

Dr. Craig Keener, Romans, Session 14

Romans 14:1-15:12

Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Keener, Romans, Session 14, Romans 14:1-15:12, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Romans 14:1-15:12 focuses on Paul's teachings on **love and unity within the early Christian community**. Keener **explains Paul's admonishments against judgment** regarding dietary practices and Sabbath observance, emphasizing the importance of **avoiding actions that could cause fellow believers to stumble**. The lecture further **discusses the significance of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit"** as the true essence of the kingdom of God, contrasting it with divisive issues. Finally, Keener **highlights Paul's call for unity** among Christians of diverse backgrounds, using biblical examples to support the concept of mutual acceptance and service.

2. 36 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Keener, Romans, Session 14 – Double click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link there (New Testament → Pauline Epistles → Romans).



Keener_Romans_Session14.mp3

3. Briefing Document

Romans 14:1-15:12: A Briefing on Love, Judgment, and Unity

This briefing document summarizes the main themes and key points from Dr. Craig Keener's lecture on Romans 14:1-15:12, highlighting the importance of love, the danger of judgment, and the pursuit of unity within the Christian community.

Love and Respect for Different Customs:

Dr. Keener emphasizes Paul's call for Christians to love one another, particularly by respecting each other's customs. This specifically addresses issues surrounding Jewish food laws, where some believers abstained from certain foods while others felt free to eat them. Paul urges both groups to avoid judgment and disdain, emphasizing:

- **"Abstainers shouldn't disdain eaters... And eaters shouldn't judge abstainers."** (Romans 14:3,10)

The Danger of Judging Others:

The lecture repeatedly cautions against judging fellow believers, echoing Jesus's teachings:

- **"Don't judge God's own servants."** (Romans 14:4)
- **"Don't judge one another."** (Romans 14:13)

Dr. Keener explains that judging others usurps God's role as the ultimate judge. He highlights scriptural support for this principle, quoting Isaiah 45:23:

- **"Every knee will bow to me and every tongue will...give praise to God."**

The Centrality of Faith and the Kingdom of God:

Dr. Keener emphasizes that true faith transcends mere adherence to dietary regulations. He highlights the core principles of the Kingdom of God:

- **"The kingdom of God is not about eating and drinking, but the kingdom of God is about righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."** (Romans 14:17)

He connects this to the fruit of the Spirit, emphasizing the transformative power of God's grace working within believers.

The Example of Jesus:

Throughout the lecture, Dr. Keener highlights Jesus as the ultimate model for Christian behavior. He cites examples of Jesus's selflessness, his willingness to suffer mockery, and his acceptance of all people:

- **"Jesus didn't please himself, but instead...he came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many, for us."** (Romans 15:3)
- **"Accept one another as Jesus accepted us."** (Romans 15:7)

The Call for Unity:

The lecture concludes with a powerful call for unity within the Church, transcending cultural and ethnic divisions. Dr. Keener stresses that unity doesn't require uniformity, but rather a shared love for Christ and a willingness to worship together:

- **"With one voice, we glorify God."**

He supports this call with numerous Old Testament passages, demonstrating the biblical foundation for Gentile inclusion and the universal scope of God's salvation.

Key Takeaways:

- Christians should prioritize love and respect over judgment, particularly regarding differing customs and practices.
- God is the ultimate judge, not humans.
- True faith manifests through the fruit of the Spirit: righteousness, peace, and joy.
- Jesus's example should guide Christian behavior, especially his selflessness and acceptance of all.
- Unity in the Church requires transcending cultural and ethnic divisions while embracing a shared love for Christ.

This briefing provides a concise overview of the main themes and key points from Dr. Keener's lecture on Romans 14:1-15:12, emphasizing the importance of love, humility, and unity within the Christian community.

