

- a wrath-worthy sinner saved by grace through faith alone in Christ alone; **and so are you;**

- he is an adopted adult son of God; **and so are you;**

- he is of the *household of God*; **and so are you;**

- he is a beneficiary of all that God has made him to be “in Christ”; **and so are you;**

- “in Christ” he has all of the Positional Elements necessary for fellowship, communion, and concord with the local assembly; **and so do you;**

- he is a ‘body-member’ of the *one body in Christ*; **and so are you;**

- he is a beneficiary of the New Testament; **and so are you;**

- he has freely joined himself to this local assembly for the express purpose of his godly edification; **and so have you;**

... and we could go on and on ...

- This single, **powerful** expression: *for God hath received him* - is designed to immediately ELIMINATE the kind of Pride, Arrogance, Inordinate Ambition, and High-mindedness that would cause problems between any dealings between weaker & stronger bro’s. in the local assembly !!!

- Illustration:

- It's kind of like thinking about getting into College or University.
- Every student goes through an “admissions” process.
- Once the Authority of the College/University admits a student—he's to be recognized by all his upperclassmen to be authorized to be there.
- And more than that, the upperclassmen are supposed to recognize that while he is not as far along as they are education-wise—they are to recognize that he has all the necessary features/characteristics to complete the course of study successfully, just as they did upon their admission to the College/University.
... and they have those features/characteristics, NOT by virtue of the UPPERCLASSMEN's authority, but by the Universities authority!

- So we have, **“for God hath received him”** — and while BOTH the stronger and the weaker are in view—due to the fact that the stronger brother has been through Rom. 1-13, and has that doctrine effectually working in his ‘inner man’ — (and because that doctrine has confronted and dealt with the stronger bro's ‘high-mindedness’ and ‘pride’ - [such as in Rom. 12:3 and Rom. 12:16]) — the onus (or full weight) of responsibility is being placed upon the stronger bro.!

- Remember, (:3) says to the stronger bro: *Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not*; ... and as we've noted, the idea of *despise* here is to ‘look down’ upon him—but behind all that is the idea that the stronger bro. would tend to think that the weak one in the faith does not have any capacity to please the Lord! ... but He does! ... How do we know that? ... **“for God hath received him”!**

- **“for God hath received him” is the Norm & Standard that needs to be acknowledged here!** (that is what will ultimately *transform you by the renewing of your mind* when it comes to how you deal with a weaker bro)!

- The important thing to understand here is that **God receives you as a “son” on the basis of where you are in your edification—and as long as that edification process is in effect—(which is to say: as long as you are actually participating in it)!**

- (and that's something to "rejoice" about—you ought to thank the Lord that He *receives* you in this way!)

- In other words—we ought to be grateful to the Lord and give thanks to Him that at the very moment you believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour, God **didn't** expect you to conduct yourself as a fully educated, fully edified member of the body of Christ!

- Our Heavenly Father has provided for us to **become** fully edified and fully educated "sons" — and His provision for that is by means of **the edification process!** (not by spiritual 'osmosis' = a gradual, often unconscious process of assimilation or absorption)! ... WRONG—it involves WORK on your part!

- But be very careful about that word "work" — that may not be the best way to describe it—because I **don't** mean by the **energy of your flesh—which is mere legalism, and abhorrent in God's sight!!!**

- God has, **by His grace**, provided you with the edification process and everything you need to be successful in it ...

- God, **by His grace**, has provided you with the information you need—the curriculum for your Sonship Education—(which is the written word of God, and Rom-Phlm., especially)

- God, **by His grace**, has provided you with the power, the ability, and the capacity to take that information and *transform you by the renewing of your mind*, and all that is involved in *walking after the Spirit* with that *renewed mind* and with a *quickenened mortal body* in order to be 'pleasing' in His sight—(which is all because you are a beneficiary of the NT)!

- So it may be better to say that God has, by His grace, provided you with the edification process—and He expects us to **involve** ourselves in that edification process in order to attain all of its aims, goals, and objectives—whereby **you** will *prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect, will of God!!!* (which is your positive & proper response of **faith!**)

- Therefore God has given to us, and provided for us this **edification process**—and that edification process is for us to become properly edified and properly educated “sons” —
But ... God only expects us to walk according to THE RULE OF WHERE WE ARE IN THAT EDIFICATION PROCESS!

- In other words—God is not upset, or impatient, or ‘fit-to-be-tied’, or put out, or frustrated, or outraged, or bothered, or troubled, or anything like that **with a weak one in the faith!**

... and the point is: IF GOD ISN'T TROUBLED BY A WEAKER BROTHER, THEN WHY WOULD YOU BE TROUBLED BY HIM???

- by the way—this should be great encouragement to those of you who are concerned about either dying or being raptured before you finish your course!

- Now—with that said—I want to address an issue at this point, which is how this passage (:3-4) can get really screwed up!

- You read:

1 Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.
2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.
3 Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.
4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

- And it's not a very difficult thing to do to reach the conclusion that God “receives” us by the Rule of “Where We Are” at the time.

- but that “Rule of Where We Are At The Time” is dealing with a very specific CONTEXT!

- In other words—a person can very easily think: “Well, ...

if God isn't upset or bothered by me being a *weak one in the faith*—and if He *receives* me by the Rule of Where I am at any given Time— **then why should I care about moving along in the “edification process” ... after all, that’s a lot of words, and a lot of thinking and a lot of prayer, and a lot of work ... No, I’m good right where I am!”**

- In other words—this very passage of Rom. 14:1-4 is an easy passage to appeal to in order to ‘get you off the hook’ for progressing any further in your spiritual life!

- After all, if God *receives* me by the Rule of Where I Am At Any Given Time (spiritually speaking, or edificationally speaking, or doctrinally speaking), then why bother with the edification process at all??

- Do you see what can happen?

- And this can happen to both the weaker and the stronger brother!

Q: What can end up happening?

A: You can easily end up becoming a ***SLUGGARD!***
(which is “why” you have that Fatherly Exhortation in Proverbs 6:6-11!)

- And this is why it’s so critical to have (:1) set the contextual ‘stage’ (so to speak) - and to **keep that context in mind all the way through to the end of 15:7!**

- The context is a weaker and a stronger brother “***IN THE FAITH***” — the context is talking about a person or persons who **want to be**, and who **desire to be**, and are **committed to being** fully edified, fully educated “sons” of God! (i.e., to the edification process!)

- To put it simply: If you are simply uninterested in your godly sonship edification, **this is NOT talking about you!** (there are other passages in God’s word that deals with you—but this is not one of them)!

- Now—one other thing I want to mention before moving on to (:4): getting back to that issue of God *receiving* us by the Rule of Where I Am At Any Given Time in the edification process ...

... as I said before—keeping everything in its context—you should be very thankful that God does that—and that He doesn't expect you to be a fully edified & fully educated “son” at the moment you believed in Christ as your Saviour—but rather, God honors the issue of godly edification being a **developmental process!**

- And that's an important thing for you to understand and appreciate — because that not only has benefit for you in Level I Sonship Education - but it also applies and is beneficial for Level II Sonship Education.

- (**Phil. 3**) - this is a context that is similar to Rom. 14:3-12— but here Paul is not dealing with a *stronger* and *weaker* brother—here Paul is dealing with **strong ones in the faith** and **perfect ones in the faith.**

- and as he does, notice how Paul deals again with this issue of **walking according to the Rule of What Has Been Attained** (or the **Rule of Where You Are At Any Given Time**) ...

- (**read :14**) — this is the end of what Paul has been saying about his own example (or **ensample**—see :17) to these Level II saints at Philippi — Paul has just set forth the ensample of the mature, Level II (or **perfect**) “son” — and the ‘core’ of the Philippian saints were tracking along edification-wise with Paul—they were (in this context) “in the faith” with him, doctrinally, and his example is being set out for them to follow as an *ensample* ...

- (**read :15**) —

— notice that expression, “***as many as be perfect***” -

- Paul understands that there are some in the Philippian assembly who are **not** ‘with’ him doctrinally, or edification-wise for several reasons—and they are not going to be able to understand and appreciate what he is saying at the moment. (they may be Level I “sons” or Level II, Phase 1 “sons)

- But he is addressing “**as many as be perfect**” to be “***thus minded***” — in other words, to those who have reached a level of ‘perfection’ in their godly edification, Paul says, **You are to think just like I told you my mind works**— and then he says, “***and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.***”

- Paul recognizes that this same edification principle or ‘Rule’ is still at work—and he recognizes that there are saints there in Philippi that are not “*perfect*” - and they are not going to be able to grasp what he has just said in Ch. 3 particularly.

- And what Paul is saying in that phrase, “*and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, **God shall reveal this unto you***” — is that **the edification process**, as you keep advancing on in it, you will come to the point where you will be able to understand and appreciate this, just like he has.

... it’s a **growth** issue—which is why Paul says what he does in (:16) ...

- (**read :16**) —

— even though these Edification Estate Differences exist—and even though different levels of attainment exist—there are those who had attained unto this level of *perfection* and *walked by the same rule*—and that’s a parallel situation to what the *strong* ones in the faith back in Rom. 14 need to acknowledge.

- They need to acknowledge (just like the strong ones in Rom 14) that God acknowledges this, too, and that God *receives* what is done by a member of the church, the body of Christ in accordance with where he has ‘attained unto’ edification-wise—and once again, THANK the Lord that He does.

- Truth is—the marvelous-ness of our gracious Position “in Christ” enables a believer to *live unto God* right from ‘day one’ — but that needs to be grasped and realized and acknowledged by the *strong* brother in the faith in order for godly edification to continue on with success.

- And if you get this understood properly (that is, not only understood, but understood in this particular **context**) — then everything else that follows in Rom. 14:4ff will make natural and reasonable sense. (and you won’t abuse it)

- and in that context—you naturally recognize that the inconsistent thing to do (where godly Love & Charity is concerned), is to *despise* the *weaker* bro; and the only consistent thing to do is to *receive* him just like God Himself does!

- **SOLUTION** to the 1st Illustration/Dilemma of (:2) - and to never becoming a “tutor” to the weaker brother in his edification process...

- (Romans 14:4) ***Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.***

- Notice:
 - we’ve got 2 complete thoughts/sentences;
 - the 1st sentence has 2 main parts to it—or 2 Clauses to it—divided by that interrogation mark (?)
 - (which is an older English use of the question or interrogation mark)
 - the 2nd sentence has 2 Clauses to it—divided by the colon [long pause]

- But for now—I want you to look at a number of the words that God has the apostle Paul use in this verse—and He uses them in order to get some particular THINKING going in your human spirit (some godly thinking that works exactly like God’s own thinking) ...

- *judgest—servant—master—standeth—falleth—holden up—able—stand*

- There is something that all these words have in common—what is it?
- A: They are all **POWER** WORDS!
 - (see Pro. 6:1-5 & Exhortation chart)
 - 1 Cor. 6:12

- **2 Corinthians 1:21-24 (:24)** - *dominion* (both in Greek and in English) = **to be lord of**—a king has a *dominion*—*dominion* = the **power** or right of governing & controlling; sovereign authority; lordship; rule; sway; control; influence.

- At this point in your sonship education, the Father’s expectation is that you are supposed to “see” (with “*the eyes of your understanding*”) that **your successful sonship education (to this point) has been successful ONLY by being under the power of your Father (the word of God, and the leading of the Spirit through it) — and NOT by being under the power of any one else!**

- And when it comes to dealing with the weaker brother in godly equity—you will never, ever attempt to put him under YOUR power!

... because if you do, you will DESTROY his sonship edification!!!

- At the time of receiving the *instruction of Equity*—and at the point were the Godly Thinking gets confronted in detail (as it does here in (:4) — your Father has already set in place (and set in motion) in your heart some very critical issues to your sonship education (and ultimately your “heavenly vocation” as a son) some critical issues that the entire body of information contained in your *instruction of Equity* is built upon.

... and there are many—but I want to point out just 1 of those critical issues ... we’ve already addressed it—and we will address it many more times as we go through Rom. 14:4ff.

- And I want to address it here because (:4), and the specific terminology it uses to describe the Godly Thinking that brings a godly, God-pleasing and God-acceptable resolution to the Dilemma of (:2) has this critical issue in view.

- And the issue I’m after here (once again) is the issue of COMMUNION!

- More than even the word “fellowship”, “communion” appears to be one of the most basic and fundamental words God uses to express the relation He has between Himself and those who are justified in His sight.

- and it’s not that the issue of “communion” is used exclusively for God’s relationship to man and man’s relationship to God—because “communion” is also used for describing at times man’s relationship to man as well.

- And it’s really a fascinating and marvelous thing that God would use such a term to, (at times), describe His relationship to man, (even to justified men) ... because, if you think about it, it doesn’t seem to be a way to express the Almighty, All-powerful, All-seeing, All-knowing, Creator of the universe to His creation—(especially His creation that, by their own will, ended up sinful & wrath-deserving!) ... does it???

- In most religions (possibly in all religions), their god is seen as an All-powerful, most-often vengeful and wrath-filled deity that really has no “lovingkindness” (or at least his/her “lovingkindness” is overshadowed by his/her vengeance & wrath.

- The point being—in most, if not all, religions—god is depicted as being almost, if not totally **unapproachable!**

... (even in Roman Catholicism, God is unapproachable—you have to go through the Priest or Mary or a Saint)

- But the Most High God, Jehovah of Holy Scripture isn't like that at all—(although He is a God of vengeance & wrath) - but in His relationship with men (especially justified men), He not only is approachable—but He desires to be approached—and to interact with men.

- Which is another fascinating & marvelous thing—God not only desires to be approached by men—but He desires a “two-way street” (so to speak) - that is, to relate to men, and for men to relate to Him!

- But remember that God is Righteous & Holy—therefore, for this “two-way street” to be meaningful and pleasing to Him, it needs to be a **godly** way to relate—that is, the men God relates to in this “intimate” way need to have His +R & His Holiness in His sight, just like He, Himself does.

- And that means that men not only need justification (+R) and sanctification (Holiness) in order to be pleasing in God's sight—(something God Himself must provide) - but it also means that God is going to have to provide a **way** or a **means** by which He can have this intimate relationship with man.

- In order for it to be acceptable/pleasing in God's sight—He is going to have to provide it by means of His Jehovah-ness and Grace — and man is going to have to receive it by Faith, alone!

- Hence: Justification; Sanctification; the Holy Spirit of God; a living human spirit; a quickened mortal body; the word of God; adoption as a son of God.

... and really, that can be boiled down to just 2 things: 1) Justification, 2) The New Testament and its benefits!

- And ALL of that is found and is provided for in the Cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ!

- And all of those things are factors when it comes to this issue of Communion!

- And one other things needs to be recognized here—in the issue of Communion: God not only intends for that word to be used to describe & express His way of relating to us, and us to Him—but He also intends for that word, Communion, to be used to describe & express a justified man’s relation to other justified men!

... and this is were you get the doctrinal concept that the ‘fulfillment’ of the Law (which is God’s Righteous & Holy norms and standards—His very character & essence) is accomplished **by godly Love & Charity!** (Rom. 13:8, 10)

- relating: God to man; man to God;
 man to man; man to each other.

- And among other things—God calls that way of relating (or relationship), **Communion**.

- **Communion** = [common union] = sharing or holding something in common with others; a fellow; fellowship; mutual participation —
(Smith’s) - *communion* is, among many, being such interchange of offices as flows from **a bond of unity** in sentiment, feeling, or conviction—*communion* is reciprocal (i.e., an interchange between two or more persons)

- (and as George Crabb states) - *communion* takes place on a **spiritual** level—in & with the human spirit and in & with the spirit of God ... “spirits hold *communion* with each other, or men may hold *communion* with God”

- 1st Use of *communion* (or any of its variations):

- **Genesis 18:33** (justified Abraham and the destruction of Sodom)

- Exodus 25:22
 - Exodus 31:18
- (you can even *commune* with your own heart) - Ps. 4:4; 77:6

- Interesting: the actual word *communion* is strictly a NT word—and more than that, it is strictly a Pauline word!

- It occurs only 4 times in the NT—all in Paul’s epistles:
 - 1 Cor. 10:16 (2x)
 - 2 Cor. 6:14
 - 2 Cor. 13:14

- Why go over this? Because the doctrinal issues we are about to get in Romans 14 are all designed to finalize (so to speak) the establishment of godly *communion*.

- The first half of the issue of godly *communion* should have already been accomplished (especially in Romans 6:1-12:2) [God to you; you to God]

- The second half of the issue of godly *communion* gets fully accomplished in Romans 12:3-16:27.

- And one of the tremendous, life-changing doctrinal issues of proper, godly, Sonship Edification is to recognize the living reality that every detail of your life (whether in your relationship with the Father and His relationship with you, or in your relationship to others and their relationship with you) ... **every detail of your life** (everything you think, say, and do) is to be thought of as **the communion of your Positional Elements “in Christ”!**

(all of life is the *communion* of the Positional Elements you have “in Christ”!)

.... even what you eat ... (supper life)

- (Romans 14:4)

- The godly Thinking that provides for you to be *instructed in Equity* that matches your Father’s Thinking concerning how you deal with those who are *weak ones in the faith* is stated in general in the last 5 words of (:3) ... *for God hath received him*.

- Now in (:4) we get the details of the godly Thinking that brings a God-pleasing solution to the dilemma set forth in (:3).

- The first sentence provides 2 Parts or Clauses divided by an older English grammar technique of raising a question in the 1st Part, but then continuing the sentence on with the 2 Part giving the answer to the question ... (but notice: it's not an outright answer! you have to THINK about it and perceive it on your own [now that's sonship!])

- and then that is going to be followed immediately with some further information that will give even greater details that will bring the godly Thinking the its **fullness**, and the dilemma to a God-pleasing solution. (but again, not by an outright 'Do this' or 'Don't do that' answer—you **have to perceive it on your own!!!**)

- 1st Part of the 1st Sentence:

Who art thou that judgest another man's servant?

- “*Who art thou*” — this expression alone is used as a very powerful expression that is designed to immediately ‘grab your attention’ - to immediately put a **stop** to your natural, erroneous & faulty thinking and **dismiss** it, (and much like a “*verily, verily*”), it then gives you an honest opportunity to get the godly Thinking that's about to be given to you — (much like our modern expression, ‘Who do you **think** you are?’) ... and that's the point: If you are *despising* your *weaker* bro. you have a ‘**thinking**’ problem, but that's your minor problem) - your **major** problem is what you are **thinking** about **YOURSELF!**

- and if you get that straightened out—and if you get your Father's thinking about **who you are in the edification process**—then your minor problem about how you think about a *weaker* bro. **vanishes**—it gets **solved!**

- *Who* = Interrogative use of the personal pronoun—and in a construction such as we have here in (:4), it's used in its pregnant or emphatic sense, referring to a person's origin, character, position, or the like.

- What our Father is doing here is 2-fold: 1) He raises a thought-provoking question designed to arrest your attention and get your mind in the position of thinking about **your own edification process** ... how did it all begin? (origin); what position were you in?; and what position are you yet in? in that edification process? ... in other words, **YOU ARE A “SERVANT” TOO!** (just like the *weaker* brother)! - you're not a *Master*, and in the edification process you never will be!

... 2) He says something to you that is specifically designed to **persuade** you of something in the way you see things in that edification process—to **persuade you to think the way He thinks about it!**

- and every detail of this godly Thinking about the edification process is rooted in the issue of **POWER!**

... the power to accomplish godly edification—where that power exists—who has that power—and who is under that power! ... **AND WHO IS NOT!**

- *Who art thou that **judgest** another man's servant?*

- **judgest**—My understanding is that this is not being used in exactly the same way that the word *judge* was used in (:3).

- In (:3) *judge* was being used where the *weaker* bro. was looking at the Sonship Liberty of the *stronger* bro. and, due to the impact it made upon his conscience, he pronounced a sentence (so to speak) of condemning the *stronger* brother for what he perceived as improper & inconsistent conduct.

- Here, while the issue of *judging* is very similar—my understanding is that it's being used in a much broader way.

- The idea here is in a slight 'shift' of meaning—one that not only has the idea of passing sentence upon someone—but in a broader sense, the idea of ruling over *another man's servant*, or having **power** over him—having the **power** to 'call him to account' for his actions ...

... it's *judging* in the sense of having any business at all to censure him, to approve or disapprove of him; to condemn him; or to have any concern about him whatsoever regarding the *servant's* relationship with his *master!*

- Like: What business is it of yours?;
What concern is it to you?

- There's a whole lot going on here—(God is very sensitive about POWER-GRABS) ... which is what you are doing!

- Man, by nature, has this ‘trend’ within his nature of sin to ‘stick his nose in another man’s business’! And nowhere is that put on display any better than in CHURCH!

- What our Father is doing here is taking an illustration right out of the ‘natural’ world—or from man’s ‘natural’ dealings with one another—(an illustration of what goes on naturally, even between lost men of the world).

- The illustration comes from the ‘business’ world—(by the way, even though this takes place even among the lost men of this world, GOD is still the inventor of “business”!)

- and the illustration is one of the relationship that exists between a *servant* and his *master*—and there’s some real genius in God choosing to use this illustration! ...

... because any person can grasp this issue at any time in history, in any culture, anywhere in the world! (any place, any time)

- Again, the point is to create & produce within your mind (your human spirit) a **GODLY** understanding and appreciation for **POWER** and **OWNERSHIP** in regards to the edification process!

- One more point about the structure & design of (:4) — while the Father draws upon an illustration out of even the lost, natural world of men—that, could, potentially, be fraught with problems because it’s something that even a lost man can think—right? ...

... and if all you had in (:4) was the 1st sentence, then it would be nothing but what even a lost person could do or think ...

... BUT ... it’s that 2nd sentence that makes all the difference! ... it’s the 2nd sentence that produces the **godly** thinking! ... and the 2nd sentence is something that **NO** lost man can do or think—and that not even another saved son can do ... because only God can do what that 2nd sentence says!!!

- The genius of God, here, is to draw upon an illustration that everyone can easily grasp—but put the godly ‘kicker’ on the end of it so that (in the edification process), the Holy Spirit can get the godly thinking written upon the fleshy tables of your heart—and therefore, real sonship edification takes place!

- i.e., this issue of the relationship between a *servant* and his *master*—(and we are NOT talking about slavery!) [the word *servant* doesn’t mean a “slave” in either the Greek or the English!] ... [more on that later] ...

- So we have: *Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.*

- And a bunch of issues are supposed to come to your mind here—(and you can work on many of them yourself) ...

... but the biggest issue of all is that of **POWER**—and in the *servant to master* or *master to servant* relationship, it’s the **master** who has all the **power** over the **servant** !!!

- And truth is—a bunch of things should ‘click’ in your thinking at this point—and those ‘clicks’ should be making ‘connections’ with a bunch of things you have already been taught in the book of Romans.

- In other words—this is **NOT** the first time your Father has confronted you with this issue ... in fact, He’s already set up your thinking properly along these lines **IF** everything has effectually worked up to this point.

- And one way I know this to be true is because God doesn’t do a lot of explaining about this illustration of the relationship between a *servant* and his *master* ... in fact, in this whole section, there seems to be an expectation that you are supposed to already know a lot about what God is saying to you here.

- Out of the many ‘clicks’ and ‘connections’ that are made here, I want to point out only 1—and it is something your Father told you about way back in your Sonship Establishment.

- (Romans 8:29-30—see notes, Rom. Vol. 3, pgs. 958-962)
 - (**note:** Per. Pro. “*he*” - used 8x referring to the Father Himself!)
- We have:
 - 4 *Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?*
 - Who do you think you are?, going around and *judging* (in the sense of approving or disapproving of the *weaker* brother’s capacity to please the Lord)
 - If you engage in that kind of activity, you are simply attempting a ‘Power-grab’ - an overthrow of God’s power in the edification process of another brother in Christ.
- **note:** ... *another man’s servant*—
 - “*servant*” = (NOT “slave”!) = one who lives in the **same house** as another; one who is under the authority of the same **householder**—(kind of like a ‘domestic servant’)
 - The point being—unlike a ‘slave’ who, most often than not, lived **outside** of the household—**this *servant* is of the same household as the Master Himself!**
 - (see Acts 10:1-8 (:7); Gal. 6:10; Eph. 2:19)
 - In a context such as this—this *servant* is of the same household as the Master—and this *servant* answers ONLY to his Master! ... he does NOT answer to another “*servant*”!
 - (see how God is putting your mind in the position He wants it in, so that He can at first expose any erroneous & faulty Thinking—and then dismiss that and replace it with His own godly Thinking?)
 - So—1st Sentence of (:4) - (**Part 1**) *Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?*
 - (**Part 2**) - *to his own master he standeth or falleth.*
 - “**master**” = (κύριος) = lord; he to whom a person or thing belongs, and about which he has POWER of deciding!

- to his own master he *standeth or falleth*.

- There are a whole bunch of ways in which the words *stand* and *fall* can be used—but my understanding is that we’re not talking about actual physical movement here— i.e., we’re not talking about *standing* in the sense of the absence of movement; or *falling* in the sense of actual movement—in other words, this isn’t talking about “not moving” vs. “moving” ...

... rather, my understanding is that in the *master-servant* relationship, the *servant* “*standeth or falleth*” is to be understood in the sense of:

standeth = **Approved**

falleth = **Disapproved**

... but I think we can get even more to the root of the issue.

- In the edification process—when the son *stands* approved in the Father’s sight—the Father is **pleased** (**pleasure**) ...

... the issue of the Father being *pleased* or having *pleasure* in his “son” is a BIG DEAL in sonship edification!

- see Rom. 8:8; Eph. 1:5-9; Phil. 2:13;
Col. 1:10; 1 Thes. 2:4; 2 Thes. 1:11

- But the BIG issue here is that **it is to the servant’s OWN MASTER** that he *standeth* (approved) or *falleth* (disapproved) ... it’s to his **OWN MASTER** (AND TO HIS MASTER ALONE) that the *servant* *standeth* **peased** in the *master’s* sight or *falleth* **displeased** in the *master’s* sight ...

... what the *servant* is in the sight of another *servant* **never enters the picture here!** (it can be a matter of godliness in another context—but **in the context of the edification process**, how the *servant* stands in another *servant’s* sight **isn’t the issue at all!**)

- *Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.*

- that's the illustration our Father draws upon from the natural course of this world (even among lost people), that we can easily grasp—but more importantly, that puts our 'frame of reference' (or our mind) in the position He wants it in for us to be able to get the next sentence—which is the GODLY thinking of the Father Himself, and that no natural, lost man can think or do.

- But before we move on to that—I just want to point out that even though this illustration is drawn from the natural course of this world—it still should 'ring a bell' or 'click' in our thinking that we have been told some things along these lines before we ever got here to 14:4 ...

... when it comes to the issue of edification as "sons" or godly edification—remember this?

- Rom. 8:31 (Vol. 3, pgs 976-980)

- Now there's one more thing that needs to be recognized about this issue of *to his own master he standeth or falleth*—but I want to address it in the next sentence ... and here's why —

- Notice that in the 2nd sentence that contains the Thinking that is godly (or according to godliness and not according to even the natural, lost men of this world) - notice that the only issue that is picked up upon between *standeth or falleth* is the issue of *standeth* ... (God doesn't address the issue of 'falling' at all!!!) ...

- GODLY THINKING (2nd Sentence):

Yea, he (the *servant*) ***shall be holden up*** ('standing' or approved and pleasing in God's sight): (why?) ***for God is able to make him stand.***

- ***Yea*** = this is not an old, archaic, out-of-date English word at all (it is used every day in our local, state, and federal government when expressing an affirmative vote) ...
... but that's about the only way in which the word *yea* is used today — the truth is, the word *yea* has a very powerful meaning that has nothing to do with expressing a person's vote—but unfortunately, that usage has almost vanished from our use of the English language today ... (and note: *yea* is NOT 'just another way to say, yes'!!!)

- When used in a manner such as we have in (:4) - when *yea* is used as the first word of this sentence—and when there is a logical progressive presentation of information being given that is being used to PROVE something; to provide a PROOF of something—and where more than one thought or sentence is being used to present that PROOF ...

... the older English word *yea* is used to introduce a phrase that is **far more stronger** and **far more emphatic** than the phrase or phrases immediately preceding it!

- That means that it's this 2nd sentence of (:4) that has the real POWER of Godly Thinking!

- And it also means that the information contained in it is something that is supposed to have a 'kick' to it, or make some things 'click' in your thinking—that takes you **back** to some information you've encountered previous to this!

- *Yea* (introducing a statement that is far stronger & far more emphatic than the previous statement—why? because this is the godly Thinking!) **he** (the *servant*, the *weaker* brother) **shall be holden up** (that's the *standeth* issue—the issue of standing approved and pleasing in God's sight): (why?) **for God is able to make him stand** (approved and pleasing in His sight).

- Let's get one thing clear from the outset—this is NOT talking about a person's justification unto eternal life (or salvation) - and how that God is able to keep him saved! (The context has nothing to do with justification—and the issue of being eternally secure in your justified position in Christ has already been fully dealt with in Ch.5!)

- The context here is dealing with the *weaker* brother's edification process—and the 1st thing that is said to you that has **far more strength** to it than even the *master-servant* illustration in the 1st sentence is: **he shall be holden up**—(the *weaker* bro. shall be *holden* or held *up* *STANDING* [or approved & pleasing in God's sight] ...

- **This entire sentence is talking about and referring to the Power of the word of God resident in the EDIFICATION PROCESS and what we have in our Position “in Christ”!**

- And the issue of “*he shall be holden up*” is an issue (or a PROVEN FACT) of Sonship Edification for BOTH the *weaker* AND the *stronger* brother!

- “*he shall be holden up*” may lean heavier on the issue of the *weaker* brother at the moment—but the truth is, (and you should recognize that the truth is) that YOU have been *holden up* as approved & pleasing in God’s sight all along in YOUR godly edification just as the *weaker* brother is being *held up* in God’s sight at this very moment (even though he’s in a *weaker* position *in the faith* than you are at the moment).

- And because this phrase directly addresses the *weaker* bro directly—and addresses you (the *stronger* bro indirectly) — this issue of being *holden up* at any given point in the edification process ... that should ‘ring a bell’ in your thinking—and take you BACK to something your Father told you a long time ago ...

... and if you think about the issue of being *holden up* as approved & pleasing in God’s sight at any given time in the edification process—the issue of being *holden up* in this context has the idea of being **successful** or **succeeding** in the edification process

... and where did your Father talk to you about your **success** to be edified as His “son” against any and all opposition?

A: The first 2 “Who” questions in those 5 probing questions of **Romans 8:31-39!** (Questions 3 & 4—[:**33** & :**34**])!

- (**see Notes in Rom. 8**)

- (The godly remedy to the *weaker* brother dilemma):

4 ... *Yea, he shall be holden up*: (pause) - [there’s no thought of the *weaker* bro *falling* or being disapproved or displeasing in God’s sight as a “son” who is, granted, *weak*, but still *in the faith!*] ... (pause) ... WHY? ...

... ***for God is able to make him stand.***

- God Himself is ***able*** (or has the ***ability*** or the ***power***) ***to make him stand!*** - this is referring to the ***power*** resident in the edification process—the power of God’s word & the *leading of the Spirit* though it—(getting it written on the *fleshy tables of your heart!*)

- The issue is—that ALL of the **power** and ALL of the **ability** for ANY “son” (*weak* or *strong*) to **stand** approved & pleasing in God’s sight is **exclusively in the hands of God Himself ... and NOT in the hands of another “son”!**

- ... *Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.*

- That issue of **stand** (*for God is able to make him stand*) - in the context of godly sonship edification should bring to mind the issue of ‘approved’ - and ‘approved’ should bring to mind the issue of ‘PROVE’ [or ‘proving’] ...

... and that issue of ‘proving’ should hearken you back to **Romans 12:2! (if time permits, see additional notes)**

- As a “son/daughter” we have the responsibility to discern the will of God all on our own—to *prove the good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*

- On the basis of gaining the norms & standards of the Father Himself—and having **His** ‘mind’, we are to PROVE His will (standing ap-proved and pleasing in His sight) - and NOT following the example or the norms & standards (or mind) of another believer! ... even a *stronger* brother!

- SUMMARY of (:1-4)

- (see charts)

- Remember that EVERYTHING that is being said here is being said **in the context of a believer in the LJC who has determined to get his godly edification by joining himself to a local assembly that is already in the process of godly edification itself!**

- EVERYTHING that is said in Rom. 14:1-15:7 has in view **the issue of the godly edification process!**

- And of the many issues dealt with in (:1-4) - one of the major issues coming out of that body of information is the issue that the **process** and the **power** of godly edification **is the exclusive realm of The Almighty God Himself, and NOT YOU!** (He is ‘jealous’ about it!)

- God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit and the word of God!

- That's the way in which YOU were edified as a "son" up to this point—(where, by comparison, you are considered a *strong one in the faith* regarding Level I Sonship Edification)

...

... and that's the way in which the weaker one in the faith will be successfully edified as a "son", too!

- And when it comes to issues of what may be perceived as "Right" or "Wong" ... YOU are never to be the **producer** of the *weaker* bro's edification (or the **producer** of any element involved with the mechanics of his godly sonship edification) that involves his being *transformed by the renewing of his mind!!!*

- Simply put—you are to NEVER become a *weaker* brother's **TUTOR!**

- (see Gal. 4:1-6 [:2])

- The law is actually a system of dealing with people, not as adults, but as **children**—it is a "*tutor and governor*" system—which is how you deal with little children—how you deal with immature, irresponsible children that you've got to put a check & balance system over just to keep them in line and to chasten them and discipline them, and in many ways, restrict their fellowship with the parent in many of the activities of adults.

- And that's how God dealt with his people, Israel, under the law in "time past."

- The *tutor and governor* system is actually one of the many functions of the Law — and this is another one of those functions—not just that the law manifests sin, or that the law makes sin known, or that the law makes sin exceeding sinful—but here the law is a *tutor and governor* over the child under that law in which certain restrictions are placed upon the child who is under that law and the child **doesn't** have the opportunity to enjoy certain liberties.

- And one of the great privileges you have as an adopted son is the privilege of **making decisions on your own!**

- And you need to recognize that a father doesn't deal with his son in childhood as he does when his son is an adult.

- And just as (:2) says, there is an **appointed time** when the father begins dealing with his son as an adult—and he doesn't employ the same tactics and the same methods that he used with his son in childhood when he was bringing him up and dealing with him in an immature, irresponsible state—in other words when the child was a “minor.”

- And a minor has a lot of restrictions put on him—and justly and rightly so. He doesn't get the liberty and responsibility to do things on his own — children have to be watched constantly and told what to do! (and that's exactly what being under the law is like!)

- Well, one of the ways that the child (the minor) was dealt with by the father when he was still in childhood was to place him under a “tutor” ... a term we are all familiar with to some degree.

- You most commonly think of a tutor as someone who gives you some kind of private instruction or private lessons in math or English or history or chemistry or music or some other subject.

- But as it was used in the ancient world, and as it is being used by the apostle Paul here in Galatians, the *tutor* is a person who has been entrusted by a father to bring up his child in the basic, elementary education that that child needs; **and** the *tutor* has also been entrusted to employ a measure of discipline and chastening on that child in connection with especially teaching him **RIGHT FROM WRONG!**

- That *tutor* was a person (actually persons) who were in charge of providing a child with his basic education, **PLUS** they also had the ‘**strap**’ on their belt (because they are also teaching a child right from wrong) - and if the child stepped out of line, the *tutors* are entrusted to **chasten** you (with the strap or ruler or whatever.)

- And you came to **FEAR** the *tutors*—children were afraid of the *tutors*—(“*For ye have not received the **spirit of bondage again to fear** ...” Rom. 8:15a)*

- The *tutor* was the individual who put the **fear** and the **motivation** of the father in the child.

- The *tutor* is entrusted with giving you a basic education in knowing right from wrong, **AND** he's in charge of disciplining you when you don't do what's right and you do what's wrong—**OR** he can **withhold** from you something that you want, if you don't do what's right.

- Therefore: one “son” being another “son’s” *tutor* is **anathema!**
[1 Cor. 16:22] (doomed to destruction—doomed to destroy the other “son’s” godly sonship edification!)

- *anathema* = accursed (Gal. 1:8, 9), doomed to destruction; OED = “cutting off a person from the communion of the church and handing him over to Satan”

- *Maranatha* = our Lord will come; the coming of the Lord

hence, ‘accursed at the coming of the Lord’

- 1 Cor. 16:22 answers/hearkens back to 1:4-9 (:7)

- Now we're ready for the 2nd Illustration of the kind of Dilemma that can arise within a local assembly when there are Edificational Estate Differences—and where the only solution to the problem/dilemma is godly SONSHIP EQUITY!

- (read Rom. 14:5-9)

- (:5) - Illustration #2—the issue of never becoming a weaker brother's **governor**.

- Truth is—(:3-9), and especially that last sentence of (:5) becomes, for the majority of Christians, ‘The Great Escape’ passage.

- With no regard to its context, this passage is often appealed to as saying something like— Well, since the Bible says, *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*, then it really doesn't matter what you believe—because the BIG issue is just that we all ‘get along’ with each other ...

... ‘getting along’ with each other—and **loving** each other is the thing that really matters—after all, the Bible is too old and too complicated to ever understand—so ‘doctrine’ isn't important; proper Bible handling isn't important ...

... because Paul says that whatever we are “*persuaded*” of, that’s what’s important ... and none of us are ever going to be *persuaded* of the same things ... and getting into that serious, detailed ‘Bible Study’ can be really divisive ... so, in conclusion: The Bible is just an old ‘Good Book’ of stories and guidelines that we loosely look to in order to get some ‘inspiration’ and our ‘truth’ is only what we are *‘persuaded’* of.

- And therefore what you are *persuaded in your own mind* of, and what I’m *persuaded in my own mind* of is equally valid - **even if what you are *persuaded of* is directly in opposition to what I’m *persuaded of*!!**

- GONE is the “gospel of Christ”;
- GONE is “sound doctrine”;
- GONE is “rightly dividing the word of truth”;
- GONE is proper Bible handling;
- GONE is godly edification;
- GONE is properly putting all that God has made you to be “in Christ” into practice!
- GONE is the authority of Scripture—and the only real authority is YOU, yourself and your own preferences as to what you think God is pleased with!

- Most of all, GONE is all that pressure and guilt of having to read the Bible; study the Bible; go to Church; and any concern about my spiritual life!

- Bottom Line: Because of what Paul says here, I can ‘Escape’ all that Bible stuff and church stuff ... it’s my ‘Great Escape’ from all that!

- And the ‘winner’ is: Satan, himself!

- Now this may be an extreme case—and there are actually many variations of this issue Christians use to ‘Escape’ the “work” of their spiritual life, and ‘Escape’ any guilt of feeling they have wasted their time in other pursuits ... (there are even those who “rightly divide” that use this kind of a view of this passage to excuse themselves from learning anything more than “Time Past”, “But Now”, and “To Come” ... and “Paul’s our apostle”!)

- Truth is—this is NOT being said to just ‘any old Christian’
— or to a ‘Cultural Christian’ ...

... you have to realize that this is primarily being said **to** a *strong* bro. **about** a *weaker* brother ... and you have to recognize that even a biblically qualified and biblically defined *weaker* brother IS FAR MORE than ‘any old Christian’!

- In other words, being ***in the faith*** is FAR MORE than being ‘**out** of the faith’ in God’s sight!

- Point is: CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING! - and you MUST keep every word and every verse in this passage in the context God put it in—and never take it out of that context!

- 5 *One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

- Before we deal with the details of this passage—I want to address a very basic issue that is implied by both of these Illustrations.

- Notice (:2) — *For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.*

(:5) — *One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike.*

- By using these 2 illustrations, our Father is able to get us to realize what all these Edificational Estate Differences kind of ‘boil down’ to ... or to ask the question one way, What does all this boil down to, problem-wise? - or - What do these illustrations imply is going to be the big problem with *weaker* brothers?

Is it ... - How far along a person is in the edification process? yes, but you can ‘boil it down’ more than that ...

- Understanding & appreciating their Sonship Status and Sonship Liberty? yes, but you can ‘boil it down’ more than that ...

- What is a *weaker* bro doing if he’s holding to dietary laws & keeping to a calendar (*esteeming one day above another*)?

A: **He's operating under God's program with Israel** ... in other words, he is not "rightly dividing the word of truth"; he's not properly handling God's word.

- And that goes to the 'heart' of everything else—because if "rightly dividing the word of truth" is not being done; and if proper Bible handling is not being done—you can **forget** godly edification as God's "son"!!!

- And while this is an easy thing to recognize by what's being said here—it's still a very critical thing to recognize—because this is going to be the very area of attack by the Adversary as you come to the end of your Level I Sonship Education!

- Notice what is said immediately after we get our *instruction of equity* ... (see Rom. 15:8ff)

(see Rom. 16:17-20)

- Ok—so **keeping everything in its context! let's read again (:5)**
5 One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

- One more thing about the context of this passage and where a lot of confusion arises about this issue ...

- Especially the issue of *one man esteeming one day above another*, and later on in (:6), having *regard for a day*—remember the context here is dealing with a *weaker* brother!

- But Bible scoffers will point to this passage and say that the Bible is inconsistent and therefore can't be trusted as being inerrant and infallible (and having final authority) - because here in Romans Paul deals with the person with godly love and charity (*let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*) — but over in Galatians, Paul brings up **this very same issue** of observing 'days' or regarding/esteeming certain days above another ... and in the Galatian passage Paul 'tears them up' over it!

- (see Gal. 4:7-11 [:10-11])

- In this Galatian passage Paul reprimands them for observing *days, months, times, and years!*

- Paul doesn't deal with the Galatians on the basis of Romans 14 at all!!! ... he **BLASTS** them and reproves them for their disobedience ... and more than that, he flatly tells them **NOT** to observe those *days, months, times and years!*

- Isn't that inconsistent/contradicting Rom. 14?

- Isn't that being a *tutor and governor*?

- So what's the difference between Romans 14 and Galatians 4?

- The difference is that the Galatians had already learned the **truth** about the great dispensational change God has brought in ... not just the **fact** of it, but all of the ramifications and consequences of it—and all that it means for a member of the church, the body of Christ today!

- Clearly, by what Gal. 4 begins with, Paul had taught them all about their Sonship Status along with the change of program in great detail—and he had taught them Rom. 7 doctrine about how God is not employing the 'rudiments of the world' today—i.e., that OT Law.

- In short—the Galatians were **NOT** *weaker* brothers, they were **disobedient** advanced brothers!

- (see Gal. 5:7) - some false teachers came in and taught them to go back under Israel's program—and they knew better than that!

- The Galatians were not *weak in the faith* at all—but in fact they had gotten themselves established to the point that Paul could say, "YE DID RUN WELL" - and he tells them to **STAND** and to **WALK**—which are terms that are indicative of the fact that the edification status of the Galatians was advanced! (but they got themselves '*bewitched*' by cooperating with the Satanic Policy of Evil!)

- That very PoE that Paul warns about in Romans 16 came into Galatia and adversely affected them and drew them away from the truth—just as he tells them and reproves them and rebukes them there in Gal. 3:1 (read).

- They knew better—so Paul doesn't treat them like *weaker* brothers at all, **because they're NOT!** (They don't deserve that magnificent moniker!)

- **In summary:** Everything said in (:5) is said in a very specific and very NARROW context: **the *weaker* brother context** as defined by God Himself & God's word itself—(true, sound, godly edification is beginning to take place with the *weaker* brother—and all this information has to do with **his** successful sonship edification).

And where the *strong one in the faith* is concerned—he will never, ever intrude upon the edification process of the *weaker* brother because: 1) the *strong* one knows that if he ever becomes the *weaker* brother's "tutor", he will end up **destroying** the *weaker* bro.;

2) the *strong* one knows that the **power** of the edification process is the **exclusive realm** and the **exclusive power of God Himself!** (and God is "**jealous**" over it with godly jealousy!)

- see 1 Cor. 10:14-23 (:22)

- **Point of clarity:** In dealing with these 2 illustrations (or examples) of the kind of things that will be encountered in a local assembly when these Edificational Estate Differences occur when you have a mixture of *strong* ones in the faith and *weak* ones in the faith—and where real intelligent, godly *equity* is called for in order to properly deal with these kinds of situations—I have said that these examples can be utilized by both those *weaker* brothers who are Gentiles and have been under the influence of the Gentile religious world AND by *weaker* brothers who are Jews and who have become saved by Paul's gospel, and who have been influenced by God's program with Israel.

- And my understanding is that there is some truth to the Gentile side of things ... however,

... I believe that it's more precise and more in keeping with what God says here that the focus of attention is far more upon the Jewish side of things—that is, that the *weaker* bro. situation is most often going to be a situation where the *weaker* bro. is operating upon some Bible doctrine (some doctrine that he's learned from God's

word itself), **but it's NOT Pauline**—it's not according to “*the revelation of the mystery*” - rather, it's “*according to prophesy*”.

- And there are a couple of reasons for that:

1) The examples or illustrations themselves easily hearken back to what was said to Israel under the OT Law—both the commands about eating meat offered to idols; and about the esteeming of certain days in Israel's calendar above other days;

2) What is said in (:6) - *regarding days unto the Lord and eating not to the Lord and giving God thanks is not* something that fits well to the issue of what the Gentiles do in their pagan religions—in other words, it seems that Paul deals with that issue in a much more forceful way (such as excluding that person from communion & fellowship over in 1 Corinthians) ...

... nor is this dealing with such things as Christmas, Easter, Lent, Good Friday, Palm Sunday, Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday (commemorating the Last Supper), or any such “holy days” in the church calendar today—why? because none of them had even been invented by men at the point in which Paul wrote his epistles. (albeit those things are part of either being a wise son or a foolish son in God's sight)

3) Because of what is immediately taken up after our *instruction of equity* is completed—that is, what God has Paul deal with in Romans 15:8ff, which is the issue of the change in programs God made when He suspended His program w/ Isr. and brought in this present disp. of grace.

- So just to be ‘on the safe side’ (so to speak) - we're going to deal with these examples/illustrations as coming from a *weaker* brother who is operating and functioning as if he is still under God's “Time Past” program with Israel—because the truth of the matter is, THAT is where the vast majority of problems are going to occur in our dealings with any *weaker* brother situation.

- Any questions on that?

- Details of (:5) *One man esteemeth one day above another:*

- This first clause in the first sentence is talking about the *weaker* brother who is *esteeming* certain *days* on Israel's calendar above other days.

- such as feast days, unleavened bread, Passover, the day of atonement, Pentecost, all kinds of "Sabbath" days, - even "new moons" — as if the OT Law concerning these days is still in force.

- And just as with the issue of *eating* or *not eating*—the *weaker* brother is not rightly and properly understanding the doctrine concerning our Position that we now have "in Christ" that is according to the mystery; or issue of Sonship Liberty that we have in this disp. of grace according to the mystery of Christ as revealed to and through the apostle Paul (whose 'office we magnify' [Rom. 11:13] - i.e., we do not 'magnify' Moses' office!).

- So, in the case of the *weaker* brother—he *esteemeth one day above another:*

- "***esteemeth***" - what does it mean to *esteem*? (by the way, *esteem* is said of both the *weaker* and the *stronger* bro—and in (:6) "*regard*" is said of both the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother, too.)

- *esteem* = to set a value on something (whether high or low); to assign a value to something.

- And when used in a favorable sense (as it is here), it means to think highly of something; to FEEL something good or beneficial about something.

CRABB

ESTEEM, RESPECT, REGARD

Esteem, from the L. *aestimo*, signifies literally to set a value upon; *respect*, from the L. *respicio*, signifies to look back upon, to look upon with attention; *regard*, v. *To attend to*.

A favourable **sentiment** towards particular objects is included in the meaning of all these terms.

SMITH — *Esteem* is akin to affection.

- Point is—when you're dealing with the issue of *esteem* (and even *regard*) - you're dealing with both the way in which you THINK about something and the way in which you FEEL about it.

- And because of that, you are then going to make a decision based upon what is operating within your whole heart— (your mind [human spirit] and your soul).

- And it's critical to recognize that in BOTH CASES—(the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother) - the words used to describe what is going on in their inner man **is exactly the same!**

- In the case of the *weaker* brother—it's not that he's got 'weak' faith—or that something is wrong with his level of commitment—or anything along those lines ... (there's nothing wrong with him [as the subject of his faith] ...

... rather, it's the OBJECT of this faith that is the problem—that is, it's not what Moses said, it's what **Paul** said—it's not the scriptures pertaining to God's program with Isr., but it's the scriptures pertaining to the church, the body of Christ [Rom-Phlm]!

- Example: Apollos (see Acts 18:22-28)

- What this means then—is that by *esteeming* something (and even *regarding* something) - where, based upon what you THINK and FEEL about something—and then making a decision based upon it — you're now back to the issue of the CONSCIENCE! (which is why this is an issue of EQUITY)!!!

(see Rom 14, pgs. 105-107)

- **Point is:** a person who Biblically 'fits' the biblical definition of a *weaker* brother is very likely to have problems associated with his 'weakness' in *rightly dividing the word of truth*—which means that he is trying to function/live his Christian life under the OT Law (under God's program w/ Isr.) - and because of that, he is likely to ***esteem one day above another*** (i.e., place a value on a particular day that he believes, and which he FEELS is spiritually beneficial or spiritually good for him; while other days are not as spiritually good or beneficial for him) - why? because that's what the Law says!

- (ex., Exo. 31:14-15 ...
... but wait ...
... read :12-13 and :16-17!)

- BUT THAT'S NOT THE WAY A PROPERLY EDUCATED SON THINKS! - he knows he's not under that system of *tutors and governors* under that OT Law! (**Rom 6:14**)

- (see Col. 2:13-23)

- A properly educated son NEVER *esteems one day above another* ! - he never esteems one day as having more spiritual benefit/value than another! ... BUT ...

... **that does NOT mean that a properly educated "son" view all days have having NO SPIRITUAL BENEFIT & NO SPIRITUAL VALUE!!!**

- Sonship Liberty doesn't mean you're "off the hook" (so to speak) concerning the spiritual value of the days of your life!

- In other words—a properly educated "son" doesn't come along and say, Well, I'm not under the law, I'm under grace, so there are no special days of spiritual significance or spiritual value or spiritual benefit—so the way I view every day is that I see them with no value at all! **WRONG!**

(why? ... read the next clause of Rom. 14:5)

- ***another*** (the *stronger* brother who understands and appreciates Pauline doctrine for this disp. of Gentile Grace in which we live) ***esteemeth every day alike.***

- "*esteeming every day alike*" does NOT mean 'viewing every day as spiritually unprofitable or spiritually valueless'!

- To a son—every single day is a day of **great spiritual benefit** and has great spiritual significance—every day is a day of putting his Position in Christ into practice in every detail of his life! - there are no "days off"!

- you were taught that from Rom. 6:1-13:14!

- Sonship Edification takes care of "Part-Time Christianity!" [and it's the **only** things that does it!]

- **GODLY EXHORTATION** to the 2nd illustration/dilemma of the *weaker* brother who *esteemeth one day above another*, while the *stronger* brother (because of his understanding & appreciation of his Sonship Liberty) *esteemeth every day alike*.

- *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

- First of all—let’s dismiss the erroneous thinking about this verse—and the mishandling of it—and the misapplication of it

... **this verse is NOT saying that a person can believe anything he wants to believe and it’s all fine with God!!!**
(it doesn’t matter to God what you believe! - you can believe anything you want and God’s ok with it!) **WRONG!**

- Why? BECAUSE THE **CONTEXT** FORBIDS IT!!!
 - “rightly dividing the word of truth” forbids it;
 - properly handling God’s word forbids it;
 - the word of God itself forbids it;
 - godly edification which is in faith forbids it;
 - sonship education forbids it;
 - God, Himself forbids it!

... do we need to go on? ... do we need to run some verses? (you can do that on your own)

- **Let’s do a CONTEXT EXERCISE:**

- “*Let every man*” - Who is “*every man*”? every human being on the face of the earth, lost or saved? every Christian, every believer? even every member of the body of Christ ??? NO!

- In the context: “*every man*” is strictly and narrowly understood to be every man (or woman) who has determined to be involved in the process of their godly edification as the adopted, adult “son” / “daughter” that they are!!!

- Once you know who “*every man*” is, it makes that issue of trying to say that it doesn’t matter to God what a person believes to be **UTTERLY STUPID!** (sloppy Bible handling)

- In fact ... let’s keep this Context Exercise going ...

- (:6) - we have a *He* that *regards the day* and the same *He* that *eateth not*;

... and we have another *He* that *regardeth not the day* and the same *He* that *eateth* ...

Q: Who are these 2 *He*'s??

- (:7) - Who is "*us*"? and who is "*no man*" ?

- (:8) - Who is "*we*" ?

- (:9) - Who are "*the dead and living*" ?

- Point is: the *weaker* bro AND the *stronger* bro are **both**, believers who are committed to the godly edification process! (and that, alone, sets them apart from lost persons, and even saved persons who care nothing for their godly edification!)

- and Romans 14 is NOT dealing with any one else! (it's not dealing with the unbeliever or lost person at all ... it's not dealing with all believers or all Christians ... it's dealing with only a very small segment of believers, i.e., believers who are committed to, and dedicated to, and involved in the edification process!)

- You go and inject any other category of persons into this section, and you have just violated the context!

(:5b) *Let every man*

- Every person (*weak* or *strong*) who is committed to, and involved in the edification process is in view ...

... and that word *Let* tells you that they are expected to be operating upon some information that they have learned previous to this point—and whatever amount that is (little or much), has been received and is effectually working within him according to that godly edification process — and any future information of sound doctrine they will have effectually working within them is going to effectually work according to that same godly edification process... **meaning, WITHOUT YOU being their tutors and governors!**

- Again—it is perfectly right and fitting and proper for you as a *stronger* brother to be a helper to a *weaker* brother—i.e., to labor and work WITH God according to the edification process ... but NEVER “AS” GOD in it!

(:5b) *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

- “*fully persuaded*” = to carry or bear something—hence, to bear or bring fully; in a legal sense, ‘to carry **full evidence** of a thing’; to give **total proof** which yields a **mind** that is **fully settled** and **convinced beyond any shadow of a doubt.**

- Every brother (*weak* or *strong*) is expected to receive the *full persuasion* of his *mind* based upon the nature of the edification information given to him [which is a grace function] ...

... and that edification information (or sound doctrine) is given directly by some specific words of God (**because one is persuaded by words**) — the words of the apostle Paul—the God-ordained apostle of the Gentiles, to whom was committed the *revelation of the mystery*, and through whose ministry *the leading of the Spirit* takes place!

- again, we magnify Paul’s *office*, not Moses’!

- Paul, not Moses, is our *chief!* (1 Tim. 1:15-16)

- Note that we came to understand and appreciate a lot about that word *persuaded* back in Rom. 8:38!

- “*in his own mind*” — First, we again need to clear up what this is **NOT** talking about ...

... “*in his own mind*” does NOT mean whatever goes on in a person’s mind ‘willy-nilly’ (so to speak) - or whatever goes on in a person’s mind on a ‘whim’; or whatever he ‘fancies’; or according to his own ‘personal preferences’; or what he ‘wishes’ in his own mind; ... or the worse thing of all, whatever he **imagines** in his own mind!

- Truth is—for both the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother—(:5b) is an acknowledging of the sonship status of each other!

- and (especially the *stronger* bro) knows that a “son” is supposed to operate just as Rom. 12:1-2 said—he is to be *transformed by the renewing of his mind, that he may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* ... and to do so all on his own!

- That is, as a “son” whose desire is to be “a man after God’s own heart” - a “son” is supposed to get the understanding of his Father’s norms & standards (from his Father’s words) operating in his mind and thereby become *fully persuaded* of them ...

... and on the basis of those divine, Fatherly norms and standards, you’re to be discerning all on your own (on the basis of the sound doctrine learned), the *good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*.

- And one of the striking and powerful things said in (:5b) - [albeit a very simple matter] — is that little word “*own*” (... *in his own mind*)

- In other words—a *weaker* brother is NEVER to be *fully persuaded* by what is in YOUR mind!
(as his *tutor and governor*)!

- A “son” is expected to give his whole heart to his father (Pro. 23:26) so that his father’s heart will become his heart.

... and if the Father has your heart, then He has your mind—and if the Father has your mind, then the body, the conduct & behavior, and the labor will follow!

- This Fatherly Exhortation of (:5b) - *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind* - is the Father exhorting his sons, (and especially His *stronger* sons *in the faith*), to be fully AWARE of who they are (and who the *weaker* sons *in the faith* are) as the “sons” of God in accordance with their *spirit of adoption* and the *leading of the Holy Spirit* through Paul’s ministry as the *apostle of the Gentiles*!

- (:5b) expects the *stronger* son, especially, to **recognize** the sonship status of the *weaker* son—and then verses 6-9 have the *stronger* brother in view, **honoring** that sonship status.

- Now we come to the **fullness** of the Godly Thinking concerning Equitable Sonship Decision Making in our dealing with a *weaker* brother.

- We have now been given 2 Illustrations of the kind of Dilemmas that can arise when you have members of the local assembly who have Edificational Estate Differences ...

... that is, when you have some members of the local assembly who are advanced in their Sonship Edification (who can be called *strong in the faith*) - and you have others in the assembly who are just beginning their Sonship Edification (who can be called *weak in the faith*).

- And the danger is that these Edificational Estate Differences can produce UNGODLY **doubtful disputations** and **contentions** and **divisions** (of an ungodly kind) and **schisms** in the local assembly IF THESE SITUATIONS ARE NOT HANDLED WITH GODLY EQUITY!

- These *weaker* brother situations may come from the *weaker* brother's influence of the world at-large (and the religions of the world) ... but more often than not, they will come from the very **weakness** that the *weaker* brother has ...

... and his real *weakness* is being *weak* in the doctrine given to, and written by the apostle of the Gentiles: the Apostle Paul.

- That is, the *weaker* brother's *weakness* is in Pauline doctrine—(in “rightly dividing the word of truth” and properly handling the word of God).

- Hence, the 2 illustrations:

#1—the *stronger* brother, based upon his understanding & appreciation of his Sonship Liberty as taught in Paul's epistles, knows and believes (and rightly so) that *he may eat all things* — but the *weaker* brother, based upon knowing and believing what God said to Israel under the OT Law, *eats only herbs*.

#2—the *weaker* brother, again, based upon knowing and believing what God said to Israel under the OT Law and during the time in which God's program with Israel was in effect, *esteemeth one day above another* (Israel's calendar) ...

... but the *stronger* brother, based upon his understanding & appreciation of his Sonship Liberty as set forth by Paul, knows and believes that *every day* is to be *esteemed alike*.

- Remember that in this context the whole issue is **godly edification!** (the whole issue, the whole context is: the edification process!)

- Both: the *stronger* and the *weaker* brother are in the assembly for the purpose of getting their godly edification!

- And as you read through this passage, it becomes clear that while both members of the assembly are addressed (the *weak* and the *strong in the faith*) - it's clear that the weight or the balance of what is said falls to the *stronger* brother—he bears the greatest weight of responsibility and accountability!

- Therefore, if contentions, divisions, and schisms arise—more likely than not, it's due to the *stronger* brother and his inability to make godly Equitable Sonship Decisions!

- So, for you who are *stronger* ones *in the faith*—some godly Thinking has already been given to you in order to utilize some real Sonship Equity in order to bring about a godly remedy or godly solution to a dilemma that seems to have no outcome but one in which one or the other gets hurt.

... and there IS a godly remedy/solution by which not only **no one gets harmed**—but both the *strong* and the *weak* members of the assembly actually are benefitted by this Sonship Equity—a godly solution whereby the *weak in the faith* succeeds in getting his Sonship Edification underway; and whereby the *strong ones in the faith* continue their successful Sonship Edification as well.

- And the godly Thinking—or the godly Remedy or Solution comes in 2 Major Parts—a “Part A” and a “Part B” (if you will).

- **Part A:** The viewpoint of the Father—God's viewpoint!
 - In other words: you have to view a member of the local assembly who desires to be involved in the edification process (*weak* or *strong*) **from how God Himself views him!**

- And that Divine, Godly, Fatherly viewpoint of how God Himself THINKS about any person desiring to be involved in the edification process is given in the following:

- ***God hath received him. (:3)***
 - ***Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. (:4)***

- That's what God THINKS as He views **any** person involved in the godly edification process!!!

- And one of the Major issues that you have to get a proper and sufficient 'grip' on (and make some connections with) is WHY the viewpoint of God is what is stated in (:3 & :4) ...

... and the 'bottom line' or fundamental issue for WHY God *receives* the *weaker* brother, and *holds him up*, and *makes him stand* is because God LOVES that *weaker* brother ... God highly **values** and **esteems** him with godly love and charity!

- God's *receiving* him and *holding him up* and *making him stand* is because of godly **charity**—God **cherishes** that *weaker* bro!

- **Charity** is the fruit that is produced by selfless love when it is so strong that it cherishes another—and as that strongest form of godly love, *charity* actively seeks and delights to do whatever is profitable and beneficial for that person—even to the point of gladly abasing itself and/or giving up of itself in order to provide for their good and betterment!

- And how do we know for sure that godly love and charity is directly tied to the Father's thinking about one who is *weak in the faith*? ... because he has committed himself to the edification process! ... and what were you taught about your Father's viewpoint

... (or how God viewed YOU) when you began your Sonship Edification? — (especially in Rom. 8:16-19 in connection with your Sonship Establishment)?

... one of the inescapable matters that was supposed to be perceived by you in all that your Father told you there, was ... JUST HOW MUCH YOUR FATHER LOVES YOU, and CHERISHES YOU!

- And that godly love & charity that so powerfully operates in your Father heart—and that same measure of it—is supposed to be; and is expected to be operating within your heart as well!

- You're supposed to value and esteem; and love and cherish the *weaker* brother exactly as your Father does!

- And by the effectual working of those words of God in (:3 and :4)—you should already have a good measure of being *transformed by the renewing of your mind* taking place! and the development of godly Equity! (the *weaker* bro. should never be intimidated by YOU in Bible class!)

- **Part B:** Acknowledging and Honoring the **mechanics** of the edification process.

- And by “mechanics” I mean, the design, construction, and function of the edification process — how it’s designed; and how it’s designed to function properly — the “machinations” of it (how the edification process is crafted by God and how He designed it to accomplish godly edification).

- In other words—acknowledging and honoring how godly edification gets done! and how it gets done with ANY person who is involved in it (*weak* or *strong*)!

- And for you who are *strong in the faith* up to this point—you should be an expert in being able to describe the ‘machinations’ of the edification process!
Q: Can you describe the mechanics of it????

- And if you pay careful attention to what God says concerning the godly Remedy/Solution to this 2nd Illustration of the *weaker* bro *esteeming one day above another* and the *stronger* bro *esteeming every day alike* — if you pay attention the last sentence of (:5) and then all that is said in (:6-:9) — a “shift” takes place from what the Father THINKS about His “son” and his commitment to getting his Sonship Edification to that edification process itself!

- (:5b) is a direct Fatherly Exhortation for his sons to think about and to direct their attention to the PROCESS of godly edification!

- *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*
(That statement exhorts a son to RECOGNIZE and to **ACKNOWLEDGE** the sonship status of the *weaker* son—and to acknowledge and recognize it in view of the ‘mechanics’ of how it all takes place—especially as stated in a ‘nutshell’ at that Major Sonship Checkpoint in Romans 12:1-2!)

- Then, (:6—:9) [the godly Remedy/Solution for the dilemma of Edificational Estate Differences] — those verses deal with the edification process, but instead of simply acknowledging it—the *strong one in the faith* is supposed to acquire the godly THINKING of how the Father **HONORS** that edification process (for the beginner & the advanced)

... and by the effectual working of those verses, you are to come to the point where you HONOR that edification process exactly like you Father does! ... and not just ‘honor’ it for YOU, but for EVERY “son”, even the one who is *weak in the faith*!

- and by ‘honor’ I not only mean ‘to give it the highest esteem or value (making it the highest priority in your life) ... which is true and proper ... but I also mean to ‘honor’ the edification process in the sense of being fully submitted to it; and to give it full deference (or full compliance).

- In other words—EVERY “son” (*weak* or *strong*) MUST comply with the “**mechanics**” for Sonship Education and Sonship Edification! ... EVERY “son” bows to that (so to speak)! [not to each other!]

- And when you have **those 2 things**—when you have:
- 1) The viewpoint of the Father Himself and how He thinks and views any & every “son” who has determined to be personally involved with the edification process;
 - 2) Acknowledging and Honoring the “mechanics” of the edification process ...

... when you have those 2 matters effectually working within your ‘inner man’ - (in your ‘mind’; in your human spirit) - and the godly love & charity that is inseparably connected with it ... ONLY THEN do you possess the proper godly SKILL to make Equitable Sonship Decisions regarding the *weaker* brother!

- Only then can you be **fair** and **impartial** in your dealings with a *weaker* brother that matches perfectly up with the Equity of the Father Himself!

- Why? because only then do you properly (and in a godly way) CONSIDER (or bring into your thinking and decision-making process) the **conscience** of that *weaker* brother—and CONSIDER the power of the moral virtue that is in effect in that *weaker* brother’s ‘inner man’!

- And that’s what Equity is all about—considering ALL of the facts in any circumstance or situation that would prove to be UNFAIR to another brother “in Christ” - (or not good; or not beneficial; or detrimental to him)

... you understand & appreciate how the effectual working of the curriculum for godly sonship edification worked to deal with **YOUR conscience** and changed your mind (and ‘inner man’) ... and you are going to honor that same ‘mechanic’ to bring about the needed change of mind in the *weaker* bro!

- (:6) *He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

- In (:6) we have 2 complete sentences.
 - And in (:6) God brings BOTH illustrations together in dealing with your Acknowledging & Honoring the mechanics of the edification process.
 - Why bring them both together? because in both categories of “sons” (the *weaker* son, and the *stronger* son *in the faith*) the issue common to both of them is the issue of **being involved in the edification process**.
 - And whether the *weaker* bro is *eating only herbs*, and/or *esteeming one day above another*—or whether the *stronger* bro *eats all things* and/or *esteems every day alike* — both brothers; both “sons” are involved in the godly edification process . . .
 - . . . and since that’s the case, both the ‘eating’ Illustration, and the ‘days’ Illustration deal with the issue of acknowledging and honoring the edification process!
 - God simply chose the ‘eating’ Illustration to have a 2-fold purpose: **1)** To point out how God, as that son’s Father THINKS about a “son” who is involved in the edification process [:3c & :4]; and **2)** Acknowledging & honoring the mechanics of the edification process [:5b—:9].
- The 1st Sentence of (:6) deals with the *esteeming of one day above another* (in the case of the *weaker* bro), and *esteeming every day alike* (in the case of the *stronger* bro).
- But we have a change in the terminology: from *esteem* in (:5) to *regard* in (:6).
 - Why the change? and what’s the difference?
 - (this is NOT talking about *regarding* in the most common sense of the word—meaning: to give your mind to it; or to give your attention to it—or in a very similar sense, to *esteem* it)
 - . . . this is not simply saying the same thing (:5) said, but only in a different way.

- Truth is, you can't *regard* something until you *esteem* it first.

- *regard* = **Webster's 1828**

1. To look towards; to point or be directed.
2. To observe, to notice with some particularity.
3. To attend to with respect and estimation; to value.
4. To attend to as a thing that affects our interest or happiness; to fix the mind on as a matter of importance.
5. To esteem; to hold in respect and affection.
6. **To keep; to observe with religious or solemn attention.**
He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;
(Rom. 14:6)

- But notice, if not careful, you might get yourself into a bit of a 'snag' here ...

- In the *weaker* brother's case:

- he *esteems one day above another*, and then (naturally enough) he *regards the day* that he *esteems*.

- but in the *stronger* brother's case:

he *esteems every day alike*, but then he **does NOT regard the day!**

- So therefore it's quite possible (and rightly so) to *esteem* a day, **but NOT regard it!** (which is the *stronger* bro's case)

- and notice that it's carefully worded—it does NOT say that the *stronger* brother '**has no regard for the day**' ... No, because that would be using the word *regard* in the very sense of valuing and esteeming the day ... which the *st. bro.* **does do** (in fact he *esteems every day alike*) ...

... rather, it says, "**he doth not regard it.**"

- in other words, it's NOT that the *st. bro.* "has no regard" for the day in the sense of not valuing or esteeming the day, because he does ... it's just that the *st. bro.* does not *regard* the day in the sense of **observing it as having special spiritual significance or special spiritual benefit over any other day.**

- And to really get clarity on this passage—just keep it in the context God put it—meaning, in the case of the *weaker* bro, he is operating upon the OT Law of commandments contained in ordinances respecting Israel’s calendar—and the *stronger* bro is operating upon Pauline doctrine as he “rightly divides the word of truth”!

- and that context will define the word *regard* for you!

(:6) - 1st Clause

He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;

- ***He*** (the *weaker* brother) ***regardeth the day*** (that is, ‘regarding’ it in the sense of **observing** it as having greater spiritual significance or benefit above other days of less spiritual significance or benefit).

or—observing a day on Israel’s calendar and carrying out all the commandments and ordinances, ceremonies, memorials, and sacrifices God said to do in observance of that day.

- Once the *weaker* brother *esteems one day above another* in regards to Israel’s calendar ... he, (as a natural result of that), actually carries it out—he “***regards***” it; he **observes** it ...

... for example: he **observes the day of atonement**—but because his is honestly ignorant of Pauline doctrine, and hence, not “rightly dividing the word of truth” - he doesn’t realize that he’s *not under the law, but under grace*—and he doesn’t realize that the “day of atonement” will not be fulfilled with the nation Israel until this present disp. of grace is complete and God resumes and fulfills His program with Israel—and he doesn’t understand & appreciate the doctrine of our “At-One-Ment” as taught to us in Romans 5—and therefore that the ‘day of atonement’ as commanded to be observed/*regarded* in Israel’s program has been suspended along with Israel’s entire program!

(:6) - 2nd Clause

“and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.”

- **and he** (the *stronger* brother) **that regardeth not the day** (that is, while the *st. bro.* highly *esteems* and highly values *every day alike* as having great spiritual significance and benefit—because he’s been properly educated and edified as a “son” in this disp. of grace under Pauline doctrine—the *st. bro.* does NOT *regard the day* in the sense of observing any OT Law commandments, ordinances, ceremonies, memorials, sacrifices or observances as given in the portion of God’s word written to, for, and about Israel.)

- And in this way—while the *stronger* brother does, indeed, *esteem every day alike*, he does NOT *regard* (or observe in the OT Law way) any day at all!

- This ‘shift’ in terminology from *esteem* to *regard* is what you call GREAT VOCABULARY CONTROL!

- (back to the 1st Clause of :6)

- **He** (the *weaker* brother) **that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;**

- The *weaker* bro who, by definition, has responded positively to the edification process—(he is attending the local assembly with an honest heart—he is there **honestly to get his godly edification**) ...

... and this *weaker* bro is in the very condition and circumstances **you** were in when you were only a ‘**beginner**’ in godly edification.

- But due to his honest ‘weakness’ in Pauline, sonship doctrine, and due to operating upon what God has said to Israel in His program with Israel—the *weaker* bro is keeping to Israel’s calendar ...

... therefore he is *esteeming one* of Israel’s holy days *above another* — and because he *esteems* that day, He (as :6 says) *regards* that day...

... in other words, he does not understand and appreciate WHAT TIME IT IS — **he doesn’t understand sonship time!** (he’s on Israel’s ‘time-schedule’ rather than the body of Christ’s ‘time-schedule’) - he hasn’t got the effectual working of Rom. 6:1-13:14!

- Therefore because the *weaker* bro *esteems one day above another*, it naturally follows that he *regards* that day ... that is, he observes and physically practices the OT Law commandments, ordinances, memorials, & observances of that *day*, but not on other days.

- (It’s really a very simple thing to understand—nothing too difficult about it at all)

- But the critical thing you have to get effectually working within you is the godly Thinking that produces the godly Remedy/Solution to the dilemma—(that is, to the potential, and very dangerous problems that can arise when the *weaker* bro is handled improperly and in an ungodly way—in which the result would be **contention, strife, and division** taking place within the local assembly) ...

... and that critical, godly Thinking Remedy is stated very simply— (simple, yes, but profound—which makes a huge **impact** upon your mind/human spirit—and you are expected to be **suitably impressed** with it) ...

- And that godly Remedy is stated in those last 3 words of the clause: **UNTO THE LORD** — “the weaker brother *that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord;*

- That little expression (in this context) **is an expression of the edification process!** ... how do I know that to be true?

I know that in the mind of that *weaker* brother, what he is operating upon (both in his Thinking and in his Conduct & Behavior) is all being done **unto the Lord** ...

... and that expression *unto the Lord* is the expression of the most basic and fundamental thing there is in the edification process—it’s the ‘root’ of it all ...

... So, what is at the **root** of the entire edification process? (which, by the way, is true in BOTH, God’s prog. w/Isr and with us as members of the body of Christ in this disp./grace)

..... [we’ll answer that in a minute]

- Let’s consider (:6) in it’s constituent parts:

- WEAKER BROTHER

- Regards the day
(“unto the Lord”)

- Eats Not
(“to the Lord”)

- STRONGER BROTHER

- Does not regard the day
(“to the Lord”)

- Eats
(“to the Lord”)

- So—in both cases of the *weaker* and the *stronger* bro—what is the ‘Common Denominator’? ... in connection with the “days” and the “eating” - what do they both have in common?

- A: What they are both Thinking and what they are both doing (putting into practice in their Conduct & Behavior) is all being done “TO THE LORD”!

- And that expression, “*to the Lord*” should take you right back to the very beginning of your coming to understand and appreciate that God did much more than just ‘justify you unto eternal life’ - but He also ‘**sanctified you unto functional life**’!

- And what does your sanctified position “in Christ” provide for you to be able to do? ... what is your ‘functional life’ for?

A: It provides for you to be GOD-LIKE—it provides for you to become GODLY!

- The ‘radical root’ issue of your sanctified, functional life is to become LIKE GOD! (godly)

- And what is the MEANS for you to become “godly”? ... How do you become “godly”? ... [by prayer? by going to church? by Bible memorization? by giving money? by a Pastor or Bible teacher, or any person for that matter? ...]

NO—you become “godly” by means of God’s own **edification process!**

- The point is: “godliness” and “edification” go hand-in-hand ... they are inseparable ... you can NOT have one without the other!!!

- And while you may say, “I know that ... that’s nothing new to me” — GOOD! ... but that’s NOT the point ...

... the point is: You need to **recognize** that and **honor** that! ... and recognize/honor that the way your Father does!!!

- So take that understanding back to the reason for why God uses the 2 Illustrations the way He does ...

1) The godly Remedy for the 1st Illustration of “eating” is to view one another (the *weaker* bro., especially) from God’s viewpoint—how He Thinks about any person who is actively involved in the edification process ...

... He views him (*weak* or *strong*) as one who actively desires to be GODLY (God-like)!

2) The godly Remedy for the 2nd Illustration of “esteeming/regarding days” is to acknowledge and honor the mechanics of the edification process ...

... and that’s because the “edification process” is the ONLY way in which any person (*weak* or *strong*) is going to become GODLY (God-like) in a way in which God can accept and be pleased with!

- So with that in view—the way in which God can point you right to how you’re going to Remedy any problems that may arise in a *weaker* brother situation is to get you to “see” that both YOU and the WEAKER brother have a COMMON issue ...

... regardless where either of you are at in the edification process—(beginner or advanced) — what you BOTH have in common is that you both are actively involved in becoming LIKE GOD: **GODLINESS!**

- And without having to take you into a lengthy review of the edification process, God can simply come along and make a very short, simple statement **that POINTS you right to it!** ... all God has to say is: that what either of you Think, and what either of you Do, you do it **“to the Lord”!**

- Do you see that in the case of either one (the *weaker* or the *stronger*) — do you see that there is something in **common**? ... and if it’s something you both have in **common**, doesn’t that mean that you have it **fairly**? ... and **impartially**? ... and **equally**?

... and if something is fair, impartial, and equal to both parties concerned, what have you got??? **EQUITY!!!**

(and in this case, **GODLY EQUITY!**)

- Your Heavenly Father has just given you His very Thinking in order to make Equitable decisions regarding a *weaker* brother—(it's not complete yet, we have 6 more verses to go) ... and along with that, He has given you a Thinking Exercise in order for you to use what He has already taught you—and together with what He just said, godly Equity is beginning to be produced & generated within you by means of the very edification process in view!

- That expression "*to the Lord*" is NOT just some Christian 'slogan' that is used just any old way—or any unintelligent way ... no ...

... when that expression is used by an intelligent, properly educated "son" of God, it has great **meaning** and great **significance!** — (it's not merely a matter of 'sounding like a Christian' or 'Christianizing' your circumstances by invoking an incantation [using it as a verbal charm or spell in order to produce a magical effect]!)

- Now—let's note one other thing about this expression "*to the Lord*"

- In connection with the 2nd Illustration of "days" - you have that expression: *unto the Lord* and *to the Lord* ...

... and in connection with the 1st Illustration of "eating" - you have the expression: *to the Lord* twice, followed by the expression: *giveth God thanks* twice.

- What I'm after is—what both the *weaker* and *stronger* bro Thinks and Does is done *to the Lord*—and in the case or Illustration of "eating" they both *giveth God thanks* ...

- in other words, you have the word *Lord* and the word *God* ... are they the same Person of the Godhead? or different members of the Godhead?

- My understanding is that they are different members of the Godhead: *Lord* = the Lord Jesus Christ
God = God the Father

- What you Do as a "son" (based upon what you Think as a "son") is done *to the Lord* Jesus Christ in this context—why?

- Because (again) the edification process is in view—and not merely **your individual** edification, but the edif. of the **body!**

- All of the matters involved in ‘deploying’ the effectual working of the doctrine of our godly sonship edification can be said to be done “*to the Lord*” - the Lord Jesus Christ.

- In connection with our individual edification as a son, that is only consistent with our having been baptized/fully identified with the Lord Jesus Christ—we are “in Christ” ... *baptized into Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:3)* ...

... and not only that—but the very predestinated goal of our sonship edification is that we are to be *conformed to the image of God’s Son!* (Rom. 8:29)

[we are a faithful copy of a faithful copy!]

- And in connection with our collective edification as a local church/assembly—we, *being many members, are one body in Christ!* (Rom. 12:3-5)

... and our Father is not only going about to create a particular image of His Son in you (individually), but He is also going about to create a particular image of His Son in us as a local assembly!

[as an assembly, we are a faithful copy of a faithful copy of a faithful copy!]

- Now let’s see if what we have covered so far holds up to Scripture:

- Isaiah 11:1-5 Equity: righteous rule!

- 1 Cor. 6:12-14- (note how [:14] parallels Rom. 14:9)

- 1 Cor. 10:22-24—(:24 - “*wealth*” = spiritual wealth; things that *edify!*)

- One of the major products of the *instruction of Equity* is a highly-developed and highly-advanced decision-making skill: (which is why I wanted to look at these 2 passages in 1 Cor) ...

... and that highly-developed, highly-advanced skill is called expedient—knowing, and understanding and appreciating what is expedient !

- So, what we have come to understand and appreciate so far really does stand up to Scripture.

- What does *expedient* mean?

- it's used 7x in Scripture—all in the NT:

- 3x by John (11:50; 16:7; 18:14)

- 4x by Paul (1 Cor. 6:12; 10:23; 2 Cor. 8:10; 12:1)

- *expedient* is actually a variation from the word *expedite*—and *expedite* = from the L. Prefix *ex* = “out” + L. *pedis* = fetter or chain for the feet—hence, to let one out of his fetter or chain.

- What is the opposite of *expedite* or *expedient*? ...

A: (just as the opposite of the L. Prefix *ex* is the L. *im*), the opposite of *expedite* is ***impede*** = to obstruct the progress!

- ***expedient*** = (OED) has 2 major meanings:

1) hasty, speedy, skillfully

2) Something conducive to another's advantage, or conducive to a definite purpose; fit, proper, or suitable to the

circumstances of the case [by the way, that's **EQUITY**] — something that helps forward an object.

[the 2nd meaning is the one we're after]

- basically it means = that which serves to advance a desired result. (but there's a shade of meaning to it that makes it the most excellent word-choice in this context)

- Something that is *expedient* is **more** than something that is 'beneficial' or 'profitable' or 'helpful' or even simply 'good for you'

... when a person does something that is *expedient*, he is utilizing a well-developed SKILL SET and putting it into operation (i.e., deploying it).

- Words like 'beneficial', 'profitable', 'helpful', or 'good' more often than not, have only the END in view ...

... but *expedient* has BOTH, the END in view AND the **MEANS** to that end ... and the **MEANS** is just as (if not more) important as the END!

- truth is, the word “*fit*” or even “*meet*” is a better synonym than ‘beneficial’, ‘profitable’, ‘helpful’, or ‘good’ ... (because as Charles Smith says, “*expediency is a kind of fitness*”) ...

... (Skeat) - “fit” = from the Icelandic *fitja*, meaning **to knit together!**

- *expedient* signifies this ‘together-ness’: (Crabb) - “*expedient* signifies belonging to, or forming a part of—[such as in the word *expedition*]”

- When a person does something that is *expedient* for another person, he is deploying a well-developed skill-set that in the END seeks the welfare of the other person—he seeks to help him forward; to advance him to a desired result ... but NOT in just any old way ...

... (Crabb again) “The *expediency* of a thing depends altogether upon the **outward circumstances**”

- And the well-developed skill-set that is going to be deployed here is the skill-set of EQUITY (along with *discretion*)—and where godly Equity is concerned (where the *stronger* one in the faith is dealing with the *weaker* one in the faith) - the stronger will consider the circumstances that the weaker bro is in; and will be guided by the Father’s *instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment* as well as godly Love & Charity — resulting in a decision that is fair & impartial and ultimately benefitting **both** the *weaker* bro **and** the assembly as a whole.

- And it’s apparent to me that, at least the way in which the apostle Paul uses the term *expedient* in all 4 passages where he uses it—that the word *expedient* is actually a **BODY** term — a term that considers not only existing body parts or members, but (just as a body does), allows for new body parts/members to be developed & perfectly joined with all other members.

... it's a sonship expression used when some real sonship decision-making has to be done with godly *Equity* that considers all of the existing members of the body being properly joined together and smoothly, seamlessly, and naturally incorporating 'beginning' (or *weaker*) members into the body without any interruption or disruption to the edification of every member of the body!

- In other words—one of the grand & glorious results of godly *Equity* is making decisions that are *expedient*—and when that is done—the result of that is: FELLOWSHIP, COMMUNION, CONCORD ... which will end up with us being *compacted* (*Eph. 4:16*) and *knit together in love* (*Col.2:2, 19*)!

- Making Sonship Decisions concerning the *weaker* brother that are of the variety of being *expedient* for the *weaker* brother's **edification** is one of the great features of **godly Equity**—a feature that will prepare you for; and be essential in your **righteous rule** in the heavenly realm!!! (to the glory, honor, and pleasure of your Heavenly Father!) ...
... Like Father, like Son, like son, like assembly, like creature!

- One other thing to note: beginning in (:6) God has the apostle Paul repeatedly use the word *Lord* for the 2nd Member of the Godhead: the Lord Jesus Christ ... not "Jesus"; not "Christ"; but "**Lord**" ...

... in fact, from the first time God uses the word "*Lord*" in Ch. 14:1-15:7—He uses it first here in (:6) and that kicks off a series of 11x He uses the word "*Lord*" in this section!

- (I'd say God is trying to emphasize something here).

- **Lord** = the English word *Lord* is believed to have come from the OE *hlafweard* = bread + keeper. The primary sense of the word denotes the head of a household in his relation to the servants and dependents who "eat his bread." With regard to the etymological sense, the "bread-lord" was an employer of labor—a master; a person possessing supreme power and authority.

- The *lord* was, therefore, understood to be the one who **provided for** and **sustained** the very **LIFE** of those of his household! (**without him, you die!**)

- And by repeatedly using that word *Lord*—in the context of Equitably dealing with a *weaker* bro—our Father is emphasizing and bringing into our thinking and reinforcing in our thinking one of the basic, ‘root’ elements of the *Lord* issue:

- The *weaker* bro—who *regards the day*, and who *eateth not*, does what he does with the Thinking that he is doing it TO THE **LORD!** (and where godly edifying is concerned, rightly so) ...

- And the *stronger* bro—who *regards not the day*, and who *eateth all things*, does what he does with the Thinking that he is doing it TO THE **LORD, TOO!** (and where godly edifying is concerned, rightly so!)

- And while it’s a rather simple and easy thing to grasp—God goes to great lengths here in the terminology He uses to get into your mind some godly Thinking about the edification process:

- and going back to that basic ‘root’ element of the word *Lord*—(the ‘bread-keeper’; the ‘bread-lord’; the One who, without His provision, and without His ability to sustain you, you would DIE) ...

... the ‘root’ element/issue of all that is: when the word *Lord* is being used in this manner and with this frequency—you’re being told in no uncertain terms that YOU ARE TOTALLY **DEPENDENT** UPON **HIM** ... He is the One who provides for and who sustains your sanctified, functional, edificational, sonship, spiritual LIFE! ...

... and the other side of that coin is: YOU ARE **NOT** DEPENDENT UPON ANYONE ELSE FOR THAT LIFE—(YOU ARE NOT DEPENDENT UPON ANOTHER “BROTHER” (*weak* or *strong*) FOR THAT LIFE! (not even Paul!))

- You see, it’s in sanctification that you can talk about ‘Lordship’ - NOT justification! (it’s not ‘Lordship Salvation’, it’s ‘Lordship Sanctification’!)

- So we should have a proper & sufficient understanding and appreciation for the entire 1st Sentence of (:6) ...

6 (following up with the godly Remedy of that 2nd Illustration of (:5) *He (the weaker brother) that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he (the stronger brother) that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.*

- (any problems with that? ... that godly Thinking should now be effectually working within your 'inner man')

- Now, the final detail of (:6)

- (2nd Sentence) - dealing with the 'eating' vs. 'not eating' issue ...

6 ... (following up with the godly Remedy of that 1st Illustration of (:2) *He (the stronger brother) that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he (the weaker brother) that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

- (by the way—do you get the idea that there is a LOT of similarity here? ... there is ... and the similarity is that in BOTH cases, the edification process in effect; BOTH are actively participating in the edification process! ... and that's the POINT!)

- And what your Father HONORS is that edification process as His "son" ... and the Father's expectation is that you HONOR it just exactly as He does!

- Notice what the Father does here:

- He first of all sets forth a case—a common issue that may arise within a local assembly where you have various levels of edification going on—some are beginners (*weak*), some are more advanced (*strong*).

- And that case is set forth in (:2) *one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs* — but notice **HOW** He sets it forth—(outside of 1 term: "*believeth*") the whole thing is EXTERNAL—it's only the cold facts of what you can SEE!

- Then the Father sets forth another case—another common issue that may arise within a local assembly where you have various levels of edification going on ...

- And that case is set forth in (:5) *One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike.* — and again, notice **HOW** the Father sets it forth—and again, you have only the cold facts of what you can SEE—the whole thing is **EXTERNAL!**

- But then—in (:6) the Father combines the 2 Illustrations together—but now the WAY in which He sets them forth is to see what is going on **INTERNALLY**—the whole thing is designed to get you to understand and appreciate (edification-wise) **WHAT YOU CAN NOT SEE!** (the ‘inner man’)

- You can see the *weaker* brother *Not Eating*, and you can see the *weaker* brother *regarding the day* — and then you can see the *stronger* brother *eating*, and you can see the *stronger* brother *regarding Not the day*.

- But the point of (:6) is to draw back the curtain (so to speak) of what is ‘**seen**’ to what you **can’t ‘see**’:

- in the case of the *weak*: *unto the Lord; & to the Lord, and giveth God thanks*

- in the case of the *strong*: *to the Lord; & to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks*

- Those common expressions are expressions of the edification process going on in both of those “sons”!

- and this is an ‘exercise’ for our ‘inner man’ that our Father is giving us so that we will learn what the Corinthians failed to learn! (**see 2 Cor. 4:1-18 [:18]**)

- Point is—if your idea of godliness is only what you can see ... you’re going to end up in pure **LEGALISM!** (and godly Sonship Edification **avoids legalism** at all cost!)

- **One Final detail of (:6)** — in that 2nd Sentence —

He that eateth (the *stronger* brother, going back to that 1st Illustration of [:2]) *eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not* (the *weaker* brother in that 1st Illustration of [:2]), *to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

- and what I'm after is that expression: **giveth God thanks.**

- And again, my understanding is, that this is also an expression that is directly tied to the edification process! ... **giveth God thanks in this context is an edification process expression!**

- This issue of 'giving God thanks' is another one of those expressions that is ABUNDANTLY used by Christian folks today—but is almost always so misused that it has all but LOST any real meaning!

- Giving God "thanks" is one of the most common things in all of Christianity—but it is also one of the most misunderstood—and mostly it's done (usually very awkwardly, or usually done with a lot of apprehension and fear—and a lot of anxiety & dread) surrounding eating time.

- What does it mean to "thank"; to give "thanks"; or to give God "thanks" ???

- (Walter Skeat—An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language) — **THANK** = derived from many languages (Dan., Swed., Ger.) - the primary sense is that of **thought**, and is closely allied to **THINK!** (OED as well)

- And this one thing alone makes "thanks" far more than what most folks ever do—because above all, **"thanks" is a THINKING TERM!** (most "thanks" is thought-less!; most "thanks" is done as a 'chore' or as a ritual without meaning!)

- In most cases, giving "thanks" is just a matter of civility and politeness—but it doesn't really have any thought [or at least very little thought] behind it at all. (it's just a way to not offend someone) ...

... but what does God's word have to say about giving **"thanks"**?

- “**Thanks**” comes in a variety of variations:
thank / thanks / thankful / thanksgiving

- 1st Use in the Bible—Lev. 7:12ff
- 1st use in Romans—1:8
- 1st historical use that pre-dates Lev.7—Romans 1:21

PAUL

- Acts 27:35; 28:15

- (see additional notes on uses in Paul’s epistles)

- [used in all Paul’s epistles except Gal. & Titus]

- THANKS = a THINKING term—*thanks* is **thought-full (full of thought)!**

- **OED**—(noun)

1. thought
2. Favourable thought or feeling, good will; graciousness, grace, favor.
3. Kindly thought or feeling entertained towards any one for favour or services received; grateful thought, gratitude.
4. The expression of gratitude; the grateful acknowledgement of a benefit or favour.

- (verb)
1. To give thanks.
 2. To give thanks to a person.
 3. To give thanks to; to express gratitude or obligation to.

- **Webster’s 1828**

1. To express gratitude for a favor; to make acknowledgments to one for kindness bestowed. *Thanks* = expression of gratitude; an acknowledgment made to express a sense of favor or kindness received. Gratitude is the feeling or sentiment excited by kindness; *thanks* are the expression of the sentiment.

- **Crabb’s**—*thankfulness* is the outward expression of a grateful feeling; *gratitude* is the feeling itself. Our *thankfulness* is measured **by the number of our words**; our *gratitude* is measured by the nature of our actions.

Smith's—*Gratitude* relates rather to the inner state of feeling, *thankfulness* to the exhibition of it in words. ... **We may look grateful. We speak our thanks. Thankfulness is mistrusted if it be not expressed;** ... *Thankfulness* is uneasy till it has acknowledged a kindness; *gratitude*, till it has recompensed it.

- So in light of a dictionary-type understanding of *thanks*—the BIG issue in *thanks* **IS THE ISSUE OF EXPRESSING GRATITUDE BY MEANS OF WORDS—THE BIG ISSUE IS SPEAKING WORDS!**

- If you are going to “give thanks”, you’re going to have to SAY IT IN WORDS!

- **“THANKS” is VERBAL!** — we give *thanks* by our **words!**

- and that’s a basic, fundamental thing—but that’s a BIG thing that we have to acknowledge the reality of, if real *thanks* is ever going to be meaningful! [especially as a “son” of God]

- Now at least 2 major things are going to have to be done, in order to get not merely a dictionary-type definition of *thanks*—but rather, to get a Biblical understanding of it that perfectly fits with the context of godly Sonship Edification and the active participation of the *weak* and *strong* one’s in the faith **in** that godly edification process.

1) “*Thanks*” or the giving of *thanks* has to be taken out of the realm of ‘ritual politeness & civility’ where it really has **no** meaning at all!

- Sonship *thanks* is NOT simply a matter of being polite and civil toward God!!!

... it’s not just an ‘involuntary reflex’ action we have because ‘God is great; God is good’ and we’re not!

... neither is it a ‘ritual without meaning’ or a religious incantation that we do when we have had a bunch of horrible things happen to us—when our life ‘stinks’ and our life is a pile of crappy situations ...

... but because we know God could make it even worse if we don’t behave right ... we grit our teeth and say, “T-h-a-n-k Y-o-u ...” [it’s not to be forced!]

2) The second major thing that has to be done is to get a proper **Working Definition** for *thanks* that fits with the context of a saint (*weak* or *strong in the faith*) who is actively involved in and participating in the godly edification process.

- to do this—we can take from our dictionary-type definition and the ‘shades of meaning’ that come from our dictionaries of English synonyms—and we can recognize a couple of things that are perfectly in line with what is going on in the godly edification process ...

- *Thanks* is a **thinking** term—and as such, it requires that we put some things together in our mind—and without doing that, you’re only going through the ‘ritual of politeness & civility’!

- Godly, Biblical *thanksgiving* is **intelligent!** it is based upon an awareness of something or some things that God has done for you by His grace!

- And since God the Father and God the Son are not physically present with you in this world at the present time—that means that whatever gracious thing God has done for you (to which you are going to respond to in giving Him *thanks*) is going to have to be confronted in His WORD!

- (and even the *weaker* brother has some measure of an awareness of some thing(s) that God has done for him by His grace ... remember, he’s a *weaker* bro,; it doesn’t say he’s an ‘empty’ brother ... he’s one who is *weak in the faith* ... he’s *weak* in Pauline doctrine ... he’s not ‘void’ of it!)

... and this is an essential & critical issue—the *weaker* bro is committed to participating in the edification process—and along with that naturally comes a particular ‘mind-set’ ... a particular viewpoint and perspective—the *weaker* bro isn’t ‘just saved’ - rather, he’s saved PLUS—and the PLUS is that he sees value and benefit to being (at the very least) “godly” that will affect every detail of his life! (he desires a true, biblical, godly life!)

- Now at this point I want to take a ‘time-out’ in developing our train of thought that we’re on—and I want to bring one other thing into our thinking concerning the issue of giving *thanks* ...

... When you *thank* someone for something—even in our definition of *thanks* so far) - when you verbally express your gratitude in a real and thoughtful way (not in that ‘ritual politeness & civility’ type way) ... there is a very basic thing going on in your thinking ...

... and that basic thing is that you have seen that your life has had a particular NEED that has been somehow MET by the gracious act of another ...

... and the basic thing you are acknowledging to that person who has met your need is: your complete satisfaction and contentment—the need has been met to your complete satisfaction, and you are contented in the fact that nothing is left undone.

- In the case of God and His gracious act—you’re acknowledging that His grace has perfectly met the situation; it’s perfectly fitting; suitable; proper; right; and even just! ...

... there’s nothing unfair about it; nothing unjust; and it’s not lacking; ...

... in other words—godly *thanksgiving* is a verbal expression for something God has done by His grace to meet a need in your life that is perfectly **appropriate and acceptable** to you!

- Godly *thanksgiving* is the verbal expression of you being pleased, satisfied, and contented with what God’s grace has done for you (that you couldn’t do yourself) ... it is the verbal expression of godly contentment and satisfaction over your need being met!

- **Simple Working Definition**: Godly *thanksgiving* is the verbal expression of gratitude for an appropriate and acceptable act of grace.

- and to say it even more simply—when you give God *thanks* as a “son” - when you *thank* God for something with the intelligence you have received from Him by the edification process—when you *thank* God with real Sonship intelligence ... what you are doing is—you are looking at everything that is happening to you (you are looking at every detail of your life) through the lens of (through the viewpoint of) your godly Sonship Education ... and because of that, you are acknowledging to God that every thing that is currently happening to you—every situation and circumstance that has led to, and connects with this very moment of time and the situation & circumstance you find yourself in ... everything about every detail of it ... **MEETS YOUR FULL APPROVAL!**

... simply put, your verbal expression of gratitude to God is saying to Him and to anyone else who hears it—that **YOU FULLY APPROVE OF WHAT IS GOING ON!** ... **and you wouldn't change a thing!**

- You're saying, “Father, this meets my **approval!**”

- This is part of the ‘Real Father-real son’ relationship—this is part of that Two-Way-Street of the Father-son Bi-directional Communication—(or Bi-directional **Communion!**)

- And this is why the word *thanks* and *bless* are so closely related!

- So the question is: **Why** does the situation/circumstance meet your approval? ... (and for now, I'm asking you as a *stronger* brother in the faith) ... What have you already been taught that would make this a REAL thing and not just some meaningless religious gesture?

A: For an intelligent, *strong* “son”, Sonship Thanksgiving is an intelligent understanding of how Romans 8:28 is being worked out in the daily, practical details of your life!

- For the *weaker* bro, who may not have the effectual working of Rom. 8:28 yet—he “*eateth not*” (which does not mean that he doesn't eat anything at all—rather, he ‘*eateth not meat*’ - he does, however, eat! ... he only “*eateth herbs*” (:2) ...

... but he's on his way to Rom. 8:28—the *weaker* bro is actively participating in the edification process—he's just a 'beginner' — but based even upon the little amount of doctrine he's operating upon (the little that has to do with God's grace—God gracious acts towards him) - he is still able to be 'pleasing' to God in some measure—and therefore, he verbally expresses his gratitude to God for an appropriate and acceptable act of God's grace.

- based upon his 'beginner' understanding of the edification process, he can offer *thanks* to God that is perfectly acceptable and pleasing to God Himself!

- Sonship thanksgiving is an intelligent acknowledgment of the edification process affecting every detail of your life—it's a verbal expression of gratitude to God for His methodology and mechanics of godly edifying taking place—and that's the "grace" part—that's the 'gracious act' God has performed for you, that you could not do yourself!

- Because the entire methodology and mechanics of the edification process is entirely based upon GRACE! (It's all in perfect keeping with "by grace through faith" (Rom. 4:16 cp. 6:1-8:39)

- Then, as you grow and mature—as you go from a *weak* to a *strong* one in the faith—you come to understand & appreciate what God has made you to be "in Christ" by His grace—and on top of that, God has made gracious provisions for you to put that position "in Christ" into effect in every detail of your life ...

... and the coming together of those 2 issues results in a godly 'inner man' sentiment of gratitude that is 'excited' by God's grace given to you ...

... and that gratitude gets expressed, therefore, in giving God *thanks* ...

... and that not only is a proper thing to take place—that not only SHOULD take place—but that NEEDS to take place—that MUST take place for a very important reason!

- And now we need to understand and appreciate what that reason is!

- It should be clear by now (and you should be able to acknowledge the reality of it) that the use of *thanks* and the giving of *thanks* is largely and most often done by both lost and saved persons merely as a ‘ritual of politeness and civility’ - however, that is NOT what God ever intended for it to be.

- My understanding is that God has actually designed for godly *thanksgiving* to be a means of you as a “son” participating in a particular Operation of God (and working together with Him in this Operation) as you are actively participating and actively involved in the edification process!

- Let’s make some connections (all of which are things that are in keeping with God’s gracious acts towards us):

- You were justified in order to become the ? Righteousness of God “in Christ” ...

- You were sanctified in order to become the ? Holiness of God “in Christ” ...

- And in order to get that ‘abounding grace’ that justified you put into effect in your functional, sanctified life, you were taught that God has done some things for you sanctification-wise by His grace ...

- He has made you *dead to sin, and alive unto God*—and by doing so, He has made it so that you can 1) Think like God thinks, and 2) Live like God lives ...

- And the ‘nutshell’ of what that allows for you to be able to do by grace through faith is ... what???

- (Rom. 6:22) - **produce ‘fruit unto holiness’**

- And one of the amazing things you learned back there is that God (by his grace; and by the edification process) intends to EXTEND HIS HOLINESS THROUGH YOU!

- And then, from Romans 7-11 God teaches you how He’s NOT going to do it (not under the law, but under grace) - and then the mechanics of how he IS going to do it!

- And then by means of “adoption” (*the Spirit of adoption*) - as a “son” - and in a real Father-to-son/daughter relationship — your sonship status is going to be the means by which you will take all that God has made you to be “in Christ” and put it into practice—it is the means by which you will ultimately Labor with God and work together with Him to accomplish all his ‘business’ Operations.

- And at first—(and rightly so) - as your sonship education got underway—each component to the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment focused mainly upon how God is going to extend His holiness through you in this present world in which you live ...

- but you were also told some things that made you aware that your training as a “son” isn’t merely to extend the holiness of God through you into this present world—but because of some things that are part of “the revelation of the mystery” - you came to understand and appreciate that you are being trained here on earth to one day *deliver the creature from the bondage of corruption*.

- this is the *great mystery of godliness* (1 Tim. 3:16)

- and that information, along with some other information in Rom. 8 made you aware of the possibilities of making an impact upon certain beings in the heavenly realm (Rom. 8:38)

- but first things first ... first, you have to ‘practice’ on this present world in which you live ... but this ‘practice’ is not without its impact in the heavenly realm!

- But for now—let’s take just this one issue of God being able to extend His holiness through you into this present world in which you live ...

... this extension of God’s holiness through you into this present world in which you live is (among many things) accomplished by your intelligent giving God *thanks* as His properly educated & edified “son” ...

... and remember what Webster said: “thankfulness is mistrusted if it be not expressed!”

- Producing ‘fruit unto holiness’ means that nothing in your life as a “son” is to be viewed as ‘mundane’ or ‘trivial’ or ‘common’ ... because the truth is “holiness” means that which is Uncommon—something God has ‘set apart’ for His particular use.

- and that means that really any thing (and all things) that we do and participate in has the opportunity to become a measure of that ‘fruit unto holiness’ ...

... and in our case—in Rom. 14:6b—that pertains to even the ‘common’ issue of eating.

- Even in eating there is a matter of putting our spiritual, sanctified, functional, sonship life into practice.

- And while giving God *thanks* for what we eat doesn’t have any ‘magical’ or ‘mystical’ or ‘supernatural’ power to cause the food to physically change (purging it of salmonella or poison—or even reducing the salt, the sugar, or the calories) ... giving God *thanks* does, however have an effect!

- Actually, the word at-large, the lost, and even the saved in the world can be affected by what we say—by our verbal expression of gratitude for an appropriate and acceptable act of God’s grace.

- While we cannot have any effect upon the physical food that we give *thanks* for—we can, however, have an effect upon the **CONTEXT** in which we eat!

- In other words—we can verbally **sanctify** (or extend God’s holiness) into the **environment** in which we eat!

- We can, (to quote David Winston Busch in his book, “Seen of Angels”) - we can “create a doctrinal context with our eating which is **seen** by others (Rom. 14:13-23), and with prayers which are **heard** by them (1 Tim. 4:1-5) ... As we are conformed to Christ, so is our eating.”

- In the ‘Two-way-street’ of godly Sonship Edification—God the Father has His part to play (so to speak) [or His roll] ... and we as His “sons” have our roll!

- 1 Corinthians 10:30-31

- (whole chapter if possible)

- (:30-31 is tied back to sonship expediency from 6:12)

- Paul is not using “*thanks*” in (:30) indiscriminately — he is using it as a technical sonship term!

- 2 Corinthians 4:15

- “*redound*” is not just another way of saying ‘abound’ — *redound* = to rise and swell as waves; to be sent as swells and waves — but one of the shades of meaning *redound* has that ‘abound’ does not have is, when something *redounds*, it has specifically met its intended consequence, effect, or result!

- This passage points up the fact that there is a very REAL way in which our *thanksgiving* (our verbal expression of gratitude for a gracious act of God) — our verbal expression of **fully approving of what is going on** — actually makes a godly IMPACT as it affects God Himself in the 3rd heaven as well as in the heavenly realm itself! (as our *thanksgiving* passes through the 2nd heaven by means of that

- 1 Timothy 4:3-5

- So my understanding is that a properly educated “son” should recognize that there is an Operation of God that he can participate in by means of his intelligent *giving God thanks* ... and it is a **powerful Operation of God** ... “*that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.*”

- And this *thanksgiving* Operation of God has some mechanical similarities to an Operation of God that we have been participating in for some time now ... it parallels in some ways something we were taught just previous to this *Equity* issue (back in our *instruction of Judgment*).

- And what I’m after is what we learned in Rom. 13:12
The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.

(from Rom. 13:13)

- And what you begin to see is—these OPERATIONS of God are actually making is to that, as you participate in them, you begin to manifest and put into effect the very LIFE of God (the *living* God) in His creation—AND (as it were) IN HIS STEAD (while His is physically absent from this earth)!

- And that goes for both physical issues, as well as soul and spirit issues (sentiments, emotions, attitudes, etc.) ... that is, the whole “LIVING” issue!

- In other words—God has determined not only to take the members of the church, the body of Christ and educated them as His “sons” in order to one day put His whole life into effect in the creature ... but He has provided for us to be trained to do that very thing by having us function in His various OPERATIONS here on earth! (We get the high privilege of, [by our sonship vocational training], to make the kind of IMPACT God Himself would be making upon this earth if He were physically here!!!)

- (see the physical (‘outer man’) aspect: Rom. 12:13 [notes])

- (this is an ‘inner man’, soul & spirit issue in Rom. 13:13!) -

- God has made it an Operation of His grace in this Disp/of/Grace to keep His zeal for the hatred/disgust of the works of darkness manifest—and to keep the adversary, therefore AWARE of God’s ZEAL in connection with judging those works of darkness!

- And how has God made it so that the adversary is kept aware of God’s zeal? i.e., how does the adversary KNOW? how do *evil men* know?

A: God has so created the firmament with great power and great capacity for rapid communication! (it has a built-in ‘Central Intelligence Agency SUPER HIGHWAY’!)

- (Jacob’s ladder)

- Gen. 28:12

- John 1:51

- Acts 7:55-56

- Dan. 10:12-13; 20

- Zech. 4:6-10 (‘watcher’ angels mentioned in Dan.) 6:1-8 (information gathering system)

(back to Romans 14:6)

- My understanding is that this issue of an intelligent “son” *giving God thanks* that can end up with *the abundant grace ... through the thanksgiving of many redounding to the glory of God* is an Operation of God that has to do with Him extending His holiness through you as His properly educated “son” both in this present world in which you live, and throughout the heavenly realm, unto the very throne of God Himself!

- And just as it is an Operation of God and His grace in this Disp. of Grace to keep His zeal for His hatred/disgust/and abhorrence for *the works of darkness* manifest—and to keep the adversary, therefore, constantly AWARE of His zeal in connection with judging those *works of darkness* as soon as this Disp. of Grace concludes ...

... there is another Operation of God and His grace in this Disp. of Grace designed to keep His **GLORY** manifest—and to make the men of this world, and the adversary and his cohorts AWARE of the effectual working of the power of His grace operating in the spirit, soul, and bodies of the members of the body of Christ in the face of the adversary and his POE that would ultimately *separate you from the love of Christ and SLANDER the GLORY of God!* [besmirch/disrepute] [bring injury to God’s own reputation, character, & essence]

- i.e., that would attempt to make it so that Rom. 8:28 is nothing more than an empty Christian ‘slogan’ ...

- that would attempt to prove that the living words of the living God **DO NOT** live in you!

- Remember: **“thankfulness is mistrusted if it is not expressed” (Webster)!**

- And we can take that statement and make it a ‘sonship’ statement that perfectly matches up with Paul’s curriculum for sonship education ...

... God’s Glory as displayed in His gracious acts fails to be understood & appreciated if those gracious acts are not verbally expressed by godly THANKS to Him!

- THE EXPANDED REMEDY/SOLUTION TO THE DILEMMA OF THE WEAKER BROTHER SITUATION: ROMANS 14:7, 8, & 9.

- In vss. 7, 8, & 9 God now has the apostle Paul give a further explanation and further amplification for the godly Thinking concerning how we are to deal with the *weaker* brother—how we are to deal with those in the local assembly that have edificational estate differences that are different than our own—those who are just beginners in the edification process being in the same assembly with those who are more advanced in their godly edifications as “sons”.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

8 For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

- And notice those English “Words of Logic” tells you that what is going on here is a further explanation and further amplification of the godly Thinking Remedy that has just been set forth ...

... you have that word “**For**” being the first word of each of the three verses—those are all “*for*”s of further explanation and further amplification.

- It would be wise to make sure that we understand and appreciate the godly Remedy to the *weaker* brother dilemma as it has been given so far—and then we’ll see the natural need to give further explanation & further amplification of it ...

- We know from the ‘Table of Contents’ for our Sonship Education that once we have completed receiving the *instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment* that the final sonship decision-making skill we are to receive from our Father is our *instruction of equity*.

- Equity is basically the capacity for making decisions as to what is fair and impartial—not with respect to the strict letter of the law, but rather the consideration of motives and intentions and circumstances. Equity deals with moral issues and is always aware of the dictates of the conscience and how that, through no fault of their own, a person finds themselves in difficult circumstances.

- ABOVE ALL!: Equity seeks to avoid the ruin of another at all cost! ... even if one is injured by another, the use of equity by the one injured will never seek reparation if it involves the ruin of another who is more unfortunate than guilty!

- However GODLY EQUITY is ‘mingled’ with godly *wisdom, justice, and judgment*—and it’s also ‘mingled’ with godly Love & Charity—and therefore a properly educated “son” will make decisions in his dealings with other “sons” in Equity that is governed by that godly Love & Charity.

- And one of the big, looming things that Equity has in view (both ‘natural’, ‘worldly’ equity and godly Equity) is that if it is not employed (or utilized) properly it will end in another’s **RUIN!**

- Therefore the properly educated “son” will always seek for the peaceful fellowship and communion of the saints in the local assembly basing all his decisions upon the doctrine of godly Love & Charity.

- And where the *weaker* brother is concerned—the *stronger* one in the faith with godly Charity towards the *weak* one in the faith will make such decisions that will only be to the *weak* one’s GOOD, avoiding his ruin at all cost!

- This issue of impending RUIN is THE MAJOR ISSUE in the godly Thinking of godly Equity!

- A properly educated “son” already knows that there are 2 entities involved in godly edification:

- 1) the individual saint/believer
- 2) the local assembly as a whole

- and because Equity, by nature, carries within it the weight of another’s **ruin**—the properly educated “son” has been made aware (by the Father) of the very real and possible danger of DESTROYING those 2 entities: destroying the saint & destroying the “*work of God*” which is the edification of the local assembly as a whole!

- So the ‘dilemma’ (or the problems) that can arise with a *weaker* bro. situation stem from these edificational estate differences —

... and because the *stronger* brother has gotten his sonship education from Romans 1-13, the *stronger* bro is going to be operating upon his well-developed Sonship Status ...

... the *stronger* bro understands and appreciates that he is “*not under the law, but under grace*” ... and as one of the results of that, he knows that he has this Sonship LIBERTY and he is operating upon that sonship liberty ...

... however, the *weaker* bro—who is *weak in the faith* (or weak in Pauline doctrine) hasn’t fully come to understand and appreciate his Sonship Status and the Sonship Liberty that goes along with it ...

... so the problems that can arise (and that can cause friction, disputations, despising, judging, and end up in warring factions, divisions, and schisms that bring to a halt the edification process in the local assembly—[individually & as a whole]) - the problems that can arise are of the nature of the *weaker* bro operating upon the OT Law and all its restrictions—as well as God’s program w/ Isr. and Israel’s Calendar of days, weeks, sabbaths, new moons and the like, **CLASHING** with the *stronger* bro who is operating upon his Sonship Liberty under grace (which has no such restrictions and no such calendar)!

- Therefore you have the kind of problems God sets forth in Rom. 14:1-6 —

1) The *stronger* bro eats *all things*—but the *weaker* bro refuses to eat meat and only eats *herbs*. (:2)

2) The *weaker* bro esteems (and regards) *one day above another*—but the *stronger* bro esteems *every day alike* (and does not regard the day). (:5 & 6)

- So what you have going on, therefore, is a **doctrinal clash** between *stronger* ones who are operating upon what God is doing in this present Disp. of grace (the *mystery of Christ* as revealed to Paul) and God’s program with Israel—2 programs that have real and distinct differences!

- But there is a Godly Remedy to this dilemma—there is some Godly Thinking that will make is to that a “doctrinal clash” does NOT take place in the assembly:

- IN short, the godly remedy is SONSHIP EQUITY!
(but what does that consist of?)

- Godly Remedy:

- The godly remedy can only take place when it is recognized that in BOTH cases of the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother, they both have some things in COMMON—they both have a common communion ...

... and the most basic, fundamental thing they both have in common is their reason for assembling themselves together is for “*godly edifying which is in faith*” (1 Tim. 1:4)

- Godliness / Edification Process

- So because that is the case—the 1st Part of the Godly Remedy is for the *stronger* bro to view the *weaker* bro exactly like the Father views any person who determines to be involved in the edification process: and that is, ***God hath received him.***

- And the 2nd Part of the Godly Remedy is to view the curriculum for Sonship Edification and its capacity to do its job with the *weaker* bro exactly like the Father does: and that is, ***God is able to make him stand.*** Therefore, by acknowledging & honoring the methodology of the Father’s education & edification process, and by honoring the mechanics of it (as spelled out in Romans 6-13), the *stronger* bro will be patient and allow for the edification process to work in the weaker bro., just as it did in him—therefore, the *stronger* bro will honor the major edification principle of, ***Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.***

- (:6) then comes along and gathers all those issues together and puts the attention and the focus upon the edificational issues that are **common** to both the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother—(both Think & Do what they Think & Do “***to the Lord***” & “***giving God thanks***” [which are expressions of the edification process taking place]) ... but there is 1 more thing that goes into the Godly Thinking Remedy that ‘**clinches**’ the Godly Thinking (or **fully develops** it).

- And this final issue of the Godly Thinking Remedy that will generate the sonship decision-making skill of Equity—is the next, natural thing that comes from that last statement of (:5) and all of what is said in (:6) ...

*5 ... Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.
6 He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.*

- Those 3 sentences/thoughts SET YOU UP for the Father to present the final issue to **His** Thinking that He Himself operates upon (that **He thinks about**) when He utilizes that great decision-making skill of EQUITY!

- Once you are thinking about one another with the viewpoint of the Father towards **any person** who is involved in the edification process (*God receives him*) ...

... and once you are thinking about how the edification process works (method-wise and mechanics-wise) exactly like the Father does [being accomplished **by grace through faith**] (*God is able to make him stand*) ...

... the final thing that has to now be done (the next, natural thing to be done) in order to get Godly Sonship Equity Thinking fully developed: is to further explain and further amplify and to underscore the **POWER** of the edification process! - (not that it hasn't come up so far, because it has; but now it needs to be **fully developed** in the son's thinking).

... maybe "fully developed" isn't the best way to say it ... maybe it would be better to say that the Power of the edification process has to now become fully grasped by the *stronger* bro. as the **central 'key'** to Godly Equitable decisions in our dealing with the *weaker* brother.

- Now—**WHY?** Why is underscoring the **Power** of the edification process the next, natural, and final thing in the godly Thinking aspect of Sonship Equity? (the 'clincher' to the godly Thinking)

- why? because the whole issue in godly edification is the **Power of Grace to do what you cannot do for yourself!**

- And when that issue of **who has the Power** and **where the Power lies** for godly edification to take place—only then does a “son” THINK with godly Equity exactly like the Father does!

... and the POWER of godly edification is what vss. 7, 8, & 9 are all about!

- It’s like God says, “Look at that *weaker* brother just like I do ...

... I’ve *received* him into the edification process (so there’s no problem there);

... I’m *able to make him stand* in that edification process to my own pleasure (so there’s no problem there);

... and he has to become *fully persuaded in his own mind* because that’s where the edification process takes place—and when the edification process DOES take place, that’s exactly what WILL happen (so there’s no problem there);

... but more than that, **YOU DON’T HAVE THE POWER TO PROUCE GODLY EDIFICIATON!** (even if you tried!)”

- And this takes you BACK to a doctrinal principle of GRACE that has the power to do what the Law could never do: (**sanctification-wise**) ... which is to squelch sin and motivate you to do good!

(Rom. 6:14) - You learned something about Grace back there that should make it so that when you bring it back to your mind here, you will be able to APPLY it to this situation (which you would never have thought of back there).

- If you don’t operate upon Equity—you are going to end up as a ‘tutor’ & ‘governor’ ... you’re putting YOURSELF back under the law—and only GRACE has the power to do what you cannot do yourself!

- THE POWER OF THE EDIFICATION PROCESS.

- (and by “Power” I mean the power to produce godliness in a man—the “Power” to produce godliness by means of godly edification)

- The “Power” issue of the edification process has at least 2 major aspects in view:

1) The “Possessor” of the Power:

- **The Personnel** that possesses the Power to produce godly edification: God the Father; God the Son; and God the Holy Spirit—the Power to produce godly edification entirely rests in (and is vested in) **God Himself**.

- (and since godly edification deals with both, the invisible, intangible part of man [the ‘*inner man*’; the heart; the mind/human spirit and the soul] PLUS it deals with the visible, tangible part of man [the ‘*outward man*’; our bodies—it’s reasonable that the Power to produce godly edification has both an Invisible/Intangible MEANS to produce it; and a Visible/Tangible MEANS to produce it.)

- **The Invisible, Intangible Means—**

- Grace—which has the power to do for you what you could never do for yourself—and which the OT Law could never do for you—therefore, you are *not under the law, but under grace*—and there is a legal component to that which specifically and legally allows for godliness to be produced by means of godly edification: and that is: the benefits of the New Testament (the legal means for *the adoption of sons*)

- **The Visible, Tangible Means —**

- The Curriculum—the word of God which contains the curriculum for godly edification as a “son” = Romans—Philemon.

2) The “Recipient” of the Power:

- **You**—God’s justified, sanctified, adopted, adult “sons” & “daughters.”

- And any time you are talking about the issue of godly edification at this present time—you have to talk about it DISPENSATIONALLY!

- Godly edification isn't just becoming God-Like—and able to Think like God does, and Live like God lives, and Labor with God in any old way ... NO ...

... rather, it has in view becoming God-Like and being involved in Godly Thinking/Living/Labor **with respect to what God is NOW doing in this present Disp. of Grace!**

- And God's business operations are NOT the same as they were when His program with Israel was still in effect!

- And chiefly, the Main difference (or the Big difference) has to do with which REALM God is repossessing and reconciling back to Himself from the possession of Satan, the adversary of God!

- And as you know, the realm God is currently involved in repossessing & reconciling back to Himself in this present Disp. of Grace is: THE HEAVENLY REALM!

- And you were already made aware of this:
— (Rom. 8:19-22)

- And you should already have some awareness of the IMPACT that you are supposed to be making by means of becoming God-Like (godly) and by becoming a 'faithful copy' of the 'faithful copy' of God's Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) - becoming *conformed to the image of God's Son* ...

... and because God did not take you immediately to heaven when He justified you, you recognize that you will have some immediate impact upon the physical realm in which you live (on this earth) - however, not at all like Israel will have under their covenants with God—but rather, your impact on this earth will be in accordance with your vocational training as “sons” for your heavenly *vocation* in the heavenly realm.

- And I say that in order to say that by now you should be aware (to at least a small degree) of the fact that your godly edification is supposed to make an IMPACT upon the heavenly realm (**the angels**).

- And when you are first confronted with the issue of *the creature* (your ‘Dispensational Vocation’ [so to speak]) and the ruling/governmental structure of *the creature* in Romans 8:38 (*For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. 8:38-39*) ...

... there is an expectation that you are already aware of some things about the *creature* and the ANGELIC beings that make it up and reside there.

- My point is—when you talk about the Edification Process; and the Power of the Edification Process—you have to talk about it in view of God’s Dispensational program—you cannot divorce it from what God is currently doing in this present Disp. of Grace ...

... Godly Sonship Edification is all about God repossessing and reconciling back to Himself the Heavenly Realm!

... it’s all about God creating a “*new creature*”, another *body of Christ* that is composed of *many members* that are trained, fit, and qualified to be put into all those positions of rulership and government and authority in the *creature* that are currently being occupied by ANGELS (fallen angels).

- Therefore, you can’t talk about godly edification and the Power of the Edification Process without talking about the kind of IMPACT that it is designed to have on the ANGELS themselves—(both the fallen angels [the Devil and his angels] as well as the un-fallen, holy angels!

- And the truth is—the Scriptures—God’s word has already had a lot to say about those angels—and you’re supposed to already be aware of it!

- And all of this has a direct bearing upon not only the edification process itself—but also upon the POWER of the Edification Process!

- And I want to take a small amount of time to show you the connection of the Power issue of the Edification Process and the Impact upon the angels.

... and my understanding is that this is **directly relevant** to what our Father tells us in Rom. 14:7-9! (it's directly tied to the very POWER of the Cross-work of Jesus Christ—which is where Grace took the position of ultimate power in the universe!)

- and I say that because, my understanding is that the Power of the Edification Process isn't just something that God Himself possesses (which it is) - and it's not just something that we are the Recipients of (which we are) ... but more than that, the Power of godly Edification operating within a properly educated "son" in this Disp. of Grace **is the greatest display of God's power that He has ever revealed!**

- And the enormity of the IMPACT of that power upon the angels in the heavenly realm (and what that impact can do) is the reason why Satan and his PoE works its hardest to minimize that impact (and nullify it; and counteract its effectiveness; and make it a big fat Zero)!

- And that's why the 1) Possessor of that Power, and the 2) Recipient of that Power of godly edification is going to be the target of attack and assault by the Satanic PoE!

- I realize that the issue of God's power effectually operating within us and having it's impact upon the angels isn't directly spoken about in Romans 14:7, 8, 9 — there is no mention of the angels anywhere in the entire passage of 14:1-15:7 ...

... but when you compare what the doctrine of our *receiving the instruction of Equity* does—(and what it is designed to NOT have take place with the local assembly) — when you compare Rom. 14:1-15:7 with the problems that can arise if that doctrine does NOT do its effectual work — in other words, when you compare Rom. 14:1-15:7 (and the *weaker* brother situation) with what the Corinthians were doing (and who had to be reproved and corrected by the apostle Paul) ...

... the ANGELS and the IMPACT upon the angels is at the core of it all!!!

(1 Cor. 1:10-11, 23-25 [men]; 4:9; 6:3; 11:10 [angels])

- In fact—the issue of us (as properly edified “sons” who are members of the *new creature* of the church, the body of Christ) making an Impact upon the angels is such a **Huge issue** that when God has the apostle Paul summarize what the “*church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth*” is all about—the **angels** are in that summary statement: (see **1 Timothy 3:14-16 [16]**)

- All I’m after here is to just get you to appreciate all the more, the POWER of the Edification Process—the POWER of godly, sonship Edification ... (which is what Rom. 14:7,8,9 is setting forth) ...

... and once that’s done—the end result (or the aim, goal, & objective) of that kind of Godly Thinking should (if it does its effectual work in your inner man), it should result in you being able to discern other “Powers” that are out there — other Powerful Forces that attempt to bring you “under” them (edification-wise) **and take you away** from being “under” the Power of the Father’s Edification Process.

- (the Satanic PoE does that—the *evil man* does that — the *strange woman* does that) ...

... but my point here is to get you to appreciate all the more, the kind of Power that God has designed into our Sonship Edification—**unmatched Power**—and how **foolish** it would be to put yourself under any other Power!

- And to do that—we’ll just look briefly at one of the most critical Impact Issues that the Power of our Sonship Edification has ... and that is our Impact upon the angels.

- In this disp. of grace, the roll of the angels is in ‘reverse’ (so to speak) - rather than ministering to us [as in Israel’s program], WE actually minister to them—and our ‘ministry’ to them is in the form of an ‘education’ - we are educating angels as to their roll in connection with the *creature* and us as God’s “sons” who are going to be in positions of authority and power **over** them in that *creature*.

- There are an innumerable amount of angels—a number so high that you can’t put a ‘peg-able’ number on it — (Heb. 12:22)

- A brief look at the Power of the angels — it is commonly thought (and rightly so) that angels are more powerful than men are — but most folks don't really appreciate just **how much more powerful they are than men!**

- 2 Peter—writing to the Rem/Isr—5th Inst./5th COP
- 2 Peter 2:9-11 (:11)

- (:11) “*greater in power and might*”

- Angels are greater than men in *power and might!*
(simple enough)

- BUT—there is a Power that we have the privilege of putting on display in this Disp. of Grace that is even GREATER than what the angels themselves possess by nature!!!

- By nature, angels possess “power and might” that is greater than what men possess **by nature**.

- But we, the members of the church, the body of Christ [in this Disp. of Grace] (as “sons”) have access to a *power that worketh in us* that is greater than what the angels possess in power and in might!

(and there's an education that goes on in connection with that for them)

- By nature, the angels are more powerful than men are, by nature ...

- 2 Pet. 2:6-8—(destruction of Sodom & Gomorrha) when you go back and read about the account of God doing that (Gen. 18-19) - you find that there are angels involved in that — in fact, there were a total of 5 cities that were destroyed ...

... and there were only 2 angels involved in that— 2 angels against an entire ungodly mob outside Lot's door .. and they just smote them with blindness! (easy peasy for them) ... 2 of them exceed the entire mob of men in “power and might”!

- Angels had the power to kill 185,000 of Sennacherib's Assyrian soldiers (2 Kings; 2 Chron.; Isa. 37:36)

- Matthew 28:1-4

- 2 Issues of a demonstration of the angels' "power and might" that is greater than man's ...

1) (:2) - just his descent from heaven had the capacity to produce a GREAT earthquake; and he's able to roll back the stone from the door all by himself ...

2) (:4) - these "keepers" are Roman Centurions of the Roman Army! ... Roman soldiers! ... (not wimps), but battle-hardened combat veterans! ... and there's more than 1 of them and they've got weapons in their hands ... they're trained to fight and kill! ... and generally, they know NO fear!

- but when they see the great earthquake; and see the stone rolled away (and this angel sits on it) - and they see his countenance like *lightning* ... they're **terrified** of him! ... they *shake* and *faint* away like *dead men* (**paralyzed with fear**)!

- and that's just **1** angel! ... and he didn't threaten them at all! ... that's just a natural demonstration that he, all by himself, exceeded them (**in company**) in "*power and might*"!

- "**Power and Might**" - what do these 2 terms mean? what is the discriminating difference in these 2 terms? ... *Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, (2 Pet. 2:11)*

- *Power & Might* are both very similar words—but they do NOT mean the exact same thing!

- **Power** = (often times physical, but not always) Applied force to the accomplishment of something. (general/basic)

... (and I'm talking about these terms as what they are by 'nature' or in the natural world)

- **Might** = (embraces all that basic meaning of *power*, but it has a further basic shade of meaning) - Applied force to the accomplishment of something ... and **cannot be overcome** by the one on the receiving end of it.

- And the angels (by nature) are GREATER in *power and might* than men are, by nature!

- And angel can "apply more force and accomplish more" than men can, by nature!

... and when they apply their force to accomplish something, it's MIGHTY— it cannot be overcome by men on the receiving end of it!

... which, by the way, makes those individuals who are out in the 5th/5th "*speaking evil of dignities*" to be the great big 'wind bags' that they are! (what bravado!)

- But with that *power and might* issue of the angels in mind—look at what God says about a properly educated/edified "son" and member of the "new creature" of the church, the body of Christ in this disp. of Grace ...

- Ephesians 6—where Paul has been dealing with us as "sons" who are able to "*withstand the wiles of the devil*" (:11) and make the educational impact upon the angels we are designed to make (see 3:10) ...

- (read :11-12) - we are going to be '*wrestling*' and taking on these angelic beings who (by our human nature) are far greater in *power & might* than we are—and in our own power & might we wouldn't be able to withstand them in any way at all ...

... **but look at (:10)** — (we don't stand or withstand by our own power & might!)

... the *power of his might* is resident in that *armour*

... and the power of that *armour* is resident in the **edification process** (the Curriculum for Sonship Edu.)

- resident in that *armour* and in that Curriculum is ***the power of his might***—the Lord’s *power* and the Lord’s *might* ...

... *the power* to apply force to the accomplishment of something ... and the *might* that cannot be overcome by the one on the receiving end of it! (i.e., it cannot be overcome by those fallen angelic beings [those *principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world*] ... it cannot be overcome by the *wiles of the devil!*

... you’ve got a *power and might* available to you that **EXCEEDS** what they’ve got (by nature) - and not even Satan, the Adversary, the Devil himself can overcome it!

- see Eph. 1:19 (but again, it’s HIS POWER!)

- this is the *exceeding greatness of his power* and the *working of his mighty power* that took place in the Battle on the Cross—and not only was the LJC made a beneficiary of that; but we are made beneficiaries of that *power & might* as members of the church, the body of Christ in this Disp. of Grace!

... then see (:20-23) - this *power* that is ***according to the working of his MIGHTY POWER*** isn’t the issue of matching the *might & power* of the angels with the natural *might & power* of what a man possesses by nature—no—because we would lose that match-up every time ...

... rather, this is talking about **inner man strength and inner man power**—AND THAT’S NOT JUST POWER IN THEORY ... THAT’S **REAL POWER!**

- THIS IS **EDIFICATION POWER**—THIS IS THE POWER OF GOD-LIKE-NESS (GODLINESS)! (OR YOU COULD SAY ‘SONSHIP POWER!’)

- And notice how that this power of godly edification that “*exceeds*” the angels in *might & power* is **directly tied to the Cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ!** (which is why it’s brought up in Rom. 14:9!)

- In the Battle on the Cross—the ‘force of the Lord’s ***mighty power*** was the ‘application of a force to the situation that was **greater than the opposition**’!! ... and the opposition **could not overcome it—it could not withstand it!**

- And again, this kind of *power & might* isn’t physical power, rather it’s the *excellency of the power of God’s word!*

- Colossians 1—here in Paul’s prayer for the Colossians, he deals with the issue of them having the capacity to withstand the opposition from the Satanic PoE—and not ‘fainting’ in our minds—and standing fast in order to make the IMPACT we’re supposed to make ...

- see Col. 1:11 - 1) ***strength***; 2) ***might***; 3) ***power***

— that’s **inner man fortification** for the ability & capacity to **stand** in “*all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness*” in the face of the opposition.

- and notice that it’s done with ***all might***—i.e., with the application of a particular force to the situation that cannot be overcome ... and that successfully deals with those *wiles of the devil* and their opposition.

- But again—it’s all ***according to HIS glorious power***—and that’s a power you do not have by nature—that’s the power provided to your inner man by means of the edification process (sonship edification)!!!

- Point is—whenever you’re dealing with the dealings and interactions of angels and men—there is a “*power and might*” issue that comes up in an angels’ thinking!

- And in this Disp. of Grace—part of what is involved in us educating angels (and being ***seen of angels*** [1 Tim. 3:16])—part of what is involved in that issue of that *great mystery of godliness* has to do with the *power and might* of the Lord’s *glorious power* operating within us by the effectual working of His word—by the edification process—by our sonship edification!

- and the angels SEE something they’ve NEVER seen before when they see that ... now, you may say, But what about the Lord Jesus Christ Himself? ... didn’t they see that? ... yes ...

... but they could say, Well, that was the 2nd Member of the Godhead—that was a real man, but that man didn't possess any nature of sin in His members—He wasn't one of the “redeemed” ...

... and it wasn't until God began forming the 2nd body of Christ in this Disp. of Grace by means of the *revelation of the mystery (the mystery of godliness)* that redeemed, justified, sanctified MEN (with sin still remaining in their members) could utilize those New Testament benefits and by the effectual working of God's word in their inner man—as the Living Words of the Living God Lives in them, that this kind of *power and might* could be “*seen of angels*”!

- And one camp of angels is THRILLED by it ... and one camp is FRUSTRATED as can be by it!

- **1 Other Thing**: and this goes right along with our understanding & appreciation for having a proper awareness of the Power of the Edification Process as a *stronger* brother in the faith having to deal with a *weaker* brother in the faith—and the kind of Godly Thinking that REMEDIES any and all problems that could arise in your personal dealings with a *weaker* bro, and that could arise by way of disrupting the close fellowship, communion, and concord of the local assembly ...

... and that is a reminder of the kind of awareness you are supposed to have concerning The Power of the Edification Process and Satan's Envious Desire for it himself.

- And what I'm after here is a matter of the Edification Process and how that in that process you are educated and edified as God's “son”.

- And there are a whole bunch of things we could talk about here—but I'm only after 1 thing—and what I believe is a ‘core’ issue to the adversary's contention with God Himself, and with his opposition and his PoE directed at us as God's properly educated/edified “sons” in this Disp. of Grace, especially.

- (and you already know much of this—but now it has to be brought into your thinking and LINKED to the Godly Thinking of Equity in Rom. 14:7-9).

- Angels are not created by God in exactly the same way as men are — they are (by nature) more powerful than men are by nature, but as you already know, angels (whether “fallen” or “unfallen”) cannot ‘read your mind’ - they do not know what you are thinking (not even Satan himself can do that). [see Job, for example]

- And angels cannot read God’s mind either (including Satan himself).

- And my understanding is that God designed the angels to be ministering and messaging beings—and therefore they are not designed as ones who can be ‘edified unto godliness’ — **that issue is reserved only for men!** (but that doesn’t stop an angelic being from desiring it!)

- Now—along with the issue of “godliness” being the issue of: 1) Thinking the way God does; 2) Living [conducting & behaving] yourself like God does; and 3) Laboring with God in what He is doing — there is another critical issue that goes hand-in-hand with that ... (and it is really one of the most **magnificent & fascinating** things about being ‘edified unto godliness’ and sonship education) ...

... truth is, (and you know this), that the edification process is NOT merely to impart and install the heart of God the Father into the heart of His adopted sons/daughters ...

... although that’s true, the end-all of Sonship Education isn’t just to be “Like Father, like son” ...

... But we were told that there is a particular thing that the Father desires to do with His properly educated sons ...

- (see Table of Contents—Pro. 1:2-6 [:5] - that issue of ***“a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels”***)

- Truth is—God has so designed you as the pinnacle of his creation; and has so designed godly Sonship Edification—to make it a closeness of fellowship & communion can take place between God and you in order that the business Operations of the Father will be undertaken JOINTLY by you and Him together!

- And the point is—**the angels can't do that!** ... they aren't designed to do that! ... they were not created for that! ...
MAN (and only man) WAS CREATED FOR THAT!

- Now what this means is—that there is something about a man who is justified, sanctified, adopted, and educated as God's son that makes it so that the angels (who are limited in knowledge) have a natural **NEED** to **LEARN** some things **by observing** “sons” in this **Disp. of Grace**—and one of the things they need to learn is what their roll will be as those ‘ministering messengers’ in the future dispensation of “the fullness of times”.

- And what this also means is that—when it comes to the fallen angels (the Devil and his angels) - it means that a properly educated “son” of God has come into the possession of some things that they **greatly desire to have**—in fact, they desire it so much, that they have **sinned** in order to get it — they **covet** it; and they will **stop at nothing** to get it; they will **traffic in iniquity** to get it!

... and it all has to do with **godly edification!**

- The angels are not designed to; nor are they created for entering in to such close fellowship & communion with God so as to *attain unto wise counsels* or *counsel* together with God to shape the future operations of the Father's business! ... but YOU ARE!

- You, a **MAN**, as a properly educated “son” of God, therefore, are designed to be what you might call God's “**confidant**” - because that's what you become when you have gained and attained those Sonship Decision-Making Skills—they are designed for you to ultimately enter into that close fellowship & communion with the Father and with His Son to take *wise counsel* together ...

... and the issue of the ultimate aim, goal & objective of God in this Dip. of Grace (which is the re-possession & reconciliation of the Heavenly Realm) is directly tied to (or married to, or joined with) the issue of godly edification!

... WHY? Well, godly sonship edification teaches you how to be a **wise ruler** ... and it takes God's **wisdom** to **rule** the Heavenly Places (and the Earth as well)!

- again, you are designed to be God's **confidant** (so to speak) [and the angels aren't] — “confidant” = one to whom **secrets or private matters are disclosed!**

- And as I just previously noted—this issue of entering into a close fellowship of *sweet counsel* with God as that *man of understanding* who shall *attain unto wise counsels*—and that opportunity belongs to MEN as God's adopted “sons” — that opportunity does NOT belong to the angels ... **all of that is directly related to, and directly tied to the issue of GODLY EDIFICATION (the edification process)!**

... it's part of the **Power** of the Edification Process! ... and it's one of the reasons why we are to be *seen of angels* so that an education takes place with them as they observe us! (they are educated in the issue of “godliness” by us!)

- Put simply—man was created by God to have a closer and more intimate fellowship & communion with Him than the angels were.

- Let's look at just a few things in regards to this ...

- Godliness (God-like-ness) is an issue with man, and is not an issue with the angels ... maybe it would be better to say that, godliness that is produced by the **edification process** is an issue with man, but is not an issue with the angels.

- And in this Disp of Grace in which we live—*great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, **seen of angels**, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

... the “mystery” aspect of godliness is designed to be *seen of angels*—and it is designed to have an IMPACT on them.

- or you could say, ‘The results of us being edified unto godliness as God's “sons” is designed to have an IMPACT on the angels as one of its primary features.’

- Genesis 1:26-27 (read)

- This is where the concept of “godliness” gets established. (*our likeness* = God-like-ness = godliness) - not that man is ever to attain ‘God-hood’, or become God Himself)

- But this is NOT said of the angels!

- In fact—the 3 Aspects of Godliness ...

- 1) Thinking like God does;
- 2) Living like God does;
- 3) Laboring with God in what He is doing

... those are the things that create an intimacy of fellowship between man and God so that man becomes a “help meet” for God in what He’s doing—those godliness Aspects make it so that man can become God’s ‘confidant’ - and therefore man **represents God wherever he goes!**

- And these Aspects of Godliness that create this close intimacy of fellowship & communion with God and all that He is doing in this Disp of Grace is really what our Sonship Status and Sonship Education is all about.

- that’s why your status as God’s adopted “son” is the means/vehicle/agency for putting your sanctified position “in Christ” into practice.

... and God never says anything to the angels about a ‘Father & Son’ relationship! (Heb. 1:5)

- So—Godliness, Godly Edification, and Sonship are all tied together!

... they produce an intimacy of fellowship with God and **man**—NOT with God and the angels!

- and not only do justified, sanctified, adopted men/women have the opportunity for godliness to take place in them by means of the edification process ... but GENTILE men & women have that opportunity in this Disp. of Grace!

- (remember that in “Time Past” the Gentiles had been consigned over to UNGODLINESS!) [Rom. 1]

- So—with us Gentiles (justified, sanctified, adopted “sons”) in this Disp. of Grace—with us (and our godly edification), we have the **privilege of God’s grace of educating the angels in the way God designed a man to function in the first place! ... which really has never been put on display to them since Adam fell!**

- we put on display that issue of close, intimate fellowship with God that has a **direct bearing** upon the **Operations** of God’s business with His creation! (access to its POWER!)

- And hopefully by now it should be dawning on you that it's quite possible that an angel could get his 'nose out of joint' (so to speak) over this—that an angel could easily desire this prerogative of man (this exclusive right or privilege of man to be “godly” [God-like] and have this close, intimate fellowship of *sweet counsel* together concerning the future Operations of God's business) ...

... in fact an angel could desire it with **inordinate desire & inordinate ambition** ... and indeed, one of them did!

- By observation, an angelic creature could come to know the kind of POWER that is vested in godliness; in godly edification; in a justified, sanctified, adopted “son” of God ... and want it for himself!

- And the truth is—the angelic beings that we are supposed to have a major impact upon is Satan and his cohorts—(the Devil and his angels).

- We specifically educate Satan and his angels ...
(see Eph. 3:10) ... we educate them in *the manifold WISDOM of God!*

- (see 1 Cor. 2:4-8) ... we educate the angels in *the WISDOM of God in a mystery, even the hidden WISDOM!*

- In the mind of Satan—(when he went from “Lucifer” to “Satan” and formed his Plan of Evil and implemented it) - the issue in his mind as the Adversary of God; the principle thing he was going to go after; his major contention with God **is the issue of WISDOM!**

- And that was a particularly appealing thing to Satan due to how God originally created him in the first place.

- Because of how God originally created him, he could say, 'I've got that kind of wisdom ... in fact, I'm wiser than God and better suited to rule & reign over the heavens and the earth.'

- And where POWER is concerned—Satan wasn't stupid, he knew he could never match God in physical power—he knew he could never 'get rid' of God—and he knew that He could never BE God ... but he did have a real opportunity to think that he could match God and even be superior to God in the realm of WISDOM!

- and one of the main features or characteristics that distinguishes (or sets apart) this Disp. of Grace from God's Prog. w/ Isr. is that the Disp. of Grace is where God reveals His *manifest wisdom* and His *hidden wisdom* in the *revelation of the mystery!*

- Isaiah 14 - a prophetic passage dealing with what the Rem/Isr will say when the Lord returns to earth and begins Delivering them from Satan's attempt to destroy them and just prior to Satan being cast into the bottomless pit.

- And just before he's cast into the pit—Redeemed Israel is going to say to Satan that what he originally designed to do back when he first formulated his Plan of Evil, he was never able to successfully get accomplished.

- (read :12-14) - (5 "I wills") - (3 Thrones)—and the idea of Satan being in the position of Rulership—the administration of a Ruler—and the wise function of a Ruler over subjects and territory.

- The goal of it all: 5th "I Will" - ***I will be like the most High.***

- Notice: The goal of Satan's Plan of Evil is NOT to eliminate the most High; or destroy the most High; or overcome the most High; ...

... the goal of the Satanic Plan of Evil is to be **LIKE** the most High

... sounds like Satan is all hung up on that ***godliness*** issue! ... and he is!

- truth is—he desperately wants to be what you are offered to be: GOD-LIKE!

- Note: that expression "*most High*" was defined for you back in Genesis 14:19 (read)

- what I'm after here is that you see the tie/connection between:
 Godliness / Godly Edification/
 Sonship Education / and Ruling Heaven
 & Earth

... and the “common denominator” to all those things that are ‘tied’ together is the issue of God’s **WISDOM!**
Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom
(Pro. 4:7)

- And what Satan wants is to be LIKE *the most High*—and not only to be *possessor of heaven and earth* ... **but to be its WISE RULER! - and receive from all of creation, the adoring worship of his wisdom as the all-wise ruler of heaven and earth.**

- Satan has 2 Titles in connection with the goal of his Plan of Evil:

- 1) Prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)
- 2) Prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2)

- The Lord Jesus Christ also has 2 Titles in connection with His plan & purpose to repossess & reconcile the Heavenly Places and the Earth back to Himself:

- 1 Tim. 6:15—*Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;*

- 1) *blessed and only Potentate* (heavenly places)
- 2) *King of kings, and Lord of lords* (earth)

- When you’re talking about what it is that Satan is really after **Power-wise**—you’re not talking about physical power and physical strength & might—and you’re not talking about military power or marshal power—or even political power — or social power [power of the arts & sciences] — (even though those things would be helpful to Satan and his Plan of Evil) ... but that kind of power would not achieve the ultimate goal of Satan’s Plan of Evil to be *like the most High (possessor of heaven and earth)* ...

... no, the real Power issue that the adversary has his sights set on—the real Power that would achieve the ultimate goal of his Plan of Evil is **WISDOM!** - and not just any old wisdom, but some particular wisdom ... some wisdom that is directly connected to the issue of godly Sonship Edification! ... Satan desires more than anything else, the wisdom (**power**) that’s contained in the **edification process!**

- To put it simply, Satan desires more than anything else the “LIKE” wisdom of God—the wisdom of God—**Like-Ness** that God only shares with men! (His “sons”)

- And if you don’t appreciate that the **wisdom** of the **edification process** is the great desire of the adversary—then you’re not going to have that deep-set appreciation that you ought to have for us educating the *principalities and powers in the heavenly places* and making known to them *the manifold wisdom of God* in this Disp. of Grace ...

... you’re not going to see the issue of God keeping the “mystery of Christ” a “mystery”! ... and *taking the wise one in his own craftiness*.

- Ezekiel 28

- Here again, God has reason to talk about Satan’s original beginning—and how that through iniquity, he ‘fell’ - and how he became the “Satan” of God—and how he has gone about implementing his Plan of Evil.

- And here in Ch.28 you have the major issue of his WISDOM being talked about—and that wisdom is **THE** issue with him in his contention with God.

- In Ch. 28 you’ve got 2 individuals spoken about:

- 1) *the prince of Tyrus*—(a man; the human being that is sitting upon the throne in the Tyrus that is upon the earth)
- 2) *the king of Tyrus*—(Satan himself)

- At this time, Satan is trying to do something that he is not legally qualified yet to do—which is to have his ‘finest hour’ that will take place out in the Lord’s Day of Wrath.

- And this becomes a kind of “type” or example for what he will be allowed to accomplish out in the Lord’s Day of Wrath.

- (actually, Satan has tried numerous times to ‘jump the gun’ [so to speak] in God’s prog. w/Isr)

- And when he finally does get to have his ‘finest hour’ - Satan is going to operate through a Gentile King on the borders of the land of Israel—here, it happens to be Tyrus — but when he finally does have his ‘finest hour’, it ends up being an Assyrian—which is who he originally started off with ...

- so what you have here is a ‘preview’ of the ‘man of sin’ (the antichrist) and Satan who operates through him out in the Lord’s Day of Wrath.

- Here, the Assyrian capacity has been removed at this time, so Satan endeavors to accomplish his mission and utilize what he can do through a stronghold he has set up in Tyrus on the boarder of Israel.

- (read :11-15)

- This isn’t talking about the man (*the prince of Tyrus*) - this is talking about the ‘mover & shaker’ behind the man—the **real king** (ruler).

- This is an angelic-type being—a *cherub*—and no ordinary cherub—this is **the anointed cherub** that ‘covered the throne of God’ in the 3rd Heaven.

- this is a description of who Satan was before he became “Satan” - when he was known as ‘Lucifer’ ...

... he was *anointed* with the privileges and the capacities described here.

- (see :12) — **full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty.**

- **wisdom & beauty** were 2 of his major attributes:

1) External: **beauty**
& 1) Internal: **wisdom**

- Satan was originally created **full of wisdom**—he didn’t have to learn it, he was **created** with it!

- now, remember what I said a few lessons ago? ... that **wisdom was a particularly appealing thing to Satan due to how God originally created him in the first place?** ...

- Well, being **full of wisdom** doesn’t mean that he was created with ‘all the wisdom there is’ ... no ... he was created “full” of the “wisdom” that he needed to operate upon as that “anointed cherub” that “covered” the throne of God ...

... but there is another kind of wisdom that he was NOT the possessor of ... EDIFICATION WISDOM!

- WISDOM is a **natural** issue with this creature!

- (:16) - goes on to describe Satan's sin and fall. (read :16)

- Then (:17) goes on to describe the formulation of Satan's Plan of Evil and the implementation of it (especially in the heavenly realm).

- (read :17)

- **"beauty"** - the External had an impact upon the Internal.

- **"*thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness:*"**
— the issue of what he did after he sinned centered around that "wisdom" he was created with—his pride & arrogance teamed up with that "wisdom" - and in response to his sin & pride and losing his original position—his pride and ego teamed up with his wisdom and came up with a Plan by which he would set out to prove that he is wiser than God—that his power of wisdom would prove to be greater than God's power of wisdom!

- And what Satan especially set his sights on is that **LIKE** kind of Wisdom—that wisdom that God only shares with a man by means of the edification process!

... and his goal is to put on display that he IS **the wisest of the wise!**

- Now—to validate this issue—back up in Ch. 28 to the beginning.

- and notice that as Satan functions through *the prince of Tyrus* at this time—this very same issue of being "the wisest of the wise" is **infused** in *the prince of Tyrus*! ... and that issue will become the very thinking of *the prince of Tyrus* ... and the only one who will exceed that will be "the man of sin" out in the Lord's Day of Wrath!

- (read :1-10)

... didn't we just read terminology like that in (:11) ??

- Satan infuses the *prince of Tyrus* with the exact same thinking, living, and laboring that **he** has as the *king of Tyrus*! (Satan is attempting to **counterfeit** godliness (God-like-ness) ... only here it is 'Satan-like-ness' (satanliness)!

- Notice the boast of (:3) ... the boast is, “I’m **wiser** than Your guy”! (Daniel) ... and ***THERE IS NO SECRET THAT THEY CAN HIDE FROM THEE:***

- The thinking and the ‘boast’ of the *prince of Tyrus* is the exact same thinking and ‘boast’ of the *king of Tyrus* ...

... and that is: **“I AM WISER THAN YOU ARE, GOD, AND THERE IS NO SECRET YOU CAN KEEP FROM ME!!!**

Why does he go there? ... why bring up the issue of “secrets” at all? ... (**and here is where everything we’ve been studying gets tied and connected together!**) ...

Answer: Because the aim, goal, and objective of Godliness (of Godly Edification; of Sonship Education; of Ruling Heaven & Earth) is the issue of ***ATTAINING UNTO WISE COUNSELS—of entering into the FELLOWSHIP & COMMUNION of “sweet counsels” together with God in order to shape the future Operations of the Father’s business!*** (see why communion & fellowship is so important?)

... it’s the issue of becoming God’s ‘confidant’ - the one who God will share all His ***SECRET WISDOM!*** (***EVEN HIS HIDDEN WISDOM!***)!

- This issue of ‘You can’t keep a secret from me!’ is the reason why the entire Disp. of Grace as “the mystery of Christ” is the fatal blow to the adversary—and why his vehement, full-blown hatred is poured out on it!

- Because by the simple act of ‘keeping a secret’ - God produced the entire and complete DOOM of the Satanic Plan of Evil! (and that’s why, in the Genius of God, the “mystery of Christ” was kept “hid” as a “mystery”!) ...

... to keep it a secret from the very guy that boasted, ‘You can’t keep a secret from me’ took him in his own craftiness!

- And that boast is a boast of SUPERIOR WISDOM!

- Now—in view of all this—let’s come back to some passages we have already looked at—and see if they have even greater impact!

- 1 Corinthians
 - part of the reason why it is that we are educating angels in this Disp. of Grace is giving Satan and his cohorts an education in the issue that Satan was NOT wise enough ... a secret COULD be kept from him, and it WAS! ...
 - ... not only was it successfully kept from him, but he, in his professed superior wisdom, actually demonstrates himself to be a complete FOOL! (see 1 Cor. 1:27-29)
- 1 Cor 2:6-8
 - what God was able to do by the **cross-work** of the Lord Jesus (**hello Rom. 14:7-9**) was to produce a “mystery” aspect to it—and that allowed for (**hello NT benefits**) this Disp. of Grace to be brought in as a secret “mystery”!
- 1 Cor. 3:18-20 (this applies to both men and to Satan and his angels)
- Rom. 11:33-36
- Rom. 16:25-27
 - notice especially (:27) - this issue of the contention between God and Satan over who has the Wisdom Power to be Heaven & Earth’s Wise Ruler (because it takes God’s wisdom [including His *hidden, secret wisdom*] to rule Heaven & Earth ...
 - ... notice how, when you come to the end of your Level I Sonship Education (by means of the Power of the Edification Process) - notice how Paul makes an issue out of **GOD ONLY WISE!** ...
 - ... the contention with the adversary over Who is the Wisest IS SETTLED!
- 1 Timothy 1 (Paul is talking about his ministry) (read :16-17)
- **SUMMARY OF THE GODLY THINKING OF EQUITY SO FAR:**
 - The godly Thinking of our *instruction of Equity* is contained in Romans 14:1-12.
 - The overall, general, ‘Stage-Setting’ Statement is (:1).

- There are 5 Major Parts that make up the godly Thinking—and at the exact same time provide for the godly Solution or Remedy to the possible problems that can arise in the local assembly when you have a situation where there are some saints that are more advanced in godly edification (i.e., *stronger* brothers) and some saints that are just beginning their godly edification (i.e., *weaker* brothers).

- The ‘common’ possible problems will occur over a “clash” between the *stronger* brothers operating upon Pauline doctrine (making the proper distinction between God’s program with Israel in “Time Past”, and the *dispensation of the grace of God* and what God is “Now” doing with the members of the church, the body of Christ—[these *stronger* brethren utilizing their godly Sonship Liberty]) — and the *weaker* brothers, who, being *weak* in their understanding of Pauline doctrine, are operating upon biblical information contained in God’s program with Israel—and operating upon the OT Law.

- This doctrinal “clash” can present a very dangerous situation where either the *weaker* brother could be ruined & destroyed in his godly edification by the *stronger* brother’s improper & ungodly response—or the edification of the local assembly could be ruined and destroyed by division and destruction of its peaceful fellowship, communion, and ongoing godly edification as a whole ... OR BOTH!

- The 5 Major Parts of the godly Thinking of Equity that Remedy this situation:

1. (Rom. 14:3) ... ***God hath received him.***

- God “*receiving*” the *weaker* brother is NOT a justification issue or even a sanctification issue—rather, it’s an **edification issue!**

- The 1st Part is to view the *weaker* brother exactly like the Father views any person who determines to be involved in the edification process: *God hath received him.*

- Put simply: **GOD** HIMSELF qualified the *weaker* brother for godly edification, **NOT YOU!**

- God justified him; sanctified him; adopted him; and **called** him to be educated as His “son” and edified unto godliness—God equipped him with the NT benefits; the Spirit of God; and the word of God—and upon the *weaker* brother’s faith-response to what God’s grace provided: *God hath received him!*

- You’re only proper Equitable Sonship response, therefore, is to *receive him* just like your Father does!

2. (Rom. 14:4) ... ***he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.***

- God's capacity to 'hold up' the *weaker* brother and His *ability to make him stand* is not done by means of God's 'miracle-working power' - rather, it is done by means of God's written word—and specifically by means of the curriculum for godly sonship edification (Rom—Phlm).

- The 2nd Part of the godly Thinking of Equity that remedies the *weaker* brother situation is to view the curriculum for godly sonship edification exactly like the Father does.

- Any *weaker* brother who is operating upon even the smallest amount of Pauline doctrine can, by means of that doctrine, "please" God to some degree—and God honors that, and so should you!

- Put simply: **GOD** HIMSELF composed the curriculum for godly sonship edification with the capacity to edify the *weaker* brother unto godliness, **NOT YOU!**

3. (Rom. 14:5) ***Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.***

- This is NOT an issue of believing any old thing you want and God is fine with it—no — rather, this statement is highly restricted to the confines of the edification process only!

- The issue of any saint/son (*weak* or *strong*) being *fully persuaded in his own mind* as the curriculum for godly sonship edification does its job in his 'inner man' is the issue of acknowledging & honoring the methodology of the Father's process of godly edification! [between Him & His son]

- And by acknowledging & honoring that process (and the mechanics of that process as spelled out in Romans 6-13), the *stronger* brother will be **patient** and allow for the edification process to work in the *weaker* brother, just as it did in him.

- And the 'mechanics' of that edification process call for godly edification to take place in a Father-to-son (adult son) relationship. [and all that means]

- Put simply: **GOD** HIMSELF designed the mechanics of the edification process, **NOT YOU!**

4. (Rom. 14:9) *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

- As we have noted in our ‘prep’ work for Romans 14:7-9 ... (and as we will see in the details of it)—our Father now draws our attention to the **POWER of the Edification Process**—

... and He does it by drawing our attention to the **source** of that power—to the ‘source-person’ and the ‘source-place’: The Lord Jesus Christ and His Cross-Work at Calvary!

- And we know that *is* what is going on in (:7,8, &9) because the cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ is NOT being brought up in any old way—or even in a “gospel-presentation” type way ...

... you know by now that the cross-work of the Lord is not a single-issue thing (i.e., justification) - but it has far more ramifications than that—because God did far more than just justify you! (there are a whole bunch of things God did & God accomplished in the cross-work of Christ)!

- and it’s here that you really should have some real understanding & appreciation for THE BATTLE OF THE CROSS of Christ!

- (note: the issue of physical death is brought up—and there is an ‘edification-viewpoint’ you’re supposed to have about life and about death—and there’s something the Lord did in his ‘battle on the cross’ where He ends up in possession of the “keys” to **death** & hell)!

- The truth is—the cross-work of Christ is **not** being brought up here in strictly a sanctified way either ... rather, the cross-work of Christ is being brought up here in a context of **edification** (the edification process; godly edification)!

- And our Father is now getting you to see that the magnificent POWER of the death, burial, resurrection, and ‘*reviving*’ of the Lord is directly connected with **godly edification**! and not only that ... but it’s directly

... connected with godly EQUITY in your dealings with a *weaker* brother (and the problems that may arise with a *weaker* brother situation within the local assembly)!

- Now when it comes to dealing with the Power of the Edification Process—and the kind of background work we've done—my purpose in it all was to get you to see basically 2 things about that Power:

- (I know that what we looked at may have seemed to be a bit unorganized and going off in different directions) ...

... but really it wasn't ... in fact, you could take what we have looked at in our dealing with the Power of the Edification Process and put it into 2 categories:

- 1) The POWER to produce it;
- 2) The POWER produced by it.
(the power IN YOU produced by it)

- Romans 14:7 ***For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.***

- The godly Thinking of Equity in connection with our dealings with the *weaker* brother situation has nearly been accomplished by the time you get to the end of (:6) ...

... God has illustrated the kind of problems and dilemmas that can arise in a local assembly where you have differences in Edificational Estates among the saints in the assembly (i.e., "*weak*" ones and "*strong*" ones "*in the faith*" - or 'beginners' and 'advanced' ones [in Pauline doctrine]) ...

... and the godly Thinking of the Father Himself has provided the Solution or Remedy to the dilemma of the *weaker* brother situation (**the EQUITABLE REMEDY**):

1) GOD HIMSELF qualified the *weaker* bro. for godly edification, NOT YOU!
(*God hath received him [:3]*)

2) GOD HIMSELF composed the curriculum for godly sonship edification with the capacity to edify the *weaker* bro. unto godliness (pleasing God), NOT YOU!
(*God is able to make him stand [:4]*)

3) GOD HIMSELF designed the mechanics of the edification process (to effectually work within the ‘inner man’ of the *weaker* brother), NOT YOU!
(Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. [:5])

- Now what our Father is doing here is to provide us with a kind of ‘proof’ (to put it in a legal sense) — He is going to give us His own Thinking of Godly Equity to deal with the *weaker* bro. situation—and basically, everything is accomplished at the end of (:6) - however, (just as it has been done before in the book of Romans [Ch. 5]), the Father is going to come along here and kind of ‘case-harden’ the godly Thinking by adding some further explanation and further amplification to the Thinking of the godly Remedy as it exists in the first 6 verses.

- And by this ‘Expanded Solution/Remedy’, God is going to **strengthen** the Godly Thinking even more!

- And the information contained in this ‘further explanation’ of the Godly Remedy to the *weaker* bro. situation will, at the exact same time, provide for the **fullness** of Godly Equity to permanently exist & permanently live & reside in YOU!

- And if the effectual working of (:1-9) have done their job in your ‘inner man’ - then you will have God the Father and God the Son’s very own Thinking of Equity (you’ll really have ‘Sonship Equity Thinking’)!

- And if you think about it—the Father has to say this to His sons at this point in order to **fully** accomplish the godly Thinking of Sonship Equity ...

... Why? Because the ‘bottom line’ to all the kinds of various problems and issues that could arise from the *weaker* bro. situation all comes down to the issue of a potential **POWER STRUGGLE, OR POWER GRAB** by the *stronger* bro.!

- So—in order to prevent this, the Father begins saying things and instructing His *stronger* sons in a way that puts the son’s thinking in the position He wants it in—and He builds upon a ‘frame of reference’ that now exists in His son’s human spirit — and leads his son’s thinking down to the very point where this final matter will provide the son with the fullness of Thinking with Godly Equity.

- and if you think about it—the issue of The **Power** of the Edification Process ... (the **POWER** issue of it) ... really does provide putting the issue ‘over the top’ (so to speak), or ‘case-hardening’ the issue, or making the issue of godly Equitable Thinking so **strong** and so **powerfully understood** and **appreciated** by the son—so that the son is ‘suitably impressed’ with the Father’s power and ‘suitably unimpressed’ with his own power when it comes to the Edification Process!

- Illustration: It’s kind of like the electricity or power that comes in to your own home—when the “power” goes out, you don’t ever think about going out to the power pole, climb up it, and fiddle around with the wires yourself to restore the power to your house (**or someone else’s**) ... NO ... why? because that power is under someone else’s control ... and you could easily end up getting yourself or another person killed!
... instead, you let the ones who control that power do the work to get the power into your house! ... in essence, IT’S NOT YOUR POWER!

... and as we’ve noted, the Power of the Edification Process is the monopoly of God Himself! ... and that includes:

- 1) The Power to produce it; 2) The Power produced by it!
(the power it produces in the ‘inner man’)

- So when we look at how all 3 of the next verses start out: we have 3 “*For*’s” - 3 uses of the English Word of Logic “For” - and each one is a *For* of further explanation and further amplification ...

... and each one builds upon what was immediately said preceding it.

- the *For* of (:7) builds off of what was said in (:6);
- the *For* of (:8) is builds off of what is said in (:7);
- and the *For* of (:9) is builds off of what is said in (:7 & :8).

- So in light of what our Father has said to us in the first 6 verses regarding the Remedy to the *weaker* bro. situation of Godly Sonship Equity ... (:7) begins to further explain/amplify that in order to begin to **strengthen** your godly Thinking of Equity **to its fullness**.

7 For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.

- First of all—my understanding is that the ‘living’ and the ‘dying’ being spoken about here is **physical life & physical death**.

(i.e., NOT ‘functional’ life & ‘functional’ death’ per se [by itself])

- And the reason for that is because of a couple of things:

1) When (:8) goes on to further explain & amplify upon this statement in (:7) - if ‘functional’ life/death is in view, it would make that statement in (:8) that says, **“and whether we die, we die unto the Lord”** to be a really weird and very odd thing to say [and very wrong thing to say’ ... (You ‘**functionally**’ die “unto the Lord”?) ... where were you taught that?

2) When (:9) goes on to further explain & amplify upon what was said in (:7 & :8), it’s clear that the ‘death’ or ‘dying’ being spoken about in the case of the Lord Himself is talking about His real, physical death — **“ For to this end Christ both died ... (= physical death) - [and rose = physical life]**

- Now I do believe that the **context** makes it so that you **look** at that physical life & physical death in a certain way ...

... this is talking about the physical life & physical death of a *weaker* and *stronger* brother—of a saint/believer who is **involved in the Godly Edification Process** ...

... and because of that, this person being spoken about in (:7) has a physical life that is being lived out in his sanctified, functional life! (and that’s an important distinction, because that makes it a valid and rightful thing to say that he is NOT ‘living to himself’ (:7), but rather, ‘living unto the Lord’ (:8).

- And because this believer/saint is involved in the Godly Edification Process—even his physical death is viewed from the perspective of what Godly Sonship Edification does in its effectual work as it is brought to bear upon the issues concerning that believer’s physical death.

- Neither of these issues have been fully developed at this point in the Edification Process—but by this time in Rom 14, you have been taught some things in connection with each of these issues!

- Again, this is another verse that can easily be taken out of its context to mean something that it does not mean ... (keep every word in its context!) ...

- This is NOT talking about every person on earth—and it is NOT talking about every believer/Christian on earth!

- The context is talking about the *weaker* brother and the *stronger* brother ***in the faith*** ...

... therefore, the **“none of US”** phrase and the **“no man”** phrase is strictly and narrowly talking about a person (any person) who is a justified, sanctified, adopted adult son (a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ) **who is actively involved in the edification process!**

- Truth is—there are a whole bunch of genuine believers in Christ who have determined to LIVE UNTO THEMSELVES and who will DIE TO HIMSELF! — they have gotten justified unto eternal life, but have responded **NEGATIVELY** to their **functional** life!

- So (:7) is bringing all those things that any person who is involved in the Godly Edification Process **have in common** (and can therefore have peaceful fellowship & communion together) regardless of their Edificational Estate (being *weak* or *strong in the faith*—beginner or advanced) — many of which have already been brought out in the preceding 6 verses ...

... and (:7) is now going to focus upon the actual **Power** of the Edification Process **by pointing to the ‘radical root’ issue in common to the weaker and the stronger brother** ...

7 For (to further explain & amplify upon :6 and the godly Remedy so far) **none of us** (none of us *weaker* and/or *stronger* brothers who are involved in the godly Edification Process) ***liveth to himself*** (we are not using our physical life for the purposes of SELF; self-promotion; self-glory; self-satisfaction; or anything that could be considered self-**ish**—why? because the Edification Process takes care of such foolish things), **and no man** (no person involved in the Edification Process as a *weaker* or *stronger* brother) ***dieth to himself*** (which is an Edification Process issue—especially taught to you in Romans 8:18-25 [among other places]).

- And the ‘radical root’ issue that is in **common** to both the *weaker* brother as well as the *strong* “*in the faith*” is the issue of who God has made us to be “in Christ” sanctification wise—and the POWER of Godly Sonship Edification to put that sanctified position we have “in Christ” into practice ...

... the Power of the Edification Process to take what God has made us to be “in Christ” **positionally**—and put it into **practice!**

- And that Power is the SAME for BOTH the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother!

(Developmental progression)

- 1 Cor. 10:31
- 2 Cor. 5:1-9
- Phi. 1:21
- Col. 3:17
- Col. 3:23-24

- So in the first 6 verses (esp. :3-6) our Father has given us His own Godly Remedy to the *weaker* brother situation—and that Godly Remedy is **Sonship Equity**—(**Godly Equity**):

1) GOD HIMSELF qualified the *weaker* bro. for godly edification, NOT YOU!
(*God hath received him [:3]*)

2) GOD HIMSELF composed the curriculum for godly sonship edification with the capacity to edify the *weaker* bro. unto godliness (pleasing God), NOT YOU!
(*God is able to make him stand [:4]*)

3) GOD HIMSELF designed the mechanics of the edification process (to effectually work within the ‘inner man’ of the *weaker* brother), NOT YOU!
(*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. [:5]*)

- Then in (:6) God continues giving us the Solution/Remedy to the *weaker* brother situation by getting our Thinking to appreciate (as God Himself does) what the *weaker* (beginner) brother has in **common** with the *stronger* (advanced) brother ...

... and by doing that—to generate within the human spirit of both the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother a ***fellow-ship*** (being shaped as a ‘fellow’ son of God) and a ‘**tightening**’ of that **BOND** which was spoken about back in Rom. 12:10 ...

*Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring on another; (i.e., the very **opposite** of *disputation, strife, & division!*)*

- And then by understanding and appreciating that since the beginner (*weaker*) and the more advanced (*stronger*) ones *in the faith* BOTH have as their goal/aim/objective **godliness through godly edification** — and therefore BOTH have things **in common to the Edification Process** — then (:7) begins to Expand on that ... it begins to further explain and further amplify what was just previously said.

- but (:7) is said in order to say what God has the apostle Paul say in (:8) ... and (:7 & :8) are said in order to say what God has Paul say in (:9) - and (:9) is the final matter in the Godly Remedy of Equity-type Thinking to the *weaker* brother situation.

(which will deal with the **Power** of the Edification Process)

- Romans 14:8 ***For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.***

- We have a 2nd “*For*” of further explanation/amplification.

- Grammatically:

- 1 complete Sentence

- 2 Major clauses (you could say 3—but we’ll deal with it as two) —

1) *For whether we live, we live unto the Lord;*
[pause, weaker] *and whether we die, we die unto the Lord:* [strong pause]

2) *whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s.*

- And there are 2 critical issues to get going in your Thinking in order to have the Father’s own Thinking existing/living in you as a “son” and to provide for the Thinking aspect to your *instruction of Equity*.

- One is in the 1st Major Clause and the other is in the 2nd Major Clause.

- Let's deal with the 1st Critical godly Thinking Issue in the 1st Clause:

For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord:

- Think of this Clause as a 'Step' in order to get you to another issue. (This is a great teaching technique—it's 'Step - by - Step' teaching)

- This (being a further explanation/amplification of :7) is calling upon you to THINK BACK to some things that you have previously been taught—and the expectation is that you will connect what you have been previously taught with this.

- And when you make that connection, you have made the proper 'Step' in your Thinking—which then leads you to the next 'Step'.

- So take that issue of NOT 'living and dying' to yourself—*For none of us livieth to himself, and no man dieth to himself.*

- (see "highlighted" notes—pg. 217, 218, 219)

- So this 1st Clause of (:8) sets forth that issue of (:7) - but now in a Positive way—and more than that, by the use of the expression, ***unto the Lord*** repeated in both 'living' and 'dying' it ADDS some information to that previous statement in (:7)...

... we live unto the Lord; ... and ... we die unto the Lord:

- by adding that phrase "***unto the Lord***" to both our 'living' and our 'dying' — that is the 'trigger' mechanism that is designed to get you to THINK BACK to something you have previously been taught!

- And this is an important 'connection' to make because it points to the Power of the Edification Process that is **common** to BOTH the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother ... that is, it's a COMMON issue in the Edification Process.

- So—where does that expression that we 'live' ***unto the Lord***, and we 'die' ***unto the Lord*** take your Thinking back to?

- It takes you back to the **beginning** of the doctrine of your Sanctification—of your sanctified position "in Christ" and all of its results ... it takes you back to Romans 6!

- And more than that—it takes you back to a MAJOR ISSUE in connection with your sanctified position “in Christ” and the **POWER** to put that sanctified position “in Christ” into practice (i.e., in your physical life here on earth, as well as in your physical death here on earth) ...

... and the MAJOR ISSUE I’m after in connection with your sanctified position “in Christ” and putting it into practice ...
... is the issue of **REDEMPTION—of the REDEEMER and His REDEMPTION!**

- and that’s what the first part (or the 1st major Clause) of Rom. 14:8 is leading you back to ...

... and we know that because of what is said in the second part (or the 2nd major Clause) of (:8) —
whether we live therefore, or die,
WE ARE THE LORD’S.

- Those last 4 words of (:8) put your mind squarely upon the Redeemer and His Redemption!
(you are bought with a price—1Cor. 6:20; 7:23)

... but wait a minute ... sanctification is a major issue of Redemption???? ... I thought Redemption was all about being justified/saved! ... Redemption has something to do with godly sanctification? ... prove it!

- Ok: 1) Justification: Romans 3:24
2) Sanctification: Romans 6 ... but for time’s sake see Gal. 4:5!

- **Redemption = a LEGAL issue** = the legal release of a person by payment of a ransom; to set someone free by paying a price; to set free from a slave-market by paying a price.

- (see notes on “Appreciating the Value of Redemption)

- Now let’s look at some things in Romans 6 along these lines:

- Rom. 6:1-4 (:4)

- Rom. 6:11-13; 14-23

- The Godly Thinking aspect of our *instruction of equity* reaches its climax in verses 7, 8, and 9.

- Everything our Father says to us is designed to build and build to this point—and as it does, it provides for the Godly Thinking of Equity in our dealings with the *weaker* brother situation to be so re-enforced, and so mighty and so powerful in its effectual working in our ‘inner man’ that we would forever more *receive* the *weaker* bro, and deal with the *weaker* bro exactly as God Himself does!

... which is in Godly Equity, and Godly Love & Charity!

- And if (:1-9) does effectually work in your ‘inner man’, you will NEVER, EVER think to bring harm, ruin, or destruction to the *weaker* bro **even if it seems you have a “just” reason to do so!**

- Keep in mind: by what your Father says to you in 14:1-9—there is the fatherly expectation that you (as a more advanced, *stronger* bro) are expected to make some very strong and powerful **connections** with what is **being** said to you WITH the sound doctrine you have **already learned!**

- and this becomes most evident in (:7, 8, & 9) ...

... because there are a bunch of things said to you in these 3 verses that act as ‘triggers’ (so to speak) - that should ‘click’ in your thinking to some doctrine you’ve learned already!

- The choice of words in (:7) does that ...

... the entire 1st Major Clause of (:8) does that ...

... especially the last 4 words of (:8) does that (***we are the Lord’s***) ...

... even the repeated use of the preposition “***unto***” in (:8) does that ... (***... we live UNTO the Lord ... we die UNTO the Lord ...***)

- While the differences in the prepositions *to* and *unto* are slight, *unto* is a more demonstrative form of the preposition *to*.

- *Unto* is actually a variation of *onto*. *Onto* is made up of *on* plus *to*, put together.

- *To* is your basic preposition of relationship—depending on what kind of relationship you’re talking about.

- It can be a physical relationship, or a geographical relationship (and if it is a geographical relationship, then it’s a directional-type thing, and that’s why you say, “I’m going to walk down to the end of the road.” And in that way you’re describing the relationship you are going to have between yourself and the road you’re on— i.e., you’re walking **on** it **to** the end of it.)

- And that can be called geographical relationship, or directional relationship, or locational relationship, etc., etc.

- But *to* can also describe a spatial relationship. And if you’re going to have a spatial relationship, then you’re going to therefore change the plane that you’re on, then, generally, you come along and attach another preposition to the word *to*, in order to indicate that.

- And *ONTO* generally indicates that you’re picking something up, and you’re moving it from the plane that it’s on before you picked it up, and you’re moving it to another plane.

- Therefore, you pick up the dog, and put him onto the table.

- And so by putting that additional preposition *on* to the word *to*, it indicates that the word *to* is not just talking about merely a directional change, but there is also a spatial change as well.

- And unto is a form of that.

- And when you use *unto*, generally you are emphasizing the degree of the relationship that you are having (to whatever the indirect object of the verb is), and you are especially emphasizing **YOUR ACTION** in connection with it.

- Therefore, (14:8) - *For whether we live, we live UNTO the Lord; and whether we die, we die UNTO the Lord ...*

- The preposition “*unto*” emphasizes the degree of the relationship you are having with “the Lord” — and especially YOUR ACTION in connection with it—meaning, as a properly educated “son” in the doctrine of your Sanctification “in Christ” - YOUR ACTION has been one of a determined, positive & proper response to the EDIFICATION PROCESS! (to “*godly edifying which is in faith*”)

... and here's the 'kicker': **SO HAS THE WEAKER BROTHER!**

- the "common-fellowship" (communion & fellowship) issue that is "common" to both the *weak* and the *strong* brother is the issue of a determined, positive & proper response to the edification process!

- In other words—that *weaker*, beginner brother is just as committed to being edified unto godliness as the *stronger*, more advanced brother—therefore, the *stronger* WILL NOT become a 'tutor & governor' to the *weaker*, and the *stronger* WILL NOT get involved in a 'power-grab' to act AS GOD in the *weaker* brother's edification process!

... (and there's more 'trigger terminology' in :9, which we'll get to later on) ...

7 For (to further explain & amplify upon :6 and the godly Remedy so far) **none of us** (none of us *weaker* and/or *stronger* brothers who are involved in the godly Edification Process) **liveth to himself** (we are not using our physical life for the purposes of SELF: self-promotion; self-glory; self-satisfaction; or anything that could be considered self-**ish**—why? because the Edification Process takes care of such foolish things), **and no man** (no person involved in the Edification Process as a *weaker* or *stronger* brother) **dieth to himself** (which is an Edification Process issue—especially taught to you in Romans 8:18-25 [among other places]).

8 For (to further explain & amplify upon what was just set forth in [:7]) **whether we live** (that is, putting into practice my sanctified, functional life "in Christ" in my physical life here on earth), **we live unto the Lord** (my sanctified, functional life "in Christ" is put into practice in my physical life [whether *weak* or *strong*] by means of my involvement in the edification process in order to become godly [God-like], just like the Lord Himself); **and whether we die** (the termination of putting my sanctified, functional life "in Christ" into effect in my physical life here on this earth), **we die unto the Lord** (my sanctified, functional life "in Christ" in put into practice even in my physical death [whether *weak* or *strong*] by means of my involvement in the edification process in order to become godly [God-like], just like the Lord Himself even in physical death itself): **whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's** (everything we have been made

to be “in Christ” - and everything that the effectual working of the edification process does to successfully put all that God has made us to be “in Christ” into effect in our physical life or death in true “godliness” is directly due to the Lord Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and His redemption as we live and die as His “purchased possession”).

- Are we good so far?

- Romans 14:9 —

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

- Here we have the final “*For*” of further explanation & amplification ... and this “*For*” is going to further explain and further amplify upon what was just said (and understood and appreciated) in (:7 &:8).

- This verse is going to take the issue of the Godly Remedy to the *weaker* brother situation **and do what a ‘remedy’ does** (not in the case of a physical ailment—but in the case of a THINKING ailment) — it’s going to **correct a disorder** in your **mind**—in your human spirit—in your thinking!

- That is—any vestige of corrupt thinking that still exists in your mind is going to be forever uprooted, removed, and replaced with the godly Thinking of God the Father and God the Son themselves.

- Any thought you have that still exists in which you would treat a *weaker* brother with contempt, or with hatred, or with impatience, or with anything that could be considered as *despising* him (looking down upon him as unable to please God in any way) - is now going to get permanently replaced by godly Thinking!

- And when this verse does its effectual job—you will forever be ‘broken’ from ever thinking about taking over the Power of the Edification Process from God, and trying to accomplish edification in the *weaker* brother BY FORCE (and without any legal authority) as the *weaker* brother’s ‘tutor and governor’!

- And the way in which God is going to forever ‘break’ you

from doing that—is to drive the issue of **the Redeemer** (the Lord Jesus Christ) **and His Redemption** to the point in your thinking so that you are **suitably impressed with it**—just as impressed with it as God Himself is!

- And when it's all 'said and done' - you're going to end up ULTRA-SENSITIVE to the fact that if you ever try to usurp the Power of the Edification Process, what you are ultimately doing is **ATTEMPTING TO BE THE REDEEMER OF THE WEAKER BROTHER!** (which is a horrifying thing; which is an abominable thing; which is blasphemy! [you're claiming to be God Himself]!

- ***“For to this end”*** — (that is, being that *“we are the Lord’s”*, and the Lord functioning as our Redeemer and **us** receiving the benefits of **His** redemption—especially His redemption as it concerns our **sanctification** [our functional life as lived out in our physical life and physical death here on this earth] all of which is provided by the Power of the Edification Process ... in other words, **the Redeemer and His redemptive work, to the end that we are edified unto godliness**)

- the ***“end”*** (in this context) = **our godly edification**—it's not our justification alone, but our justification & sanctification **which makes godly edification possible** and which makes us spiritually 'fit' to be utilized by God for His plan, purpose, and will.

- ***“Christ”*** - now we have a shift in terminology—(from *“Lord”* to *“Christ”*) - Why?

- The word *“Christ”* primarily comes from the Davidic Covenant, (i.e., from the doctrine of the mechanical means by which God would put His “Jehovah-ness” into effect in order to do for you by His grace, what you could not do for yourself).

- And as such, *“Christ”* is a designation—(something like a title) - and it designates the one who bears it as being the one spoken about in the Davidic Cov.

- So the designation *“Christ”* first and foremost identifies the Lord Jesus as being the One of whom the Davidic Cov. is talking about.

- And the shifting to the term “*Christ*” here is done in order to lay the emphasis upon the Lord’s “Christ-ness” for some particular reason.

- Which means that God’s intent is to bring the issue of the Lord’s “Christ-ness” to the forefront of our mind so that we don’t just merely think about the word “*Christ*” - but to think about some aspect of it, or some particular quality or characteristic of the Lord Jesus being “*the Christ*” ...
... that is, something that He accomplished as “*the Christ*”.

- And the very first Mandate of the Davidic Cov. is the Redeemer mandate and His Redemption!

(so that grabs our attention and makes a suitable impression and impact) ... and that’s an **important** issue to our context ...

- But even more than that—the reason for changing the terminology from “*Lord*” to “*Christ*” (and the reason for **not** using the word “Redeemer”) is another issue that the word “*Christ*” brings to our mind ...

... and that is the “*Christ*” (God’s anointed) as a title that directly connects to the Davidic Cov. directs your thinking to think about the Lord Jesus and His **Sonship!** - because the “*Christ*” is the One who would become “*the Son of God*” who, being Adonai Jehovah was enfleshed in the line of the seed of David as per the dictates of the Davidic Covenant.

- And by directing our attention to the Lord’s own **Sonship** status, enfleshed in the line of the seed of David as the “*Christ*” - **He, and He alone, holds the LEGAL RIGHTS to Redemption and all of its results!** ...

... and He holds the legal rights to Redemption and its results **EXCLUSIVELY!** (NO ONE ELSE HOLDS THOSE RIGHTS ... NOT EVEN YOU!)

- Sonship is a LEGAL matter—Redemption is a LEGAL matter—and coming out of those 2 things: the Power of the Edification Process is a LEGAL matter (in the sense that the Power of the Edification Process is the exclusive, legal possession of the Son of God; the Redeemer; the “*Christ*”!)

- So the reason why the terminology is changed from “*Lord*” to “*Christ*” is to act as another one of those ‘trigger terms’ and to get you to make the connection with the Legal Rights to the Power of the Edification Process being exclusively in the hands of God Himself, and NOT in your hands at all!

- and this ‘trigger terminology’ should, (if it does its effectual job), make it so that you will, from now on, NEVER venture into making a claim that you have NO LEGAL RIGHT TO! (i.e., a claim to the Legal Right to the **Power** of the Edification Process over the *weaker* brother)!

... We have so far in (:9) ...

- “***For to this end***” — (that is, being that “*we are the Lord’s*”, and the Lord functioning as our Redeemer and **us** receiving the benefits of **His** redemption—especially His redemption as it concerns our sanctification [our functional life as lived out in our physical life and physical death here on this earth] all of which is provided by the Power of the Edification Process ... in other words, the Redeemer and His Redemption has so worked, **to the end** that we are **edified unto godliness**)

- the “***end***” (in this context) = **our godly edification**—it’s not our justification alone, but our justification & sanctification which makes godly edification possible and which makes us spiritually ‘fit’ to be utilized by God for His plan, purpose, and will.

- “***Christ***” (God’s anointed) as a title that directly connects to the Davidic Cov. directs your thinking to think about the Lord Jesus and His **Sonship!** - because the “*Christ*” is the One who would become “*the Son of God*”, and being Adonai Jehovah was enfleshed in the line of the seed of David as per the dictates of the Davidic Covenant.

- And by directing our attention to the Lord’s own **Sonship** status, enfleshed in the line of the seed of David as the “*Christ*” - **He, and He alone, holds the LEGAL RIGHTS to Redemption and all of its results!** ...

... and He holds the legal rights to Redemption and its results **EXCLUSIVELY!** (NO ONE ELSE HOLDS THOSE RIGHTS ... NOT EVEN YOU!)

- Sonship is a LEGAL matter—Redemption is a LEGAL matter—and coming out of those 2 things: the Power of the Edification Process is a LEGAL matter (in the sense that the Power of the Edification Process is the exclusive, legal possession of the Son of God; the Redeemer; the “Christ”!)

- The terminology is changed from “*Lord*” to “*Christ*” to act as another one of those ‘trigger terms’ and to get you to make the connection with the Legal Right of the Redeemer having the Legal Right to the Power of the Edification Process EXCLUSIVELY! (AND NOT YOU!)

- and this ‘trigger terminology’ should, (if it does its effectual job), make it so that you will, from now on, NEVER venture into making a claim that you have NO LEGAL RIGHT TO! (i.e., a claim to the Legal Right to the **Power** of the Edification Process over the *weaker* brother)!

9 For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, ...

- “... *Christ both died, and rose, and revived,*” — obviously, this is referring to the Cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ at Calvary.

- And as we have seen—this is being spoken of NOT in the context of justification/salvation, but rather in the context of **sanctification** and the results of putting your sanctified position “in Christ” into practice by means of the edification process.

- This is some godly Thinking about the work of the Lord on the Cross that has to do with godly **edification!**

- And those 2 things ARE linked together!

[there are some passages in the Corinthian epistles that we have already looked at that make it apparent that you should have made this connection with Romans doctrine—but even out in Level II of our Sonship Education we still see these 2 issues of 1) the Cross-work of Christ and 2) godly edification being linked together] ... (Eph. 1:7-9ff; 4:7-12; 1 Tim. 3:16)

- *Christ both died* (on the cross at Calvary), *and rose* (from the dead), *and revived,* — in order that *He might be Lord both of the dead and living* (in respect to the godly edification of the weaker/stronger bro).

- Now here in (:9) we have an interesting choice of words, as well as an interesting order of the wording ...

... *Christ both died, and rose, and revived,* ...

- And it almost makes you think that the word order should be: 'Christ both died, and revived, and rose, ...'

- And that word *revived* seems out of place (or outright wrong) because it seems inappropriate to the issue of Christ dying a real and physical death—it seems wrong to say that someone who had died and was really and physically dead in every way would be said to have *revived* ... (and didn't He do that before He rose from the dead?)

- And most Bible scholars are so befuddled by this that they either leave out the word *revived* or change it to something else—and they even change up the word order to suit themselves.

- But the word *revived* **is** correct and accurate—and the word order is absolutely flawless and without error!
(... so let's look at that word *revived* closely and we'll see why ...)

- This is the 2nd time the word *revived* has been used in the book of Romans (Rom. 7:9 and here) - in fact, these are the only 2x in the NT that the word *revived* is used.

- **REVIVED (past tense of REVIVE)** — From the L. prefix *re* = again + *vivo* = to live—hence, to bring to life again.

OED = restored to life—used by Bible scoffers to say that Christ didn't actually physically die, but swooned or fainted on the cross and this word indicates he recovered from swooning—**to return or come back to life; to regain vital activity after being dead (Rom. xiv. 9);** to live again—to return or come back after a period of abeyance—to make active or operative again.

Webster's 1828 = To bring again to life—To renew; to bring into action after a suspension (such as, "to revive a project")

Smith—the discriminating shade of meaning of *revive* is that *revive* speaks of "anything of which the force or action has lain dormant or in abeyance is said to be *revived* ..."

- So my understanding is that the word *revived* is a proper and fitting term to express the fact that the Lord (who died a real and physical death on the cross), was 'restored to life' or 'came back to life' - (in other words, there is NO reason to think that the use of the word *revived* is some kind of proof that the Lord didn't physically die on the cross, but only fainted or swooned) ...

... but more than that—by the word order of using the word *revived* as the last of the 3 terms expressing His cross-work—the word *revived* is putting the emphasis (not so much upon the **fact** that He was brought back to life) - but the emphasis is being put upon the issue of some action having to do with His life that was put in abeyance (or laid dormant) for a period of time, and then that LIFE-ACTION was come back to, or taken up again.

- And when this is being said in the CONTEXT, not of justification, but of **sanctification** (and with the edification process in view) — then that **does** make a connection with something we have already been taught about previous to this ...

... this is connected to the Lord's own "*newness of life*" spoken about back in Romans 6—a *newness of life* in connection with **sanctification**—and with the edification process!

- (see Rom.6 pg. 67-70)

- Once the Lord completed His function as the Redeemer and His redemption—He *revived*—He took up doing what was laid dormant (for 3 days & 3 nights) - and He returned to His LIFE-ACTION of being "*Lord both of the dead and living*" — He began 'walking in newness of life' in connection with a believer's **sanctification** and godly edification—(which could not be done before the redemption was performed as that Redeemer)!

- And not only that—but now something could be done in His LIFE-ACTION that could **not** have been done prior to His work as Redeemer: the mystery aspect of His cross-work could now get revealed and underway in the new entity of the one new man, the new creature of the church the body of Christ! (and that takes the Power of the Edification Process ... the NT benefits + complete written word of God + HS)!

9 For (in view of [:7 & :8] and the fact that *we are the Lord's* by means of His redemptive work) **to this end** (as *Lord both of the dead and living*, and in this context, those who are actively involved in the edification process [*weak or strong*] and are therefore beneficiaries of the redemptive work aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ which makes godly edification possible) **Christ** (as Adonai Jehovah enfleshed in the live of the seed of David as per the Davidic Covenant, the Lord Jesus Christ holds the exclusive legal rights to redemption and ALL of its results—including the Power of the Edification Process and the Power produced by it) **both died** (a real, physical death on Calvary's cross), **and rose** (the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead is the guarantee of His accomplishments as our Redeemer [which is its own legal matter]), **and revived** (the action of the Lord Jesus Christ's life that could only be walked and lived out after His redemptive work was completed—and which laid dormant temporarily [for 3 days/ nights] could now be returned to and His *walking in newness of life* now includes providing the Power of the Edification Process to any believer [*weak or strong*], ...

... **that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.**

- **"that"** (Purpose Clause) = in order that this ultimate goal might be achieved ...

- **"he might be"** - "*might*" is not being used here as a 'maybe He will, maybe He won't' issue (as if He might be *Lord of the dead and living*, but He might not)—no—rather, this is the use of the word *might* in the sense that when the accomplishment of what is said previous to the word *might* has taken place, then the accomplishment of what is said after the word *might* will certainly, absolutely, and without a shadow of a doubt take place.

- **"Lord"** - terminology shifts back from "*Christ*" to "*Lord*" - which is the expressive title or designation of Jesus Christ being the supreme authority & POWER regarding the matter at hand—we are His "purchased possession" - He is the 'owner' of both the *weaker* and *stronger* bro.

- *Lord* = "bread-keeper" - denotes the head of a household in his relation to the servants and dependents who 'eat his bread.' A master; a person possessing supreme power and authority.

... once again, driving home the issue of the Power of the Edification Process being in the Lord's hands, **not yours!**

- The return to the terminology “*Lord*” drives into your thinking, the godly Thinking—that the Christ (the Redeemer) is **the *Lord*** ... and the thinking is to never attempt to minimize that issue ...

- “*Lord*” reminds us that in a wider sense, Jesus Christ is *Lord* of all believers whether *dead* or *alive*—and in a narrower sense, He is *Lord* of every saint who in the context of their sanctification and participation in godly edification, includes BOTH you, as a *stronger* bro, **and** the *weaker* bro as well!

- God has Paul return back to this terminology and say what he says in the final 11 words of (:9) because this is the ‘kicker’ to all that he has said—and this one final thing HAS to be said—because the One who provided for godly edification to take place is, at the same time: Redeemer, Christ, and Lord!

- And there is one final aspect to the Lord’s Lord-ness that has not yet been said—but now it can be said (and needs to be said).

9 *For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.*

- As we just noted— “*the dead and living*” can be said of all believers in a wider sense—but in this context, the narrower sense is talking about the *stronger* and *weaker* ones *in the faith*—that is, those who are involved in the edification process.

- But I want to point out (as a ‘side-bar’) that the statement in Scripture that the cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ allowing for Him to be “*Lord both of the dead and living*” indicates a very powerful doctrinal issue ...

... being *Lord* of those who have physically died proves to you that deceased believers ARE NOT annihilated; they are NOT unconscious (or in ‘soul-sleep’)! ...

... as the Redeemer; the Christ; and the *Lord* we know that every believer who has died is under the dominion-care of the *Lord/Redeemer!* ...

... and this gives great confidence/assurance/ and HOPE to

any believer who has experienced the death of another believer (whether family, friend, or acquaintance)!

- Because death was something pertaining to the predicament we were in “in Adam” - the Lord Jesus Christ as our Redeemer (by His own death, burial, and resurrection—by the Battle of the Cross), He redeemed us out of the grip, the fear, the power, and the sting of DEATH!

- And one of the things that’s supposed to happen at this point is that you are supposed to gain a particular viewpoint or perspective about death (both your own, and others) ... a **GODLY** viewpoint!

- (this is prep-work for even your own death—even if it takes place under the “sufferings of Christ”!)

why would you ever wish they were back?

- (this recalls to our thinking a lot of the doctrine we learned about death from Romans 5!)

- Now—returning to that issue I talked about earlier—these last 11 words of (:9) is one final thing that **HAS** to be said (not only in connection with the Redeemer and His redemption), but also in connection with Jesus the Christ being “**Lord**” — this last phrase of (:9) **MUST** be said; it **NEEDS** to be said—and it is the final aspect of the Lord’s ‘Lord-ness’ (so to speak).

- *Lord* has special significance in that it is a descriptive title that carries heavily the shade of meaning that all persons and all things that He is *Lord* of **are to consider themselves SUBJECT TO HIM!**

- The ultimate goal of godliness (being “like God”) [and the ultimate goal of godly Sonship Edification], is to LABOR with God in all that He’s doing ...

... **Labor**, therefore, demands something from the one you are laboring for—the one under whose authority/power you labor (i.e., your *Lord*)... **it demands evaluation!**
(**evaluation** OF the subjects **BY** the *Lord*!)

... (truth is—the idea of being **evaluated** has already entered your thinking as late as Romans 8:14! or as early as 6:1!)

- And being subject to a *Lord* means that you are **ACCOUNTABLE** to your *Lord*—**and to Him alone!** (not to any other person—not even to a *stronger* brother!)

- **Subjection** means **accountability**—and **accountability** means **judgment** and **evaluation** **MUST** take place

... Lordship DEMANDS such judgment!

- And that judgment & evaluation is one of those issues that is the exclusive right of the *Lord* (who, in this case performed the **redemption**).

- And by bringing this issue back into our thinking—the next, natural thing for that to generate in our thinking is a function of the ‘*Lord’s*’ Lordship that He will naturally carry out—(it is a future function/future demand of Lordship)—because as subjects to a ‘*Lord*’, the natural thing for that *Lord* to do is to evaluate or judge His subjects — **and reward them as His servants accordingly!**

- Put simply—the *Lord* determines among His **servants/subjects who gets what!**

- And that’s the reason for why (:10, 11, & 12) needs to be said as the final matter of the godly Thinking of Equity!

- **Romans 14:10, 11, 12** — **The Final Concluding Matter** of the godly Thinking Aspect of our *instruction of equity*.

- And by now you should clearly see the reason “why” this Final Concluding Matter has to be brought up as a matter of godly Thinking—this matter of Sonship Accountability (or Estate Accountability).

- because there is a matter of ‘accountability’ for any person involved in the Edification Process—[and that goes for both the *weaker* brother and the *stronger* brother]!

- and by now you should see the naturalness of that! (accountability goes hand-in-hand with godliness; with godly edification; with sonship edification)! — and you need to have a good understanding/appreciation for this, otherwise this “*judgment seat of Christ*” issue just comes ‘out of the blue’! (you have to know “why” it’s being brought up!)

10 *But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.*

11 *For it is written (Isa. 45:23), As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.*

12 *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

- ROMANS 14:10

- (:10) is all 1 sentence—it's divided into 3 parts by the older English use of the question mark (interrogation mark) for only a **part** of a sentence which allows for a question (or questions) to be raised within a complete sentence or thought. And when used this way, it's often done to raise a question or series of questions that act as (more or less) 'follow-up' questions to the main question or a **main issue** that has been set forth **before**—(the main issue being set forth in [:3]).

- This is an older English technique for taking a body of information that is set forth in such a way so as to present a 'proof' of something and bring it 'full circle' - meaning, to set forth an issue; then to provide the logical proof of it; and then to return to the original issue after the proof has been given and underscore the reality of it.

- And that's just what God has the apostle Paul do here—he sets forth the 'dilemma' of the kind of problems that can arise within the local assembly when you have a *weaker* brother situation in the 1st Illustration of (:3).

- And **only** the 1st Illustration is gone back to because only in it is described the ill-effects that can occur to cause division in the local assembly. (only in :3 do you get a description of the resulting ungodly, improper, and inconsistent Thinking that occurs between the *stronger & weaker* brother).

- And the natural thing to do—once the corrective doctrine and the godly remedy to the ungodly, inconsistent Thinking has been given—is to say something **BACK** to the original problems & ill-effects that were originally brought up and listed, and to now do so in view of the godly remedy.

- And by doing that— you **fully prove** that the godly remedy really does WORK! (the Godly Thinking resolves the problems of that *weaker* brother situation **perfectly!**)

- And in the case of (:10) - there are 2 things going on—not only does Paul take the godly Thinking ‘full circle’ by raising 2 questions that takes you back to the original issue sitting in (:3) - but secondly, he’s going to give one additional matter as a final, concluding matter that adds even greater strength to the godly Thinking remedy.

- but this final, concluding matter can only be said in light of (or in view of) the godly Thinking remedy being fully set forth and fully proven to be the effectual-working Thinking to resolve the problems of the *weaker* brother situation.

- God has Paul state (or list) the actual problems that can arise within the assembly in the *weaker* brother situation in (:3) — * the *stronger* brother can end up *despising* the *weaker* brother (*Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not*) ...

... and * the *weaker* brother can end up *judging* the *stronger* brother (... *and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth* ...)

- Then you have the godly Thinking Remedy given in from the end of (:3) and down through (:9).

- And now—in view of all the corrective godly Thinking, you return to the original matter of the actual problems that can arise in the *weaker* brother situation—(i.e., the *judging* of the *stronger* brother by the *weaker* brother, and the *despising* of the *weaker* brother by the *stronger* brother) ...

... and in view of that corrective, godly remedy Thinking—**one last thing** is going to now be said (and can only now be said, once the godly Thinking has been given) ...

... and the result is that the ‘proof’ has come ‘full circle’ **PLUS** one additional thing is said in order to give the ‘proof’ even greater strength and even greater might to ward off any ‘inroads’ of the adversary to get divisions started in the local assembly and thereby ruin and destroy its vital fellowship and communion!

(it’s like the godly Thinking is now set in **cement**—but this Final Concluding Matter is the ‘**rebar**’ that re-enforces it and makes it even **stronger** and the **most powerful** it can be!)

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- Let's look at those first 2 questions within this sentence:
"But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? ..."

- These 2 questions need to be looked at together—why? - because they are **not** introducing something new—and they are **not** supposed to be dealt with as though they are 2 different doctrinal issues or 2 “categories” of doctrine (or 2 ‘compartmentalized’ issues/doctrines).

- And another reason why these 2 questions need to be taken or looked at together is because of the very first word of the verse: ***“But ...”***

- Most commonly, the word *but* is used as an adversative conjunction—(meaning that what is now going to be said is the antithesis or direct opposite of what was just previously said) ...

... but that's **not** the way in which the word *But* is being used here—here is an instance of the use of the word *but* as a continuative conjunction—meaning that something that has already been said is now going to get picked back up ...

... (due to setting forth the issue already, and making a statement about it—but then pausing to say anything about it in a concluding-type manner so that a body of information can be given to further explain/amplify upon something vital about what was originally set forth) ...

... and now—once the further explanation & amplification has been completed—the only remaining issue is to pick back up (or come back to) what was originally set forth and in view of the further explanation, give a final concluding statement about the whole thing. (continuing on with what was first said)

- So this use of the word *But* in (:10) acts to circle back to the original statement in (:3) - and in view of all the further explanation in the middle section, to conclude the matter—and in this way, the word *But* acts like a “Therefore”.

- So we have: **But** (returning to what was said in [:3], and continuing on with that in order to conclude the matter) **why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? ...**

- Now—in view of all the godly Thinking set forth from the end of (:3) — (:9) ... with that body of doctrine doing its effectual work in your ‘inner man’ ... ‘Why in the world would you ever think of doing what was said in (:3)?

- In the case of: The **Weaker** Brother —

(:3) ... *and let not him which eateth not* (that’s the weaker brother) **judge** *him that eateth* (that’s the stronger brother) ...

- (then the further explanation & amplification)

(:10) *But why dost thou* (weaker brother) **judge** *thy* (stronger) *brother?*

- Remember why God has Paul use the term **judge**:

- The answer as to Why does the Father use *judge* as the Thinking of the *weaker* bro. towards the *stronger* bro. is because what he observes the *stronger* bro. doing in his **Sonship Liberty** has “pricked” his **CONSCIENCE!** (or **bothered his conscience!**)

- And in one case, the conscience has NOT been bothered; but in the other case, the conscience HAS been bothered!

- In the case of the *stronger* bro. — his conscience isn’t bothered one bit by eating whatever he wants to eat because he knows he has the Liberty as a “son” to do that. He has a ‘clear conscience’ in that case.

- But in the case of the *weaker* bro. — he’s operating upon the OT Law—and based upon what he believes from that OT Law, he refuses eating meat, because to do so would not only be a violation of the Law, but it would violate his own **conscience!** (and he *judges* the *stronger* bro. because the *stronger* brother’s *despising* of him is perceived to be a ‘strong-arm’ tactic in order to get him to eat meat!)

... and that just doesn’t ‘fly’ with his conscience—he can’t do that “in all good conscience”!

- And this issue of the **conscience** is a big deal when you're dealing with the issue of EQUITY! ... and therefore, this issue of the *weaker* brother **judging** the *stronger* brother falls squarely into the matter of SONSHIP EQUITY as well!

(Crabb— “the obligations to *equity* are altogether **moral**; we are impelled to it by the dictates of **conscience**; we cannot violate it without exposing ourselves to the Divine displeasure” ... “*Justice* is that which publick law requires; *equity* is that which ... **the law of every man's conscience requires.**”)

- In the case of: The **Stronger** Brother —

(:3) *Let not him that eateth* (that's the stronger brother) **despise** *him that eateth not* (that's the weaker brother);

- (then the further explanation & amplification)

(:10) ... *or why dost thou* (stronger brother) *set at nought thy brother* (weaker brother) ? ...

- I realize that at first what is said here in (:10—**set at nought**) doesn't seem to match up with that word **despise** in (:3) ... but it does!

- Truth is—the word **despise** (:3) is the Greek word ἐξουθενέω — and the phrase **set at nought** is the same Greek word!

- “**set at nought**” is an expression of **despise**!

- So the question is, Why change the word **despise** in (:3) to the phrase “**set at nought**” in (:10)? ... [we'll come back to that later] ...

- Remember why God has Paul use the term **despise**:

- “**despise**” - is a very **strong** word! (and it's intended to be a strong, repulsive, and ugly word)

- *despise* = (seems to be derived from the OF, but it may come from the Sp. & L.), but it is commonly believed to come to us from the L. Prefix *de* = down + the L. *specio* = to look, hence, **to look down!**

OED = to look down upon; to view with contempt; to think scornfully or slightly of.

- and you have *despise* and some similar terms: *contempt, scorn, despicable, disdain* and such ...

... but there is a ‘radical root’ element to all these words ... (?) ... and that is that the one doing the *despising, contempt, scorn, disdain* sees the object of his *despising* as **WEAK!**

- and in a context such as this—with a *stronger* brother who is a ‘freshman’ nearing that ‘sophomore’ stage—the tendency for one who is ‘stronger’ or ‘higher’ in his learning is to look at one who is ‘weaker’ or ‘lower’ in his learning **and look DOWN UPON HIM!** ... or *despise* him!

- and to view the *weaker* bro as being worthless and unable to be able to “please” God in any way!!!

- And the *stronger* bro is expected to connect that word *despise* (since it means to look DOWN upon) with the issue of being **high-minded!** (Rom. 11:20; 12:3!)

- And he’s expected to connect that with the issue of **PRIDE** (the Pride Of Life—from which comes *strife & envying—the works of darkness*)

- this is how you can easily end up doing the adversary’s bidding/work, all the while thinking you’re doing God’s bidding/work!

- And all of this points to or drives at ONE thing: the *stronger* brother’s LIBERTY—(Sonship Liberty)! and his proper or improper use of that liberty! — and this is where real godliness (and becoming ‘Like Father, Like son’ gets honed and crafted and polished)! [i.e., the use of one’s liberty]

- And if the *stronger* bro. fails to utilize godly *equitable* thinking— but instead, utilizes his own natural, ungodly thinking (taught to him by the “*wisdom of this world*”) - then he’s going to end up *despising* his *weaker* bro.! (*him that eateth not*)

- i.e., he will LOOK DOWN upon him;
- he will see the **weakness** of the *weaker* bro. and see that weakness **AS A BAD THING**;
- and instead of operating upon godly *equitable* thinking, he will operate upon his own PRIDE and ARROGANCE of being in a superior/stronger position edification-wise, and he will become **high-minded** and end up in some way viewing his *weaker* bro. with contempt, scorn, abhorrence, and anything else that falls under the category of *despise*.

- So that’s again why God has the apostle Paul use the word *judge* in connection with the ungodly Thinking of the *weaker* bro towards the *stronger* bro — and the word *despise* in connection with the ungodly Thinking of the *stronger* bro towards the *weaker* bro.

- (and BOTH are issues directly involved with EQUITY— i.e., with the **failure** to use godly *equitable* Thinking!)

- But (going back to what I said before) — Why does the word *despise* (in :3) get changed to *set at nought* here in (:10)? Why not use *despise* again? ... and why are these 2 issues **reversed** in (:10) so that the ungodly Thinking of the *stronger* brother towards the *weaker* brother gets stated LAST?

- Normally, when you set forth a list or series of issues such as this—the intention is to move from smaller to greater; from mild to severe; or to place an issue LAST in order to put some kind of special emphasis upon it. (and my understanding is that this is just what’s being done here)!

- The focus of attention is to emphasize the ungodly Thinking of the *stronger* bro—why? well, for one thing, the *stronger* bro is in a position (by default) of having greater responsibility when it comes to his laboring together with his Father in his Father’s business/work—(due to being more advanced in the curriculum for his Sonship Education and godly edification).

- and for another thing—the *stronger* bro is expected to have the effectual working of the Components of the curriculum for his Sonship Education that directly deals with “*high-mindedness*” and Pride, and The Pride of Life that he’s not only responsible for, but accountable for!

- But let’s look at that change in terminology—from *despise* in (:3) to *set at nought* in (:10).

- What does *nought* mean?

- *nought* = (Walter Skeat) - *nought* comes from *naught*, meaning “nothing” - it’s etymology comes down to us from ME where it was used to mean “No Whit” (no + thing); not a whit—hence, **worthless!**

- OED = nothing; nothing of worth; nothing of value or purpose — and “to set at nought” = to despise, defy, scorn, disregard.

- Webster’s 1828—(takes you back to “*naught*”) = nothing; in no degree; bad, worthless, of no value or account.

- by the way—this should give you some insight into the word *naughty* / *naughtiness* as it’s used in Scripture!

- So it’s pretty easy to see that the word *nought* is a further developed species of the word *despise*—but there’s something else going on here ...

... notice that it doesn’t say, ‘or why dost thou treat thy brother as nought’

... no—it says “**SET AT nought**” — so why did the KJ Translators do that?

- What do those 2 little words “**set at**” get you to THINK in connection with the word *nought*?

- When you **SET** something or someone **AT NOUGHT**, WHAT ARE YOU DOING???

- “*nought*” tells you that you *despise* the person; you look down on him; you think of him as **worthless** (and in this case, as being unable to please God) ... but by the addition of the words “*set at nought*” it tells you something MORE about your ungodly Thinking ...

... when you **SET** someone **AT NOUGHT** the desire of your Thinking is to **SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM HIM!**

- The primary focus of attention in (:10) is NOT on the mere issue of *despising* the *weaker* brother—but the focus of attention is on the issue that pertains to **FELLOWSHIP AND COMMUNION!**

- To “*set at nought*” is a more intensive form of *despising* because it focuses upon the **RESULT** of your *despising*—which is to **refuse and withdraw godly edificational fellowship from this weaker brother!**

- “*set at nought*” means that your ungodly Thinking has got to the point to where you REFUSE to have any FELLOWSHIP with the *weaker* brother!

- and that means that DIVISION has now occurred in the local assembly ... and more than that, YOU are the cause of that division! (and this ‘division’ is what Godly Equity seeks to avoid at all cost!)

10 But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? ...

- Now for the answer to the 2 questions ...

10 ... for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

- Once the issue of the godly Thinking has done its effectual work up to this point (from the end of :3—:9) - and therefore, once the issue of of the *weaker* and the *stronger* brother (and especially the *stronger* brother, because he bears the greater weight of responsibility) has been made aware of the **significance** of his **Estate** (edification-wise); and once a son now recognizes his **godly reputation**; and his **sonship responsibility** ... now you are ready for dealing with the full weight of your **sonship accountability**.

- And the son can now properly deal with (and properly respond to) to his **sonship accountability** because of the way the Father has progressively developed His son's godly Thinking by what has previously been said to him ...

... the Father's driving home in His son's thinking the issue of how **both** of you (as a *stronger* one in the *faith*, **and** the *weaker* brother in the *faith*) are connected to and related to the Power of the Edification Process ...

... driving home the issue of:

THE LORD;

(and by default, the Redeemer);

THE CHRIST;

and then back to the LORD once again ...

... all of that makes you aware of the fact that **both** you as a *stronger* bro, **and** the *weaker* bro, are both the *purchased possession* of the *Lord* Himself ...

... and as *Lord of both the dead and living*—we are both to consider ourselves SUBJECT TO HIM (and NOT to each other [in the edification process])!

- And all of that is designed to come down to this Final Concluding Matter: Lordship **demands** (by its very nature) the evaluation of the Lord's **subjects!**

- (again, being subject to a *Lord* means that you are ACCOUNTABLE to Him, and to Him alone!)

- Subjection means accountability ... and accountability means that **judgment & evaluation** MUST take place!

- And for us (whether we are *weak* or *strong*) - all of us as members of the new creature of the church, the body of Christ are all going to have to do what the rest of (:10) describes ... "***we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.***" (and my understanding is that goes for ALL believers/saints in this Disp. of Grace in general, and it goes for the *stronger* & *weaker* ones in the *faith*, specifically).

- So let's look at this issue of the *judgment seat of Christ* ...

- The expression *judgment seat* is not a new concept here—it has been mentioned many times in Scripture (albeit a NT expression) - and it is mentioned in both God’s program w/Isr., and with the Disp. of Grace in which we live:

- Mat. 27:19; John 19:13 [Pilate’s]
- numerous times in Acts in connection with Paul (18:12,16, 17; 25:6, 10, 17)

- The exact expression “*the judgment seat **of Christ***” is **new**— & occurs only 2x (here in Rom. 14:10, and in 2 Cor. 5 [read **:1-10**] [:10])

- But there is a passage in our epistles of the apostle Paul where, although the expression “*the judgment seat of Christ*” is **not** mentioned—further details about *the judgment seat of Christ* are gone over ... (see 1 Cor. 3:1-14)

- COMMON MISUNDERSTANDING: The *judgment seat of Christ* IS NOT the same things as “*the great white throne*” judgment!

- (see Rev. 20:11—[which connects back to Dan. 7:9-10])

- All too common, many folks get the issues of the *great white throne* and the *judgment seat of Christ* mixed up because they do not “rightly divide the word of truth” - and by not paying attention to which program they are in, they end up mixing up the ‘rapture’ (or catching up of the church, the body of Christ) at the end of this present Disp. of Grace with the 2nd Advent (or 2nd coming) of Christ just prior to the “kingdom of heaven” getting established on the earth!

- WHEN will the *judgment seat of Christ* take place? ... when all the Scripture’s teaching is taken together, my understanding is that it will logically take place when the entire “body of Christ” is gathered together immediately after the rapture.

- When dealing with the issue of the *judgment seat of Christ*—the first thing you have to **acknowledge** is the **reality** of it—it really does exist— and it really does exist as a matter to which you are going to have to deal with (by *standing* before it for your judgment/evaluation as one who is **subject** to the Lord) — (and those passages we read in Rom. 14:10; 1 Cor. 3:10-14; 2 Cor. 5:10 make that perfectly clear). **(you have an ‘appointment’ with that judgment!)**

- All of us, as members of the body of Christ will *stand* before the *judgment seat of Christ*, **because of who God has made us to be “in Christ”** ...

... and this is due to the fact that not only did God **justify** us unto eternal life, but He also **sanctified** us unto functional life—and by doing so, He has made us members of His “new creature” the church the body of Christ ...

... and He has done that in connection with His plan for reconciling the heavenly places unto Himself (not the earth, which is Israel’s program)!

- It’s in **sanctification** that God has made it so that we can now **live** unto Him and **serve** Him by bringing forth “*fruit unto holiness*” - and He has made it so we can, therefore, be **used** by Him to replace the present occupants of the positions of governmental rule in the heavenly places when He reconciles them unto Himself.

- By its very nature—our sanctification—our functional life—along with the **potentials** of it, and the **responsibility** of it—there is the need for there to be a time when God will **evaluate how we have responded** to our sanctified, functional life because of how it is connected with our vocational position “in Christ” in the heavenly places ...

... and in connection with that, there is a need for us to **receive** from God the **results** of that evaluation!

- And in a ‘nutshell’ this is what the *judgment seat of Christ* is all about.

- If the only thing God did for us was to justify us unto eternal life when we believed in the Lord Jesus Christ as our only & all-sufficient Saviour, then there would be no need for *the judgment seat of Christ*.

- But since God also sanctified us and gave us a vocational position “in Christ,” there arises a need for the *judgment seat of Christ* and for God Himself to respond to how we have responded to the grace He has given to us in sanctifying us unto His service—(that “grace” giving us all we need to live properly & successfully unto Him: the HS; the NT benefits; the written word of God, Rom. 8:1-13).

- Now another issue that makes *the judgment seat of Christ* a needful thing is that our sanctified & vocational position “in Christ” is directly connected to the issue of God dealing with us as “sons” - (**sonship edification**)!

- Our status as God’s adopted, adult “sons” is the ‘arena’ (or the realm or the vehicle—or the means) by which God has designed for godliness and godly edification to take place.

- And just as the issues or aspects of godliness are: 1) Thinking; 2) Living; and 3) Laboring together with God in all that He’s doing—so to is it with sonship edification!

- And our ‘laboring together with God’ is not merely in view of what we are doing on this earth—but because of what this Dip. of Grace is for in the first place (i.e., to repossess the heavenly places from the adversary & his cohorts), and because our ‘vocation’ “in Christ” is not an earthly vocation, but a “heavenly vocation” - God expects us to presently labor together with Him in what He is now doing in this Disp. of Grace, **and in doing so, to look forward to eventually entering into laboring with Him in the heavenly places!**

- This is what our *adoption as sons* is all about!

- And just as a natural father evaluates his sons’ response to his desire to educate them in his mind and ways and work when it comes to determining how well they can enter into his business—and how much responsibility they can handle in it ... so it is with us!

- The *judgment seat of Christ* will be the time at which God evaluates (judges) our response to His desire and grace-provisions to educate us in His mind (thinking), ways (living), and work (labor) ...

... and on the basis of that evaluation, He will determine how much responsibility we are **qualified** to handle in His business of the reconciliation of the heavenly places.

- By the way—this means, therefore, that every member of the church the body of Christ DO NOT get the same thing at *the judgment seat of Christ*! ... and for those who ‘bristle’ at that; and have problems with that—that’s because they have not been properly taught in the issue of BODY THINKING! (your liver isn’t upset because it doesn’t get ‘seen’ by everybody like the eyes do!)

- The type of *judgment* (or evaluation) will be one of us “*giving account*” of ourselves to God in connection with what He has said He wants us to do in view of Him having sanctified us “in Christ” - (which is the issue of being “godly” - “*godly edifying which is in faith*” [1 Tim. 1:4]).

- 1 Corinthians 3:10-14

- Here Paul deals in more detail about our final evaluation at the *judgment seat of Christ*—but here he does so by describing us in a way that is perfectly consistent with and in keeping with godly edification: we are described as “*God’s building*” (:9).

- We are *God’s building* in connection with God’s grace-provisions for; (and His plan, purpose, and will for) our *godly edifying*.

- As *God’s building*, we have a “*foundation*” (:10) - and that *foundation* is just what God has made us to be “in Christ Jesus” (:11) as Paul has laid down and set forth to us in Romans chapters 1-11 — and then on through the rest of Romans as our sonship edification gets underway, plus 1st & 2nd Cor., and Galatians.

- Then the blueprint of the ‘superstructure’ of our godly edification that’s supposed to be built upon that *foundation* is what God has the apostle Paul set forth in Eph., Phil., and Col.

- Finally, the ‘capstone’ of our godly edification gets built in 1st & 2nd Thessalonians ...

... and then the ‘pastoral’ epistles of 1st & 2nd Timothy, Titus, and Philemon educate and edify us as to the tactics and attacks we will encounter as a properly edified local assembly from the adversary and his Policy of Evil.

- Now—when we build upon the *foundation* of who God has made us to be “in Christ” **by following the ‘blueprint’ given through Paul**—we build with the ***gold, silver, and precious stones*** type of building materials that are fitting to the nature of the foundation—and thereby glorify it with enduring, eternal glory! (a glory that will last forever)!

- **BUT!!!** ... if we DO NOT specifically follow Paul's 'blueprint' for godly sonship edification—if we do not follow the order, the sense & sequence of Romans through Philemon ... then we are attempting to construct a kind of godly edifying which is **NOT** "**in faith**" ... or to put it as Paul does, we only have a ***form of godliness, but deny the power thereof (2 Tim. 3:5)*** ...

... if we **do not** follow Paul's 'blueprint' for us, the members of the church the body of Christ today following Paul, the "*wise masterbuilder*" (1 Cor. 3:10) ... or by educating ourselves with "*the wisdom of this world*" (see 1 Cor. 3:19) instead of the wisdom of God—then we will build with that "*wood, hay, and stubble*" type building materials (:12) that are contrary to the *foundation* upon which they rest!

- And by doing so, you end up dishonoring the *foundation*! ... **and it will NOT be permitted by God for your building to remain dishonoring your foundation forever!**

- NO — the *work* that we are to do, being *God's building*, and that "*shall be made manifest*" (:13) will be made *manifest* or *revealed* "**by fire**" (:13) - and that *fire* "*shall try every man's work of what sort it is*" (:13) ...

... and "*the work*" we are supposed to do (being *God's building*) is the *work* of taking the grace-provisions God has made for our *godly edifying* and building true *godliness* upon the *foundation* of who we really are "in Christ."

- And if we do so, we "*shall receive a reward*" (:14) in that day (at the *judgment seat of Christ*) ...

... and if we do NOT do so, our "*work shall be burned*" (:15) and we "*shall suffer loss*" (:15) — which means NO REWARD because the *work* was **not** proper—you will suffer the **loss** of what had been built by that *wood, hay, and stubble* type of edification building materials (being the dishonoring thing that they are)!

- Now that's a very, very simple and very, very basic grasp of what the *judgment seat of Christ* is about—but I want to get just a little bit more specific in connection with our edification as "sons" ...

... and that's because it should be very clear by now that this final evaluation (or *judgment*) at the *judgment seat of Christ* is directly tied to how you responded to God's **grace** in offering you the opportunity to be 'edified unto godliness which is in faith' - and then giving you by His **grace** all of the provisions that enable you to be 'edified unto godliness which is in faith' and thereby put all that God has made you to be "in Christ" into practice in the details of your life.

- But as I pointed out before—(and as it should also be very clear to you by now) — 'edification unto godliness which is in faith' is directly tied to your **sonship status** and your **living out** your sonship life according to Paul's 'blueprint' - (i.e., according to the curriculum for your sonship edification as found in Romans—2 Thess).

- So that means that your final evaluation at the *judgment seat of Christ* is going to be the evaluation of your response to being edified as God's adopted, adult son or daughter!

- And that means—(and what should be very clear to you by now as well) — that means that your evaluation at the *judgment seat of Christ* is going to be directly connected to your **inheritance** as a ***JOINT-HEIR WITH CHRIST!***

- And receiving your inheritance as a *joint-heir with Christ* is NOT **unconditional**, rather, being a *joint-heir with Christ* is **CONDITIONAL!!!**

- **(see Rom. 8:16-21ff [:17])**

... the issue of being an "*heir of God*" isn't a new thing here—you were confronted with that back in Rom. 4! ... but the issue of being a "*joint-heir with Christ*" is something new in Rom. 8:17!

(... this means that our sonship is connected to Christ's own sonship! ... ***WITH Christ***)

- The *judgment seat of Christ* is connected to our response to our edification as God's "sons" ... and our edification as God's "sons" is connected to us having the opportunity to be *joint-heirs with Christ* ... but that's not all of the 'connections' ... being a *joint-heir with Christ* is **conditional** ... and being a *joint-heir with Christ* is connected with, and conditioned upon (and tied to) the doctrine of **sufferings!**

- Therefore, one of the BIG CONCERNS you should have (if your evaluation at the *judgment seat of Christ* means anything to you) is the issue of: **HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO SUFFERINGS?** (both, “*the sufferings of this present time*” and “*the sufferings of Christ*” [2 Cor. 1:5])

- THAT’S the question you have to ask yourself—because the truth of the matter is, how well you respond to sufferings is quite possibly the greatest indicator of how well you are being ‘edified unto godliness’ and how well you are educated as God’s “son/daughter”!!!

- If you want to know how well you’re doing in your godly sonship edification (and how well things will go for you at the *judgment seat of Christ*) ... one of the main indicators of that is: Are you responding to sufferings as a properly educated and properly edified “son” of God???

- And this makes a lot of sense out of what Paul says over in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10! (read)

... (also see Phil. 1:29-30; 2 Tim. 2:12; 3:12)

- And just to look ahead to an issue that we have yet to properly deal with as to who God has made us to be “in Christ” ... there is far more to our godly sonship edification and how we respond to sufferings as a properly educated son—and far more to our inheritance as *joint-heirs with Christ* than all that we have been dealing with in just the BASIC or FOUNDATION of our sanctified position “in Christ” ...

... because we have yet to deal with our EXALTED position “in Christ” and putting our exalted position in Him into practice in the details of our life!

... in other words—all we’ve really been dealing with in Romans is the issue of God justifying us to become the +R of God in Christ; and sanctifying us to become the Holiness of God in Christ ... but all that is connected to an even greater issue of God’s GLORY! ... and our being exalted in order to become the Glory of God in Christ! ... and how we respond to suffering is directly connected to that GLORY issue!

- (let's look at a passage that we've looked at before and see if it makes even more sense in light of this ... 2 Corinthians 4:5-18)

- When it comes to our life being lived out in all its details as a properly educated son—and when it comes to all of the skill-sets that our Father educates us in so that we can be trained here on earth for our 'heavenly vocation' in the creature ... our Heavenly Father has so composed and constructed godly Sonship Edification to take those godly, grace-generated skills and translate them into GLORY with respect to **rank & position** in the heavenly places!
(Eph. 1:1-2:7 [2:7])

- All of our "*treasure in earthen vessels*" (all of our sonship wisdom and training) is going to be translated to match up perfectly with our immortal and glorified bodies in the heavenly realm!

- The truth is—our godly sonship edification (and the wisdom and the skill-sets we acquire from it that allow for us to be able to successfully walk many different 'paths of life' (Pro. 2:19) just as God would Himself, AND the many GLORIES that gets graciously produced by walking those paths as a properly educated son of God **ARE INSEPARABLE** ...
(see **2 Thes. 2:12**)

- And for this reason, you are supposed to understand and appreciate that just as there is a particular "*mind*" that is supposed to run all of the affairs and all of the details of a properly educated son of God's life here on earth—so too is there **that same certain "*mind*" that is going to run all of the affairs and all of the details of the creature in the heavenly places!**

- (**see Phil. 2:5**) ... you can either let that *mind* be IN YOU, **or NOT!**

- And either way you go—THAT is what is going to be *manifested* at the *judgment seat of Christ* when it comes to your rewards as a *joint-heir with Christ* —

(see Rom. 8:19; 1 Cor. 3:13; Col. 2:18-19; 3:23-25 [:24])

- THE “REWARD” ISSUE —

- (see 1 Cor. 3 — :1-15 — [:8 & :14])

- Your *reward* is tied to you (as a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ) being both an *heir of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*.

- Because every believer is by default (at the time of their justification unto eternal life) an *heir of God* — and because every believer has the **position** (sanctification-wise) of being an adopted “son/daughter” of God—every believer will, according to their adoption, receive something as the *heir of God* that they are.

- And due to the fact that every believer that is a member of the new creature of the church the body of Christ has an inheritance **in the heavenly places (and not on the earth)** their ‘default’ inheritance (or reward) will be in keeping with the realm of the heavenly places in which they will dwell as that “new creature”.

- In other words, the ‘default’ inheritance (or reward) of every believer (across the board) is going to be in keeping with living and functioning out in the heavenly places and NOT living and functioning here on this earth.

- (see 1 Cor. 15:50)

- And God has the apostle Paul tell you what the ‘default’ inheritance (or reward) of every believer will be:

- (see Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 15:48-53; Phil. 3:20-21)

- it’s from these verses that we get the terminology of having a ‘glorified, immortal body’ ...

... and while every believer will get a glorified, immortal body that is fit for the heavenly realm—it’s in the issue of the “glory” of that glorified body that is going to be a matter that is going to **differ** from believer to believer—that is, not every believer is going to have the same degree (or amount) of “glory” ...

... (see 1 Cor. 15:39-41)

- We know from Romans 8:17 that the *reward of the inheritance* for being *joint-heirs with Christ* is (again) **conditional**—(based upon the issue of *if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together*) ...

... therefore the *reward* of our inheritance as *joint-heirs with Christ* will NOT be the same for every believer—**nor will the associated GLORY that goes along with that reward.**

- And Paul repeatedly tells you what that *reward* and the *glory* that accompanies it is all connected with ...

... a particular **MIND** and **LIFE** of the Lord Jesus Christ that is designed to be put on display (or manifested) through *sufferings* ... that is, how you handle *the sufferings of this present time* as well as *the sufferings of Christ* as a properly educated and properly edified son of God!

- (which is why you have Paul repeatedly bringing up the issue of what you *mind* and how you put that **mind** on display in all the details of your **LIFE**! [by means of your godly sonship edification and the sonship skills you have had develop within you by the effectual working of the excellency of the power of God's word!])

- Rom. 1:28—this was your problem as a twice-dead Gentile—your **mind** was NOT God-like; it was ungodly; it was Satan-like(ly)!

- Rom. 8:5-6—you *walk after the Spirit* by *mind*ing *the things of the Spirit*, then you become *spiritually minded*!

- Rom. 12:2; 16; 15:6; 1 Cor. 1:10; 2:16; 2 Cor. 13:11; Eph. 4:23; Phil. 1:27; 2:2-5; 3:16; 4:2

- My point in all this is to underscore the fact that the “*glory*” of your glorified, immortal body is going to be determined by your evaluation at the *judgment seat of Christ*! (and with that in mind, we can now talk a little about those *rewards*) ...

(1 Cor. 3:14)

- “*reward*” = compensation for work done that has pleased the one who gave you the opportunity to work for him or with him.

- The exact nature of the *reward* is not addressed in Ch.3, but it is later on ...

- (see 1 Cor. 9:24-25 [:25])

- A *crown* is associated with being in a position of authority or rulership or privilege over others.

- And when you take together what Paul says in 1 Cor. 6 (that we *shall judge the world* and we *shall judge angels* [:2-3]) - and in view of the fact that we are, (as the church the body of Christ) designed by God to be *the fulness of him that filleth all in all* (Eph. 1:23) in connection with filling those governmental positions in the heavenly places ...

... the *reward* of the *incorruptible* crown therefore has to do with the particular positions of authority and rulership we are qualified for and worthy to occupy in the heavenly places.

- And since the positions of authority & rulership in the heavenly places are described as *principalities, powers, mights, thrones, and dominions, and every other name that is named* (Eph. 1:21; Col. 1:16) - my understanding is that these are the specific positions of authority & rulership God has determined for us to occupy and which will be determined at the *judgment seat of Christ* ...

... (our response to our godly sonship edification being the issue that will determine our qualification for what kind of [or nature of] *incorruptible crown* we will receive).

- And since we have these same positions of governmental authority & rulership here on the earth—you can get an idea from their earthly counterpart what those positions of governmental authority & rulership in the heavenly places will be like ... because since the names are the same for both places, a ‘parallel’ exists between the ones that are *in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible* ...

- In order of ‘rank’ it would appear that the *principalities* would be the highest—and when you look at that same position here on earth, you realize that a *principality* designates a particular large place or territory that is ruled over by a person ...

... then going down in rank would be the *powers*—which would be those under the ‘prince’ of the *principality*, who would rule for him over the various zones or provinces that make up the overall *principality* ...

... and then within each of those *powers* would be other *names* (or titles) like *thrones*, *mights*, and *dominions*—each with certain jurisdictions and responsibilities.

- By the way—even the members of the remnant of Israel (when they have received their adoption as “sons”) will be evaluated and receive “crown” rewards in connection with their inheritance—[Jam. 1:12; **read 1 Pet. 5:1-4**]

- That’s a general, basic, and simple understanding of what the *judgment seat of Christ* is about.

- Point is—when you violate godly sonship Equity in dealing with the weaker brother, you attempt a ‘power grab’ in the sense of trying to become the weaker brother’s Redeemer, Lord, and Christ—and in doing so, you, by default, are setting yourself up as the “**judge**” at the **judgment seat** whereby YOU (who are NOT God, and are NOT able to therefore render a fair & impartial verdict based upon ALL THE FACTS) ...

... YOU (whether you’re aware of it or not) attempt to throw the Lord Jesus Christ off of His *judgment seat* and place yourself on it as the **rewarder** of the weaker brother! (which is disgusting, disgraceful, and abhorrent!) ...

... no properly educated son would ever think this way!

- And that’s what’s supposed to be effectually working in your mind as you come to the end of the Godly Thinking portion of your instruction of equity!

... And to drive the point home, you have (:11 & 12) ...

- Romans 14:11 - ***For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.***

- One of the chief ruling and guiding principles that is supposed to effectually work and operate within your human spirit (just exactly as it does in God the Father and God the Son) is the matter of what might be called the Sonship Accountability Factor...

... that is—one of the major issues in godly sonship Equity regarding the *weaker* brother situation is to always keep the proper and godly ‘chain of command’ in view (or where the power & authority rests) ...

... and that is the issue of—when it comes to the godly Edification Process, a properly educated “son” recognizes and **never violates** the principle that the *weaker* brother is accountable to God and God alone ... and NOT to him (or you!)

- In fact, NO believer (no saint; no Christian; no “son/daughter”) is to EVER ***‘have dominion over your faith’!*** (2 Cor. 1:24)

- ***“For it is written, ...”*** — here we have a *“For it is written”* and not a *“As it is written”* ...

- *As it is written* = indicates that what you are after is NOT a direct application of a verse out of God’s program w/ Israel — but rather that there are situations and circumstances that the members of the nation Israel will be in (or have been in) that has a similar or parallel issue to what we, as members of the church the body of Christ will find ourselves in.

- (but that’s not what’s going on here)

- *For it is written* = indicates that we are expected to go back to where this quotation sits in God’s word and recognize that the EXACT issue that’s sitting back there is the SAME issue that’s sitting right here!

- And even though it comes from a portion of God’s word that deals with God’s program with Israel—**this is an issue that is true in BOTH programs!**

- And the issue that is true in both programs is this issue of the final assessment/accountability of any person’s life **is to God alone**, and NOT to men!

- “For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God.” — Quotation from **Isaiah 45:23**

- This passage is not talking about the *judgment seat of Christ* in particular because that *judgment seat* was something you would only know about by means of *the revelation of the mystery* —

- But since the *judgment seat of Christ* fits within the realm of man’s accountability to God in general—and all men coming under the sovereign final authority & supreme power and judgment of God — what you have set up is what is known in matters of logic as “a fortiori” reasoning. (often times a “*much more*” expression is used)

- If Isaiah 45:23 is true [or a reality] (and it is) ...
Then Romans 14:10c is even a more powerfully reality & truth!

- Notice that Rom. 14:11 is NOT quoted from Isaiah 45:23 as an exact, ‘word-for-word’ quote ...

- This often happens in God’s word—especially when the NT quotes the OT—and often seen in Paul’s epistles) - it’s nothing unusual at all.

- And it’s NOT a ‘scribal error’ or a ‘spurious’ quotation or something wrong with the text—or something wrong with the translation ... or anything along those lines!

- Rather—as the Holy Spirit is the author of God’s word; and since He holds the ‘copyright’ (so to speak) on the text of God’s word—just as any original author holding ‘copyright’ on what he has written — the Holy Spirit is free to make any kind of ‘alterations’ He desires to His own text!

- Therefore the Holy Spirit has the apostle Paul say it this way (and with these alterations) to perfectly fit the context of Romans 14.

- The Holy Spirit slightly changes the word order; He changes “unto” to “to”; He adds the word “and”

... and He states what the Lord actually said when He “*swore by Himself*” ...

Isa. 45:23 — *I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, ...*

Rom. 14:11 — *As I live, saith the Lord, ...*

- This is a common way in which the Lord takes an ‘oath’ — when He wants to make a formal statement of absolute, unbending TRUTH about something or some undertaking.

- He puts it in the form of a promise—and since there is nothing in the universe any higher to appeal to than Himself, He *swears* by His own “*self*” (or His own character & essence—His own Jehovah-ness).

[which is something you can NOT do in any court! ... you have to have witnesses]

- And by doing so—He tells you about an event (in this case) that is going to take place in the future—and binds its future fulfillment to His own character & essence—which makes this promise so powerful that in order to break it, God would have to cease being God!

- By the way—in the Romans 14 passage, the apostle Paul is dealing with **the Lord Jesus Christ** and His judgment seat—and in the Isaiah 45 passage the prophet Isaiah is dealing with the L-O-R-D (Jehovah-God) ...

... and the Holy Spirit has the apostle Paul add 2 words to the end of the sentence: “*to God*”! ...

... meaning that Romans 14:11 is a very plain and very powerful statement that Jesus of Nazareth **IS GOD!** (Biblical proof of the deity of Jesus!)

- ... *As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, ...*
(which is true of every saved member of the nation of Israel in God’s program with Israel) ...

- the Mem. Rem/Isr have their own sonship accountability to God in accordance with God's program with them — due to the Lord's function as their Saviour, Redeemer, Lord, and Messiah.
- They have an 'appointment' to be judged and evaluated—which is appropriate and in keeping with sonship education no matter what program or dispensation you are in.
- And that is the **“For it is written”** issue—(the **exact** same issue that is sitting back in Isaiah 45:23 is the **same** issue sitting in Romans 14:11)!
 - Which is the issue of **individual sonship accountability to God, and to God alone!** (both for the members of the Rem/Isr as “sons”, and for us, the members of the church the body of Christ as “sons”!) — and the further issue that God has every right (and a right that, in view of who He is to us), a right that **MUST** be executed to **JUDGE & evaluate** us based upon how we responded to His grace provisions for our godly edification!
 - And concerning the Lord Jesus Christ—Paul tells you later on in Level II Sonship Education that the individual accountability of **ALL MEN** (saved and lost), and even **ALL ANGELS** (holy and fallen) will recognize and acknowledge the Lordship (or Lord-ness) [that is, their individual accountability to the Supreme Power & Authority] of the Lord Jesus Christ! ... (see **Phil. 2:10-11**)
 - The old hymn is right:
*What will you do with Jesus?
 Neutral you cannot be;
 Someday your heart will be asking,
 “What will He do with me?”*
- ... **“and every tongue** (everyone that has a tongue, i.e., every man—and every man is going to not only give a physical gesture of their accountability to God, but every man will also give a **verbal** account—he's going to **“say it”**) **shall confess to God.**”
- I want to look at this last difference in the two texts ...
- Rom. 14:11—*shall confess* - Isa. 45:23—*shall swear*

- In Isaiah 45, the Mem/Rem/Isr are told that *every tongue shall swear* ... in Romans 14, the members of the body of Christ are told that *every tongue shall confess* — Why are these words different?
- Granted, in God's prog/w/Isr there is going to be a lot of "confessing" going on—(especially as part of Israel's 'prescription for cleansing') - [Lev. 26:40; Mat. 3:6; 1 John 1:9, just to name a few]
- And even the apostle Paul uses the word "confess" several times.
 - Interestingly enough, the word "swear" never occurs in any of Paul's epistles.
- *Swear* and *confess* are very closely related — both words have to do with the act of verbally making statements as to the TRUTH of a matter.
 - The word *swear* and the word *confess* can be used a whole bunch of different ways—(and to cut down on time, we're not going to do an exhaustive word analysis on either of them).
 - "*swear*" = commonly, to make a statement or declaration of truth with an appeal to God (i.e., "I swear to God ...")—the appeal to God is to say, that since God is all-knowing [omniscient], then even He will confirm that what I say is true ...
 - ... the idea being that if you were to stand face to face with God, and God being all-knowing, even He would agree that your statement was the truth.
 - in other words, if God Himself were to judge what you say is true or false, even He would have to affirm that what you are saying is true.
 - (see Heb. 6:13-18)
 - Truth is—in God's program with Israel there is a great deal said about both, the issue of *swearing* and the issue of *confessing* — in fact those 2 issues are a massive subject in God's dealings with Israel (both individually and nationally).
 - And you can search those things out on your own—but for time's sake, I'll just say that of the many issues surrounding

what the nation Israel and the individual members of the nation are going to *swear*, *confess*, and *testify* to—the issue of Jehovah being their one and only God; and the issue of Jesus of Nazareth being their one and only Messiah (Christ), Saviour, Redeemer, Deliverer, Avenger, King, and Blessor, are among the biggest issues.

- And there are matters in God's prog.w/Isr where both the nation as a whole, and the individual members of the Rem. are going to be *swearing*, *confessing*, and *testifying* to the truth of (not only Adoni Jehovah being their one true, "living" and Almighty God) - but to the truth of the person and the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth being, (as Peter said), "*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" (Mat. 16:16)

- So it will be sufficient at this point to simply recognize that when Isaiah 45:23 says, "*every tongue shall swear*" - the word *swear* is in perfect keeping with certain issues that individual members of the nation Israel, and the nation as a whole are going to be making as verbal statements in an oath-type form as to the truth concerning the true and living God Almighty, as well as the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth being "*the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

... all of which are matters that are in perfect keeping with God's program with Israel.

- So—why the change from "*swear*" to "*confess*"?

- It is NOT because *swear* is **only** pertaining to God's prog.w/Isr and *confess* is **only** pertaining to this Disp. of Grace!

- Because if you study it out—that's simply not true—and the truth is, both *swear* and *confess* pertains to God's prog.w/Isr. (and you could say that both pertain to us in the Disp. of grace, too).

- So if that's not the reason why, then it must be because of something else ... what?

- To get to the answer of "Why the change?", you have to realize that both words (*swear* and *confess*) could be used as fitting and proper terms—so if that's the case, then what you are left with is that God is intentionally using the one over the other for some **contextual** reason—(something in the **context** demands it!).

- When something like this occurs in Scripture, (where either term can be used properly), the context determines which term gets used ... and when that's the case, more often than not, the term that **is** used, is being used to EMPHASIZE something of great significance!

- and that's the case here—God, as our Heavenly Father is **emphasizing** something to us as His “sons” and as members of the body of Christ in this Disp. of grace in which we live.

- So—as a “*For it is written*” issue—(an issue that is the EXACT same in both programs) — our individual sonship accountability is to God, and to God alone—(i.e., not to other “sons”) — and we all have an ‘appointment’ to be JUDGED and evaluated by God as to how we have responded to His grace provisions & grace opportunities to use those grace provisions to the fullest.

- But the change in terms (from *swear* to *confess*) is done to put some special emphasis and some special significance upon the **nature** of our ‘appointment’ at the judgment seat of Christ with respect to godly Equity and how we dealt with the *weaker brother* situation.

- And you should know by now that the major issue at the judgment seat of Christ is going to be the issue of godly sonship edification!

- (that is, godliness—and how you responded to being ‘edified unto godliness which is in faith’)

- And you should also know by now that “godliness” is like a coin with 2 sides to it: 1) Individual Godliness;
2) Body Godliness.

- So in view of knowing that—which side of the ‘coin’ are we dealing with here? ... A: Body Godliness (the issue of how you deal with other members of the body of Christ that are ‘weaker’ in Pauline doctrine than you are) ... right?

- So the context is our *receiving the instruction of equity* as it pertains to dealing with other sons (who are *weak* in godly edification) so that their godly edification can be successful—and at the same time so that the assembly (or local body) can continue in peaceful godly edification.

- **Body godliness** is becoming more and more of an issue!

- And I know that Body Godliness is being emphasized here because of the nature of Equity in the first place—but also because of the terminology God has Paul use in (:10) ...

... or why dost thou **set at nought** thy brother?
(which emphasizes the resulting action of the stronger bro who would tend to *despise* the weaker bro ... and the resulting action would be to WITHDRAW FELLOWSHIP from him ... to WITHDRAW EDIFICATIONAL FELLOWSHIP from him)!

... and by doing so—cause an unneeded and ungodly **DIVISION** in the local assembly (or BODY)!

- By putting **that** into your thinking in (:10) - and then by coming along in (:11) and changing the term *swear* to **confess**—we should understand and appreciate that the word *confess* has something special, and something significant to do with BODY GODLINESS (especially)! ... and it does!

- So we can ask the question a little more precisely: What does confess have to do with Body Godliness? ... and when we find out the answer to that, we should be able to answer the question of: Why does God change the words?

- The answer to “What *confess* has to do with Body Godliness” can be found in a simple understanding and appreciation for what the word *confess* means—(and that will give us enough information in and of itself) ... but we can further verify it by looking to where God deals with saints about this very issue later on in our epistles.

- **confess** = from L. *con* = together, fully + *fateri* = to acknowledge, hence, to acknowledge fully.

OED = to declare or disclose (something which one has kept or allowed to remain secret as being prejudicial or inconvenient to oneself); to acknowledge, own, or admit.

- Webster’s 1828 gives very much the same type definition, but (as does the OED), Webster defines it in terms of the most common way in which we think about what surrounds *confessing* something—or what situation a person is in when we commonly think about him making a *confession*.

- Now—saying all that—what we’re really going after here isn’t just a definition of the word *confess*—but rather, **WHAT DOES THE WORD CONFESS IMPLY?**

- First—what is the most common way in which we think about a person who *confesses* something? ...

A: a **LEGAL** situation—in a court of law—or in a police interrogation — in connection with the committing of a crime.

- Usually you *confess* the reasoning of what was in your mind (if you’ve committed a crime).

- Secondly (and more importantly) - what does the word *confess* **imply** in a legal sense?

A: **GUILT!** — and **THAT’S** what we’re after—**that’s** what the word *confess* (with it’s simple, common definition) **IMPLIES!**

- When God has the apostle Paul bring this final concluding matter of your sonship accountability at *the judgment seat of Christ* to bear upon you in regards to dealing with the *weaker* brother with godly Equity ...

... and if you do NOT handle it with godly Equity, but rather you end up setting the *weaker* bro *at nought*—and **withdraw edificational fellowship** from him ...

... the Father then directs your attention back to Isaiah 45:23 so that you recognize and appreciate the fact that the *weaker* bro is NOT accountable to YOU (edification-wise), but rather, both he **and** you are accountable to God (to the Lord Jesus Christ) and to Him alone ...

... and furthermore—the change from *swear* to *confess* tells you that if you in fact DO withdraw edificational fellowship from the *weaker* bro., then you are **GUILTY** of something!

- And the ‘BIG’ thing that you are guilty of — (and which can be understood and appreciated right here in the context of Romans 14) — is that, (at the very least), you are guilty of **BODY UN-GODLINESS!**

- (and we could let it go at that—that’s sufficient enough to get the effectual working of the doctrine sitting right here)

- Truth is—you are actually expected to perceive more than that ... you’re expected to perceive what this ‘body ungodliness’ **consists of!**

- And just to verify that we’re on the right track—let’s look at a passage where God has the apostle Paul deal with certain saints who are guilty of this very thing—who have needlessly and in an ungodly manner **withdrawn edificational fellowship** from other *weaker* ones in the assembly—and we’ll find out more specifically what this ‘body ungodliness’ consists of ...

- (see 1 Cor. 10:1-12; 14-17 [:17])

- (see 1 Cor. 11:17-29 [:29])

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD’S BODY. (1 Cor. 11:29)

- The thing you are ‘guilty’ of (specifically) is **NOT DISCERNING THE LORD’S BODY!**

- ***discerning*** = OED = to separate things, one from another as distinct; to distinguish; to perceive the difference between things—

— which demands the issue of **making judgments!**

- Charles Smith (Synonyms Discriminated) = *Discernment* is a combination of **keenness** and **accuracy** of **mental vision**. It sees character, deeds & actions in their **differences**, their peculiar **motives**, their **true nature**. The discerning man is not easily misled, because he is not imposed upon by **appearances**, nor takes one thing for another.

- “**discernment**” is a product of EQUITY!!!

(actually, it’s a product of all 4 of the sonship decision-making skills—*wisdom, justice, judgment, & equity*)

- *Discernment* is a particular sonship skill that comes out of (and gets developed) as you progress through the curriculum for your sonship education & godly edification—and by this point its development should be well underway ...

... so much so, that it should now be a very useful part of your sonship decision-making skill!

- Notice that it was already in use back when you received your *instruction of judgment* in connection with the adversary and his Policy of Evil — (i.e., in connection with godly sonship *discretion*) ...

- see Rom. 13:12-13

- see Pro. 2:6ff—(:9); (:10-11, :12, :16)

- Pro. 2:11—Sonship Working Definition:

Discretion = the ability to **discern** passion-based enticements, and to not be taken in by them.

Understanding = Knowing the *way* that the *evil men* operate.

- notice that **discernment** has to be working within you in order for you to have the *discretion*!

- (look at **Smith’s Synonyms** again in order to get the various shades of meaning for the word *discernment*) ...

- *Discernment* is a combination of **keenness** (wise, piercing, “learned” perception) and **accuracy** (careful, precise & correct) of **mental vision**.

- It sees **character** (the sum of the moral & mental qualities that distinguish an individual—a person’s mental & moral constitution), **deeds & actions in their differences**, their **peculiar motives**, their **true nature**.

- The *discerning* man **is not easily misled**, because **he is not imposed upon by appearances, nor takes one thing for another**. — (see 2 Cor. 4:18; 5:10-12, 13-17)

- **Discernment** in God's word —

- *Discernment* is NOT a 'spiritual gift' today!
(1 Cor. 12:8-11 cp. 1 Cor. 13:8-10)

- 1st Use: Gen. 27:23

- 1 Kings 3:5-13

- Proverbs 7 (Phase 2/Level II) - (:1-10)

- Malachi 3:13-18

- Matthew 16:1-3

- 1 Corinthians 2:14-15

- Hebrews 4:12; 5:14

- *Discernment* is one of those items of 'spiritual merchandise' or 'spiritual money' that we talked about back in Proverbs 3.

- see Proverbs 3:13-18

- (see notes on)

- *Discernment* is a natural 'by-product' (so to speak) - or a natural, secondary result of all 4 of the Sonship Decision- Making Skills (*wisdom, justice, judgment, equity*) ...

... but as a natural 'by-product' of godly Equity, the *discernment* you acquire here **is of a highly specialized kind (or nature)** ...

... and that's because the *instruction of godly sonship equity* deals with **BODY GODLINESS**—that is, it deals with a son's ability/capacity to maintain edificational fellowship & communion, as well as BODY fellowship & communion with others members of the local assembly who are "*in the faith*" but who are at different levels of growth in the edification process.

- And in order to maintain that Body Godliness as a properly educated, more advanced, “*stronger*” son—it requires and demands a **great deal**—(far more than you would ever think at the outset of getting the Godly Thinking of your Father on the matter)!

- But for now—it needs to be acknowledged and recognized that along with everything else you’ve been taught in the Godly Thinking portion of (:1-11), **it demands, and it requires BODY DISCERNMENT—it requires you to be able to “DISCERN THE LORD’S BODY” !!!**

- For now—let’s finish off the information contained in the Godly Thinking portion of *receiving the instruction of equity* ...

Romans 14:12 *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.*

- (The Final, Concluding Matter all together)

10 But why dost thou (weaker brother) judge thy (stronger) brother? or why doest thou (stronger brother) set at nought (refuse godly fellowship & communion and separate yourself from) thy (weaker) brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

11 For it is written (the exact same issue is sitting back in Isaiah 45:23), As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. (every individual “son” of God is accountable to God, and to God alone ... not to YOU!)

- (:12) ***So then***—This acts as a “therefore” — however, “*So then*” is actually a **softer** conclusion than using a *therefore*—in other words, this IS a conclusion, BUT it’s NOT the conclusion to the entire body of information contained in the Godly Thinking portion of our *instruction of equity* ...

... the **hard** conclusion is, indeed, a “*therefore*”, but it occurs in (:13) — the “*therefore*” in (:13) has in view the entire body of information contained in the Godly Thinking portion of our *instruction of equity* in (:1-12) ...

... this “*So then*” of (:12) is a concluding matter of (:10 & :11) — it’s kind of like using an adding machine—and at some places it’s appropriate to hit the “Total” button for smaller sections of information—but then at the very end, you hit the “Grand Total” button [*therefore*] (in [:13]).

- ***“every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”***

- This is the **guiding ‘Principle’** that comes out of the Final, Concluding Matter of Godly Equitable Thinking in our dealings with the *weaker* brother!

- It’s the “Prince” Thought or the thinking that is to rule and govern our godly thinking towards the *weaker* brother ...

... if everything has done its effectual work in (:10-11), then THIS is going to be the Principle that governs every thought you have in your dealings with the *weaker* brother situation in the local assembly!

- The effectual working of this ‘Principle’ will ensure your ‘trustworthiness’ to properly deal with the *weaker* brother situation—and it will SAFEGUARD the fellowship and communion of the local assembly in which you belong! (safeguard the *weaker* bro; and safeguard the assembly as a whole).

- And the principle is: The *weaker* brother (moreover, any believer/saint/son) is NOT accountable to YOU in connection with his edification (in the edification process)! The *weaker* brother (as well as you, yourself) are strictly accountable to God, and to God alone!

- Therefore—by means of (:2-9) doing their effectual work in your ‘inner man’ - PLUS - having that doctrine strengthened with the might of (:10-11) doing their effectual job in your ‘inner man’ - as a properly educated and properly edified “son”, (:1) should now be a living and vital reality in your human spirit: YOU WILL ALWAYS ***“RECEIVE HIM THAT IS WEAK IN THE FAITH”*** JUST LIKE YOUR HEAENLY FATHER DOES (which is) ***“NOT TO DOUBTFUL DISPUTATIONS.”***

- Now the only thing we need to do detail-wise with (:12) is to look at that issue of ***“give account”*** - that is, as you *stand before the judgment seat of Christ*, each one of you (individually) ***shall give account of himself to God*** (i.e., to the Lord Jesus Christ who is God).

- We need to note only a couple of things ...

- Notice that the indefinite article is missing ...

- It does NOT say, “*every one of us shall give AN account ... (of himself to God)*” ...

... rather, it says, “*every one of us shall **give account** ...*”

- This isn't a huge doctrinal issue at all—but it does point up the amazing accuracy of both the English language and the King James Bible. (the absence of the indefinite article *is* grammatically correct)!

- The rules surrounding the use of both definite and indefinite articles are NOT the same in Greek and English—(something that is commonly unnoticed by most modern translators).

- “an” is an indefinite article (like “a”) - and is a reduced form of the numeral *one*—hence, one single thing or issue.

- and in our verse, if the indefinite article “an” were present, (*every one of us shall give **an** account*—[which would be grammatically **incorrect** in this case]), it might cause us to think that we are going to give **one** out of many possible accounts to God—but that's NOT the case at *the judgment seat of Christ*.

- truth is—we are going to *give account* for **everything** that pertains to our response to God's grace provisions and opportunities for Godly Edification: BOTH **individual godliness** AND **body godliness!**

- And as Gould Brown says in his “Grammar of English Grammars” [pg.225] - “A common noun, when taken in its *widest sense*, usually admits **no** article.” — and that's what's going on here — *every one of us shall **give account** of himself to God* — that is, the *account* you give at the *judgment seat of Christ* will be one in the **widest sense** possible ...

... in other words, you are going to account for (and **be** accountable for) the effectual working of godly edification in every area of your life; in every detail of your life; ... sound Bible doctrine (the very curriculum for your Sonship Edification) is designed to affect every area (in the widest sense) of your life, and you are going to account for its affect **in every area** of your life!

- Hence, our little ‘Exercise’ last Bible Class:

As godly sonship edification takes place—what is supposed to happen is that by the effectual working of *God’s word* and *prayer*, everything you have; everything you do; and everywhere you go *if it be received with thanksgiving* it gets **sanctified** [1 Tim. 4:5] ...

... (it becomes “The Lord’s”)!

12 So then every one of us (every member of the church, the body of Christ in general; but more specifically [and more to the context], every *weaker* and every *stronger* brother) **shall give account of himself to God.**

- “**account**” (L. prefix *ad* = to + count, in the sense of *compute* or *reckon* [*to tell the particulars of something*]) = most commonly we think of *account* in terms of one who is an ‘accountant’ (i.e., a person who keeps, audits, and inspects financial records of individuals or businesses) ...

... and although the context isn’t dealing with the issue of you being an *accountant* in the sense of the reckoning of money, the root issue of an *accountant* does apply ...

... because at the root of the issue of *account* or an *accountant* is the issue of **disclosing**—of **exposing** something hidden to full view—hence, the issue of **making something known**. [that’s what an *accountant* does with financial dealings] ... making **full disclosure of one’s actions!**

- More to the sense & context here: Webster’s 1828 — #4—a narrative; relation; statement of facts; recital of particular transactions and events, verbal or written.

- And even more to the sense & contexts here:

#5—**An assignment of reasons; explanation** by a recital of particular transactions, given by a person in an employment, or given to a superior, **often implying responsibility.**

- OED = #8) A statement as to the discharge of responsibilities generally; **answering for conduct.**

- Our context here in (:12) is one of a LEGAL nature/sense—and *account* can be used in a **legal sense** ...

... **in a legal sense**, *account* = Webster's 1828—A writ of account in law, is a writ which the plaintiff demands (God, the Lord Jesus Christ at His judgment seat) that the defendant (you and me) should render his just account, or show good cause to the contrary; called also an action of account.

- This is what our context of (:12) is driving at!

- Since our sanctification is in view at the *judgment seat of Christ*—(that is, the putting of our sanctified position God has made us to be “in Christ” into practice in all of the details of our life) - and since we are the adopted “sons” of God; and since we have been Redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ and are therefore servants of the Lord — we have now entered the legal realm of responsibility and accountability ...

... and all that demands that there come a time when a legal forum (i.e., *the judgment seat of Christ*) is required in order to judge and evaluate how we have responded to God's grace-given provisions and grace-given opportunities to put our sanctified position “in Christ” into practice—(in short, How did you respond to the edification process?) — and we are now specifically confronted with that very issue.

- And there is a ‘shade of meaning’ that the word *account* carries that makes it the most excellent choice of English words in (:12) — *account* means to fully disclose the reasoning of the mind; to give an explanation prior to judgment! ... (which will be the case for us at *the judgment seat of Christ*).

- by the way—this is a case of great ‘vocabulary control’ because this word *account* (in its legal sense) matches up beautifully with the word *confess* in its legal sense (:11) ...

... and again, this underscores that one of the great issues you and I will face at the *judgment seat of Christ* is going to be the issue of the success or failure of your godly edification regarding your dealings with the *weaker* brother ... in other words: **BODY GODLINESS!**

- So that takes us to the end of the details of (:1-12) — the end of the Godly Thinking aspect of our *receiving the instruction of equity*.

- Now—with all the Godly Thinking in place; effectually doing its job in your human spirit (inner man) - look once again at 2 Corinthians 1:23-24!

- In concluding the Godly Thinking portion of (:1-12) - I want to return to the issue that we have previously discussed—which is an issue that does not get stated here, but that is supposed to (and expected to) emerge in your thinking as a “son” who has been properly taught by your Heavenly Father.

- In order for you to be able to maintain Body Godliness in the local assembly as a properly educated “son” - it demands and it requires from you BODY DISCERNMENT—it requires you to be able to **“DISCERN THE LORD’S BODY”**! [which the Corinthians FAILED to do (1 Cor. 11:29)]

- And that **discernment** (*discerning the Lord’s body* being the nature or kind of *discernment* we’re after here) is going to demand & require that something now take place in your **heart**—for your **heart** on the matter of the *weaker* brother is to now become **the exact same as your Father’s heart** on the matter of the *weaker* brother—(not just matching the Father’s *Thinking* on the matter, but matching **His whole HEART** on the matter) ...

... truth is, by the effectual working of Romans 14:1-12, your heart should now become **“enlarged”**!

(see 2 Cor. 6:1-18)

... and by now another thing should have happened to your thinking—another one of those Features/Characteristics of Godly Love & Charity should have now emerged ...

... **the 6th Feature** ...

- By the effectual working of the doctrine contained in your Sonship Education so far—by what you have been told and what you have been taught in Romans 12:3-14:12—enough has been said and taught to you by your Father so that not only did the 5 Core Features of Godly Love & Charity get generated within you—but enough has been said in Romans 14:1-12 to effectually generate **the 6th Major Feature of Godly Love & Charity**... in Romans 14:1-12 there has been sufficient information given to you, that by its effectual work, it should have generated in your mind the issue that Godly Love & Charity is all about **SELF-SACRIFICE!** (R.14:1-12 is designed to do that!)

- Romans 14:1-12 is designed to generate the issue of godly **Self-Sacrifice** as being one of the Major Features of Godly Love & Charity.

- It doesn't do it all by itself—rather, it takes some things that were put into your godly thinking back in your *instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment*—(the Curriculum for your Sonship Education from Romans 12:3-13:14) ...

... and then, by what you are expected to **perceive** with the **“eyes of your understanding”** in Romans 14:1-12—the full generation of godly Self-Sacrifice [as a Major Feature of Godly Love & Charity] is expected to get accomplished for Level I of your Sonship Edification.

- [not that it's fully developed yet, but it's fully generated into a Major Feature of Godly L & C for a Level I “son”].

- Godly Love is **Self-Sacrificial**.

- (by the very word “*sacrifice*” itself, you should see how this Feature of Godly Love connects back to what you did and what you told your Father when you had to pass that Major Checkpoint in Rom. 12:1-2)

- And if your thinking went back there—then, GOOD ... but!

... the issue of Self-Sacrifice as a Major Feature of Godly L & C that comes out of Romans 14:1-12 is in a different context than the issue of you *presenting your body as a living sacrifice* in Romans 12:1! (we'll come back to this later)

- Godly Love being Self-Sacrificial means that you understand and appreciate the issue of “*sacrifice*” ... What is a “*sacrifice*”?

- *sacrifice* = in general and primarily it means a victim (usually an animal) slaughtered and offered or surrendered to God.

- But we know that we're not talking about animals (*we* are the sacrifice) - and we're not talking about being slaughtered as a sacrifice on some altar to God. [we're *living*]

- So it has to be talking about something else—and *sacrifice* has a meaning that is **less common** which means: the surrendering of something valued or desired for the sake of something having, or regarded as having, a higher or more pressing claim—and that’s the more fitting definition of us *presenting our bodies as a living sacrifice* to our Father.

- You’re presenting something of value (your body; yourself) for the sake of something having a higher or more pressing claim: your being educated by your Father as His adopted son!

- An illustration of this would be like a man who goes into the military service—he becomes a ‘living sacrifice’ - he has presented himself to his country and his Commander in Chief — and he has taken something he values (his body and his life and his freedom) and sacrifices it to his government for the higher & more pressing claim of fighting the wars of his country in order to preserve and defend its freedom.

- (and then, back in Romans 12, we went on to take this basic definition and make it a ‘working definition’ that’s in line with the specific context of Romans 12:1&2.)

- But just ‘cutting & pasting’ our understanding of what it means to be a “*living sacrifice*” from Romans 12:1 to the Feature of Godly Love & Charity that emerges from Romans 14:1-12 simply won’t do! **WHY??**

- A: Because a great deal of things have greatly developed within you from Rom. 12:1 to this point! ...

... Godly Love & Charity has developed ...

... your Sonship Decision-Making Skills have developed ...

... your understanding & appreciation for what your sonship life is about (and what it is going to be about in the future) has greatly developed ...

... the particular “*image*” that God wants developed in you (the *image of God’s Son*) has gotten developed to a fair degree ... (and we could go on and on) ...

- But to put it simply: Your Godly Sonship Edification has developed a great deal at this point—you've come a long way in the **EDIFICATION PROCESS!**

- And to put it even more simply: **You have made significant progress in GODLINESS!**

- Now let's come back to that issue I talked about earlier — ... the issue of Self-Sacrifice as a Major Feature of Godly L & C that comes out of Romans 14:1-12 is in a different context than the issue of you *presenting your body as a living sacrifice* in Romans 12:1!

- In Romans 12:1, the issue of you *presenting your body as a living sacrifice* is in the context of (really, and rightly so), your **INDIVIDUAL GODLINESS**—that is, you presented your body to your Father as a *living sacrifice* ...

... which does **NOT** mean in the way in which this is commonly treated by the commentary writers and Bible teachers: which is that any old Christian, in view of how gracious and merciful God has been to love you and save you—then that calls upon you to live 'well-pleasing' to God by sacrificing your will and your fleshly desires ...

... and determine to not live 'worldly' (whatever that is) but godly (whatever that is). And so we shouldn't get tattoos; ladies should wear dresses (but not too short); men shouldn't get their ears pierced; no card playing; no tobacco; no alcohol; no secular music; no shiny buttons; and off we go to the races of legalism! (A lot of ridiculous things get injected here).

- Rather—it means that at this Sonship Checkpoint of Romans 12:1-2—our Father is going to receive from us the measure of intelligence we now have that will allow for us to **pass** the checkpoint—and the first measure of intelligence He wants to hear from us is that we understand and appreciate that we are presenting our bodies to Him as a *living sacrifice*—and that distinctive phrase brings to our thinking all that we have come to not only understand and appreciate, but that we now have effectually working and operational in the details of our lives—from the beginning of all that God has made you to be in your sanctified position “in Christ” — and it comes right out of **Romans 6:1—8:13**.

- INDIVIDUAL GODLINESS naturally, and logically, and rightly comes FIRST — and then, once that gets underway, BODY GODLINESS can be introduced and confronted as the natural ‘outgrowth’ it is to Individual Godliness—(and perfectly fits with God’s Will, Plan, Purpose, and Design for each one of us as His adopted, adult sons & daughters in this Dispensation of Gentile Grace in which we live)!

- So beginning in Romans 12:3, our Father immediately gets “**body thinking**” and “**body conduct & behavior**” and “**body labor**” underway.

- (and naturally, enough, the doctrine of Godly Love & Charity parallels our Sonship Edification as we progress in the curriculum for our sonship education).

- Therefore, by the time we get to the end of Romans 14:12—and this issue of SACRIFICE comes back to our mind—it’s **no longer** just in the context of our Individual Godliness, but it’s in the context of **Body Godliness** ...

... and it’s no longer simply the issue of “*sacrifice*”, but it’s **SELF**-sacrifice that’s in view!

- And the thing that makes it really different is that it’s NOT the issue of YOU sacrificing to get YOUR godly edification; rather, it’s the issue of YOU (in godly Love & Charity) **sacrificing** so that **OTHERS** can get **THEIR** godly edification!

- So in view of our definition of the word *sacrifice* (the surrendering of something valued or desired) - which is NOT your *body* as a “*living sacrifice*” in order to get YOUR godly sonship edification — rather, **it is the sacrifice of your Sonship Liberty** [and what ever else is necessary] ... for, as the definition says ... (for the sake of something having, or regarded as having, a higher or more pressing claim) - which is the **weaker brother** and **HIS** godly Sonship Edification!

- Now before going on to (:13ff), I want to make another ‘connection’ with this issue of the 6th Major Feature of Godly L & C being SELF-SACRIFICE—especially in connection with the sacrificing of our own Sonship Liberty [or whatever else is necessary] for the sake of the *weaker* brother’s success with his godly Sonship Edification ...

- And this issue is something that connects up with Body Godliness (the very context we have in Rom. 14) - it connects the issue of our Self-Sacrifice for other's godly edification and our being what we were taught back in Romans 12:3-8 [1st Component of Wisdom].

- My understanding is that the 6th Feature of Godly L & C (Self-Sacrifice) is directly connected with the issue of us being: *many members in one body (12:4) ... (12:5) So we, being many, are ONE BODY in Christ, and every one members one of another.*

- and my understanding is that these 2 issues (being *one BODY in Christ*—and—*Self-Sacrifice* as a Feature of Godly L & C) are also directly connected with a **3rd issue**:

- the issue of **communion, fellowship, and concord** of the body of Christ in general—and the local body of Christ: the local assembly!

- So we're going to see 3 issues connected:

- 1) our being *one BODY in Christ*;
- 2) Godly Love being the Self-Sacrificing of our Sonship Liberty [and whatever else is necessary] for the success of the *weaker* brother's godly edification;
- 3) the Communion & Fellowship of the local assembly.

- Based upon what you are expected to know even before you ever get to the book of Romans—when you are first confronted with the issue that you are all members of *one BODY in Christ* — that term or expression **“BODY”** **“ONE BODY IN CHRIST”** is supposed to bring something to your mind (into your thinking) from the Scriptures you are supposed to have dealt with before the book of Romans.

- something that gets fully brought out, especially in the Gospel accounts—something concerning the Lord's **body** ...

- What did the Lord Jesus Christ use illustration-wise in connection with His “body”?

A: **BREAD** (Mat. 26:26; Mk. 14:22; Luk 22:19) - and then in John's gospel you have some detailed teaching of the Lord to His disciples about His “*body*” and His “*blood*”.

- So the question is: Does the apostle Paul (in our epistles) make this same connection between the *body* of Christ and the *bread* illustration? ... YES!

- The word *bread* is never used in Romans — but even so, does Paul expect us to make this connection of Christ's *body* and *bread*?

- Yes— 1st Use in our Epistles: 1 Cor. 5:8

- 1 Cor. 10:16, 17

- 1 Cor. 11: 23, 26, 27, 28

- and does it seem that Paul expects us to already know this when he tells us about it? YES!

- And what is the term/expression Paul uses (and the Lord uses) to describe how that *bread* is distributed to us (and how we are to distribute it to others)?

- Mat. 26:26

- 1 Cor. 10:16

- 1 Cor. 11:24

- BREAK / BROKEN

- OED— “**sacrifice**” #4a

The destruction or surrender of something valued or desired for the sake of something having, or regarded as having, a higher or more pressing claim; the loss entailed by devotion [love] to some other interest; also, the thing so devoted or surrendered. Cf. **self-sacrifice**.

- “break” / “broken” - in the sense of a Christian/believer being “broken” - is often only thought of as being “broken” to the will of God—as if you are a dog or a horse that has to be punished or trained through a series of punishments until he “gives up”. (which is NOT sonship!)

- “break” / “broken” have a massive amounts of different ways in which they are used—(they’re used in a whole bunch of different ways) ...

... but when you “break bread” what are you doing? (you’re not violently destroying it!) ... what are you doing?

- When you “break bread” - what you are literally doing to the “bread” is: You are sacrificing some of it so others can partake of it, too!

- You can’t talk about “breaking bread” without the issue of SACRIFICE!

- “BREAK” = to sacrifice so others can partake of it.

- And that’s what we do every time we gather together in the local assembly for godly edification—we ARE that “bread”, and we “break” ourselves [read: “sacrifice”] - we sacrifice of ourselves [Self-Sacrifice] so others [*weaker* brothers] can partake of it [of the edification process]! THAT’S BIBLICAL PAULINE COMMUNION!

- One more thing to add to this issue of the 6th Major Feature of Godly Love & Charity being “Self-Sacrifice” ...

- Paul talks about himself a lot—which is proper & fitting due to who he is to us (our *apostle* / *chief* [1 *Tim.* 1:15]), and what God did with him as our “*ensample*” (*Phi.* 3:17; 2 *The.* 3:9) = [cannot be improved upon; cannot be substituted for] —

- Much of what Paul says (when he talks about himself) is about how greatly he suffered and sacrificed for the saints in the churches he established ... which is NOT to draw attention to himself so much as to draw your attention to him being our “*ensample*” for how our Thinking and Conduct & Behavior should be **towards one another!**

- Paul was used by God to illustrate to the body of Christ what godly Sonship Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity is all about! (in godly Thinking Living, and Labor)

- This is a massive subject in Paul’s epistles—let’s run some verses to see this—(not an exhaustive study by any means) - but as we do, see if you can perceive that there is something more to the issue of Self-Sacrifice than what we’ve talked about so far ... because, to be more aligned with Scripture, there are a couple of other terms that should naturally accompany the expression “Self-Sacrifice” ...

... and these other terms or expressions are in perfect keeping with Sonship Education and Sonship Edification ...

... in other words—Self-Sacrifice is something Satan has counterfeited and something that the ungodly world at-large values & esteems—but it's produced by the natural fleshly sinful world (corrupt wisdom), and is therefore made in 'its own image'! (i.e., satan-ly)

- but then there is godly Sonship Self-Sacrifice that is produced by the effectual working of God's word in a properly educated "son" of the Heavenly Father!

- 1 Cor. - 2:1-5
 - 3:1-10
 - 4:1-7; 8-16
 - 9:1-17 [:17—*willingly*]; 18-27
 - 10:23, 33
 - 13:1-8
 - 15:9-11

- 2 Cor. - 1:6
 - 2:4
 - 4:1-18
 - 6:3-10
 - 7:4 [:4—*joyful*], 5, 12-13
 - 8:8-9, 24
 - 12:9, 15
 - 13:5-9 [:9—*glad*]

- Phil. - 1:12-18
 - 2:1-18

- Col. - 1:24 [*—rejoice*]

- 1 Thess. - 1:6
 - 2:8 [:8—*willing*], 19-20
 - 3:1-10

- 2 Tim. - 2:8-13
 - 4:6-8

- Whether stated or implied: Sonship Self-Sacrifice is **Willing** & **Glad!!**

- ROMANS 14:13-23**The GODLY LIVING (CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR) portion of *receiving the instruction of EQUITY*.**

- As we have covered in the previous 11 Components to our sonship education - (as we have received from our Father those first 3 sonship decision-making skills of *wisdom* [6 Components], *justice* [3 Components], *and judgment* [2 Components]) - we recognized that each 'Component' contains a 'pattern' that is repeatedly followed:

- That 'pattern' is designed to address each of the 3 Aspects (or issues) contained in "godliness" (since "godliness" is what our Sonship Education/Edification is designed by God to produce within us [a God-like heart!]):

- 1) Thinking the way God thinks;
- 2) Living/Acting the way God does in all our Conduct and Behavior;
- 3) Laboring with God in what He's doing at this present time.

- And, as you should be well familiar with by now—once the Godly Thinking Aspect has effectually done its job, the curriculum for our Sonship Education is designed so that the very next thing you deal with will have to do with taking what's now in your mind (the godly Thinking) and immediately putting it into your walk—or your Conduct & Behavior.

- The godly Thinking—(by its effectual work of challenging any ungodly, erroneous, faulty, or corrupt thinking—bringing it to the surface—then jettisoning it (getting rid of it) - and then replacing it with the godly Thinking ...

... (if everything has worked properly), the godly Thinking will produce within you a godly **desire** to put that Thinking to work ...

... in other words, the godly Thinking naturally produces a desire to LIVE **consistent** with it as you continue to *walk after the Spirit* as a son. (more *things of the Spirit to mind*)

- The Godly Thinking has a natural 'outlet' for it to get put into practice in the details of your life. (and so it is here)

- And since our *instruction of equity* is not made up of many different Components—but, rather, is 1 Component in and of itself—as we noted when we first broke down Romans 14:1-15:7 — the next body of information we are going to be dealing with IS that ‘natural outlet’ for our newly-acquired Godly Thinking of Equity, which is our Godly Living (C & B in view of it) contained in **Romans 14:13-23**.

- And since the overall **context** has not changed—then, we’re still dealing with the issue of making Equitable sonship decisions in our dealings with the Weaker Brother Situation.

- Therefore, (:13-23) is designed to take what’s now in your mind and put it into practice in your C & B in a very specific and very particular way ...

... as **STRONG ONES “in the faith”** ...

- And that’s an important thing to recognize—because it makes it so that you can’t just come along and crack your Bible open to Romans 14:13-23 and think that it applies to (or it’s talking about) just any old Christian/believer!

- This is talking to & about those who are *strong* in the faith—i.e., those who have the doctrine of Romans 1:1-14:12 effectually working in their ‘inner man’ ... and you **MUST** have those first 12 verses effectually working!

- And if you don’t—(if this get taught just as a ‘topic’ or topical preaching), then **AT BEST**, you’ll get about 10-30% of what’s really here! ... it will **NEVER** work the way it’s supposed to (or as God intends for it to work)!

- (you’ll be helpless and hopeless to even know what a *weaker* or *stronger* one ‘in the faith’ really is!)

- **Overview: (or Simple Breakdown/Outline of Rom. 14:13-23)**

- First of all—there is an ‘Overall Matter’ that all 11 verses are addressing ... What is it? What can we say in a short sentence?

- It’s all dealing with Godly Sonship Equitable Living so as to **avoid any & all Sonship Abuse!**

- All 11 verses are dealing with taking the godly Thinking and putting it into practice in your C & B — that is, to actually DEPLOY the doctrine you've just learned (which is godly Equity-type Thinking) and to so walk & live with it in order to AVOID ever ABUSING something that you have been given by your Father as a matter of being adopted by Him as an adult “son” ... (not to mention an adult “son” in this Dispensation of Gentile Grace in which you live!)

... you have been given the position of an Adult son, and with that position comes something fantastic; something magnificent; something wonderful ... but something that can be **ABUSED**, and more than that, can cause GREAT HARM, if not utilized properly!

- And you know what that wonderful thing is: **LIBERTY!**

- (see 2 Cor. 3:17—[this is commonly thought of as the freedom or liberty of a **nation**—as if you can get enough of the citizens to be ‘God-fearing’, ‘Spirit-filled’ Christians, then you’ll have real liberty in the USA] — WRONG! — this is talking about Sonship Liberty!)

- Indianapolis Star (in 1951) changed it’s motto from “Fair and First” to “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty” ... Ha!

- And as I’ve often said—a son has to come to a pretty deep understanding & appreciation for his Sonship Liberty—it’s a **MUST!** (and that understanding is actually supposed to take place in Sonship Orientation and Sonship Establishment [Rom. 8:14-11:36]).

- And as we’ve come to understand & appreciate—Sonship Liberty can become a **real problem** in certain situations—and the *weaker* brother situation is one of them ...

... situations where we are in the company of the lost is another ... and situations where we are in the company of other believers who are not of the *weaker* brother variety is another.

- And the Sonship Decision-Making Skills can be used in all these situations (Equity included).

- So—what Romans 14:1-15:7 is dealing with are the problems that can arise when a “*Weaker Brother Situation*” occurs within the local assembly—and after the Godly Thinking has been given, the Godly Living (in view of that Godly Thinking doing its effectual job) gets addressed ...

... so with all that in mind—we could say that the “Overall Matter” that all 11 of these verses are addressing is:

Deploying Godly Equity (putting the Godly Thinking into practice in the *weaker* bro. situation in the local assembly)
to Avoid Sonship Abuse (that is, the Abuse of Sonship Liberty).

- Now—(looking at the Breakdown of the whole passage) - as you scan down through it—looking merely at the words and phrases and expressions—do you notice that there is a phrase that gets often repeated (not exactly, but close) ...

... we have some repeated “*Let*” expressions:

- (:13) *Let us not therefore*
- (:16) *Let not then*
- (:19) *Let us therefore*

- And if you think about the 2 expression/phrases that contain the “*therefore*” (which is one of those English Words of Logic) - then that may indicate that what you have here are at least 2 Major Divisions ... or 2 Major Parts ...

- Part “A”: (:13-18) - Part “B”: (:19-23)

- So—is there any other reason that gets stated in the text that helps you out to settle in your mind that there really are 2 Major Parts to the Godly Living Aspect? ... Yes!

- There are 2 Different objects (so to speak) that are addressed (not just 1) ... [and they are both kind of in the middle of each of the 2 Parts] ... {and each one is identified by a **repeated term**} ? “*destroy*”!

- 1) - (:15) **Destroy not him with *they* meat, for whom *Christ* died.**
- 2) - (:20) ***For* meat destroy not the work of God.**

- In other words—there are **2 Things** that can get *destroyed* if a “son” Abuses his Sonship Liberty ... due to his failure to make proper Sonship Decisions of Equity in the *weaker* brother situation:

1) **“him”** (:15) = the *weaker* brother himself.

2) **“the work of God”** (:20) = the godly edification of the entire body or local assembly.

- And if you think about it—in view of what’s supposed to be taking place in the local assembly—(which is the issue of godly Edification) — Why do you think there are these 2 Parts? ... and Why is one the issue of the *weaker* brother himself; and the other the issue of the edification of the local assembly?

- To help you out: what is the goal of godly sonship edification?? ... being “Like Father, like son” ...
GOD—LIKE—NESS “godliness” ...

... and what are the ‘2 Sides’ of the coin to the issue of godliness? ...

- **INDIVIDUAL GODLINESS**

- **BODY GODLINESS**

- The Godly Thinking portion of Rom. 14:1-12 dealt with both of those godliness issues—and now the Godly C & B portion of Rom. 14:13-23 deals with both of those godliness issues ... and in that order!

- So we have: **Part A: Individual Godliness**—that is, godly C&B that will not become a hindrance to an individual saint/son (the *weaker* bro.) so that he can successfully attain his own, individual godly edification—(and not be destroyed by Sonship Liberty Abuse).

Part B: Body Godliness — that is, godly C&B that will not become a hindrance to the body/local assembly, so that it can attain to its own body-type godly edification—(and not be destroyed by Sonship Liberty Abuse).

- So we have these 2 Major Parts to the Godly Living section ... now the issue is—are there any divisions to each of the 2 Parts? (I believe there is) ...

- Part A: (:13-18) - Individual Godliness

- And to get at these divisions—let’s read through (:13-18)

- focus upon the “tone” of what God says ... is it mostly Positive or Negative? ... or ...

... does it SHIFT from one to the other?

- My understanding is that it SHIFTS from one to the other—from Negative to Positive.

- And instead of saying “Negative or Positive” — let’s put it in terms of what is actually in view here: Godly Living (C & B) ... but not just any old kind of godly C&B ... because the godly C&B (:13-23) isn’t said in a ‘vacuum’ (so to speak) - rather, it has a particular **context** ... what is said in (:13-23) is said strictly in view of the Godly Thinking of (:1-12)!

- So what is said about the Godly C&B in (:13-23) is spoken about in terms of the only CONSISTENT thing to do—or the only CONSISTENT way to Conduct yourself and Behave yourself as one who has obtained the Godly Thinking ... OR NOT!

- In other words—the **CONSISTENT** way to behave is the **POSITIVE** aspect; and the **INCONSISTENT** way to behave is the **NEGATIVE** aspect.

- And the **NEGATIVE** or **INCONSISTENT** way to behave gets addressed first; then the **POSITIVE** or **CONSISTENT** way to behave gets addressed last.

- And that’s the pattern for BOTH sub-bodies of information (in :13-18 and in :19-23).

- So for ‘Part A’ — you have 2 sections to it—the first which is Inconsistent C&B; and the 2nd which is Consistent C&B.

- Part A:

- 1) - (:13-15) = **Inconsistent** (Equitable) **Conduct & Behavior** (of a *stronger* son or *stronger* one “in the faith”) **in view of the Godly Thinking** (the godly Thinking of Equity in :1-12) **toward the individual weaker brother.**
- 2) - Then: (:16-18) = **Consistent** (Equitable) **Conduct & Behavior**—that is, C&B that is Consistent with the Godly Thinking of Equity in :1-12 toward the individual *weaker* brother.

- Part B:

- 1) - (:19-21) = **Inconsistent** (Equitable) **Conduct & Behavior** (of a *strong* son, or *stronger* one “in the faith”) **in view of the Godly Thinking** (of Equity in :1-12) **affecting the local assembly** (in continuing to get its godly edification as a body).
- 2) - (:22-23) = **Consistent** (Equitable) **Conduct & Behavior** — that is, C&B that is Consistent with the Godly Thinking of Equity in :1-12 that allows for the local assembly (the body) to continue its own edification process in peaceful communion and fellowship!

- Romans 14:13

Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

- Notice we have 1 Sentence, divided up by 2 Major Clauses —

1st Clause: *Let us not therefore judge one another any more:*
(notice the Colon = a hard pause—2nd most powerful pause in English)

2nd Clause: *but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.*

- **“Let us not therefore ...”**

- “Let us not” - when you have a “let” expression/phrase, you generally are being told to either think or act based upon **some previous information!** (which is the case here)

- “*Let us not*” calls upon you to (in this case), to begin to take some particular **action** (godly C&B) - but to do so based upon some previous information...

... and that previous information is of course contained in (:1-12).

- Our Father (through the apostle Paul) is going to exhort us to take some action now based upon the godly Thinking we have just acquired ...

... and the action we are going to take is really not 1 thing, but 2—(one act is negative; and one is positive—in other words, we’re going to NOT do something; and at the same time, we’re going to DO something else).

- and this is in perfect keeping with the Godly Thinking portion (:1-12) - but more than that, it is in perfect keeping with Sonship Education—because what’s at the heart of all of Sonship Education is that the “son” receives his Father’s heart as his own heart—and therefore the big issue is for any “son” **to NOT be a “fool” or “foolish” in his Father’s sight!**

- Therefore being a “**wise**” son/daughter (and not a **foolish** one) means that you’re not simply doing something just because your Father told you to do it—(which isn’t sonship, but childhood) — but rather, to know WHY the course of action you’re being exhorted to take (not commanded to take) would be either CONSISTENT or INCONSISTENT with what you’ve been taught in your Sonship Education.

- and that’s exactly how God presents the Godly Living portion:

- 1) Exhortation of what is INCONSISTENT with the Godly Thinking (in:13-15);
- 2) Exhortation of what is CONSISTENT with the Godly Thinking (in :16-18)

- and in all of (:13-18) the issue is what is either INCONSISTENT or CONSISTENT godly C&B toward the individual *weaker* bro. [Individual Godliness]

- “*Let us not*” — in view of the Godly Thinking of (:1-12) in general; but more specifically, in view of (:10-12) and the issue that *we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ*—and the Principle that comes out of that in (:12) *So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God*—i.e., **where the Edification Process is concerned, the weaker brother is NOT accountable to YOU! The weaker brother is strictly accountable to God and to God alone where godly Edification is concerned!**

- Now—in view of all that—*Let us not* ...

- “**us**” = in this context—is NOT talking about just every believer/Christian! ... rather, it’s talking specifically about those in the local assembly who are **strong ones in the faith** — (those who have Rom. 1:1-14:12 doctrine effectually working in their ‘inner man’).

- “*therefore*” - this is a ‘hard’ conclusion—it’s a conclusion of all of the information contained in (:1-12) [true enough] - but! it’s also the ‘hard’ conclusion of the matter *most recently* covered in (:10-12) - that Final Concluding Matter to the entire Godly Thinking portion.

- And notice the ‘word placement’ of this *therefore* — (it’s placed 4 words into the sentence!)

... which is a technique of Older English:

The more that the word *therefore* gets pushed into the sentence, the more the writer wants to emphasize the critical nature of what’s being said—or the great importance of it; or the issue how vital it is, and you-just-can’t-ignore-this because if you do ... ! ... then certain and great **harm** will come of it!

- The word placement of “*therefore*” acts as a **SIGNAL: WARNING, WARNING!!!**

- (and you get one for “Individual Godliness” and one for “Body Godliness” [:19])

- Point is—the critical / vital / most important / can’t miss it issue of all in your Sonship Equitable C&B towards the *weaker* brother is to **NOT PUT A STUMBLINGBLOCK OR AN OCCASION TO FALL IN HIS WAY!!!** (that **stumblingblock** issue is **gigantic!**)

... (we'll get to that, but first let's finish this 1st Clause) ...

- (:13) *Let us not therefore **judge one another any more:***

- This is an easy passage to mishandle and to use as a 'Bible Billy Club' when it's lifted out of its context!

- And when it's used by someone to say, "You can't judge me! — even the Bible says you can't judge me!" ... which is meant to be used as a way to excuse ungodly, sinful, unrighteous, and even filthy behavior!

- (which is totally **dishonest** in this verse anyway—because Paul turns right around in the next Clause and says, "*but judge this rather, ...*" !)

... the idea that "A good Christian does not judge!" ... which is not only un-biblical and un-Christian—but EVIL to the core ... and truly satanic!

... which, by the way, is what this putrid, evil, satanic idea is of: "Your Truth—speak your truth!"!

- **The Bible NEVER tells you to NOT judge anyone, ever, for any and all reasons, ever!** (but this is just how the Corinthians were acting and conducting themselves!)

- Pro. 28:5 *Evil men understand not judgment: ...*

- The exhortation here is NOT that we should NOT judge at all ... rather, the issue is having the capacity as a WISE SON (and not a FOOLISH son) to make proper and appropriate judgments about what is right and appropriate *to* judge!

- And you can't use that old 'dodge', "Well, if you really love me, then don't judge me" garbage ...
(*Phil. 1:9*) *And this I pray, that your love may about yet more and more in knowledge and in ALL judgment;*

- Well—we could go on—but (as always) it's the **CONTEXT** that comes along to save us from making a total mess out of this verse! (not the 'Original Greek'; not a 'word-study')

- **CONTEXT:** Godly Equity in our dealings with the *weaker* brother situation in the local assembly — but to be even more precise, the context is all about the **Edification Process!**

- Godly Edification of an **individual** member of the body of Christ (the *weaker* brother);
- Godly Edification of the **body** of Christ as a whole (especially the local body, the local church)

- So when our Father exhorts us through the apostle Paul to:
Let us not therefore judge one another any more: ...

- We are exhorted to:

1) *Let us not* (take what's in our mind as the godly Thinking and put it into practice in our godly C&B)

2) *therefore* (and consider this to be the most critical & vital and crucial issue of what would be considered to be **unwise, foolish, dangerous, and harmful** C&B)

3) *judge one another any more:*

- that is, to decide and pass a sentence **condemning** the thinking & actions of a *weaker* brother when he hasn't had the opportunity to advance in the Edification Process as far as you have!

- And the truth is—the “*judging*” being talked about here is the expression of what you were told back in (:1) when God ‘set the stage’ for the entire *instruction of Equity* ... that is, receiving a *weaker* brother **TO doubtful disputations!**

- (see [:1] & note on “*doubtful disputations*”)

- by the way—this is something that many believers (especially in the so-called ‘grace camp’) seem to never get straight—because often times, a person will get some doctrine about “right division” and then set about to pick an argument with another saint who doesn't have the doctrine he has—then to make an argument with him for the sake of winning the argument — which is NOT how a properly educated “son” of God thinks! ... that's a FOOLISH son, not a wise son! A wise son doesn't desire to “win an argument,” - he desires for godly Edification to take place in another saint's heart, just like it has in his own heart! [test of Godly Love & Charity]

- So once you take that 1st Clause and “pause” (at the colon) long enough in order to get the **full impact of the full, effectual working of it**... then you can proceed on to the 2nd Clause of the sentence in (:13) — *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: (1st Clause)*

- And the “full impact” of it—the hard-hitting, ball-peen hammer-between-the-eyes issue that you’re being doctrinally ‘hit’ with (and confronted with) is this:

- There is **godly judgment** in the case of making **equitable** decisions in your dealings with the *weaker* brother that will result in his successful godly edification taking place within the local assembly ...

- And there is **UNGODLY judgment** that the *strong* one “in the faith” can make that is wholly **without** godly equity (and void of godly equity) that can result in the **harm / ruin / and destruction** of the *weaker* brother’s godly edification taking place!

- And when that occurs—guess what that *strong* one “in the faith” IS (or what he becomes) by his **failure** to operate upon godly Equity? (and failure to operate upon Godly Love & Charity) ?? ... what does he become? ...

... he (that *stronger* brother) becomes **UN-GODLY!**

- And what happens to the *weaker* bro. when he is judged in an ungodly way by the *strong* brother who is UN-GODLY in his judging? ...

... the *weaker* brother ends up falling under the **TYRANNY** of the *stronger* brother! (as his ‘tutor & governor’) - and that ends up in **legalism!**

- (or to borrow from the apostle Paul in 1 Cor. 6:12, the *weaker* brother is brought **under the power of another**—and in 2 Cor. 1:24, the *stronger* brother has taken **dominion over** the *weaker* brother’s **faith!**

- Folks, that’s **tyrannical dominion**—that’s **spiritual tyranny!**

- TYRANT = one who seizes upon sovereign power **without legal right**—a **usurper!**

- And to put it simply (as David Winston Busch said), “The [only] alternative to godly judgment is the tyranny of the ungodly” ... and that’s a great way to put it: **“the tyranny of the ungodly”!**

- And that colon at the end of the 1st Clause in (:13) tells you that you should be **deeply** and **suitably impressed** with that! (“suitably”, meaning, just as impressed as your Father is! and as His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ is!)

- (:13 continued) - 2nd Clause— ***but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.***

- **“but judge this rather,”** - that is, ‘Son, here is **GODLY judging** with **GODLY Equity**’ — here is what a properly educated “son” would **do** with the Thinking of Godly Equity ... (and here is the Godly C&B in view of godly Love & Charity — here is the proper course of action to take with the *weaker* brother with godly **Self-Sacrifice!**)

- (again, the Un-Christian, Un-biblical, ungodly thing is to NOT judge! [which those phony people who say, “If you’re a good Christian, you’re not to judge” do, anyway]) ...

... the issue isn’t one of NOT judging anyone for anything; rather, the issue is to make proper and appropriate godly judgments!

- “*judge*” here isn’t the idea of sitting as a judge in a courtroom and making determinations of “guilt” or “innocence” - or acting as a spiritual umpire to say what is “safe” or “out”; what is “good” or “bad” —

- rather, it’s the issue of Sonship Decision-Making—it’s the issue of being in a position or situation or circumstance where you have to decide by judicial authority that something is to be done.

- (and that “judicial authority” is your sonship status by which you think & act just as your Heavenly Father would if He were in your shoes—it’s the ‘judicial authority’ of the word of God effectually working within you!)

- Simply put, judge here is the use of godly Equity!

- You are to take the godly Thinking of (:1-12) and by being put in the position of having to deal with the *weaker* brother situation—you **exercise your mind** with **that** doctrine in order to arrive at a correct (righteous & godly) course of action!

- And, (as we noted before), with all things considered in the **context** — the *judging* spoken about here is the issue of ***discerning the body*** (*1 Cor. 11:29*).

(Smith's)

- ***Discernment is a combination of keenness*** (wise, piercing, “learned” perception) **and accuracy** (careful, precise & correct) **of mental vision**.

- **It sees character** (the sum of the moral & mental qualities that distinguish an individual—a person's mental & moral constitution), **deeds & actions in their differences**, **their peculiar motives**, **their true nature**.

- **The discerning man is not easily misled**, because **he is not imposed upon by appearances**, **nor takes one thing for another**. — (see 2 Cor. 4:18; 5:10-12, 13-17)

- And godly Equity—(godly equitable judgment) is **SACRIFICE!** (as we will see in the rest of the verse)

- (:13b) ... *but judge this rather, that no man* (no person who is a strong one ‘in the faith’) ***put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.***

- **“THE” Major Issue in godly Equitable C&B:**
THE STUMBLINGBLOCK! (don't be one!)

- *“stumblingblock”* = (OED) - Something to stumble over; a cause of stumbling. A piece of wood, stone, or other matter, that obstruct one's way; an obstacle or obstruction.

= an obstacle to belief or understanding.

= an obstacle in the way of progress.

- In the context of (:13), we're **not** talking about doing something to cause a person to **physically** *stumble*—rather, we're talking about doing something to cause the weaker brother to **spiritually** *stumble*!

- (Webster's 1828) = That which causes someone to err (i.e., to make an error or make a mistake; to violate accepted moral standards; to **sin**).

- “*stumblingblock*” is such a fitting & proper term to use in this issue of Sonship Education (and sonship education in BOTH programs!) —and is perfectly in keeping with it—Why?—

— (Skeat) = (*stumble* comes from several Scand. languages) to stammer; **to go with uncertain steps; hesitation of the steps**.

- And to a son—his “steps” have **great meaning and significance**! — Life as an adult, adopted “son” of God is all about your “steps” - *walking after the Spirit*; and the **way** in which a son is supposed to *walk* ...

... terms like *feet, paths, steps, run*, etc.

- (see **Pro. 2:8-9** [Sonship Orientation];
- **3:5-6**; [Wisdom]; **3:23** [Justice]
- **4:11-13** [Judgment]; **4: 23-27** [Judgment])
— just to name a few —

- Therefore a good, simple, short, **Working Definition**:
A sonship *stumblingblock* in the context of Rom. 14:13 means, **Anything that violates the edification process!**

- and as I said before—since Sonship Edification is God's will, purpose, and design in BOTH, His program with Israel, AND this Disp. of Grace in which we live ... (see 1 John 2:8-11 [:10])

- Now we know that by now it's no surprise that all of our *instruction of equity* here in Rom. 14 is leading to 2 Major issues: 1) *Destroy not **him** with thy meat, for whom Christ died.* [:15] 2) *For meat destroy not the **work** of God.* [:20] - and it's no surprise that there is a Major Issue that is tied into all this: viz., **Godly Love & Charity** [:15] ...

- ... *now walkest thou not charitably.* — now, just to underscore just how precise the terminology is that God has the apostle Paul use here—what is it about a *stumblingblock* that causes a ‘trigger’ to go off in your mind—and to make a connection with a *stumblingblock* and Godly L. & Charity?

- What is the behavior of someone who (in any sense and in any context) puts a *stumblingblock* in another person’s way?

- (by the way—the terminology of [:13] **implies INTENT!**) ... so how would you describe the behavior of someone who intentionally puts a *stumblingblock* in another person’s way?

- I’d call it CRUEL behavior! — and now you have a ‘connection’!

- The *stumblingblock* analogy is a graphic way to cause you to think: Well, that’s just a cruel thing to do...

... and then you think: Where have I dealt with cruelty before? (you’re helped out by being ‘prompted’ with the word *charitably*) ... this is the OPPOSITE of Godly L & C [**not** charitable]

... where did we go over this? ... in the 2nd Feature of Godly L&C—**KINDNESS**

- Godly Love is: Selfless/Kind [go together]

- see Rom. 12:10

- (see Notes: Rom. 12, pgs. 429-431)

- see Rom. 8:14-15 [:15]

- Legalism = Bondage = CRUEL, opp. of *kindness*

- Remember: *Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.*

- “The alternative to godly judgment is the tyranny of the ungodly.” CRUEL TYRANNY/BONDAGE/LEGALISM!

- (:13 so far) ***Let us not***—(this “*Let*”, “*Let us not*”, “*Let us*” terminology is sonship language—it’s a command, but it’s **not** like a military command or a command from a father to a child—rather, this is put in the form of a ‘**Sonship Command**’ - and a by using a ‘sonship command’, a father expressly gives his son a directive, whereby he bids him to **act in accordance with a clear principle or principles that he has been taught in his sonship education**—and in doing so, **let the principle(s) that he has learned govern his decision-making.**)

therefore—(consider this a crucial & vital issue of unwise, foolish, dangerous, and harmful conduct & behavior)

judge one another any more: — (causing *doubtful disputations*—condemning the *weaker* brother as worthless and unable to please God, when, through no fault of his own, he simply isn’t as far along in the Edification Process as you are.)

- [which is failure to *discern the body*—it’s failure and foolish thinking & behavior in connection with godly communion & fellowship!]

but judge this rather, — (again, sonship-type terminology—rather than “Do this!”, “*judge this*” calls upon the son to use his sonship decision-making skills that he has acquired, PLUS, the sonship principles of the Thinking portion of godly Equity, and determine all on his own what **specific action** to take based upon the **general statement** the Father is about to tell him.)

that no man (not one of you *stronger* ones in the faith) ***put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.***

- The expression “***occasion to fall***” is a further description of the “*stumblingblock*” issue—and since the whole expression is being used as a **spiritual** illustration, the “*falling*” is ‘falling’ spiritually or ‘falling’ edificationally!

- In general—and the most common) way in which the word “*fall*” is handled, is that it’s talking about ‘falling’ in to:

1) sin; 2) unacceptable & foolish behavior—
— or both.

- and that’s true enough—and that should be understood and appreciated for the truth that it is ...

... but that’s NOT the worst thing that can happen to a *weaker* brother! (‘sin’ & ‘unacceptable/foolish behavior’ is one thing—his destruction is something else!

... BUT—that’s too general/basic for the context—because the context is far more specific than that—the context here is all about the godly edification of the *weaker* brother—it’s more specifically talking about the Edification Process ...

... therefore, since we looked at a basic, Working Definition of what the “*stumblingblock*” is—and since the phrase, “*or an occasion to fall*” is a further description of the *stumblingblock*—then (just like the *stumblingblock*), the phrase, “*an occasion to fall*” fits under that same Working Definition:

- **Anything that violates the Edification Process!**
(resulting in the *weaker* bro’s. destruction & ruin!)

- Let’s look at this 2nd Clause of (:13) in its entirety:

... ***but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way.***

... now ... isn’t that rather vague? (unsatisfying?)

... doesn’t that raise the question: ‘Well, I know what a *stumblingblock* is—but what (exactly) is a *stumblingblock* that would violate the Edification Process?’

... why does God do this kind of thing to me all the time? why doesn’t He ‘spell it out’? how about some examples???

- And truth be told—this kind of thing, more often than not, really does aggravate many believers! (though they won’t admit it)

- Well—God IS (by design, and deliberately, and intentionally) being vague here—(not that He’s being unclear [because He *is* clear] - but He’s being very basic, or generic, or nonspecific) - and He’s doing it on purpose! (or for a *specific* purpose) ...

... and that *specific* purpose for God being nonspecific is because of your status as an **adopted, adult “son”** - and because of your **sonship decision-making!**

- The way in which your Father is talking to you here through the apostle Paul is in perfect keeping with the Father’s own ‘Working Definition’ of what Sonship Edification is all about: *be ye transformed by the renewing of **your** mind, that ye may prove what is that good (G1), and acceptable (G2), and perfect (G3), will of God.*

- Truth is—you’re **NOT** told (exactly) what to do! ...
... ON PURPOSE!

- You’re supposed to (and expected to) take all that your Father has taught you about who you really are **IN CHRIST** in connection with your **SANCTIFIED POSITION “IN CHRIST”** so far (from Romans 6:1-14:12) — and in any ‘weaker brother situation’ that arises in the local assembly, **make decisions all on your own** as to what it means, and as to what actions to take so that you **NEVER put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in your brother’s way.**

- This should **IMPRESS** you! — it should suitably impress you as to just how big of an issue it is to understand and appreciate the recognition of YOUR sonship status (and YOUR sonship decision-making) **AND** the sonship status (and sonship decision-making) of the *weaker* brother!

- In other words—you should be suitably impressed with the Major Principle that is stated back in (:5) ...
— **“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”**

- That! should be the ‘Prince’ or ‘Ruler’ that governs your thinking in every decision you make in the *weaker* brother situation!

- Anything other than that—and you’ve got **legalism**, and the **utter destruction** of the godly Edification Process!

- (this is a lesson in Ruling & Governing! ...
... RULE the situation; Govern the situation!)

- What we're dealing with here in Equity (and in the *weaker* bro. situation) is really the **Moral Attitude** of our Heavenly Father; and having His very own **moral attitude** generated within our own heart.

- And this **moral attitude** is directly connected with, not only godly Equity & the *weaker* bro. situation—but it's directly connected with godly sonship Edification!

- And the way in which this godly **moral attitude** is connected with godly Sonship Edification is that it's connected to the **conscience** of both you, as a *stronger* one in the faith—and the *weaker* brother in the faith.

- And the reason the **conscience** is at the core of it all, is because: **the conscience is your Evaluator when it comes to making a decision!**

- On the one hand, you've got a *weaker* bro. in the faith—and he has some doctrine that he's operating upon that is NOT in line with what Paul teaches us in his epistles to, for, and about us as the members of the body of Christ that we are in this disp. of grace in which we live.

- On the other hand, you've got yourself—a *stronger* one in the faith—and you've got a great understanding & appreciation of your Sonship **Liberty**—and that you're *not under the law, but under grace*.

- And with the *weaker* bro. — and he's doing what he's doing in all 'good conscience' — and somewhere along the line, he's going to have to have his conscience dealt with so that he can (in a godly way) **change** his mind, and be corrected by the effectual working of God's word—and in the end, **make a decision** to conform to God's word "*rightly divided*" - and finally have his mind **settled** in all good conscience upon IT! (and he does that by **FAITH**—by believing what God says to him!)

- And then, with you, (the *stronger* one in the faith) — you're operation upon your Sonship Liberty, and doing so in all 'good conscience' - but you're going to have to make a decision too: [a Sonship Decision]... and your conscience is going to have some information in it that the *weaker* bro. doesn't have; that generated within you the very **Moral Attitude** of your Heavenly Father (and the Lord Jesus Christ).

- Therefore, you're going to do the god-like thing and decide [**all on your own**] as a "son" on a "path" or course of action that will end up having you **restrict** your own Sonship Liberty for the sake of ensuring that the *weaker* bro. doesn't end up just imitating you (and **sin against his conscience**) - and/or, being **forced** (by spiritual bullying—either intentional or unintentional) to conform to YOU (instead of God's word doing the work)!

- This is what it means to NOT *put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in your brother's way!*

- This is what it means to have full recognition of the *weaker* brother's 'Sonship Status' and 'Sonship Decision-Making' ...

- This is what it means to **value & esteem** (and to **honor** and give **full deference** to) the Edification Process!! (which God Himself takes **deadly serious** ... in fact, you could say, 'Outside the gospel of Christ that justified you unto eternal life—**nothing** in the "Christian way of life" does God take as serious as this!')

- (want proof? — see 1 Cor. 8:9-13!)

- The BIG ISSUE in all of the Godly Living portion (of :13-23) is really this issue: ... **but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.**

- Working Definition: Anything that violates the Edification Process.
 - Further Working Definition: Anything said or done by a *stronger* bro. that makes the *weaker* bro. no longer walk as a "son"!

- So—how do you ‘deploy’ godly Equity in the *weaker* brother situation?

1) By *judging* (making judgments; sonship decisions) so as to not *put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall* (in godly sonship edification) *in the weaker brother’s way*;

2) By honoring & respecting the Principle to: *Let the weaker brother be **fully** persuaded in his own mind.* (valuing & esteeming the Edification Process)

Romans 14:14 *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

- Paul uses himself as an example as one who is *strong* in the faith and how to deal with the *weaker* bro. situation with godly Equity.

- Grammatically: we have 2 Major Clauses—divided by a colon.

1st Clause: *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself:* (pause ...)

- Paul, talking about himself:

- *I know*—this is the strongest possible use of the word *know* ... this is to *know* ‘**absolutely**’; to know with the result that it’s a **permanently settled matter in the mind!**

... ok, that great, Paul, but just HOW do you *know*?

- A: *and am **persuaded** by the Lord Jesus*, (this is where his ‘absolute knowing’ comes from) ...

- *persuaded* = (a great sonship word) = to induce a person to **believe** something; to be led to or ‘won over’ to believe in a statement or doctrine, and to be **fully assured** of it.

- This is a critically important term/expression—especially in this context—because it draws your attention to the **Edification Process and how it properly works!**

- Perf. Pass. Ind. πείθω = to persuade, to induce one by words to believe, to tranquillize ...

- Web. 1828 = to influence by argument; to draw or incline the will to a determination by presenting motives to the mind; to convince by argument.

[this is where many folks are screwed up edification-wise!]

[GO S-L-O-W-L-Y!]

- Crabbs = we are *convinced* by arguments, but we are *persuaded* by personal influence (read, the written word of God [the Lord Jesus Christ] + the leading of the Spirit of God [the Holy Ghost]) - ***persuasion is accomplished NOT so much by argument***, but by drawing a person to be *persuaded*—***persuaded also indicates that a certain course is determined to be followed***—we are *convinced* of truths and facts, but we are *persuaded* to **act & behave**—you're *persuaded* **to do something!**

- And that means that by the very nature of being “*persuaded*” that doubt and unbelief have been driven out and replaced by godly attitudes of confidence, assurance, conviction, and *persuasion!*

- And when you have become *persuaded* of something—there has been a series of issues presented to your mind and has **influenced** the way you think (godly thinking: thinking like God does) - but to be *persuaded* indicates more than that—it also indicates that you have determined to follow a certain course—you have determined to **operate** upon what your mind is now *persuaded* to do (godly living: living like God does) - and that's exactly what you are about to do!

[Examples:]

- (see) Acts 26:22-28

- (see) Rom. 4:21

- this is the 2nd time Paul has used this word about himself:
[see] Rom. 8:38

- Point is: when Paul says, ***I know***—that's what any *stronger* brother in the faith with Paul would be able to say! ... a *weak* brother in the faith wouldn't be able to do that!

- And when Paul goes on to say, ***and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus***, — you're now dealing with the doctrine that gives you *the mind of Christ* that *persuades* you to think something and then act upon that thinking!

**- GODLY EDIFICATION IS THE ACT OF
“PERSUASION” - NOT THE ACT OF CONVINCING
BY WINNING AN ARGUMENT!**

- (:14 so far) *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus,*

- “*by the Lord Jesus*” - you have the “*Lord*” issue being used in 1st position = emphasizing the sovereign ‘Lord-ship’ of Jesus as our Redeemer (we are HIS lawful possession) - [which has already been set forth as a critical issue in dealing with the *weaker* bro. with godly Equity] ... PLUS, the personal name, “*Jesus*” indicating just that issue — that is, Paul’s *persuasion* came from his own experience of having to go through the Edification Process himself ...

... and because of the nature of being *persuaded*, there was **personal influence** that took place ...

... in Paul’s case, he was personally face-to-face with the Lord Jesus for a short time—but even **more** than that (odd as that may be to say), Paul was *persuaded* by the **personal influence** of the word of God that was given to him ...

... and because the “word of God” IS the very “mind of Christ” + the “Spirit of God” who “led” Paul through the curriculum for godly sonship edification—then Paul can rightly, fittingly, and properly say, *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, ... (i.e., personal influence!)*

- *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, **that there is nothing unclean of itself:***

- Now, THAT’S a remarkable statement!

- Wait a minute! Wasn’t Jesus born “under the law”? ... didn’t Jesus “keep the law”? ... didn’t He observe the commandments of the law? ... (including the law’s teaching of things that are [to the Jews] *clean* and *unclean*???)

- YES! - see Gal. 4:4

- see Mat. 26:17-20

- see Luke 2:21

- So ... what’s going on here????

- What's going on here is an issue of "rightly dividing the word of truth" — and proper Bible handling!

- This is a fantastic passage that very clearly sets forth the fact that the way in which God is dealing with men today is NOT the way in which He did under Israel's program!

- This phrase fully recognizes the "mystery" of Christ—the distinct change in programs God made when He unexpectedly interrupted and suspended His program with Israel, and brought in this "secret" dispensation of Gentile Grace!

- And that's a very important distinction to make—especially in connection with the godly Edification Process ...

... because Edification (even as a "son") is NOT something unique to us as members of the body of Christ—(just as "godliness" isn't unique to us) ...

... so you always have to bear in mind that the godly Edification we're receiving now is in keeping with our NOT being a part of God's prog. w/Isr., but being the "new creature" of the church the body of Christ in this dispensation of grace!

- (:14 so far) *I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing **unclean** of itself:*

- "**unclean**" = forbidden by the OT Law (of Moses)

- see [**Lev. 11**] - (:1-4; :46-47)

- *chew the cud* = the natural process of 'inward digesting' = digesting the word of God;

- *divided hoof* = ones 'outward' walk

- The (:) colon—pause ...

- **but** (adversative conjunction) **to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.**

- "**esteemeth**" (**esteem**) - [see :5]

- *esteem* = to set a value on something (whether high or low);
to assign a value to something.

- And when used in a favorable sense (as it is here),
it means to **think highly** of something; to FEEL
something good or beneficial about something.

CRABB

ESTEEM, RESPECT, REGARD

Esteem, from the L. *aestimo*, signifies literally to set a value upon; *respect*, from the L. *respicio*, signifies to look back upon, to look upon with attention; *regard*, v. *To attend to*.

A favourable **sentiment** towards particular objects is included in the meaning of all these terms.

SMITH — *Esteem* is akin to affection.

- Point is—when you're dealing with the issue of *esteem*, you're dealing with both the way in which you THINK about something and the way in which you FEEL about it.

- And because of that, you are then going to make a decision based upon what is operating within your **whole heart**— (your mind [human spirit] and your soul).

- In the case of the *weaker* brother—it's not that he's got 'weak' faith—or that something is wrong with his level of commitment—or anything along those lines ... (there's nothing wrong with **him** [as the subject of his faith] ...

... rather, it's the OBJECT of this faith that is the problem—that is, it's not what Moses said, it's what **Paul** said—it's not the scriptures pertaining to God's program with Isr., but it's the scriptures pertaining to the church, the body of Christ [Rom-Phlm]!

- **Example: Apollos (see Acts 18:22-28)**

- What this means then—is that by *esteeming* something - where, based upon what you THINK and FEEL about something—and then making a decision based upon it — you're now back to the issue of the CONSCIENCE! (which is why this is an issue of EQUITY)!!!

EQUITY

- Equity is basically the capacity for making decisions as to what is fair and impartial—not with respect to the strict letter of the law, but rather the consideration of motives and intentions and circumstances. **Equity deals with moral issues and is always aware of the dictates of the CONSCIENCE and how that, through no fault of their own, a person finds themselves in difficult circumstances.**

*14 I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, **to him it is unclean.***

- The word “*conscience*” is not used anywhere in this entire chapter.
- And while that is true—the expectation is that, by what God has the apostle Paul say to you here, that you cannot help but perceive that the **conscience** is at the heart of the whole matter of both Godly Equity, and your sonship decision-making in dealing with the *weaker* brother situation! (see 1 Cor. 8)
- And no where in the entire chapter is this more apparent than here in verse 14.
- So the question is not “What” is the conscience? and what does it do? ... (although that’s important—and we’ve actually looked at “what” the conscience is) ... but the big question is “WHY?” ...
 - ... Why is our Father’s *instruction of equity* centered upon, and focused upon the **conscience** (the conscience of the *weaker* brother)?
 - Because while we’ve already noted in defining the word *equity*, that *equity* is always aware of the dictates of the **conscience**—we really haven’t yet fully come to understand and appreciate **WHY** fair and impartial sonship decision-making of godly *equity* is “always aware of the dictates of the **conscience**.”
- Take our *weaker* brother situation here in Rom. 14:14 —

- The apostle Paul “*knows*” and is “*persuaded*” (as a *strong* one in the faith)—just as any *strong* one in the faith “*knows*” and is “*persuaded*” that *there is nothing unclean of itself: ...*

... but in the case of the *weaker* one in the faith—to the *weaker* brother: if he *esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean*. (“**esteem**” = an ‘evaluator’/conscience term)

- And as we’ve rightly noted before—why does the *weaker* brother *esteem a thing to be unclean*? ... why does he look upon certain meats (in this example) and *esteem them to be unclean*?

A(1): You could say (and rightly so) that the *weaker* brother *esteems* certain meats to be *unclean* because he’s operating upon what God has set forth back in His “Time Past” program with Israel—back in what He has set forth in the OT Law—the law of Moses.

- But that really doesn’t fully answer the question of Why? — that’s really not sufficient enough to get at the full reason for why the *weaker* brother looks upon certain meats and *esteems* them to be *unclean*—because all that does is tell you **where** he’s getting his information; or **what** the information is that he’s operating upon.

- If that’s all you’ve got in the way of answering our “Why?” question—then it’s really not satisfactory to fully settle the matter of Why in your mind ...

... something else that we’ve already touched upon in our study of Romans 14 and this issue of godly *equity* comes very close to answering the question ...

... if the *weaker* brother is operating upon the information contained in the OT Law under God’s program with Israel, ask yourself, WHY? ... Why does he read what’s sitting back in the OT Law—or from what he has been taught about meats from the OT Law, Why does he operate upon that?

A(2): Because he **BELIEVES** it! — now, that’s getting far closer to a satisfactory answer as to Why he *esteems* certain meats to be *unclean*. — but even that isn’t the fullness of the reason as to Why we are expected to perceive issues concerning the **conscience** when we make sonship decisions with godly *equity* regarding the *weaker* brother situation.

- (we’re in the ‘9-Ring’ - we need 1 more step to get in the ‘10-Ring’)

- (again) ... *but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.*

- (and again) - Why does the *weaker* brother ‘evaluate’ and *esteem* (**in his conscience**) that certain meats (in this case) are *unclean*? ... or to ask it another way—**to him it is unclean** (when proper Bible handling says it isn’t) — but, **to him it is unclean** (WHY?) - Why is it that way **“to him”**?

A(2): Because he **believes** it to be that way.

- So the *weaker* brother has taken something God has said in His word, and he has responded positively to it—and more than that, he has determined to operate upon it—therefore, he has made an **evaluation** of it in his **conscience** as to it being either Right or Wrong—and since he is **not yet** “rightly dividing the word of truth”, and **not yet** properly handling God’s word—he therefore has no information or knowledge from God’s word telling him otherwise.

- So **“to him”** it’s **RIGHT** to *esteem* certain meats *to be unclean*.

- So how does the *weaker* brother go from this, to being one who is *stronger* in the faith—and come to the point where he can say with Paul, *I know and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is **nothing unclean** of itself?*

- And it’s how he goes from his position in (:14b) to Paul’s position in (:14a) that really answers our question and clears up the whole issue!

- And on top of all that—we have to add to this that if the *weaker* bro. isn’t treated with godly *equity*, he can end up being **destroyed**, and even **perishing!** (*1 Cor. 8:11*)

- God has actually provided man with a particular “safeguard” by creating man with a **conscience**—(under the wisdom of this world, and the Satanic Policy of Evil, it’s a disaster—but under the wisdom of God and God’s word “rightly divided” and properly handled, it’s a magnificent and powerful “safeguard” - it ‘safeguards’ a particular thing that God holds as the most sacred, holy, hallowed, and godly; not-to-be-trifled-with; not-to-be-tampered-with issue in all of the life of a Christian (or a saint; or especially, a “son”) ...

- The **conscience** is a wonderfully and powerfully made aspect of our ‘inner man’ —

— intelligence; knowledge; and information is a great part of it—but it’s not all there is of it ...

... because as you evaluate and ascertain whether something is Right or Wrong—the **conscience** can either be “*good*”, calm, quiet & peaceful; or it can be “*bad*”, bothered, troubled, offended, distressed, and in turmoil (it can produce great ‘anguish’ in the inner man) ...

... it can be “*grieved*” ... it can even become “*seared*”!

- The **conscience** is a combination of knowledge/information and how you FEEL about it and in light of it.

- So the **conscience** is basically your EVALUATOR when it comes to making a decision.

- And the “evaluation” it makes is: ‘This decision I’m going to make ... is it RIGHT? ... or is it WRONG?’

- Now—here’s the thing — you need to recognize: that **the conscience does NOT do the deciding—it does NOT decide!** — (The VOLITION decides!)

- (the **conscience** ‘guides’ and ‘safeguards’ the decisions you make as to being either RIGHT or WRONG).

- And since that is the case—**therefore**, (it’s possible that) **you can make a decision AGAINST your conscience, or WITH your conscience!**

- the main point here being that you can, indeed, make a decision that goes completely AGAINST your conscience—(it’s wrong to do it; but it **can** be done!) - [Illustration: Me and Scotty Weaver—Grace Brethren Church, South Bend, IN]

- Now—let’s take what we’ve come to understand & appreciate about the **conscience** and see if we can determine what it is that our Father is getting us to see with some real sonship perception ...

... and see if we can ‘put our finger on’ just what this thing is that God views as so sacred and not-to-be-trifled with or tampered with ... (and which, when we see it as God does, it will answer all our questions of “Why”) ...

... in fact, it’s a sacred, godly Principle connected both to all things concerning Justification and to all things concerning Sanctification.

- First of all—by what God has the apostle Paul say in Rom. 14:14 and in 1 Cor. 8 — it can rightly be said that: **‘God the Father does NOT want you give up something that you’re not ready to give up!’**

- If you do give up something that you’re not ready to give up, then what you are doing is making a decision **AGAINST** your **conscience!**

... and what will happen if you **DO** give up something **AGAINST** your **conscience?** ...

... you end up with some other PERSON (other than your Father and His word) having **dominion over your faith!** [*Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: **for by faith ye stand.***]

- **YOU END UP IN LEGALISM!** (Sonship Edif. gets destroyed)

- So what’s the answer? How does the *weaker* bro. get from his position in (:14b) to Paul’s position in (:14a)? What is this thing (this Principle) that God so jealously guards and protects at all cost? ... that is to never be trifled or tampered with?

- Where godly Edification is concerned—where the Edification Process is concerned—the thing that God views as so sacred & is to never be trifled with or tampered with is a **PRINCIPLE** of godly Edification ... Godly Edification is entirely accomplished **BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH!**

- And that's what the Principle of Rom. 14:5 is all about— it's about "by grace, through faith" ...

5 ... *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

- One of the most important issues in godly *equity* is this:

What you as a *strong* one in the faith are going to be **most** concerned with in your dealings with the *weaker* brother is his CONSCIENCE ...

... Why is it wrong to violate your conscience (or violate the conscience of the *weaker* brother)? ... **because equity demands only that which can be done in "good conscience"!**

- If it can't be done in "good conscience", **then you are violating (:5) [Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind] ... you are violating 'BY GRACE, THROUGH FAITH'!**

- And the truth of the matter is—**the Father doesn't want you to give up anything you're not ready to give up! — and the Father does not want the *weaker* brother to give up anything he's not ready to give up!**

- And the way in which God has provided for a person (a saint/believer/Christian "son") to give up something is by means of the Edification Process operating upon GRACE: **"by grace, through faith"!**

- And if you (or the *weaker* bro.) give up something you're not ready to give up (by means of the Edification Process operating upon "by grace, through faith" ... **you end up with the *strong* one in the faith having "dominion" over the faith of the *weaker* brother! [see 2 Cor. 1:24]**

- And the result of all that is: **YOU END UP IN LEGALISM** (you violate "by grace, through faith" - and you **destroy** the *weaker* brother's sonship edification ... and YOURS!)

- Let's look at a couple of passages in God's word that highlight the *conscience* at work in a godly way ...

- Acts 24
 - Paul has been arrested for the uproar he caused when he was in Jerusalem—the vain/religious leaders of Israel wanted to kill him, but his Roman citizenship made it so that Paul was going to have to go before the judges of Rome [i.e., Felix & co.]
 - the Jews cook up an ambush to try to kill Paul, but their plan gets exposed—so the Roman authorities take Paul from Jerusalem up north to the city of Caesarea for Roman trial.
- (see 24:10-16 [:16])
- 1 Cor. 8:7-12; 10:25-33
- 1 Tim. 1:3-7 [:5]; 1:18-20 [:19]
- Titus 1:14-16 [:15]
- “by grace, through faith”
 - Rom. 4:13-16 [:16]
 - Rom. 9:30-33
 - Eph. 2:8 (ff)
- The “faith” part of “by grace, through faith” is further developed back in Rom. 6 and that issue of “*reckoning*” ...
 - Rom. 6:8-14 [:11]
- Everything about Justification is accomplished “by grace, through faith” — and everything about Sanctification is accomplished “by grace, through faith”! [which most Christians never get straight! ... because most of what ‘Cultural Christianity’ and ‘Denominational Christianity’ largely operates by the issue of: **‘Saved by grace; live by the Law’!**]
- And keeping all things in Justification **and in Sanctification** on the basis of “by grace, through faith” is **why** you were taught what you were back in Romans 5 about the POWER OF GRACE!

- (Note to self): at this point we went back and reviewed Romans 5:20-21—
[pages 316-331 Romans 5 notes]

- (once again) - You deploy godly Equity in the weaker brother situation: 1) By **judging** so as to not *put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall* in the weaker brother's way.

2) By honoring & respecting the Edification Principle to: *Let the weaker brother be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

- Godly Edification is a part of your Sanctified position “in Christ” — and godly Edification (sonship Edification/Education) is totally produced ‘**by grace through faith.**’

- Simply put:

Justification is produced & accomplished ‘**by grace through faith**’;

Sanctification is produced & accomplished ‘**by grace through faith**’ [at the exact same time];

and godly Edification is produced & accomplished ‘**by grace through faith**’ [throughout your lifetime]!

- and the properly educated “son” of God will always jealously guard & protect (with godly jealousy) the issue of the *weaker* brother's own godly Edification getting itself produced & accomplished ‘**by grace through faith**’ at all cost! ... even if it costs you your LIBERTY (sonship liberty)!

- You (as a *strong* one in the faith) know some things about how the Edification Process works (how it gets produced & accomplished) ... and you know something about the *mind* and the *conscience* ... you know how easy it is to usurp the Edification Process [i.e., to “shanghai” it—to induce or compel someone to do something by fraud or by force]; and how easy it is to violate ‘by grace through faith’ and therefore violate the Principle of (:5) *Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*

- You know that the **conscience** acts as a ‘safeguard’ against a person (especially the *weaker* bro) making a decision without having knowledge & information to the point where he has become *fully persuaded in his own mind* ...

... and therefore you know that because of the way in which the **conscience** operates—a person **can** make a decision AGAINST the **conscience** ...

... You know that it's quite possible (and quite easy) to get “the cart before the horse” — that is, to make a decision **BEFORE** there's any knowledge or information in it!

- And when a person does make a decision AGAINST the **conscience**, the **conscience** becomes bothered, troubled, and disturbed—an emotional reaction takes place indicating that a decision is attempting to be made **without** the *mind* being *fully persuaded* by some information it has acquired.

- Therefore you should know by now that the proper process that the **conscience** is designed to take is:

<p><u>KNOWLEDGE</u> — (grace provided information from the written word of God & the ministry of the Spirit of God writing it upon the fleshy tables of the heart)</p>	<p>— <u>EVALUATE</u> — (as a result of responding positively to the word of God by faith)</p>	<p>— <u>DECIDE</u> (deploy the doctrine in the details of your life)</p>
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BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH!

- (now it is ‘acceptable’ in God’s sight! ... anything else constitutes **legalism** and is UN-acceptable in God’s sight!)

- And the beauty of a **godly conscience** is that it acts as a protection and safeguard against anything that is NOT **by grace, through faith!**

- (that’s how the *weaker* brother gets from [:14b] to Paul’s position in [:14a]!)

- by the way—by the very word “**weak**” and the very **context** of ch.14 — the expectation is that the *weak* in the faith will NOT remain that way!!!

- in other words—you're NOT supposed to get the idea that a person can believe and operate upon whatever he want to—and it's fine with God! ... NO! WRONG! **THAT'S AN ABUSE OF THIS PASSAGE!**

- The expectation is that the *weaker* bro. **is** going to CHANGE HIS POSITION—but he'll do it **by grace through faith**—by the Edification Process Principle of: *being fully persuaded in his own mind!*

ROMANS 14:15

15 But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.

- Here we have (grammatically) —

- 2 complete sentences.
- 2 “Steps” (if you will) to each sentence.

- Sentence 1: (Step 1) ***But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat,***
(Step 2) ***now walkest thou not charitably.***

- Sentence 2: (Step 1) ***Destroy not him with thy meat,***
(Step 2) ***for whom Christ died.***

- In the 1st sentence you have the **general** or **common result** of a son's inconsistent Conduct & Behavior toward the *weaker* brother.

- “general” or “common” in the sense that it widely covers the entire gamut (or the complete range or extent) of what occurs or happens to the *weaker* brother when a son abuses his Sonship Liberty in his presence.

- In other words— “**meat**” is the example used here; but if you were to take *meat* out of the picture, you could ‘fill-in-the-blank with a whole bunch of other things that you as a *strong* son in the faith have the liberty to do — but the point is, the resulting **grief** would be the same! (& ‘Step 2’ would be the same!) [*now walkest thou not charitably.*]

- (which is in perfect keeping with Sonship Education—by having the Father’s “heart” on the general matter, you can [and you’re expected to] utilize it in a whole bunch of ways that you have to figure out on your own) - [not a ‘case-book’]

- And there are 2 things that are **negative and detrimental** mentioned here:

- 1 thing that happens to the *weaker* brother—he becomes ***grieved***,

- 1 thing that happens to you (the *stronger* bro) - you do not ***walk charitably***.

- In the 2nd sentence you have a Fatherly command (or exhortation; or directive, or instruction) to His son.

- And there are 2 things that are expected to make a **DEEP IMPACT** upon you in the way in which you are to Conduct and Behave yourself in the *weaker* brother situation:

- the 1st thing is: **you can end up DESTROYING** the *weaker* brother! (is he *destroyed* physically?, emotionally? materially? or what ???);

- the 2nd thing is that the **death** (or Cross-work) of the Lord Jesus Christ is directly involved in this!

- And the issue is that you are to go away from (:15) **deeply and suitably IMPRESSED by these 2 things in (:15b)!**

- So let’s look at the details of the 1st phrase of the 1st sentence of (:15) — and let’s see the kind of negative & detrimental impact that a son’s inconsistent Conduct & Behavior towards the *weaker* brother will have upon him. [inconsistent with godly Equity]

... and remember that this negative & detrimental impact is all in the context of the Edification Process—when the *strong* one in the faith FAILS to deploy the godly Thinking of Equity—and disregards the Principle of “By grace, through faith” — and puts a *stumblingblock or an occasion to fall* in the *weaker* brother’s way—and not allowing him *to be fully persuaded in his own mind*. [**not allowing him to walk as a son**]

- 15 *But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat,*

- “*But if*” - You may understand and appreciate (just like Paul does) that “***there is nothing unclean of itself***” — that is, you may understand and appreciate that you have all the Sonship Liberty in the world to do what you do (to Conduct & Behave yourself as you are doing) — and that there is absolutely no violation to the sound doctrine contained in the Edification Process or the Edification Curriculum for a “son” in this dispensation of grace in which we live (Rom-Phlm) ...

... and in this case, *meat* is just *meat*—there is no such thing as “*clean*” or “*unclean*” *meat* in this disp. of grace!

- **However!** since the *weaker* bro. *esteems* that *meat to be unclean*, and therefore, *to him it is unclean*—then when you eat that *meat* in his presence, **he becomes GRIEVED with your eating that *meat* in his sight!**

- The point is—there is a matter that has presented itself whereby the *weaker* bro. is simply not far along enough in the Edification Process for God’s word (the Curriculum for his sonship edification & education) to have presented the corrective, sound doctrine to him (and give him the proper **information** he needs to operate upon as a “son” in this Disp. of Grace) - and for him to then respond positively & properly to it—and then to **evaluate** that *meat* in light of the corrective sound doctrine—and finally **decide** to make a godly change in his thinking and in his C & B! [all on his own ... without you giving him an order/telling him what to do!]

- **This constitutes putting a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in your brother’s way!**

- “*if*” - 1st class condition—that is, this is the TRUTH and this is the absolute REALITY of what happens **whenever** (and **every time**) you *put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in your brother’s way* — in fact, it can be *meat*, or it can be a whole bunch of other things! (alcohol is a big one—but you’ll have to figure that out on your own)!

- “*But if*” tells you that **every time** you *put a stumblingblock in your brother’s way* (and **what ever that stmbck is [meat, alcohol]** - the *weaker* bro. is going to be **GRIEVED!** (not, “maybe he will/won’t” ... **HE WILL** [1st Cl. Cond.]

- 15 *But if thy brother be **grieved** with thy meat,*
- “***grieved***” - (past tense of *grieve*) - (a form or variation of *grief*)
 - My understanding is that *grief* is directly tied to the **conscience**—at least, it is in this context!
 - If you’re said to be *grieved*, then you’re experiencing *grief* ... so What is *grief*?
 - (Running through the OED, 1828, Crabb’s & Smith’s) *Grief* can mean a whole bunch of things ...
 - heavy / press down / weight / burden
 - sorrow
 - pain (of the mind) / mental distress / mental trouble
 - injury of any kind
 - suffering
 - wounded feelings
 - offended
 - affliction
 - displeasure
 - provoked
 - *Grief* is different from *sorrow* in that *grief* comes from **without** (it’s caused by someone or something on the outside) — however, *sorrow* comes from within.
 - (see **Pro. 17:25**)
 - (this is good) — *Grief* calls love and compassion into action!
- Ok—that ‘describes’ and ‘defines’ what *grief* is—but that really doesn’t answer the question of WHY does God have the apostle Paul use that word here? in the context of the *weaker* bro. situation? in the context of the Edification Process??
 - Why is *grief* the most excellent term to use when a *weaker* brother has had a *stumblingblock* put in his way?
 - (outside of the ASV, all other modern English Trns. have: ‘distressed’ / ‘hurt’ / ‘injured’)

- Note the 1st use of *grief* (or any of its forms/variants) ...

... 1st use ("*grieved*") - **Gen. 6**

- (see Gen. 6:1-6)

- What does God associate His *grief* with???

- A: (:5) - **EVIL !!**

- From the perspective of the one who is being *grieved*—from his perspective, someone has been EVIL to him! or done some EVIL to him!

- At it's core or radical root—*grief* conveys the idea that some evil has been done to a person!

- And this is a major issue to a "son" - it's a major issue in godly Sonship Edification (in the Edification Process)!!

- (see **Rom. 12:9-10** 2nd Component: Wisdom)*

* (see **Godly Love & Charity book—Keith Blades pg. 100**)

- So *grieved* (or *grief*) is the most excellent of all words to use here **because the Sonship Edification Process is in view**—and the word *grieved* accomplishes 2 major things (which any other word would not do):

1) It properly describes the condition that takes place in the conscience of the *weaker* brother who has had a *stumblingblock* put in his way of godly Edification ...

2) At the same exact time it directs the attention of the *stronger* brother to where the Father wants it: which is for the *stronger* brother to give his attention to the basic & fundamental issue that will keep him from ever putting that *stumblingblock* in his brother's way in the first place: **Godly Love!** (which is, at its core, SELFLESS & KIND!) - and it is a horror; it is an abomination; it is **ABHORRENT** to do **EVIL** to any member of the body, especially the *weaker* bro!

- Now let's look at the 2nd phrase of the 1st sentence of (:15) — and let's see the kind of negative & detrimental impact that a son's inconsistent, ungodly Conduct & Behavior towards the *weaker* bro. will have **upon HIMSELF!**

- i.e., when he fails to deploy the godly Thinking of Equity and puts a *stumblingblock* in the *weaker* bro's way.

- **15 ... now walkest thou not charitably.**

- Your *walk* = your Conduct & Behavior as a "son"!

- "**charitably**" = Charity + able + ly (like) - [not] having the ability or capacity to be 'charity-like' in your sonship Conduct & Behavior.

- This is bringing **disgrace & dishonor & disrespect** to YOU as a "son" - and worse, to your Father (who you are supposed to be "like") and His Son (who you are supposed to be "*conformed*" to)! — **this is SHAMEFUL conduct & behavior to a "son"!** Why? because it is harmful and destructive to the BODY!

- (see definition of Charity—pgs. 1-4)

- Keep Thing In Memory.

- Tested! a test reinforces what has been learned—it also exposes any deficiencies or lack of learning as well.

- 1 Cor. 15:1-2

- (also) 1 Tim. 4:6; 2 Tim. 2:14

- We're going to do 3 things:

1. Remind ourselves of the Major Features of Godly Love & Charity so far—(6 Features).

2. Remind ourselves of the Body-Attributes for us as being ***one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.*** (Rom. 12:5)

3. Remind ourselves of the 'Mechanics' of keeping things in memory as a part of our sonship responsibility.

- Now we come to the final sentence in (:15) — a sentence that encapsulates everything that has been said in the Fatherly exhortations, warnings, and Fatherly guidance in avoiding the Abuse of Sonship Liberty in the *weaker* brother situation.

- The design of the 4 sentences that make up (:13-15) is to act as a kind of **crescendo**—(a gradual increase in the intensity or force of a passage) - that ends up with the most precise, brief, and yet **forceful** statement concerning the **IMPROPER** and **INCONSISTENT** use of godly Equity in a *stronger* son's Conduct & Behavior toward the *weaker* bro.

- And even though all of the previous 3 sentences point out the **seriousness** of the *stumblingblock* — this 4th statement uses the most forceful and compelling language of them all! **to underscore just how serious this is!**

- Even the carefully chosen words (and the order in which they are said) are designed to make this the most powerful & forceful language of all of the 4 sentences ...

... the very 1st word testifies to this: **Destroy!** ... which is a “plosive” in the English language—(a “plosive” is a word that begins with a letter where the air in the lungs is momentarily blocked [by the tongue, for example], building up pressure that when it's released, makes a ‘pop’ or explosion) - [ex. p, t, k, b, d, g] ... i.e., **it “thunders”!**

- And this 1 sentence is designed to make an **indelible** and **impressive impact** that will, (by its effectual work), remain as a **permanent Principle of godly Equity-type Conduct & Behavior in a properly educated son!**

- Because this disgusting, disgraceful, and ungodly C & B reveals at least 2 things about a son who is guilty of *putting a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way*:

- 1) He is NOT *walking charitably*—he does NOT have godly Love & Charity operating within him as he ought;
- 2) He does NOT value & esteem sonship as he ought! (he doesn't value & esteem the Edification Process!)

... and to these 2 we can add a 3rd:

3) He does NOT understand and appreciate the very Cross-work of the Lord Jesus Christ as he ought to!!!

- What good is a “son” if he is going to **destroy** his Father’s work? (how can he be trusted with laboring together with the Father in His business in the *creature*?)

- this is the ‘**proving**’ issue of sonship education & sonship edification—*proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God* — “*proving*” that your *mind has been renewed* — “*proving*” that you have been *transformed* ... **OR NOT!!!**

- (:15b) ... ***Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.***

- “*Destroy not him*” - the word “destroy” has a whole bunch of meanings & definitions—it’s a very common word and very much still in use today—(it can mean: *to demolish; to ruin; to annihilate; to lay waste; to make desolate; to kill, to slay; to take away; to cause to cease; to put to an end; to devour; to consume; etc.*) ...

... and it can be used in a whole bunch of different contexts—but there is a reason why this is most excellent to use in the specific context of Romans 14:15.

- And in (:15) we’re talking about *destroying* a “**him**” - and the “*him*” is the *weaker* brother—but the context isn’t talking about *destroying* him in the sense of his physical life—(killing him, or slaying him, or annihilating him, or anything like that).

- And yet, the word *destroy* is a very powerful and intense word—so in what way can we *destroy* the *weaker* bro.? ... and how can we *destroy* him with “*meat*”???

- “***Destroy***” (L. prefix *de* = down; with the sense of the English verbal *un* + L. *struo* = to pile, to build — hence, to **un-build**)

- ***destroy*** is a most excellent word to use in a context like we have here—in which the major issue is **edification** ! (a spiritual building!) - we can **un-build** the **building**!

- You can *destroy* a *weaker* brother in his own godly sonship edification! Why?/How?

- Because by *putting a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall* in his way—you end up violating the major Principle of godly edification of “By Grace, Through Faith” — and you become the cause of the *weaker* brother no longer walking as a “son” under his Father’s authority — and you end up becoming his ‘tutor & governor’ - which puts him (and you) into LEGALISM!

- And legalism DESTROYS the sonship edification process! (it ‘un-builds’ his spiritual building!)

- “*Destroy not him (the weaker bro.) with thy meat,*”

- “*meat*” - that’s the *stumblingblock* you’ve put in your brother’s way!

- *meat* is the use of your Sonship Liberty! - you know that there is no such thing as *unclean meat* in this disp. of grace (according to Pauline doctrine) - but the point is, the *weaker* brother DOESN’T KNOW THAT YET!

- So therefore, this phrase is talking about the ABUSE of your Sonship Liberty—and the Fatherly prohibition is to **NOT abuse your Sonship Liberty ...**

... rather, you are to do the godly thing: and the godly thing is to RESTRICT your Sonship Liberty ... or to put it another way, you SACRIFICE your Sonship Liberty for the sake of another member of the body! (that’s the *expedient* thing to do!)

- And when you do, then you are operating upon genuine godly Love & Charity—especially that 6th Major Feature: Willing & Glad Self-Sacrifice! [*a living sacrifice*]

(surrendering something valued or desired for the sake of something having a higher or more pressing claim—sacrificing something so others can partake of it ... that’s **godly fellowship & godly communion!**) (& that impresses the angels!)

- And the truth of the matter is: **“Destroying him”** (the *weaker* bro.) is the **OPPOSITE OF EQUITY!**

- In the case/context of the *weaker* bro. situation—godly Equity demands that the only thing to do that is consistent with godly Love & Charity is to **give up of yourself** (of your own Sonship Liberty) because you value & esteem the *weaker* bro. more than you do yourself.

- **“Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died.”**

- **“for whom Christ died”**

— this is talking about the Lord Jesus Christ dying for the *weaker* brother ...

... but this is NOT talking about Christ dying for his JUSTIFICATION! ...

... this is talking about Christ dying for his SANCTIFICATION ... and more specifically, for his **SONSHIP! (Gal. 4:5)**

- This is pointing out that Christ (because of His own godly Love & Charity) **DIED** on the cross for yours and for the *weaker* brother’s SONSHIP status & Sonship Edification!

- And if you value & esteem sonship as Christ does—then you ought to give up of yourself (sacrifice your own sonship liberty) for the benefit of the *weaker* bro. so as to NOT **destroy** his sonship walk!

- and when you do—then it can be said of you by the Father, ‘Now, son, now you’re walking charitably!’

... moving on

- The entire portion of Ch. 14 that runs from (:13-23) deals with deploying the **godly Thinking of Equity** into **godly C & B** in the *weaker* brother situation in order to avoid the Abuse of Sonship Liberty ...

... which has the potential to *put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in the weaker brother’s way*—and end up causing 2 matters of **destruction** to the Edification Process:

- 1) Destroying the godly edification of the **individual** *weaker* bro.;
- 2) Destroying the edificational work of God in the **local assembly**.

- And the ***destruction*** that will result from the lack of godly Equity will manifest itself in the form of: **carnality, envying, strife, debates, wraths, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults, murmurings, railings, envy, evil surmisings, contentions, division, and schisms.**

- And that will end up **destroying the fellowship, communion, and concord of the local assembly!**

- And that will end up **destroying the IMPRESSIVE IMPACT that God has designed it** (the local assembly's godly edification) **to make upon the heavenly realm and the angels that reside in that heavenly realm!**

- In other words—(and even though you may not know all about it in all of its details yet) — you will end up **destroying a critical and vital Operation of God [an Operation of God's business]!** (and really, plural Operations of God)!

- And so, (:13-18) address the issue of godly Equity being deployed in proper sonship Conduct & Behavior in the matter of the individual weaker brother and his godly edification process ...

... and (:19-23) address the issue of godly Equity being deployed in proper sonship Conduct & Behavior in the matter of the body of Christ or the local assembly as a whole and its godly edification process.

- And in each of those 2 matters—God has the apostle Paul address Conduct & Behavior that would be **Inconsistent** with the godly Thinking of Equity—followed by Conduct & Behavior that would be **Consistent** with the godly Thinking of Equity.

- And so, we have covered the C & B that would be **Inconsistent** with the godly Thinking of Equity in the matter of our dealing with the individual weaker bro. and his individual godly edification (in [:13-15]) ...

... and now we're going to take up the matter of godly sonship C & B that would be **Consistent** with the godly Thinking of Equity in dealing with the individual weaker bro. and his individual godly edification. (and that's what we find in [:16-18]).

- **ROMANS 14:16** - *Let not then your good be evil spoken of:*

- Notice that we have 2 complete sentences in these 3 verses.

- (:16 & :17) form 1 complete sentence;

- (:18) is 1 complete sentence.

- (:16) ends in a colon (:) - and while there is a hard ‘pause’ that is supposed to be taken there in order to ensure that you have the full, effectual working of what is said there ...

... the thought of (:16) is designed to be directly attached to what is said in (:17).

- And we have (once again) one of those instances where by means of the STYLE of the English Language, the statement that is said in (:16) [and the colon at the end of it] comes along and **prompts** you to ask, WHY?

16 Let not then your good be evil spoken of: ... WHY?

17 For (a “for” of reason—like saying, ‘And here’s the reason for ‘not letting your good be evil spoken of’) the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

- “*Let not then ...*”

- (we’ve seen many of these “*Let*” phrases) - again, the use of this terminology calls upon you to take some particular **action** (godly C & B) - but to do so based upon some previous information...

... it’s your Father’s exhortation to take what’s in our mind as the godly Thinking and put it into practice in our godly C & B.

- So based upon the effectual working of (:1-12) - and in the context of godly Equity being deployed in the *weaker* bro. situation ... (and in the context of the Edification Process of that *weaker* brother) ...

- “*Let not then your good be evil spoken of:*”

- “***your good***” (what is “*your good*”?) - well, because the word *good* is extremely general, you could go off in a whole bunch of different directions and say it’s talking about a whole bunch of different - things—but the context won’t allow that !

- This is a case where you have a **very general term** — but a **very specific context!** And the context corrals your thinking — or reigns in any attempt to apply the term in a whole bunch of ways, to ONE specific way ...

- in other words—the **context** will tell you **exactly** what “*your good*” is that can “*be evil spoken of*”!

- And the **context** is dealing w/ the Abuse of your Sonship Liberty!

- and while “*your good*” could refer to your Christian faith in general; or your position “in Christ” in general; or your “sonship life” in general; or “the gospel of Christ” in general; or a whole bunch of other things ... in which lifting this phrase out of its context, has some form of application or another—which is true (or has some truth to it) ...

... the **context** allows you to be able to identify what “*your good*” is, and ‘put your finger on it’!

- “*your good*” = your SONSHIP LIBERTY!

- Your point of view—your understanding & appreciation of being *not under the law, but under grace*; of the great dispensational change that God has brought in ... and what Sonship Liberty is all about may be right—it may be “**good**” ... but that’s NOT the issue! ...

... the issue is that you don’t demand that on a *weaker* brother who hasn’t got to the same point of godly sonship edification that you have!

- “*be evil spoken of*” (*evil spoken* = blasphemed)

- The issue is to never allow your Sonship Liberty to be *evil spoken of* by a *weaker* brother in the faith!

- This is NOT that no one will every say anything bad about you ... because they will! (Acts 22:22; 1 Cor. 4:12-13)

[1 Cor. 12:13—*defamed* = blasphemeo]

... but **you** didn’t give them reason—the reason is their negative response to God’s word!

- but keeping to the **context**—the issue here is that, based upon the godly Thinking; **you are to NEVER allow your Sonship Liberty to be so abused in the sight of a weaker brother where he would *speak evil* of Sonship Liberty!**

- (it's the very Liberty he, himself has—he just doesn't know about it yet!)

- The **horror** of this is seen when you understand and appreciate that if a *weaker* bro. *speaks evil of your good* (your Sonship Liberty) - then what you have is one member of the body blaspheming another member of the same body!

... which is making a mockery of, and bringing a stinging reproach upon the very body of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself! (an insult; a shame; a disgrace)
[it ruins your "*conversation*"!]

... this makes the "body of Christ" a monstrosity!
[a monster; a freak]

- "***Let not then your good*** (Sonship Liberty) ***be evil spoken of:***"
- (by the way, notice the issue is ***speaking! evil speaking!*** ... this is the beginning of your awareness of a *conversation* taking place concerning you and your sanctified, sonship life; and concerning your communion & fellowship in the sight of men and angels!)

- This is one of those 'Sonship Sayings' [see chart]

- And the Main Operating Principles are actually given to you in (:17) and (:18) - [there are 2 of them]

- **ROMANS 14:17** - ***For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.***

- The "***For***" is a "for" of reason (so to speak) - Why should we *let not our good* (our Sonship Liberty) *be evil spoken of?* ... Well, "***FOR***" this reason ...

- And the reason is: because of ***the kingdom of God!*** and this is a fascinating statement—because our Father is having us link up (or make a connection) between what we are doing with other members of the body (& members of the loc. assem.) with ***the kingdom of God!***

- But first let's get an understanding & appreciation for Paul's use of "*the kingdom of God*".

- This is the 1st (and only) time the word *kingdom* is used in the book of Romans.

- And this expression often throws folks who *rightly divide the word of truth* for a 'loop' — because it's commonly thought that the expression *kingdom of God* is something that's only used in connection with God's program with Israel.

- However—truth is, Paul uses this expression (or something similar to it) 14x in his epistles!

- Paul's use of "kingdom":

- *kingdom of God* (9x)
- *kingdom of Christ* (1x)
- *kingdom of his dear Son* (1x)
- *his kingdom and glory* (1x)
- *his kingdom* (1x)
- *his heavenly kingdom* (1x)

- Most often—(and what is commonly thought of) is that the expression *kingdom of God* (or *kingdom of heaven*) is referring to what God said in the 4 gospels—which is that it's talking about God's kingdom that He will set up and establish here on this earth with the nation of Israel.

... but that **can't** be what Paul is talking about here!

- Neither is this talking about the *kingdom of God* in general (or in a generic way) - in which you would say that it's just referring to any and all justified people in general, whether they're in God's program w/ Israel, or with us as the body of Christ in the Disp. of Grace.

- Rather, when Paul talks about the *kingdom of God*—he talks about it on the basis of what our Romans sonship establishment **does** for us when we get our dispensational bearings, and our dispensational orientation established by the doctrine that Romans sets forth for us to do that very thing — (especially in Ch. 9, 10, & 11).

- And when Paul gives us our dispensational understanding & dispensational orientation in Romans 9, 10 & 11 — we're supposed to understand that, in connection with the 'revelation of the mystery of Christ', that there is FAR MORE TO THE KINGDOM OF GOD that's going to be established through His Son (the Lord Jesus Christ) THAN WHAT WAS PROPHETICALLY DECLARED IN CONNECTION WITH IT!

- In other words—the whole issue of the *creature being delivered from its bondage of corruption*, and us being the “sons of God” though whom that deliverance is going to take place—provides for us to understand that the *kingdom of God* (in connection now with the revelation of the *creature's deliverance*) has now made the *kingdom of God* to be a **far bigger** thing than it was previously known to have been!

- Therefore, in those 14x when God has the apostle Paul talk about the *kingdom of God* (or the *kingdom* in some other expression) — it's to be understood that the *kingdom of God* is being talked about as to what has now been made known in connection with what God is doing in connection with His Son 'kingdom-wise' (so to speak) ...

... and what He's now doing through His Son 'kingdom-wise' is that He's providing for an aspect of His kingdom-reign that **had not** been spoken about, and made known about in the past!

- And the issue now is—the *kingdom of God* now includes His **heavenly kingdom!** ...

... not a kingdom FROM heaven that comes down to this earth—(which is still going to be the case when God resumes & fulfills His prog. w/ Isr.) — but the Lord Jesus Christ is also going to establish His own kingdom IN the heavens itself!

- and that's what's going to provide for the *creature's* deliverance.

- And in the passages that God has Paul deal with the *kingdom of God* issue—the surrounding context is dealing with the **heavenly aspect** of it!

- (and you can see that when you closely examine the context of those passages).

- And especially from Rom. 9, 10, & 11—that dispensational orientation is carried on throughout the book of Romans—so that when you come to it for the first time here in Ch. 14, you know about that dispensational change that has taken place; and you already know about the program God is involved in today (that is distinct & different from His prog. w/ Isr.) by the effectual working of that doctrine.

- You know that we're **not** involved in God establishing His kingdom on this earth; but rather, we're involved with God establishing His kingdom in the heavenly places!

- Therefore, Paul using the expression *the kingdom of God* is a very legitimate use of that expression in talking about the establishment of God's kingdom in the heavenly places.

- And what people don't realize, very often, is the fact that the issue of 'inheritance' that's spelled out in "the gospel of Christ" - having those 2 alternatives: 1) they're either going to inherit the kingdom of God; or 2) they're going to inherit God's wrath ...

... well, in view of what God is doing now—(the fact that He's calling out of the **Gentiles** a people for His name) — the issue is that, the inheritance of the kingdom of God that is his if he believes the "gospel of Christ" is the inheritance in His heavenly kingdom! — because that's what He's calling out the Gentiles for!

... He's not calling out at this time a people for His name to replace Israel! ... He's calling them out for a brand new and different purpose!

- And if the doctrine contained in Rom. 9, 10, & 11 has done its effectual job—then when you, for the first time, encounter this expression in Rom. 14:17, you already know that you're NOT talking about God's kingdom here on this earth, but His kingdom in the heavenly places.

- By the way—the expression *kingdom of God* and/or *the kingdom of heaven* being something that God is going to establish on this earth (as talked about in the gospel accounts) really gets established back in the book of Daniel —

And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: ... (Dan. 2:44)

- and that allows for God to call it both “*the kingdom of heaven*” and “*the kingdom of God*” just as He does in the gospel accounts!

- Now—coming back to our Rom. 14:17 passage—the real IMPACT of this—and the really fascinating and marvelous thing about it is:

this is being said in the context of **our godly sonship conduct & behavior WITHIN THE LOCAL CHURCH (IN THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY)! —**

... that is, our godly conduct & behavior based upon the godly Thinking of Equity in (:1-12) — our living out our sonship life IN THE LOCAL ASSEMBLY as a “body” **is directly linked & connected with *the kingdom of God* — i.e., with the heavenly places!**

- This is PROOF that the local church really is a kind of “simulator” of the *creature* itself! (*the kingdom of God*)

- Paul doesn't say—*Let not your good be evil spoken of: For God's church is not meat and drink—or For the kingdom of God on this earth is not meat and drink—or For your spiritual life on earth is not meat and drink—or For God's kingdom within your heart is not meat and drink— or anything along those lines!!!!*

- So we have: (sonship saying) - 16 *Let not then your good (sonship liberty) be evil spoken of: (Why?)*
17 *For the kingdom of God* (that God has now revealed through the *mystery* by the apostle Paul to be far more than God ever spoke about in the past on the earth—but now to include the heavenly places) ...

- “For the kingdom of God *is not meat and drink;*”

- First of all—you need to recognize that you’re being taught some things here in a very simple and very brief & concise way that have great & powerful & mighty and life-changing issues in connection with what your Father is teaching you now for future glorious and God-honoring Operations in *the life which is to come* !

- Where your sanctification is concerned—where all that God has made you to be “in Christ” sanctification-wise is concerned—and where your life as an adult, adopted “son” of God is concerned ...

... the ‘curtain’ is being drawn back for you to get the ‘eyes of your understanding’ open to some things about God’s plan, purpose, and will for you when you get ‘placed’ as His “sons” out in the *creature* (the heavenly places) and operate out there; and labor with God in all He will do in that realm!

- In other words, there is far more going on here than the Father merely telling you that *the kingdom of God* (the heavenly realm in which you will function as a member of the *new creature* of the church, the body of Christ) isn’t primarily concerned with physical carnal things; but with spiritual things! (true as that is)

- You are being given your ‘formative’ education as a “son” into matters that are going to be built upon in Level II Sonship Edification; and will be matters in Level III Sonship Edification; and will end up being Major Issues in your function in the realm of the heavenly places! (i.e., “*the kingdom of God*”)

- Let’s recognize the truth / reality of this by running some verses:

- see Paul’s use of the word “*kingdom*” (list of verses)

- “*meat*” - 1 Cor. 6:3
 - 1 Cor. 8:8
 - Col. 2:16
 - 1 Tim. 4:3
 - (even 4:8)

- see 1 Thes. 4:1-12

- What I want to do now—is to just underscore the Major Issue that this is—this proper, godly sonship BODY Conduct & BODY Behavior in view of *the kingdom of God* (the *creature*) - and how deeply it should matter to you that you get the most out of the ‘vocational training’ you are supposed to get from the effectual working of God’s written word, and properly putting it into practice in the local assembly ‘simulator’ in which you gather ...

... how that in something that is seemingly so ‘small’ as *meat and drink* and your consistent or inconsistent conduct & behavior with it in the local assembly in general and with the *weaker* brother, specifically ... **IN THE SIGHT GOD YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER is of an enormous and exceedingly great scope! ... and that the “fellowship” and “communion” of the body of Christ is of such an enormous magnitude in nature!** (for the *deliverance of the creature from its bondage of corruption* and for the successful implementation of YOU, as *the new creature* of the body of Christ in those heavenly places of *the kingdom of God*)!

- And just to illustrate and underscore that—I want to once again look ahead to the example of the Corinthians who had FAILED to get this proper edification here in Romans 14—and see how God has the apostle Paul give them the proper *doctrine, reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness*.

- 1 Corinthians 6

- (the context of the passage):

- From back in Ch. 5, Paul has had the sad task of having to deal with the ways in which the Corinthians were either 1) **abusing** their sanctification “in Christ” - especially in the issue of not being under the law, but under grace; or 2) their **abuse** of their liberty as “sons”, and their failure to properly make use of their sonship liberty when it comes to making the kind of wise and sound godly decisions that God desires us to make as we live as His responsible adult “sons”.

- In Ch. 5 Paul deals with their flagrant abuse of the issue of their sanctification ...

... and in the first part of Ch. 6 Paul deals with how they were foolishly failing to make proper use of their sonship liberty—especially failing to exercise the skills of wise sonship decision-making that they were supposed to have already acquired.

- And then after Paul initially deals with these 2 examples of their ungodly sonship living—(and after he gives them sufficient godly reproof and correction to at least put a stop to their ungodliness from continuing on) — beginning in (:12) of Ch. 6, God has Paul return to the general subject of how we as wise “sons” ought to be possessing our bodies in sanctification and honor.

- And in doing this God has Paul set forth some further specific instruction and counsel to us on the kind of godly thinking that we should have regarding our bodies—so that instead of us living in conformity to this ungodly world’s *lust of concupiscence* (1 Thes. 4:5) we can have the kind of godly sanctified behavior in our bodies that God has purposed for us to have.

- So as Paul starts focusing upon the issue of us wisely possessing our bodies in sanctification and in godly honor, he begins in (:12) by stating the **fundamental principle** that we as wise “sons” should operate upon, and which should govern all of our sonship decision-making.

*1 Cor. 6:12 — All things are lawful unto (or available) me, but all things are not expedient: — (all things are NOT beneficial or helpful to the Edification Process of either ourselves or others in the body—in fact, some things will do just the opposite: impede or obstruct our progress or their progress)
all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.*

- This is the fundamental Principle that should govern all of our sonship decision-making because this fundamental Principle is built upon godly Love & Charity (and the doctrine of Equity in Romans 14).

- All things truly are both *lawful unto us* and *lawful for us* as “sons” — but in accordance with our sonship ‘godly edifying’ we are given to know that not all things are *expedient* for us (or for others), and we are given to learn that we do not want ourselves or others to be *brought under the power* of some carnal pursuit or endeavor because it will actually work **against** a person being *conformed to the image of Christ*.

- Therefore if we are wise and intelligent “sons” we should always opt for that which is *expedient* to us, and also we should wisely be on guard so as to avoid being cleverly deceived or seduced into being *brought under the power* of any wasteful carnal or worldly pursuit or endeavor.

- Now in (:13) Paul goes on to cite a worldly and carnal adage about ‘natural law’ and ‘natural rights’ that unfortunately the Corinthians were foolishly operating upon instead of their godly sonship operating Principle of (:12)—and which was causing them to be easily seduced by *the lust of concupiscence*.

1 Cor. 6:13 — Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: ...

- This is an actual worldly and carnal **adage** of that time (and still has its existence today) — it’s an adage about what might be called a person’s ‘natural law’ and ‘natural rights’ ...

... and this adage is saying in essence that ‘since man has natural bodily appetites for things like food—and since he has the natural right and expectation to satisfy that appetite as he so chooses, so also does he have the natural right and expectation to satisfy other bodily appetites like that of sex.’

- And although this may be how the world reasons and what it professes—this is NOT godly Thinking! ... and it is NOT what we are taught to think from our sonship education!

... which is why Paul goes on to say ...

.... (:13 cont.) ... *but God shall destroy both it and them.*

- This is exactly what we are given to learn and understand about our present body’s natural appetites and the provisions for them — they will be *destroyed* !

- And this will happen when we receive the fulness of our sanctification (which will include the redemption of our bodies) ...

... God is going to *destroy* both the carnal appetites **and** the provisions for them—**and with that being the case, we should live in our bodies right now consistent with this knowledge and with this reality!**

- Also—since *God shall destroy both it and them* — this tells us that this world’s adage about us having the natural right to go about satisfying our body’s appetites is **completely ungodly**—and therefore it is NOT what we should be operating upon at all!

- Instead, when it comes to the issue of our natural bodily appetites (like sex—and like many other things), we are to operate upon God’s viewpoint—and we are to make wise sonship decisions based upon what our Father teaches us to understand and appreciate about our present bodies in connection with Him having sanctified us “in Christ”.

- And with this being so—Paul goes on in the remainder of (:13) and in (:14) to underscore what it is that we should understand ...

1 Cor. 6:13c-14 - Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord for the body.

14 And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by his own power.

- This is the point: **In view of our sanctification, (and especially in view of us being members of the BODY of Christ), our bodies are for the Lord’s use!**

- In connection with godliness, our bodies are for Him to live His life through!

- That is, the Lord has designed to live IN us and to USE our present bodies as vessels for the outworking of His LIFE!

- And one of the things God did in raising up the Lord from the dead is to make it so that He could do this!

- And He is going to raise up us as well when He redeems our bodies so that the Lord can CONTINUE to do this in our glorified bodies! (out in the creature)

- Again—this is the basic understanding & appreciation that we should have for our present bodies—this is the basic godly Thinking about them that should govern how we **possess our bodies** right now so that we **possess them in sanctification and in honor**—and **not** after the pattern of this ungodly world with its *lust of concupiscence!*

- So—after setting this forth—Paul goes on in (:15) where he not only makes sure that we clearly understand exactly what he just said—but he also makes sure that we clearly realize exactly what fornication *IS* for us in view of who we are “in Christ” ...

1 Cor. 6:15 *Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid.*

- This is exactly what *fornication is* for us—because since our bodies are *the members of Christ*, this means that if we commit fornication, we are making the members of Christ the members of an harlot!

- And if by some chance we don't realize that this is the TRUTH—(or if we somehow think that this is either preposterous or an exaggeration of the truth) - Paul goes on to say in (:16) ...

1 Cor. 6:16 *What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.*

- The point being, therefore, that **it is True!** - it's neither preposterous nor an exaggeration that if we commit fornication we make the members of Christ the members of an harlot!

- And even the very thought of this ought to be repulsive to us (which is why Paul says), **God forbid** ...

... and the thought of this SHOULD repulse us because of what Paul goes on to say in (:17)

1 Cor. 6:17 *But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.*

- As members of the body of Christ being *joined unto the Lord*, we are *one spirit* in/with Him! — and by being *one spirit* with the Lord we should now be **thinking** about such things as fornication just like He things about it!

- That is, we should be thinking it to be the very same repulsive, ungodly thing that He thinks it to be in view of our body being *for the Lord; and the Lord for the body!*

- So in view of knowing what such things as fornication is for us—we ought to ‘avoid it like the plague’ instead of being seduced into it by worldly thinking like *meats for the belly, and the belly for meats*.

- So by means of the effectual working of the truth about our bodies, and the truth about what fornication is for us—we ought to **possess our bodies in sanctification and godly honor!**

- therefore, Paul says in the beginning of (:18) ...

1 Cor. 6:18 Flee fornication.

- and we should *flee* it—and (along with the Corinthians), we should no more be deceived by, or seduced by, this world’s *meats for the belly, and the belly for meats* ungodly operating principle (or adage)!

- And to make sure that we are even **more** repulsed by it, Paul goes on in the rest of (:18) to explain that if we commit fornication, we also **sin against our own bodies!**

(:18 cont.) Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.

- And this, too, is true—if we commit fornication, we actually do *sin against our own bodies* ...

... and just to make sure that we clearly recognize the truth of this and understand it properly, Paul goes on in (:19) and the beginning of (:20) to say ...

*1 Cor. 6:19, 20a What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?
For ye are bought with a price:*

- (that’s **Redemption!**)

- And since we *are not our own*, but God Himself has *bought us with a price*—(and in so doing, He has made our bodies *the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in us*) - then this means that if we commit fornication we indeed do *sin against our own bodies*, since our bodies are **His** and they are **His temple** (building)!

- So, (on the one hand), we ought to be repulsed all the more by fornication, and *flee* from it all the more ...

... but, (on the other hand), and at the exact same time, (by means of this very teaching) — we ought to be suitably **IMPRESSED** all the more with the issue of **possession our bodies in sanctification and godly honor** to the Glory of God in the midst of this ungodly world with all of its ungodly adages and operating principles!

- And according to this, Paul concludes in (:20) ...

1 Cor. 6:20b ... therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

- And this is exactly what we should be doing, if we are the wise & intelligent “sons” that God has designed us to be!

- so we have; **16 Let not then** (based upon the previous information of godly Equitable Thinking in :1-12 and the Inconsistent Conduct & Behavior regarding that in :13-15) **your good** (your Sonship Liberty—especially the liberty to eat meat) **be evil spoken of:** (why?)
17 For the kingdom of God (which, due to the revelation of the mystery through the apostle Paul now includes the heavenly places in which we will operate as members of the body of Christ) **is not meat and drink; ...**

- The focus and context of the passage has to do with **godly edification**; with the **edification process**; with our being **edified as “sons”**; and with our **operation as godly edified “sons” in the heavenly realm!**

- And in view of that particular **context**—the issue of *the kingdom of God is not meat and drink* is NOT saying that there will be no ‘meat and drink’ in the heavenly realm—it’s not saying that we will never eat anything or drink anything in that realm—nor is it saying that eating and drinking is forbidden in the heavenly places — or that they have no place in that realm—or anything along those lines.

- Rather, the issue that is in the **context** of the passage—(which is godly sonship edification) — and reason for bringing up the issue of *the kingdom of God*—(which is the realm of the heavenly places in which we will be operating in as “sons”) is to underscore the fact that such EXTERNAL and PHYSICAL elements such as what a person **eats** and what a person **drinks** HAS NO BEARING UPON HOW YOU STAND (edification-wise) IN GOD’S SIGHT AND IN THE OPERATIONS OF GOD IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES!

- To put it the way Paul does in 1 Cor. 8:8 - ***But meat commendeth us not to God: for neither, if we eat, are we the better, neither, if we eat not, are we the worse.***

- Godly edification is about spiritual ‘fitness’ - it’s all about what is going on in your INNER MAN!

- The things that go on in our ‘outer man’ are merely the out-workings of what’s going on in our ‘inner man’!

- And, once again, if you get ‘the cart before the horse’ here, you end up in LEGALISM (& not “by grace, through faith”!)

- The issue is—what you *eat* and *drink* are NOT proper or appropriate Conduct & Behavior ‘indicators’ of true, genuine, proper, godly Edification that will have direct meaning and usefulness in the Operations of God in the heavenly realm.

- **“BUT”** - (the very strong adversative conjunction—meaning, standing in stark contrast to, and directly opposite of *meat and drink*—**here is what *the kingdom of God* is in truth! here is what matters in the Operations of God in that realm; and here is the appropriate, proper, and godly C & B that comes from the godly Thinking acquired by the “son” in the Edification Process**) ...

- That is, in direct contrast to the ‘outer-man’ C & B that comes from something OTHER than godly Edification which is ‘in faith’ (Paul’s epistles) - and which, therefore, has no bearing upon our spiritual FITNESS to conduct & behave ourselves in the heavenly places to our Father’s pleasure ...

... what follows now is a listing of some of the things that DO matter to *the kingdom of God* in the heavenly realm, and our **spiritual fitness** to function in it!

... righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

- First of all—notice that there are 3 things listed or mentioned here:

- 1) *righteousness,*
- 2) *and peace,*
- 3) *and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

- Also notice: all 3 of these things are **both** ‘inner man’ issues— they are matters of what goes on in the ‘inner man’ (in the human spirit and in the soul of a person) — and they are also the out-working of the ‘inner man’ into some godly sonship Conduct & Behavior!

- Also notice: while these 3 things can be talked about in terms of the wisdom of this world—these 3 things are actually the product of true, genuine, and godly Edification! — these are what the Edification Process produces (what godly sonship edification produces) — and the resulting godly sonship conduct & behavior!

- So, therefore, these 3 things are 'listed' here as things that are CONSISTENT CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR to the godly Thinking of Equity contained in (:1-12)! ... and are CONSISTENT EQUITABLE CONDUCT & BEHAVIOR with what our fitting function in *the kingdom of God* will be!

- and indeed, they are ...

- Now—turning our attention to the list of these 3 things ...

- First of all—my understanding is that this is NOT a complete listing of all the possible things that can ever be said regarding what *the kingdom of God* **IS** ...

... the “*kingdom of God*” is massive—and the things that make it up and that will go on there [conduct & behavior-wise] is, (in my understanding), much more than 3 things ...

- So the question is: Why are just these 3 things listed; and why are they in that order?

- Perhaps they are 3 very general, generic, basic, and fundamental categories of what *the kingdom of God* is ... and perhaps they are ... (they could be) ... but I think there's far more to them than that ...

- Are they in answer to the *meat and drink* issue? (odd that *meat and drink* are 2 things, and here we have a list of 3 things—so that really doesn't match up very well).

- My understanding is that these 3 things actually **answer** to 3 things that have already been confronted in our passage! (They actually 'connect' to 3 issues that have already been addressed in this Godly Living portion of receiving the instruction of Equity).

- So—in order to get to the answer for why these 3, and why in this order—you have to start by thinking about this being the CONSISTENT C & B **as opposed to the** INCONSISTENT C & B that was just previously dealt with!

(dealt with in :13-15)!

- In Rom. 14:13-15, we dealt with the **Inconsistent** C & B of the *stronger* brother ‘in the faith’ toward the *weaker* brother—that is, the ABUSE of the *stronger* brother's Sonship Liberty in the presence of *him that is weak in the faith*.

- And in (:13-15) you were directly confronted with **3 things** — with 3 detrimental, Inconsistent, ungodly matters that have a direct, negative and destructive Impact upon the *weaker* brother ...

... (you can discount all of [:14] because nothing is mentioned there as having a direct, negative and destructive impact upon the *weaker* brother) ...

- So—if you just look at (:13) and (:15) ... do you see the 3 things that are mentioned that directly have a negative & destructive impact upon the *weaker* brother? ...

1) (:13) Let us not therefore judge one another any more: ...

- And as you know this is not talking about any and all ‘judging’ ... rather, it’s talking about UNRIGHTEOUS judging!

- and that matches up with (and is the direct opposite of) the Consistent C & B of sonship Equity, which is: **RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

2) (13) ... that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way.

- And as you know, this is not talking about physical pain & suffering ... rather, it’s talking *stumbling & falling* edification-wise ... which will result in what (:1) said: *doubtful disputations*—that is, disputing, DISCORD, hostilities, quarrels, strife, divisions and the like—in other words, **THE ABSENCE OF PEACE**.

- **Peace** is the Consistent C & B that is the direct opposite of the Inconsistent C & B of *putting a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in your brother's way*.

3) (:15) *But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat ...*

- And as you know—the conscience of the *weaker* bro. becomes **harmed** by the Abuse of the *stronger* brother's Sonship Liberty because the *weaker* bro. has NOT become *fully persuaded in his own mind* by the curriculum for his sonship edification as contained in Romans-Philemon ...

... by bending to your demand, he has violated the Edification Principle of “by grace through faith” which results in his being *GRIEVED*.

- And *grief* is the direct opposite of **JOY** ...

... being the producer of *grief* in a *weaker* bro. by one who is *strong* in the faith is Inconsistent C & B on the part of the *strong* brother ...

... but the exact opposite of that is to be a *helper of their joy* — a *helper of* the weaker brother's *joy* by means of the Consistent C & B of the *strong* one in the faith.

- And it's “*joy in the Holy Ghost*” - (not the ‘Holy Spirit’) because it's **not** a ministry of the 3rd Member of the Godhead in view here; but rather, it's the actual **Person** of the 3rd Member of the Godhead in view.

- And that's because the 3rd Member of the Godhead is the One who is in charge of sanctification and edification ...

... and He is now *dwelling* in the conscience of that *weaker* brother for the purpose of DOING something with him edification-wise—He's *dwelling* in him to produce the same thing He's *dwelling* in you to produce: **the image of God's Son (the Lord Jesus Christ)**!

- That's why you're told in 1 Cor. 6:19 *What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*

- **ROMANS 14:18** - *For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

- “*For*” = further explanation & further amplification of (:16 & :17).

- And it’s interesting that this verse even exists—because you could come along and think that you could just skip it altogether—and go from (:17) directly to (:19) ...

... and that alone tells you something—it tells you that your Father not only expects what He says in (:17 & :17) to matter greatly to you; and expects (:16 & :17) to make a great impact upon you ... but it also tells you that by what God says in (:16 & :17) alone IS NOT SUFFICIENT ENOUGH for the full, effectual working of His instruction of godly Equitable **conduct & behavior** that He has given you so far, to do its effectual job!

- In other words—you NEED what is said in (:18) or else you will end up with a **weakness** in your own godly Equitable C & B that can (and will) be exploited by the adversary—and he’ll get a ‘foot-hold’ by which the Edification Process in the *weaker* brother will get DESTROYED!

- So the truth is—while what is said in (:17, especially) matters greatly; and should make an impressive & lasting impact upon you ... it’s really (:18) that is designed to make the **greatest** and **most powerful** and **impressive impact** upon you of all! [it’s the ‘kicker’ of it all]

- It’s one thing to do something because you’re told to do it (like in [:16 read]) ... but it’s another thing to know WHY you’re doing it! ... and you HAVE to know why!!! ... it’s the “WHY” that produces the godly understanding & appreciation! (the “why” produces God’s **heart** on the matter)

- “*he that in these things*”

- “*he*” = generally, all believers—however the context is more specifically addressing the *strong* ones in the faith! (i.e., those who are more advanced [edification-wise], and who have their sonship status and sonship liberty properly working within them by the effectual working of Rom 1-13).

- “*that in these things*” - (what “*things*”?) = the “things” (generally) are the “things” of godly Equity that allow for the Sonship Edification Process to take place in the *weaker* bro.

- More specifically, they are the “things” mentioned back up in (:17) that make it so that *your good* (your sonship Liberty) is not *evil spoken of*— they are the “things” that, because of their effectual work within you— “things” such as:

- 1) *the kingdom of God* (heavenly places)
- 2) the attributes of *the kingdom of God* being *righteousness*
- 3) *and peace*
- 4) *and joy in the Holy Ghost*.

... and those “things” that make is to that your godly desire is to Self-Sacrifice (godly Love & Char.) and to Self-Restrict your sonship Liberty for the sake of, and for the benefit of the godly edification of the *weaker* brother!

- And while there are only a very few *things* mentioned in (:17) - the truth is, those few *things* account for a massive amount of sound, Pauline doctrine!

- (and, sadly, those *things* are NOT properly understood or appreciated by nearly ALL members of the body of Christ today!)

- More often than not—when the majority of Christians today think about Self-Sacrifice, they most commonly think in terms of sacrificing either money, or time, or talents.

Money—to fund more and more church programs / building projects—or to give to the poor and needy’s physical needs (food, clothing, rebuilding houses, etc.);

Time—nursery attendant, Sunday-school teacher, choir member, trustee, bake sale, church yard sale, church bazaar, etc.

Talent—special music, painting, cleaning & fixing up the church building, maintenance of the church bus, building the props for worship service, etc.

... **but what do these have to do with the Edification Process???**

- Rarely—(and almost non-existent) in the thinking of most Christians today is the greatest and most godly aspect of Self-Sacrifice: **Willingly & Gladly sacrificing & restricting their own Sonship Liberty for the sake of the godly edification of others (of the weaker brother)!**

- **These are the “things” of REAL, TRUE, AND GENUINE “Christian Service” ... or, as will be said next: he that “SERVETH CHRIST”!**

- 18 For he (a properly educated and properly edified “son” of God) *that in these things serveth Christ ...*

- “serveth Christ” - whatever you sacrifice for the issue of godly edification is real, true, genuine Christian service!

- When you determine to willingly & gladly restrict your own sonship Liberty for the sake of the Edification Process taking place in another—that’s real, true, genuine Christian service! (beneficial for training in the creature [heavenly vocational training] & rewardable at the judgment seat of Christ!)

- And why does it say “serveth Christ”? ... why doesn’t it say, [‘For he that in these things serveth the weaker brother (or another)’?]

A: Because BODY thinking is the ‘order of the day’; it’s the **preeminent** issue! (as well as BODY living & BODY labor)!

- **“service”** is a BODY ATTRIBUTE you learned about back in Romans 12:3-8! [Useful/Cooperate/Serve/Welfare]

- This isn’t the issue of helping out an individual person so that you feel good about it (and imagine God feels good about YOU) ... rather, this is a BODY issue—this is about the welfare of the Body of Christ (of which the *weaker* bro. belongs, and of which YOU belong)!

- In other words— ‘serving Christ’ in (:18) benefits YOU as well as other members of the BODY!

- And that’s exactly what (:18) is: it’s a setting forth of the **benefits** of your godly C & B of Sonship Equity—and it does just what you’ve learned such a benefit does—and those benefits are spelled out in the remainder of (:18) ...

- 18 *For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

- (does that sound familiar? ... it should) - this is very similar to a passage we looked at a long time ago—one that describes some particular **benefits** to your Positive & Proper response to the sonship doctrine given to you by your Father.

- But first—notice when a member of the Body of Christ properly and appropriately *serves* other members of the Body (according to godly sonship edification in this dispensation of grace)—where the *kingdom of God* [the realm of the heavenly places in which you are going to be operating in / and according to the *righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* that will characterize that realm when godly, edified “sons” are placed in it] ... when that’s what’s being done as one who is *servng* the body of *Christ* ...

... there is a BENEFIT that you get as a “son” - a GRACE benefit ...

... which is: you stand as one who is *acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

- “*acceptable*” = something that may or can be accepted; something that can be gladly received or received with pleasure; well-pleasing.

(this is one of the greatest joys of a “son” - to please his Father—to be well-pleasing in His sight)

- But to translate it ‘well-pleasing to God’ isn’t the best translation—because if it is translated that way, you are going to lose the ‘trigger’ that is supposed to take your mind back to something important—[*acceptable* is a ‘trigger’ word; ‘well-pleasing’ is NOT!]

- So where does your mind go back to when you see that word *acceptable*? (Rom. 12:1-2)

- Used in both Rom. 12:1 and 12:2—and while the use of *acceptable* in (:1) has some great connections to make—my understanding is that it’s the use of *acceptable* in (:2) that is supposed to be ‘triggered’ in your mind here ... and that’s because in Rom. 12:2, you have a list of 3 things that focus upon the 3 Aspects of Godliness:

- (see Rom. 12:2)

- First and foremost, it's that *good will of God*—and that focuses upon the effects of my education upon my thinking!

- *proving what is that good will of God* is that I know for sure how I'm supposed to think about this situation—this opportunity—this circumstance — this is the *good* thinking, the *good* way to view this; it's not defective, it's not corrupt by man's wisdom or thinking; it's not selfish—or whatever—it's *good* thinking—it's sound.

- Next: *and acceptable* = not only does it mean, that which may be received with pleasure; agreeable or pleasing; - but as Webster in his 1828 Dictionary defines it: **as a man makes himself acceptable by his services or civilities.**

- *acceptable*—focuses upon the ability that we're going to gain in our education as sons that will determine the *acceptable* way of manifesting that *good* thinking **in the conduct and behavior of our lives**.

- This focuses upon our **actions**—the way we live!

- So then we have: *and perfect*, - (and notice by way of the English Grammar—the commas make it so that we're not talking about 2 things [i.e., *good* and *acceptable*] that describe the *perfect will of God*, but that we're definitely talking about 3 things—all 3 of which are describing the *will of God*—and the last one is *perfect*.

- *perfect* = finished; complete; wanting nothing—as a perfect likeness or a perfect work.

- That *perfect will of God* is the ability to take that new *good* thinking and that *acceptable* behavior—and incorporate them into an aspect of God's business.

- So by Rom. 14:18 telling us that the benefit that accrues to you when you *serveth Christ in these things* is that you are *acceptable to God*—that takes your mind back to Rom. 12:2 and perfectly matches it up with the *acceptable will of God* which is the **2nd Aspect of Godliness: Living like God does (godly Conduct & Behavior)** - which just happens to be the very issue we're dealing with here in Rom. 14:18—**Godly Living of Sonship Equity!**

- and this functions as a kind of system where you as a “son” can **‘check’** yourself and see if things are going well in your sonship education/edification ... or NOT!

- So: *18 For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God*—[i.e., you have the assurance that you are actually *proving* the *acceptable will of God* in your C&B as your Father’s “son” utilizing godly Love & Charity and godly Equity in your dealings with the *weaker* bro., who is another member of the Body of Christ].

- What an incredible skill-set! (and you should see why it’s a skill **SET**—because it takes a whole SET of specialized skills to do this as **well-pleasing** in God’s sight!

- So the stated benefit here in (:18) is 2-fold:

1) *acceptable to God*

- Now we have the last phrase: 2) **and approved of men.**

- (should we care if we’re ‘approved of men’?) - YES!

- **“approved”** = the prefix *ap* comes from the L. prefix *ad* = to [the *d* changes to a *p* when it comes before a word that starts with a *p*]

+ L. *probare* = test, try, prove

Hence = **to** test, **to** try, **to** prove; **to** esteem as GOOD or SOUND!

OED = to show to be true, proven, demonstrated; to display, exhibit, make proof of.

- Notice that this is NOT the issue of being LIKED by men—in fact, in most cases you’ll be hated, despised, and ridiculed by men.

- The issue isn’t one of men liking you—the issue with the word *approved* is the issue that your ACTIONS (godly Living) will be seen by men to be consistent with your THINKING (godly Thinking) — which sets before men a particular testimony & makes a particular **impact** upon men that God wants made (liked or disliked; loved or hated) — because of such things as Rom. 12:17; 2 Cor. 8:20-21 (see).

[R E A D]

- (Now—coming back to what I said about this being something that sound familiar—something we looked at a long time ago that describes some particular **benefits** to your Positive & Proper response to your sonship education) ...

- (see Pro. 3:4)

- And then we have the BENEFIT that goes with the Proper Response —
- Proverbs 3:4—*So* (why should you do what [:3] says?) *shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*

- The common denominator to both of these added benefits to the Positive & Proper Response is so that you as a son can GO ON to the next Component or the next Form of Doctrine.

- And this particular benefit of (:4) is found and stated in almost this exact same way over in Romans 14:18—*For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.*

- If you respond Positively & Properly to the doctrine of your sonship education—then you’re going to *find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man*—now that doesn’t mean that everyone is going to “like” you—but it means that you’ve done the **right thing** in the sight of men—you’ve functioned as a “son of God” emulating your Father, precisely how you’re supposed to—and whether or not they “like” you or don’t “like” you—that Positive & Proper response to your sonship education has done to them, and produced in their sight what that doctrine is designed to do—it’s made the proper and appropriate IMPACT upon them that it’s deigned to make.

- (Especially in the sight of both God and other “men” who are fellow believers/Christians who are part of the body of Christ, but who may not be responding to their sonship education.)

- In other words—that doctrine has been put to use and put into practice PROPERLY!

- Next—we have (:19) which provides for a conclusion to the matter of our Consistent godly C & B in view of the godly Thinking of (:1-12) and how the sonship decision-making skill of Equity is Deployed in order to Avoid the Abuse of Sonship Liberty toward the individual *weaker* brother and his edificational destruction.

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

- “*Let us ...*” - Once again (as we’ve seen many times now) the use of this “let” terminology calls upon you to take some particular **action** (some godly C & B) - but to do so **based upon some previous information**.

- “*therefore*” - placed in the 3rd word-position indicating that the force of intensity and emphasis is **very high**—it’s a technique of the English language to call your attention to something of **great importance!**

- And this ‘*therefore*’ allows for you to know exactly what the ‘previous information’ is that you are being exhorted to act upon in your godly C&B ...

... this ‘*therefore*’ is a conclusion—a conclusion to what was just previously said in (:16, 17, & 18) ...

... it’s a conclusion to the body of information dealing with the Deployment of godly Equity in order to Avoid the Abuse of Sonship Liberty that would end up destroying the edification process in the *weaker* brother.

- With the Sonship Saying Principle of (:16) [*Let not then your good (liberty) be evil spoken of:*] ...

... and in view of *the kingdom of God* (and it being the object of your sonship training in these godly decision-making skills and the use of godly Love & Charity) ...

... in view of *the kingdom of God* being *not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* ...

... with that being the case, and in view of the effectual working of these things— the “*therefore*” conclusion on the matter is this: the only godly thing to do that is consistent with your sonship education/edification and your instruction of Godly L&C is to: ***follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.***

- **“follow after”** - this is a phrase or expression of logic ...

... such as:

‘In view of X the logical thing that **follows** is Y .’

- But this is an expression of Godly Logic—or of that which is **consistent** with godliness (or with godly edification as a “son” of God) ...

... such as:

‘In view of Rom. 14:16-18; the only thing to do (conduct and behavior-wise) is to *follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

- **“follow after”** = to strive to reach or gain—to pursue a particular course of action—which for us in our sanctified sonship education is the issue of our **walk** as “sons”.

- **“follow after”** is going to describe what our godly C&B should consist of as “sons” who have properly received our instruction of Equity.

- Now it’s interesting how this is worded — *Let us therefore follow after* — it doesn’t say, ‘Let us therefore DO things which make for peace, etc.’ ... or, ‘Let us therefore ALWAYS DO things which make for peace, etc.’ ... or, ‘No matter what and WITHOUT EXCEPTION, do ONLY those things which make for peace, etc.’ ...

... in other words, it’s my understanding is that this use of **“follow after”** is NOT being used as a hard, firm, without-exception, no-matter-what, iron-clad rule or commandment.

- And that’s not to minimize the issue that when it comes to the issue of the *weaker* brother situation (and his own godly, sonship edification), **the proper C&B of a “son” who has received his instruction of Equity is to follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.**

... that’s the godly C&B of Equity—and in view of all the godly Thinking portion of (:1-12); and in view of the preceding godly Living portion of (:13-18); and especially in view of (:16-18), this IS the godly & proper course of action!

- However! Is this telling us that there is absolutely no reason whatsoever that we should “follow” a different course of action other than “peace”? ... are there any situations outside of the *weaker* brother situation where a course of action would be anything other than “peace”? ... (IF you define “peace” the way the ungodly world does: CO-EXIST) ...

... in other words—are we supposed to act like the current public school system and just allow rudeness, malice, suspicion, and ungodly behavior to go unchecked? ... and to deal with it by ignoring it? or coddling it? or by peace-type psychology?

- Remember that the Corinthians “Lord’s table” had become more like a bunch of children in a school cafeteria!

- If that’s the case—really, that is an example of “***not discerning the Lord’s body***”!

- God has Norms & Standards that are to be followed with respect to the body of Christ and the local assembly—and those norms & standards are found in His word—(especially Paul’s epistles) — and there is a godly manner in which they are to be carried out.

- Now I want to be careful here: we Do, and we MUST always *follow after the things which make for peace*—but that does NOT mean that we are to turn a ‘blind eye’ to divisions, strife, discord, and the like, and just fold our hands and peacefully sit by doing nothing about it! (hoping it goes away)

- (1 Cor. 5) - Truth is, when edificational estate difference exist—and when we don’t see ‘eye-to-eye’, we need to understand the **nature** of those differences (*discerning the Lord’s body*) and recognize that God’s word calls for different courses of action depending upon what those differences are ...

... But we **are** to move forward in **peace** and in godly L&C according to what God’s word says and what God’s norms and standards are as found in His word!

- (read :1-5) - [:5]

- So the truth is—**Yes**, we should always *follow after the things which make for peace* — it’s just that doing so (or ‘maintaining the peace’) may call for some ‘harsh’ measures in order to maintain it (depending upon what the situation or circumstances are).

- **That’s the significance of that word “things” (the THINGS which make for peace) — and those “things” are not spelled out for you here—you’ve got to use some godly judgment and make some godly sonship decisions all on your own in order to ‘put your finger on’ what those “things” are!**

- **And whatever they are—they are things that are going to keep, maintain, or restore the peaceful communion & fellowship between you and the weaker brother—as well as the assembly as a whole!**

- And the issue is—this takes some real, godly judgment—the problem is NOT that problems exist in the local assembly; the problem is saints who are not properly prepared to handle and resolve the problems in a godly manner!

- 2 Cor. 13:11
- Eph. 4:3
- Col 3:15
- 1 Thes. 5:13

- The truth of this is borne out in the expression, *follow after the things which MAKE for peace* — (that little word “**make**”) ...

- “*make*” = (OED, “make for”) = to tend to the advancement or progress of something or someone!

- and “*the things which make for peace*” are going to be things that “advance the progress” of the godly edification of that weaker brother— “things” that are consistent with, and in keeping with the **Edification Process!**

- 19 *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace,*

- “*peace*” = (can be used in a whole bunch of different ways) ...

- **“peace”** - OED (n.) 3b = basically, the freedom from war or hostile conditions; free from disturbance, a quiet, tranquil, undisturbed state ...

... and in keeping with our context of the use of godly Equity in the *weaker* bro. situation where the Edification Process is concerned = free from quarrels, dissension, *disputations* and divisions—a state of concord, fellowship, and communion!

- *‘following after the things which make for peace’ in this context* is talking about YOU as an intelligently educated “son” (with the decision-making skill of Equity and all that goes along with it [i.e., godly L&C]) conducting & behaving yourself (and eventually Laboring with God) in God’s ‘house-maintenance/keeping’ business!

- It’s NOT like some dumb ‘peace-protester’! rather, it’s more like a **‘peace-officer’** - i.e., one of the major jobs of godly Equity is to maintain the “peace” in the local assembly!

... to maintain the peaceful Edification Process for the *weaker* brother; and to maintain the peaceful Edification Process for the entire assembly ...

... to maintain godly, peaceful fellowship and communion!

- The Edification Process is a LEARNING process; it’s an EDUCATION process ...

... (it’s NOT the issue of getting saved, and then God or the Holy Ghost will just “speak” to you in some ‘still small voice’ - or will give you an ‘unction’ - or give you a ‘sign’ as to what you should do or what God’s will is ... WHY? ... because all those things are things that are APART from actually using God’s written word! - they’re apart from the effectual working of God’s word [godly edification]!)

... and since the Edification Process is a process of godly Education and learning—the truth is, **it is impossible to learn and be educated properly in an environment other than PEACE!** (you may have wars & divisions in a church, but if you do, there’s one thing for sure: until peace is restored **godly Edification comes to a halt!**)

- This *peace* is Edificational Peace!

- And the truth is—this is a marvelous and fantastic privilege of God’s grace—to be an Edificational Peace Officer! ...

... and it’s an incredible grace-opportunity to get some real training & practice in **producing a godly environment!**
(*CREATURE PRACTICE; CREATURE TRAINING*)

- 19 *Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.*

- The last phrase: “*and things wherewith one may edify another*”

- Review “edify / edification” (#68, 69, 70, 71)

- And as you should know by now—this is NOT talking about you possessing the POWER to edify another—rather, it’s talking about the “***THINGS***” *wherewith one may edify another*” ...

... this is where you get to be a “*helper of their joy*”

... and there are MANY *things* that you should know about wherewith you may participate in the godly edification of another!

... in fact, you should be able to list some of them yourself without my help! ... can you?

[Hint]: it’s not by music; or by church programs; or by nature outings; or by visiting the “holy land”; or by Holy Ghost Crusades; or by being baptized in the Jordan River; or by watching butterflies and sunsets; or by the latest best-selling Christian books; or by touching religious relics (or prayer cloths or anointing oil); etc. etc.

{note: “music” has a legitimate place—but it’s NOT the **cause** of godly edification; it’s a **result** of it! — [see Eph. 5:15-21; Col. 3:12-16] }

- It’s the “***things***” of the Edification Process! (how the Book works; and how to use it!)

- ROMANS 14:20-21

- Godliness (God-like-ness) is the basic & fundamental objective of what God has made us to be “in Christ” sanctification-wise.

[G1/G2/G3]

- Godliness is accomplished by godly edification which is *in faith* (not just ‘any ol’ way’) ...

... *godly edifying which is in faith* is accomplished by our education as adopted adult “sons” ...

... and the “*in faith*” issue of our education and edification as “sons” is that our godly sonship education & edification is accomplished by the effectual working of that portion of God’s written word that is addressed to us, for us, and about us in this present dispensation of the grace of God which is found in Romans through Philemon—in that order and in that sequence) which forms the curriculum for our godly sonship education and edification.

- Due to the fact that God gave the apostle Paul (and only the apostle Paul) *the revelation of the mystery*—we know that, according to that *revelation of the mystery* that we, today, as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ are NOT Israel; not helpers of Israel; not spiritual Israelites; and are not currently involved in God’s program with Israel (having temporarily suspended it) — we are made aware by our apostle Paul that we are part of a brand-new entity that is separate, different, and distinct from Israel called “*the body of Christ*” (Rom. 12:5).

- Therefore, where godly edification is concerned—there are not 1, but 2 matters of godliness that we are concerned with—and by default, there are 2 matters of godly edification that we are concerned with:

- 1) Individual Godly Edification (**Individual Godliness**)
[image: has to do w/ God’s Son]
- 2) The Godly Edification of the Body of Christ as a whole (**Body Godliness**) [image: has to do w/ the Head]

- And each of these 2 matters of Godliness & Edification (or godly edifying) can be *destroyed* by the failure of utilizing, employing, and deploying godly Equity in the *weaker* brother situation in a local assembly!

- The entire section dealing with the godly **Living** deals with deploying godly Equitable Thinking in the *weaker* bro. situation in order to Avoid the Abuse of your Sonship Liberty. (sonship liberty abuse is a very destructive thing in God's sight because of its destructive nature to the Edification Process!)

- Moreover, the deployment of the doctrine of the godly Thinking of Equity into the godly Equitable Living is going to deal with these 2 matters of godly edification. (there are 2 Parts to it)

PART A:

- (:13-19) has dealt with the 1st matter of the individual godly edification of the *weaker* brother.

PART B:

- And now (:20-23) will deal with the 2nd matter of the Edification of the Body of Christ as a whole (or Body Godliness).

- That's not to say that some (if not much) of the information contained in these 4 verses will still be dealing with our C&B towards the individual *weaker* brother (which it does)...

... but that information is "set" in a particular context by the very first sentence in (:20), which pertains to the edification of the body of Christ in the local assembly as a whole.

- The 1st sentence of (:20) 'sets the stage' for the remainder of what is said in (:20) and for (:21, 22, 23) — everything that is said after "*For meat destroy not the work of God.*" pertains to that issue.

- And just as the pattern was in Part A, so it is in Part B — we have presented to us what is the **Inconsistent** thing to do in our C&B in view of Godly Equitable Thinking in the *weaker* bro. situation that would adversely affect the local assembly as a whole and be **destructive** to it's godly edification as a whole — and that's contained in (:20-21).

- Then in (:22-23) we have what is the **Consistent** thing to do in our Equitable C&B in the *weaker* bro. situation that would **benefit** the local assembly as a whole and contribute to it's godly edification as a whole [for it's good] — and that's contained in (:22-23).

- Now—before we deal with the details of (:20-23), I want to address an issue that we need to have firmly and clearly working in our mind (and gripping our mind) as to the nature of how God Himself thinks about and views how godly edification works.

- And that is—godly edification is not simply the matter of academic scholarship—or of what I might call ‘sterile education’, meaning that you learn one thing in, of, and by itself — or what we often times call learning doctrine ‘categorically’ - (which actually ends up being ‘compartmentalized’ learning).

- Sound Bible doctrine is NOT to be taught or learned ‘categorically’ — God didn’t write the Holy Scriptures that way, and He never intended for them to be learned that way.

- Sound Bible doctrine is NOT compartmentalized, rather **it’s supposed to all be INTERFACED** — sound Bible doctrine is put in God’s word in the very order He wants it in, and in the order (**and in the amount**) in which you will be properly edified unto godliness ...

... the doctrine is designed by God to ‘interface’ or join itself to each subsequent doctrine (or form of doctrine) in the very amount of doctrine presented in its sense & sequence.

- Some of that doctrine will be built upon later on in the curriculum—but the important matter is to recognize and to allow the order of the doctrine presented in the order of the arrangement of the books of the Scriptures to do its effectual work in our ‘inner man’ just as God set them, (one ‘form’ after the other) until godly edification is accomplished (or to use the expression, until God ‘makes a man out of you’).

- Now I say all this to address a matter of the nature of how godly edification works (and how God designed it and views it Himself).

- And what I’m after here is that issue of there always being ‘parallel’ issues or ‘parallel’ doctrine that accompanies and assists the main doctrine being learned for godly edification to take place.

- And in all of our instruction of these 4 sonship decision-making skills of Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and Equity—one of the major (if not THE major) parallel doctrine being taught & developed along with all of them is the doctrine of Godly Love & Charity.

- And just as it was with Wisdom, Justice, and Judgment—so it is with godly Equity ... (and so it is will ALL of godly edification and the Edification Process) ...

... godly Edification and godly Love & Charity are taught and developed TOGETHER ... in fact, THEY ARE ALWAYS TOGETHER ... THEY GO TOGETHER AND ARE NEVER TO BE SEPARATED!

... **AND THEY MAKE PROGRESS TOGETHER!**
**** (THEY PROGRESS AS A UNIT!) ****

- by the way—they both have incredible POWER to accomplish GODLINESS!

- In fact, you might say that **godly edification is INSULATED by godly love & charity!**

- And that's just the way it is with our godly Equitable Thinking and Behavior!

- And that's why you repeatedly see in our curriculum the issue of 'spiritual growth' (or godly edification) and godly love & charity being mentioned **together!** (how often *faith and charity* go together; [edification & love/charity go together!])

SAMPLING:

- 1 Cor. 8:1
- 1 Cor. 13:4-7
- 1 Cor. 16:13-14
- 2 Cor. 8:7
- Gal. 5:6, 13-14, 22
- Eph. 3:17-19
- Eph. 4:15-16
- * Phil. 1:9
- Col. 3:14-15
- 1 Thess. 3:6, 12-13
- 1 Thess. 4:9-12
- 2 Thess. 1:3
- 1 Tim. 1:5-7
- 2 Tim. 1:13
- 2 Tim. 2:22
- Titus 2:2
- Titus 3:15
- Phlm. 1:5, 7

(All 12 books following Romans!)

- **ROMANS 14:20** *For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.*

- The 1st sentence ‘sets the stage’ for what is said in the remainder of (:20) as well as all of (:21, 22, & 23)

- “*For meat destroy not the work of God.*”

- “*For meat*”

- “*For*” is being used here in the sense of ‘For the sake of’ or ‘For the cause of...’ — and that issue of a “**cause**” should ‘click’ in the thinking of a properly educated “son”!

- “*meat*” - notice that we are NOT necessarily talking about actual meat-products (steak, pork chops, lamb chops, hamburgers and hotdogs) ...

... remember what the original dilemma with the *weaker* bro. situation was that Paul presented back up in (:2—read) ...

... The issue is that the *strong* one in the faith (knowing and operating upon Pauline doctrine) eats ***ALL things*** (meats, yes, but there were more than just certain meats that were *unclean* under the OT Law [there were “creeping things”!])...

... and the *weak* one in the faith refuses to eat anything other than *herbs*—which means that meat is included in what he won’t eat, but he won’t eat anything else, either! (nothing but *herbs*) ...

- My point here is that when God has the apostle Paul use the word “*meat*” [just as he has done the previous times in (:15 & :17)], the word *meat* is being used in much the same way in which God first used the word *meat* back in [Gen. 1:29 - read] ...

... God’s not telling Adam & the woman that “Every herb is given to you in the place of steak!” — no — He’s telling them that ‘Every herb is given to you for your *meat* or food, or sustenance’ — “*meat*” having the definition of that which supports or sustains life and health. [funny, the word *meat* was used **before** man ever ate ‘meat’ [animals]!

- So the point is—what God has the apostle Paul say in this “semi” ‘stage-setting’ statement in (:20) is primarily directed at **you** who are the *strong* ones in the faith ...

... and not only are you to conduct & behave yourself in the local assembly and in the *weaker* bro. situation so as to **Destroy not him with thy meat (food), for whom Christ died ...**

... that is, by the proper use of godly L&C, conducting yourself as a properly educated “son”, you therefore will conduct yourself toward the *weaker* bro. so that you don’t violate the Edification Process—you don’t become the cause for the weaker bro. to no longer walk as a “son” and end up destroying his godly edification ...

... but rather, you will Gladly & Willingly Sacrifice your own sonship Liberty (you will **restrict** your sonship liberty) for the greater cause of the *weaker* brother’s godly edification.

- In other words, you will (as that ‘Peace Officer’) conduct yourself in a godly manner that will **ensure the Individual Edification** of the *weaker* brother ...

... and not only that—but now, (by the use of godly Wisdom, Justice, Judgment, and especially godly Equity) — with the proper sonship edification you have received up to this point (along with the godly L&C you now have operating within you) - you are now in a position to conduct & behave yourself in a godly manner to see to it that the continued Edification of the **entire body** (in the local assembly) successfully continues on in peaceful fellowship and communion! (by that same Glad & Willing Sacrifice of your own sonship Liberty)!

- “Sacrifice” really does have a quality to it or feature to it that **allows for you (and for others) to go on; to make progress!**

- Body Illustration: When fighting extreme cold, as hypothermia sets in, the body will actually begin ‘sacrificing’ the extremities (arms & legs, nose, ears, etc.) to keep the core of the body warm and functioning—the body will sacrifice itself so that it can GO ON LIVING!

- So we have: **For** (the sake of; cause of) **meat** ...

- That is, “*For*” the sake of something as inconsequential as “*meat*” or FOOD—(or something as unimportant or something that is non-essential for YOU as a *strong* one in the faith to eat whatever you want, whenever you want; even if it produces a *stumblingblock* to the *weaker* brother) ...

- The issue is that *meat* is NOT inconsequential or unimportant or non-essential to that *weaker* bro.—because, to him IT IS! (see :14)

- But to YOU (as a *strong* one), you’re being able to “*eat all things*” is simply a part of your sonship liberty! ... it’s NOT something that is essential to YOUR continued godly sonship edification! ... in fact, it’s something that can actually be **sacrificed** for the benefit of others’ godly edification!

- (At the judgment seat of Christ it might go something like this: The Lord says to you, “Ok, for the cause of you having the liberty to eat any food you want, and because you refused to give it up for a *weaker* brother’s edification—you would rather put a *stumblingblock* in his way and see him (and My work) **destroyed** than simply make a change to your diet? You **destroyed** My work for nothing more than a food preference?)

20 *For meat destroy not the work of God.*

- “**Destroy**” (L. prefix *de* = down; with the sense of the English verbal *un* + L. *struo* = to pile, to build — hence, to **un-build**)

- **destroy** is a most excellent word to use in a context like we have here—in which the major issue is **edification** ! (a spiritual building!) - we can **un-build** the **building**!

- And unlike (:15) where the Edificational destruction was in connection with the **individual** *weaker* brother—(15 *Destroy not him*) - the Edificational destruction in view here in (:20) is **the work of God**. — and my understanding is that this is NOT talking about individual godliness/edification, but **body** godliness/edification.

- My thinking behind this is that if individual godliness/edification is in view here in (:20), then this is simply a repetition of what was said back up in (:15) — and since the information contained in the book of Romans doesn't make simple repetitions like this, it seems to me that this is NOT what's going on here.

- Also, there have been 4 verses of information given between (:15) and (:20) — and in that body of information the issue of *the kingdom of God* has been brought into the picture—which is the issue of that realm of *the kingdom of God* that we now know (due to the revelation of the *mystery*) to include the heavenly places (which is the realm in which we will be operating as members of the “new creature” of the church the body of Christ).

- So while it is true that godly Edification and the Edification Process is still in view—my understanding is that we're no longer talking about the individual edification per se, but rather, BODY edification (the edification of the body of Christ as a whole).

- “*For meat destroy not **the work of God.***”

- “**work**” - even the word *work* can mean a structure, a house, a building; and EDIFICE—and when you talk about getting up in the morning and going off to *work*, what is it that you mean? interestingly, even in the Greek (ἔργον) = **business**, employment, that which one is occupied.

- *for meat destroy not the work of God* (the business of God; what you are employed to do with God in His business) - don't ‘un-build’ God's edification of the BODY!

- The “*work of God*” here is talking about the godly Edification Process of the BODY of Christ—both as a whole, and as it exists as a smaller portion gathered together in the local assembly.

- Now—why is this important? What is going on here with the edification of the Body of Christ? and why is this such a big deal at this point in our sonship education and edification?

- Are we being taught this just so “we can all get along”? (we shouldn’t fight; we shouldn’t be divisive; we shouldn’t be problem creators, we should be problem solvers...)

- all of which is true enough, but the ungodly, unsaved world attempts to do this very thing with the ‘wisdom of this evil world’!

- Doesn’t it seem to you—(just by the sheer volume of the information contained in Equity [30 verses]) that there is something MORE that God is doing here?

... not to mention the issue of the judgment seat of Christ coming up for the very first time ...

- My understanding is: there is! and even though you don’t have to have the information I’m going to talk about—the truth is, some of what I’m about to say should have already begun to ‘dawn’ on you ...

- To address this issue of what MORE is going on here with this Fatherly exhortation “*For meat destroy not the work of God.*” is to look at something we’ve become familiar with at this point.

- And what I’m after is looking at how this fits in to the issue that we’ve come to understand and appreciate about you and I as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ being not only justified in God’s sight, but also being sanctified in God’s sight ...

... and as ones who are sanctified in God’s sight, we have (as we learned back in Rom. 6ff) been baptized or fully identified with Christ by being made to be “in Christ”.

- And as such, we are positionally said to be “in Christ.” And as being members of the body of Christ (Rom. 12:5), we therefore have talked about many times in the past the issue of us being in a **real and true ‘living-union-relationship’** with Christ as members of His body.

- And there is a direct parallel that exists between the ‘living-union-relationship’ of the Body of Christ and the ‘living-union-relationship’ that exists between the individual members of our physical bodies. (Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-27 [body attributes])

- Now—have you ever wondered about how we are joined together as being many members in one body “in Christ”? what’s the **nature** of it?

- Or maybe we can get to it another way—(this may seem to be unrelated, but it isn’t):

- Have you ever thought about being members of the body of Christ in those positions out in the heavenly realm—but IT’S SO BIG — how will we ever see one another? ... how will we ever communicate with one another? ...

... and if we are all the way out there—and the Lord Jesus Christ is physically present here on the earth as King over His Kingdom—then how will we ever see Him? ... and how will we communicate with Him?

- To answer this, I’m going to allow Keith Blades to answer it in one of his email Q & A’s — (20060103 D83 L BC v) [pg. 2-4]

20 *For meat destroy not the work of God.*—that sentence is designed to ‘set-the-stage’ for what follows—it’s designed to be one of those ‘sonship sayings’ - it’s designed to get permanently written upon the fleshy tables of your heart!

- **“All things indeed are pure;”**

- “*All things*” - does that mean any thing? or every thing that there is in this world? ... does that mean we can eat mouse poison and it becomes “pure” in our mouth?

- What are the **All things** here? A: MEAT/FOODS

- In other words, in this dispensation of the grace of God in which we live—being not “under the law, but under grace”
nothing we eat is a violation of the OT Law;
no food is forbidden for us to eat today by the law!
(Lev. 11 does NOT apply to you; to us the body of Christ)!

- the problem is not what you can or can’t eat—the problem is what you can or can’t do that would put a *stumblingblock* in the way / walk of the *weaker* brother!

- “All things indeed are pure; **but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence.**

- This is easy to read (and oftentimes taken) to be talking about the *weaker* brother who is forced to eat something that he believes is *unclean* as it pertains to the OT Law.

- but that’s NOT what this is saying ...

- “*that man*” is NOT the *weaker* brother; it’s the *stronger* brother!

- That is: *but it is evil* (a purely evil thing to do—associated directly with the adversary and his policy of evil!) *for that man* (the *strong* one in the faith) *who eateth* (i.e., eats something that causes a *stumblingblock* to be put in the *weaker* brother’s way) [which is called] *with offence*.

- And the word “*offence*” is the most excellent word here—it’s genius!

- Remember way back in Rom. 5 where we dealt with that word *offence* over and over again (5:15-20) —

- The most common way in which we utilize *offence* is in the context of something PERSONAL - we have been personally offended - it is something that strikes at your heart - and therefore when we talk about someone doing something embarrassing to us or to our ego or esteem, or our feelings, we will often say that “So-and-so really offended me!” by what they either said or did.

- We don’t say, “So-and-so committed a crime against me.”

- No. It’s something you took real personal, and there’s emotion involved, etc. and that’s the MORAL sense or use of the word offence/offend (verb).

- The SECOND most common way in which we utilize the word offence is in its legal sense. *Offence* and *offend* is a LEGAL term.

- And while the personal, moral issue **is valid** here—what this is going after is something found in the more legal sense!

- In other words—you DO cause the *weaker* brother to be personally offended (that's true) - but the thing that should **horrify** you is the result of that—or the position that the *weaker* brother is put in as a result of that ...

- And that is the big issue. By that legal term (*offence*), that is the term that encompasses all that is involved in a legal transgression that produces a particular status in the eyes of the judge or the law or whatever the legal authority is that puts the offender in an ENEMY STATUS with that Authority!

- DEFINITION-wise, an offender or an *offence* in a legal sense is an act or a deed that is a repudiation of authority. And because of that it produces something in the eyes of the authority that has been repudiated.

Q: What is it (most fundamentally) that a legal *offence* produces in the eyes of the authority that it offends?

A: When an *offence* is committed in a legal context, it puts the offender in the status of being AT-ODDS with the authority, or at enmity (an enemy status) with the authority - and that's the thing that makes the authority respond by declaring the offender with the appropriate moniker of unrighteousness. (murderer, blasphemer)

- And the point is—it should be horrifying to you (unthinkable to you) to put the *weaker* brother (a member of YOUR body; the body of Christ; a member of Christ's own body) in an AT-ODDS, **enemy status with YOU!**

- Your own physical body NEVER does that!

- That's not a "body"; that's a grotesque, deformed, MONSTER!

- And that's the 'destructive' force of: *For meat destroy not the work of God* — that's the POWER and MIGHT of (:20)!

ROMANS 14:21

It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.

- Continuing on with what would be ungodly C&B or what would be Inconsistent C&B—(inconsistent with the godly Thinking of your *instruction of Equity*) or UN-Equitable (**inequitable**) behavior toward the *weaker* brother ...

... continuing on with the seriousness of the *stumblingblock!* (and it's *destructive* nature).

- Once again—bear in mind that ‘stage-setting’ statement of the first sentence of (:20) ... ***For meat destroy not the work of God.*** [and what that means!]

- In view of the ‘destructive’ nature of the *stumblingblock* to ***“the work of God”***, the focus of attention in (:20b) was upon what it does to the ***stronger*** brother who becomes the **cause** of the *weaker* bro. *stumbling and falling* ...

... and the result of the *stronger* one in the faith putting that *stumblingblock* in the way of the *weaker* brother—is that it directly and immediately puts the *stronger* brother himself in an **ungodly** position in God's sight (an ungodly and **foolish** “son” in the sight of his Father!) ...

... the *stronger* one in the faith (YOU) - when you put a *stumblingblock* in your *weaker* brother's way—you are doing **EVIL** in God's sight (which is bad enough!) ... but more than that, you are, by ***eating with offence***, you are putting you and another member of your “body” (the body of Christ) in an AT-ODDS status! (an ENEMY status)!

- You're not only doing the bidding of the adversary; **you're doing his work for him!**

- Now in (:21) we're going to see the destructive and Inconsistent C&B of **IN-EQUITY** and the affects it has on the ***weaker member***.

- And keep in mind that the issue that governs our mind and all our thinking here is that ‘stage-setting’ statement of the first sentence of (:20) ...

- so you should run it through your mind again ... *For meat destroy not the work of God* — (for something as non-essential to the Edification Process as food preferences, don't destroy the work of God in the Edification of the body as a whole [the edification of the local assembly]) ...

- And notice: EVERYBODY gets hurt/harmed!

1) You, the strong one in the faith (:20b);

2) The weaker brother (:21)

— all the members of the body get hurt; all of the edification “work of God” in the assembly as a whole suffers harm!

- So looking now at the destruction & harm to the edification process of the weaker brother ... (:21) ...

21 It is good neither to eat flesh,

- And what I'm specifically after here is just those first 4 words: *It is good neither* ...

- In other words, you're being told here by your Father that something is NOT GOOD— 'it is NOT GOOD to _____'

- And that word “good” should (once again) be a ‘trigger’ word—it should hearken you back to some things you've already been taught in your sonship education that, when it ‘clicks’ in your thinking, it should make a deep and impressive IMPACT upon you!

- And this is consistent with how your Father gives you your *instruction of equity*—because equity requires you to make some sonship decisions based upon the information your Father gives you in His *instruction of equity* that is supposed to (and expected to) connect itself with a bunch of information/doctrine you have already learned!

- (like it did in your instruction of *judgment*—the information contained in your instruction of *equity* acts as a kind of ‘catalyst’)

catalyst = [chemistry] a substance that gets added to a reaction—and it enters into the reaction—and works to increase the rate of the chemical reaction.

- (Now, there are a lot of other issues about a catalyst—some of which don't really apply, and where the illustration kind of breaks down—but in general, it is a good illustration.)

- The “catalyst” concept is a good one to think about—because when the *equity* gets added to the *wisdom*, the *justice*, and the *judgment* (with the “*spirit which is of God*” that they’ve produced) — in a sense, the *equity* is going to act like a ‘catalyst’ - and just like a chemical catalyst does, it’s going to facilitate and provide for the previous chemicals or compounds to do something that they could not do before—(even though they were in a reaction already; and even though they were mixed together; and even though certain things **were** going on).

- But as soon as the ‘catalyst’ is added—then all those elements can do **far more** than they could do without that ‘catalyst’!

- And just to carry out the illustration a little further—oftentimes the catalyst is inert (unable to act) in and of itself unless it’s added to a mixture to produce a furtherance in the reaction that’s going on (or to produce a further capacity in the reaction that’s going on).

- Point is—the catalyst (by itself) doesn’t have much of anything that you can do with it. (you can’t do much with Rom. 14:1-15:7 by itself!)

- And just as we’ve noted before—we have a lot of “LET” phrases in this section—and even though we don’t have one here, the truth is, we are given here the same type of things as we had in those “LET” phrases ...

... we are being given here some authoritative commands on certain matters—but they are given in way that is consistent with our sonship status—sonship commands or **sonship directives** — whereby our Father bids us to act in accordance with some clear principles that he has already taught us in our sonship education—

— and in doing so let those principles we have already learned govern our decision-making in light of the further instruction of *equity* we’re being given now.

- And now in the first 4 words of (:21 *It is good neither ...*) — and especially with that word *GOOD*— we have another one of those ‘trigger’ words that acts as that ‘catalyst’ to connect with some information we’ve already learned and by what is said now, we can do FAR MORE with it; and have FAR MORE capacity to make godly sonship decisions than we ever had before!

- *It is good neither* (it’s NOT GOOD) ... that word “good” is a very broad and very general term—but it’s one what we have already encountered—and one that we have already gained a lot of understanding and appreciation of in the context of sonship edification and sonship education!

- In the doctrine of Godly Love & Charity, we have already learned (and reviewed lately) that the 5th Major Feature of Godly L&C is: Benevolent Goodness — (and that has a lot to do with us being that kind of ‘peace-officer’ and as (:19) says, *following after the things which make for peace.* (if you don’t have it, go back and get it!)

- But we’ve also learned a lot about the issue of what is GOOD and what is not (i.e., EVIL) in direct connection with BODY THINKING—with us being *one body in Christ, and every one members one of another ...* (Rom. 12:5)

- What I’m after is that 2nd Major Feature of Godly L&C: “Lovingkindness” in Rom. 12:9 — *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is GOOD.*

- (from our “Godly Love & Charity” book—pg. 100)

When “good” and “evil” are viewed through the eyes of love, they no longer are simply thought of for what they mean by definition. And no longer are they words that provoke little or no emotional response.

But rather when “evil” and “good” are viewed through the eyes of love they are specifically looked upon, (and they are pointedly thought about), **for what they do to those that one loves, and for the kind of impact and consequences that they have upon them.**

So, simply put, when one looks upon “evil” through the eyes of love, and he thinks about it for what it will do to those he loves, he clearly sees that it is something that will actually **hurt and/or harm them.**

Likewise when he looks upon “good” through the eyes of love, and thinks about what it will do to those he loves, he clearly sees that it is something that will genuinely help or profit them, and so actually contribute to their welfare.

Wherefore when “evil” is viewed through the eyes of love it becomes disgusting, and hence something to be loathed and avoided as one deals with those he loves.

While on the other hand “good” becomes precious and delightful when viewed through the eyes of love. Hence it becomes something that one fervently desires to express to his loved ones.

Therefore it is easy to see why “lovingkindness” can be described as **a quality of growing or increasing love involving a strong and compelling disposition to do GOOD to one’s beloved, while at the same time eschewing evil; which therefore makes one delight in being helpful, profitable, and beneficial to the one that he loves.**

- So in (:21—*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth ...*) in view of the BODY THINKING and Godly L&C that has been effectually working within you for such a long time as it has—even though the word “good” here is a very broad & general term, it carries great and mighty weight to a properly educated “son” of God!

- Because a properly educated “son” understands & appreciates what being “*one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*” is all about—and you know that if your Father is giving you a ‘sonship directive’ to act in accordance with some doctrine He has already taught you—then you immediately recognize that when something is said to be NOT GOOD (in connection with the body of Christ and the Edification Process), then it must be EVIL ...

... and more than that, you know what *KIND* of “good” and what *KIND* of “evil” is being dealt with ...

... it’s “good” and “evil” in connection with godly BODY thinking and godly EDIFICATION!

- And “*eating flesh, or drinking wine*” are things you are free to do as a “son” in this disp/grace where *adoption* gives you that **liberty!**

- But a properly educated & edified “son” at this point in his education has not only got a very strong understanding of his sonship Liberty—but he also has his Father’s instruction of *wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity* as well as his Father’s own godly L&C ...

... and with godly *equity* guided by godly L&C—this Fatherly directive of godly C&B toward the *weaker* brother gives a great deal of room (so to speak) for you to make a wide-range of *equitable* sonship decisions **all on your own!**

- You know your Father’s CAUSE here—and you know what the **context** is dealing with—and you have all of Romans 1:1-14:20 behind you (effectually working within you) ...

... and the cause is dear & precious: **“the work of God” ... godly Edification—the edification of the BODY! for the deliverance of the creature from its bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God!**

- So—with all that bearing down upon the context of what is being said here, you should know ...

... ***It is good neither*** (what is about to be said is NOT GOOD — that is, it’s EVIL—in the context of godly sonship edification and godly L&C, the consequences of my C&B toward the *weaker* bro. would be to cause him harm and ruin in his own edification and the edification of the body; but rather, the compelling disposition of a “son” of God is to do GOOD to your beloved WB; to be helpful, profitable and beneficial to that member of the body you love & cherish) ...

... ***to eat flesh*** (the flesh of animals; even animals sacrificed to idols) ***nor to drink wine*** (alcoholic beverage—which had it’s problems with both the Gentiles and the Jews), ***nor any thing*** (well, that’s open-ended! - this is your Father giving honor to your own adult, sonship status—you’re going to have to make a whole bunch of equity-type judgments all on your own! in connection with your sonship Liberty!) ...

... ***whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*** (those 3 terms all have to do with the WB’s edification: the issue that he is not walking as a son any longer!)

- and my understanding is that these 3 terms are listed in the order that they are because they go from ‘mild’ to ‘severe’ ... or maybe better: **‘severe’ to ‘most severe of all’**.

- “... *stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*”

- These 3 words are descriptive terms—that is, they are being used to describe in a progressive manner what happens to a man (a *brother*; a *weaker brother*; a member of the body) when he is treated in a manner as described as not being GOOD.

- And because of their descriptive nature—and because of the way in which they are being used in this context—my understanding is that it would do very little good to do a ‘word-study’ on these terms—and really be of little value to even do extensive work on defining them in a dictionary sense.

- And the reason for that is because—(for one thing; they are very familiar words and you could easily come up with a definition for them) — but more than that, it’s because of the **way** our Father is talking to us in this passage ...

... and as it began with that phrase, *It is good neither ...* the word *good* got us to thinking not so much about what *good* is definition-wise—but rather what such things as *good* and *evil* DO to the ones that we love.

- And such is the same here with these 3 words: *stumbleth, offended, weak ...* it’s not so much what they mean definition-wise; it’s what they DO to a *weaker* brother (another member of the body who should be the object of our godly L&C **unto godly Edification**)!

- So—we know that the context of all 3 words have to do with the WB’s **edification** (and the *destruction* of that edification); and we know that all 3 words are calling our attention to what is DONE to that WB as a result of our ungodly, inequitable Conduct & Behavior.

- So with those 2 things in mind:

1) stumbleth—edification-wise, you cause the WB to violate the Edification Process by violating the principle of “by grace, through faith” - you make it so that the WB is NOT being “*fully persuaded in his own mind*” with the result that he is no longer walking as a “son” under grace but as a child under the Law and you being his ‘tutor & governor’.

2) *offended*—edification-wise, you have forced the WB to violate his own faith/belief which causes harm and injury to his conscience and (to him) falling into **sin**—(again, in violation of the Edification Process)! Furthermore, you put yourself and the WB in an AT-ODDS, ENEMY status which has its own devastating consequences ...

- If someone is *offended*—and if that person now sees the other person to be At-Odds with him ... usually, it doesn't end there ... more often than not, there is one more 'step' to it ...

... if someone comes up to you who has just been sprayed by a skunk—and that *offensive* odor hits your nose (your sense of smell has been *offended*) ... what does that make you DO?

YOU GET AWAY FROM HIM!

... and that's the final, devastating 'step' to the WB being *offended*—what it does is to completely disassociate himself with you! and with the **assembly!** (with the assembly where godly edification is going on!) ... he will **separate** himself from YOU! (division, schism)

- And lest you think that God does not take this seriously, (and seriously in BOTH programs), let's just look at a couple of passages ... [with both, the *stumble* concept and the *offend* concept] ...

- Mal. 2:8 (:1-8)

- Luke 17:1-2

- 1 Cor. 8:13

*** **PRO. 18:19** ***

3) *made weak*—edification-wise, you have generated a type of legalism under your tutorship and governorship that attempts to put the WB under *the spirit of bondage to fear* whereby godly edification as an adult, adopted "son" of God is rendered impossible. By ungodly, inequitable C&B, the WB is made to be operating apart from Pauline doctrine to a degree far greater than ever before—the result being you have by all intents & purposes given the WB right into the hands of the adversary! **You have betrayed him!** [not "loved" him!]

- ROMANS 14:22-23

- As we have noted before— where godly edification is concerned— there are not 1, but 2 matters of **godliness** that we are concerned with—and by default, there are 2 matters of godly **edification** that we are concerned with:

1) **Individual** Godly Edification (**Individual Godliness**)
[image: has to do w/ God's Son]

2) The Godly Edification of the **Body** of Christ as a whole
(**Body Godliness**) [image: has to do w/ the Head]

- And each of these 2 matters of Godliness & Edification (or godly edifying) can be **destroyed** by the **failure** of utilizing, employing, and deploying godly Equity in the *weaker* brother situation in a local assembly! (in other words, by the ABUSE of our Sonship Liberty)!

- The entire section of Rom. 14:13-23 (which is the Aspect of godly **Living**), deals with deploying the godly Equitable **Thinking** (of :1-12) in the *weaker* bro. situation in order to Avoid the Abuse of your Sonship Liberty.

(sonship liberty has the potential of being abused—and the abuse of sonship liberty is a very destructive thing in God's sight because of its potential to destroy the Edification Process in the *weaker* bro., and in the local assembly as a whole.)

- Moreover, the deployment of the doctrine of the godly Thinking of Equity into the godly Equitable Living is going to deal with these 2 matters of godly edification. (there are 2 Parts to it)

PART A:

- (:13-19) has dealt with the 1st matter of the individual godly edification of the *weaker* brother.

PART B:

- And now (:20-23) will deal with the 2nd matter of the Edification of the Body of Christ as a whole (or Body Godliness).

- That's not to say that some (if not much) of the information contained in these 4 verses will still be dealing with our C&B towards the individual *weaker* brother (which it does)...

... but that information is “set” in a particular context by the very first sentence in (:20), which pertains to the edification of the **body of Christ** in the local assembly as a whole.

- The 1st sentence of (:20) ‘sets the stage’ for the remainder of what is said in (:20) and (:21, 22, 23) — everything that is said after “*For meat destroy not the work of God.*” pertains to that issue.

- And just as the pattern was in Part A, so it is in Part B — we have presented to us what is the **Inconsistent** thing to do in our C&B in view of Godly Equitable Thinking in the *weaker* bro. situation that would adversely affect the local assembly as a whole and be **destructive** to it’s godly edification as a whole — and that’s contained in (:20-21).

- Now here in (:22-23) we have what is the **Consistent** thing to do in our Equitable C&B in the *weaker* bro. situation that would **benefit** the local assembly as a whole and contribute to it’s godly edification as a whole [and for its good—for its being able to continue on in its godly edification in peaceful communion and fellowship] ...

... and the Conduct & Behavior that is Consistent with godly Equity for the Edification of the **body** (or the local assembly as a whole) that provided for the peaceful communion and fellowship of that local assembly is contained in (:22-23).

- **Romans 14:22** - (:20a *For meat destroy not the work of God.*)

Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.

Happy is he that condemneth not himself in the thing which he alloweth.

- (1st sentence) ***Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.***

- (we have the Older English use of the question mark [interrogation mark]).

- “*Hast thou faith?*” - first of all—let’s make sure we understand what this is NOT saying—the word “*faith*” here is NOT talking about faith in the sense of ‘some kind of ‘religion’ or ‘Christianity’ - or even the gospel of Christ and the doctrine connected with it ... because

... as you know, as faithful ambassadors of Christ, we are to actively be declaring that to others—witnessing and professing the gospel of Christ publically.

- [this is a great example of taking a verse and lifting it out of its context and making the Bible to say something it doesn't say] ...

... for example, in the attempt to **privatize** all religion, a person could take this passage and put it on a protest sign or a bumper sticker ...

... *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.*

... and say, 'Look, the Bible itself says to keep your own religion to yourself! All religions are the same, so shut up about Jesus being the one and only way to salvation!'

- Once again—CONTEXT rules the day!

- "**faith**" - isn't simply 'belief' in general — nor is it simply 'doctrine' in general—rather, it's more specific than that (again, due to the **context**) ...

- In this context, God is able to have Paul say in one word what we have already encountered in several words.

- In context—the subject at hand is the overall matter of the **Edification Process**—and more specifically the issue of the *weaker* brother situation where a *stronger* brother's abuse of his sonship liberty (in such things as what he eats and drinks) could become a *stumblingblock* to his *weaker* brother's godly sonship edification!

- "**faith**" here (in one word) is referring to that critical and most important principle of godly sonship edification that was stated back up in (:5) **Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.** (10 words) [or, "by grace, through faith"]

- That principle honors & respects—(or better values & esteems) the **EDIFICATION PROCESS** of the WB, **and** the **SONSHIP STATUS** of the WB!

- The expression, "*Hast thou faith?*" is asking the **stronger** bro. if he has been fully persuaded in his own mind that what he eats and drinks (and *any other thing* he does/says) is fully in keeping with his sonship liberty. (which he acquired by **FAITH** in God's **grace** provision)!

- (and, by the way, the answer to the question is **YES!**)

- “*Hast thou faith?*” - The Father says, ‘You strong ones in the faith, Are you fully persuaded by means of the godly Edification Process that all the things you eat and drink (and any other thing you say and do) is fully in keeping with your godly sonship liberty? ...

... (the Father pauses for a response) ... “YES,” says the *stronger* “son” in the faith ... and the Father says, “You’re **right**, son!” ... BUT—since sonship liberty has the potential to be a *stumblingblock* to the WB’s godly edification ...

... here’s the godly & Fatherly directive that’s in keeping with the Edification Process **and its inseparable companion**, Godly Love & Charity ...

“ ... have it to thyself before God.”

- Notice how in perfect keeping with sonship edification this is—the Father is NOT forbidding the son to partake in those things of his sonship liberty—rather, He’s directing His son to exercise his sonship liberty BEFORE HIM! IN HIS SIGHT! **but NOT in the sight of the weaker brother who could be edificationally destroyed by it! and by that, cause the work of God in edifying the body to be destroyed!** (that’s the “*expedient*” principle of 1 Cor. 10:23!)

- It’s fascinating (and totally consistent with a real Father-son relationship) that the Father doesn’t tell the son, “Son, just NEVER do that!” ... but instead, He honors His son’s sonship liberty—He says, “Just do that in my sight!” as if the Father gets the **joy** of mutually fellowshiping and communing with His adopted, adult son in a bit of sonship liberty! ... and He does! (it makes an impact on angels, too)

- But this phrase, “*have it to thyself before God*” does, indeed, **infer** something ... and you’re expected to get what is inferred (or to perceive something that is NOT stated) ...

... and that issue is: in connection with your sonship liberty; *have it to thyself before God*, **BUT NOT BEFORE THE WEAKER BROTHER!**

- Don’t ‘flaunt’ your sonship liberty before the WB (don’t parade it in front of him) - ‘flaunt’ is a good word to describe it, but it’s not found in Scripture—but “*boast*” is!

- “*boast*” - What you’re doing by flaunting & abusing your sonship liberty in the sight of the WB is very much like those of Israel’s vain, religious system!

[see Rom. Ch. 2 —The 2nd Part of the Gospel—Self-Defense pleas to try and escape being counted worthy of God’s wrath—no one will be able to escape the judgment of God by anything they do. — (:17-29 = Self-defense plea of extenuating circumstances because of being a favored Jew) - see :17, 23]

- Rather than doing any thing in the sight of the WB that could be a potential *stumblingblock*—the SB (even though he is perfectly free to do it as a part of his sonship liberty) will RESTRICT or RESTRAIN his liberty for the sake of the WB’s godly sonship edification ...

... and let's call it what it really is: SACRIFICE!
(Willing & Glad Self-Sacrifice!) ...

... when God has Paul tell you, “*Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.*” (***have it to thyself before God*** = There’s the SACRIFICE! (and it’s **godly** sacrifice because it’s done by YOU based upon godly Edification as a “son” [i.e., based upon your godly sonship education in this disp. of grace / based upon those 4 sonship decision-making skills / based upon Romans doctrine / based upon godly L&C]—it’s SELF-sacrifice; SELF-restriction; SELF-restraint of your sonship liberty!) ... based upon godly *expediency* (1 Cor. 10:23)!

... and the **reason** for doing so has NOTHING to do with being ‘legalistic’! — rather, it all has to do with godly L&C! — with valuing & esteeming (loving) **the Edification Process** exactly like God Himself does!

- When conduct & behavior is restricted or regulated by **force**: by a another PERSON (or by an ORGANIZATION OF PERSONS [church, denomination] **that is the very definition of “legalism”!** — and legalism is the very opposite of GRACE; it’s the very ENEMY of grace! and the ENEMY of the Edification Process!

- But when a saint's conduct & behavior is restricted & regulated by the effectual working of godly L&C for the Edification Process—**that is the very definition of GODLINESS itself! — that's what the Lord Jesus Christ died for! (Rom. 14:9!)**

- By the way—when that 6th Major Feature of godly L&C is effectually working within you—and when you Willingly and Gladly Sacrifice your own sonship liberty for the sake of another's godly edification ...

... you're actually doing something that is spoken about in God's word another way—and it's something that usually causes most Christians to either grossly misunderstand; or in many cases causes most Christians to spiritually 'gag' or be repulsed by or shudder when they think about it ...

... and it's a word that many Christian folks who do 'rightly divide the word of truth' oftentimes just wish Paul had never used!

- And what I'm referring to when you Sacrifice your own sonship liberty for the sake of another's godly edification is that what you are doing at that point is **fasting!**
(scary word)

- Fast / Fasted / Fasting / Fastings

- Acts 13:2-3; 14:23; 27:9, 33

- 1 Cor. 7:5

- 2 Cor. 6:3-10 (:5)

- 2 Cor. 11:19-27 (:27)

- (see Keith's email response: 20070410 D41 DG fasting)

22 Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.

- (:22) anticipates a possible objection that would arise in the SB's mind when he hears that Fatherly directive of (:20a), *For meat, destroy not the work of God*—which would go something like this:

“Do I have *faith*? Well, yes I do. I know (:14) and am fully persuaded in my own mind and by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself—and I know that based upon ...

... Romans doctrine. I know what it means to be an adopted, adult “son” of God; and I know what it means to be a “son” in this dispensation of grace! Don’t I have the right as a “son” under grace, (and not under the law), to put my sonship liberty into practice? And if not—doesn’t that make me out to be a hypocrite?

- (It’s NOT a matter of what you have a “right” to do or not do ... that’s an issue of Justice! ... this is a matter of Equity! ... it’s a matter of Equity and godly L&C!)

- And in the matter of the WB situation (where Edification is at stake) - the ‘open’ practice of your sonship liberty could DESTROY the Edification Process [individually and body]!

- And wherever and whenever the ‘open’ practice of sonship liberty would become a *stumblingblock* to the WB—the only proper & godly course of action to take is to CONCEAL your sonship liberty in the sight of the WB, but *have it to thyself before God*—(that is, go ahead and enjoy your liberty in the personal, private communion & fellowship you have between you and the Father!

- In other words—along with your sonship liberty comes a **Doctrinal ‘Concealed-Carry’ Permit!** (*Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God.*)

- (:22 continued) ... ***Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.***

- **“Happy”** - (only time used in Romans)

Other uses in Paul’s epistles:

- *“happier”* (1 Cor. 7:40); *“haply”* (2 Cor. 9:4)

- *happy* = (from the word *hap* [which occurs 1x in the Bible: Rut. 2:3] and means, chance or fortune that falls to any one; and you can have both good *hap* and bad *hap*; luck, lot—moreover it means, an event or occurrence which befalls one; a happening) - *happy* = having good ‘hap’ or good circumstances.

- *happy* is most often thought of and described as a feeling which results from the conscious enjoyment of pleasurable sensations that are derived from external circumstances.

- *happy* = (1828) the enjoyment of agreeable sensations from the possession of good; enjoying pleasure from the gratification of appetites or desires ... but he only can be esteemed really and permanently *happy*, who enjoys peace of mind in the favor of God. [Webster]

- And this is why the KJ translators didn't translate the Greek word μακάριος (which far more often translated) "*blessed*" as *happy*.

- Of the 2 words (*happy* & *blessed*), *happy* is the word more closely associated with what it going on in this context—which is the issue of an adopted, adult “son” of God indulging in his sonship liberty *before God* (in private communion & fellowship) and NOT before the WB.

- [which is true] ...

... [but the ‘other side of the coin’ is just as true as well] ...

- The SB is quite *happy* in concealing his liberty (sacrificing it; restricting it) for the sake of the WB's own godly edification!

- In either situation / either circumstance, godly Equity (with Godly L&C) produces godly *happiness*—godly satisfaction & contentment in the inner man of the SB who wisely uses that godly Equity in the WB situation! [not abusing his liberty]

- Hence (OED) - *happy* (4.a.) = having a feeling of great pleasure or content of mind, arising from satisfaction with one's circumstances or condition.

(*blessed* or *happy*? ... context demands *happy* ... that's real vocabulary control!)

- ***Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*** (What do you think this is talking about?)

- I take this a bit different from the way in which it is commonly dealt with by most Bible commentaries and Bible teachers—(who take this to mean that you are “*happy*” when you are conducting yourself in such a way that you are not hurting your own conscience; or acting contrary to your own conscience—resulting in **self-condemnation**. [which is true enough; and true enough in this case]

- The sense being: ‘Happy is the SB when he behaves in a way that doesn’t end up with him feeling condemned within himself (in his own conscience) because he acted improperly toward the WB.’

- But my understanding is that there is far more going on here than the Father simply telling the son that he’s going to be *happy* when his conscience isn’t bothering him in what he’s doing. (true as that is—and that’s not to be minimized)

- Is there another way that a son could “*condemneth not himself*”? Or, to put it another way, is there another way that a son could ‘*condemn himself*’ **other** than the self-condemnation of guilt and wrongdoing (felt in his conscience) because of inconsistent behavior toward the WB? (of putting a *stumblingblock* in his brother’s way)?

- In other words—you do have *condemneth not himself*—so it IS a *kind* of self-condemnation—but is it the kind of self-condemnation that is talking about either **legal** wrongdoing, or the mere sensation of a ‘guilty conscience’?

- (When was the last time you encountered the word *condemn*? in any of its forms? ... Rom. 8:34!)

- **Review: Sonship Condemnation**

(Notes: Rom. 8, pg. 28-33; 1039-1043)

- The *condemnation* that we’re dealing with here is sanctification-type condemnation—it’s functional death (with all of the feelings and emotions and sentiments that go along with it stemming from your guilty conscience) **and you are expected to determine on your own**:

WHAT IS & WHAT IS NOT:

- compatible with *walking in newness of life*—being *dead to sin, and alive unto God*—not *yielding your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yielding yourself unto God ... and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*

- compatible with *walking after the Spirit* under that grace system, and *not after the flesh* under the law system;

- compatible with (1) being in the status of an adult “son” (2) in this disp. of grace.

... *Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

- “that thing” (whatever you eat / drink / say / do)
- “which he (SB) alloweth” or what you allow yourself to partake of or partake in as an aspect of your sonship liberty.
- This refers to the things that you are going to **permit** yourself to **partake** of as an aspect of your **sonship liberty**.
 - As a properly educated “son” you are expected to be able to discern and perceive [by the ‘conformity to the image of Christ’ that has been accomplished so far] - you are expected to discern all on your own what you can eat / drink / say / do / that is perfect keeping with your “walk” as God’s “son” - with what is consistent with “Walking after the Spirit” and “not after the flesh” IN GOD’S SIGHT [*having it to thyself before God*].
 - This (again) is your Father teaching you what it means to be “**expedient**” in your sonship liberty! (1 Cor. 10:23 *All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not.*)

[**expedient** = beneficial or helpful to the Edification Process of either ourselves or others in the body—in fact, some things will do just the opposite: impede or obstruct our progress, or the progress of others.]

- When you, as a properly educated “son” (one who is *stronger* in the faith) wisely utilize godly Equity in your sonship decision-making regarding the WB situation—far from being miffed, or put-out, or being mad, disturbed, inconvenienced, bothered, annoyed, irritated, or UNHAPPY, or anything along those lines for restricting your sonship liberty in the WB’s sight (which, if that’s your attitude toward the WB, would only fester and end up with strife, divisions, and schisms in the assembly that would *destroy the edification work of God*) - far from all that: **by the self-sacrifice & self-restraint of your sonship liberty**

... Equity working together with godly L&C [6th Fea.: Willing & Glad Self-sacrifice] effectually produces within you genuine, godly **happiness**—being perfectly satisfied & content with restricting your sonship liberty to *‘having it to yourself before God’* due to having your Father’s own viewpoint and His own value and esteem (**love**) for godly Edification [the Edification Process]! (see **1 Cor. 13:4-7!**)

22 *Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*

- **ROMANS 14:23**

And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.

- **“And he”** (*he*, is the WB) - and the situation is one where the WB is forcing himself to eat something other than *herbs* (meat) - ONLY because the SB is eating meat in his presence even though the SB knows that the WB is offended by it (because he hasn’t yet received the doctrine of his sonship status and sonship liberty in this disp. of grace) —

— so the WB is eating meat only by imitating the SB (**at best**) - or (**at worst**) because the SB, (playing the part of the WB’s ‘tutor & governor’) has simply TOLD the WB to do it! [either way, the effects are devastating & ungodly!]

- In other words, the WB is eating with **“DOUBT”** ... **“he that doubteth”** ...

... AND THAT’S THE **STUMBLINGBLOCK!**

- **“doubt”** = a state of uncertainty regarding the truth or reality of something; uncertain and unsettled in a person’s mind; the mind that is not fully persuaded is in **“doubt”!**

- The expression, **“he that doubteth”** describes the violation of the Edification Process—the violation of “by grace through faith” — the violation of: being fully persuaded in his own mind by the effectual working of God’s word that is contained in his curriculum for his sonship education & edification in Rom-Philm.

- **“And he that doubteth”** - The WB has become ‘tripped-up’ by the SB putting a *stumblingblock* in his way—and is now forcing himself to eat meat **although still believing in his heart that it is WRONG for him to do so!** ... and the result is **DISASTROUS!**

- “*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, ...*”

- “**damned**” - *damned*, *damnation*, and *damnable* are exclusively King James terms ...

... all of the Modern English Translations have changed that word (mostly because it’s determined by Bible Scholars to be just too harsh of a word)! [“That’s a swear word, for heaven’s sake!”] ... or they can only think of the word *damn* being used in only one way.

- The Modern English Trns. have changed the word to ‘condemned’ pretty much across the board.

- Granted, the most basic meaning of *damn* is the action of condemning, or being condemned—furthermore, it’s the action of being condemned **by judicial sentence!** (It’s an act of JUSTICE!)

- And it needs to be understood and appreciated that the *damning* in this context **IS NOT** talking about a person (saved or lost) being *damned* or condemned to hell! (A person’s salvation/justification is no where in this context!)

- Just as there are different kinds of *justification* in the Bible; and different kinds of *salvation* in the Bible — so, too, are there different kinds of *damnation* in the Bible!

- One of the big problems folks have with the word *damn* is that they can only think of it in terms of it’s **penalty!** (for instance, being condemned to hell/lake of fire).

- But *damnation* deals with judgment—with being charged with something and held accountable for it.

- *Damnation* is standing justly accused and having been found GUILTY of something ... what the penalty will be is another matter altogether!

- And it IS an extremely **harsh** word—it’s the expression of a person’s **guilt** for committing wrongdoing **in the most severe terms as possible!** — and because of what’s going on here IS so severe and ‘destructive’, it demands to be stated in the most **severe** terms as possible! (**see 1 Cor. 8:8-13**)

- The truth is—*damned* is a far more excellent term to use in this context rather than ‘condemned’ or ‘judged’ or ‘punished’ - because *damned* is a word reserved **only** for condemning a person & a person’s actions in the **harshest** of terms!

- It’s the most powerful term the English language can use for legally condemning a man and a man’s actions!

- But more than that—*damned* (unlike ‘judged,’ or ‘punished’ or ‘condemned’) **IS A FEAR-PRODUCING TERM!!!**

- It’s one thing to be in danger of being ‘punished’ or ‘judged’ — but it’s another thing to be in danger of being *damned*!!! (and remember: YOU put the WB in that position by putting a *stumblingblock* in his way edification-wise!)

- It’s a term reserved for **WRATH**—(either the wrath of God, or in some cases, the wrath of the government [the *power*])

- And in this case, the WB is *damned* in his own **conscience!** his own conscience is what has *damned* him—and that puts him in FEAR of standing worthy of God’s WRATH! - not to be put in hell/lake of fire, but OT, Law-type wrath for violating the OT Law commandments! (a la, the **cursings** and **judgments** of the OT Law).

- This is a great example of the “Thundering diction” of the King James Bible!!!

- If nothing else—*damned* tells you God isn’t messing around—He’s not playing games here! This is serious business, with serious and dire consequences!!!

- “*And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, (why?) **because he eateth not of faith:***”

- (note the colon—pause and get the **full impact** of what is being said to you!)

- “***because he eateth not of faith***” - note the little word “*of*” - it doesn’t say, ‘because he eateth not IN faith’ - but “***of faith***” — **the context, here, is critical for not misusing this passage!**

- It's true enough that the WB's belief is in view here and that he's eating in un-belief that it is right for him to do so—but if that's all that is being said here, then you open yourself up to some potential problems with this verse (especially that last clause, *for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*).

- While it's true that the WB is eating without believing that it is right for him to do so—the context here is focusing upon something even more precise than that—because it's focusing upon **godly edification** (the Edification Process)!

- And my understanding is that both expressions: *because he eateth not of faith*: ... and ... *for whatsoever is not of faith is sin* — the expression “*of faith*” is talking about the Edification Process and what goes on in godly edification:

- ‘by grace, through faith’ (walking as a “son”)
- (and most importantly), *5 Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*.

- And the potential problem here is—it's true enough that if a man is fully persuaded in his own mind that what he is doing is totally **against** what he believes is right, then he is convicted & *damned* in his own conscience, and it is SIN for him to do so—again, true enough ... (and seriously enough) ...

... but what often happens is, this can get ‘flipped’ in a person's mind to where he assumes that the **converse** (or the **reversed position**) is also true—which is to think, If I do something (or anything) that I simply BELIEVE to be right (or have FAITH that it's right), then therefore it is NOT a sin! **WRONG! THAT IS NOT TRUE OR RIGHT!**

- John 16:2
- Acts 26:9-11

- *And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith* (of being fully persuaded in his own mind by means of the godly Edification process): ... (pause) - let that make the impressive impact it's deigned to make on you! ... *for whatsoever is not of faith is sin*.

- (and this final statement is grossly misunderstood and misused!)

- It's *sin* because it's not produced 'by grace, through faith' (or by the Edification Process, or by walking as a "son" being fully persuaded in your own mind) ...

... and if your conduct and behavior—(if how you conduct yourself and behave yourself) is NOT as a "son" would do; or NOT on the basis of 'by grace, through faith' and the godly sonship edification process—then what IS your conduct & behavior base upon? ... what is the **active power** that produces your conduct & behavior? ...

... or to throw it back to the doctrine contained in our initial instruction of our sanctified position "in Christ" and it's results—back in Rom. 6:1-8:13 ... if you are NOT 'walking after the Spirit under grace', then what ARE you 'walking after'???

- The Answer Is: If you're NOT walking after the Spirit under grace, then you are walking after your **FLESH** under the law!

- The Answer Is: If everything that you THINK and LIVE (put into practice in the details of your life) because of that THINKING is NOT "*of faith*" - if it's not produced by grace through faith in the effectual working of God's word for your sonship edification—then it can only be produced one other way: **BY YOUR FLESH!** ...

... and whatever your flesh produces is **SIN!!!**

- It's true enough to say that a person who is forced to do something that is totally against what he believes to be right, to him it's sin—and that is true ... but that's not ALL that this context is dealing with! ... it has far more than that in view—it has the entire issue of godly Edification in view! ... and even more precise, it has the godly Edification of the *weaker* brother in view!

- (the following is from Keith's email correspondence—20031111 C09s W pages 4-5)

- 23 ... *for whatsoever is not **OF FAITH** is sin.*

- Since God has made us “sons”; and since He has provided us with the education that He wants us to have so that we can “*prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*”, and since He expects us to take the education He has for us and to make such decisions regarding our walk, our conduct, and our behavior in this world — there is therefore a **fundamental principle** upon which we are to operate as “sons.” (It’s not the only principle, but it is **the most fundamental one**.)

- And that fundamental principle is referred to by Paul, for example, in Romans 14 where He deals with the issue of the ‘sonship decision-making’ of saints who are “*weak in the faith*” compared to that of ones who are “*strong*.”

- After saying a number of things in the opening verses that establish the fact that God expects even saints who are “*weak in the faith*” to make ‘sonship decisions’ on the basis of what they have learned and understand, at the end of verse 5 Paul says, “*Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.*”

- Also at the end of verse 23 he says, “*for whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*” ... This is the most fundamental principle that we as “sons” are to operate upon — and as such it is our most fundamental principle of ‘sonship decision-making.’

- Therefore we are to operate upon the principle “*of faith.*”

- Whatsoever we decide to do in any situation **is to be done** “OF FAITH.”

- That is, we are to do it because we **know** and are **fully persuaded from God’s word to us, and His educating of us by it**, that doing it is consistent or not consistent with who we are “in Christ,” and that it is **not** unrighteous Nor displeasing to Him.

- We are NOT to make ‘doubtful decisions’ based upon either our own uncertainties, speculations, or wonderings; nor based upon following the example of others as if they were our ‘tutor or governor.’

- Instead we are to make decisions “***of faith***” as individual “sons,” being **fully persuaded from God’s word to us** that such a decision is the **consistent** and **righteous** thing for us to do in view of who we are “in Christ” and in view of what we are learning as God educated us in godliness.

- In view of this, ‘sonship decision-making’ is not a complicated or complex thing.

- Rather it is the issue of God’s word to us in this present dispensation actually living in us as we learn it and grow up in it.

- And it ‘lives in us’ as we do more than just **think about** it ...
... it ‘lives in us’ as we think **WITH** it and operate upon the basis of that thinking.

- Once again, this is what God expects us to do. He is the one who has made us “sons” and given us the **liberty** of sonship decision-making that goes along with it.

- Therefore He has not only provided for His word to ‘live in us,’ but He expects it to do that very thing. He expects us to make decisions “***of faith,***” and doing so is the issue of His words ‘living in us.’

- So sonship decisions are to be “***of faith.***”
 - Simply put, you need to make your decision based upon being **fully persuaded from God’s word to us** that it is **consistent** with who you are “in Christ,” and so you can do it to His glory ...
... or on the basis of being fully persuaded that it is **not** consistent with who you are “in Christ,” that you cannot do it to God’s glory. This is what God expects you to do as a “son.”

END CHAPTER 14