4. Romans Study Guide: Session 14, Romans 14:1-15:12

Romans 14:1-15:12 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. What is the central issue Paul addresses in Romans 14, and how does it relate to the broader theme of the letter?
2. Explain why judging fellow believers is wrong according to Paul's argument in Romans 14.
3. What are the different perspectives on the observance of the Sabbath discussed by Keener, and what is his personal view?
4. How does the concept of "stumbling blocks" relate to the discussion of food and drink in Romans 14?
5. According to Paul in Romans 14:17, what truly characterizes the Kingdom of God?
6. Explain the meaning of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" as described in Romans 14:17.
7. How does Paul use the example of Jesus in Romans 15:1-4 to support his argument for unity and acceptance among believers?
8. What is the significance of Paul's use of Psalm 69 in his description of Jesus in Romans 15:3?
9. What is the hermeneutical principle Paul outlines in Romans 15:4, and how does he apply it to the issue of unity?
10. How does Paul use a series of Old Testament quotations in Romans 15:9-12 to support his argument for the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan?

Answer Key

1. The central issue is the conflict between those with stricter Jewish dietary customs and those with more lenient practices. This connects to the overarching theme of loving one another, even amidst cultural and religious differences.
2. Judging is wrong because it usurps God's role as the ultimate judge. Paul emphasizes that we are all God's servants, and it is not our place to condemn or pass judgment on fellow believers.

3. Keener discusses the traditional Jewish Sabbath, the early church's shift to Sunday worship, and the concept of a Sabbath rest as a principle applicable to any day. He personally believes in honoring a day of rest, although the specific day is less important than the principle.
4. "Stumbling blocks" are actions or practices that may cause a fellow believer to sin or compromise their faith. Paul urges believers to avoid actions, even if permissible for themselves, that could become stumbling blocks for others, particularly regarding food and drink.
5. The Kingdom of God is not defined by external rituals or dietary practices, but by inward qualities: "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit."
6. These qualities represent the transformative work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. Righteousness reflects a life aligned with God's will, peace speaks to internal and relational harmony, and joy flows from a deep trust in God.
7. Paul highlights Jesus' selflessness and willingness to endure suffering for the sake of others. This example encourages believers to prioritize the well-being of their fellow believers and practice acceptance and forgiveness, even when faced with differences.
8. Psalm 69 is a lament of the righteous sufferer, and Paul's use of it emphasizes Jesus' identification with those who suffer. This reinforces the call for empathy and understanding within the Christian community.
9. Paul states that scripture was written for our instruction and encouragement. He applies this to the issue of unity by showing that the Old Testament itself points to God's intention to include Gentiles in his plan, thus encouraging Jewish and Gentile believers to embrace unity.
10. Paul selects passages that speak of Gentiles praising God, rejoicing in him, and placing their hope in him. This demonstrates scriptural support for the inclusion of Gentiles in God's plan and reinforces his call for unity between Jewish and Gentile believers in the church.

Essay Questions

1. Analyze Paul's use of the concept of "weak" and "strong" believers in Romans 14. What are the implications of this terminology for understanding Christian unity and diversity?
2. Discuss the various interpretations of the Sabbath in the early church and their relevance for contemporary Christian practice. What principles from Romans 14 can guide believers in navigating this issue today?
3. Evaluate Paul's argument that "whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). How can this principle be applied to contemporary ethical dilemmas while avoiding legalism and judgmentalism?
4. Explain how Paul's understanding of the Kingdom of God in Romans 14:17 relates to his broader theological framework in the letter. How does this vision of the Kingdom impact the way believers live in the present?
5. Analyze Paul's use of the Old Testament in Romans 15:1-12. How does his interpretation of these passages contribute to his argument for the inclusion and acceptance of Gentiles within the Christian community?

Glossary

- **Bema:** A raised platform used for judgment or pronouncements, often in a Roman context. In Romans 14:10, it refers to the judgment seat of God.
- **Circumcision:** The ritual removal of the foreskin, signifying the covenant relationship between God and the Jewish people. In Romans 15, Paul uses it to refer broadly to Jewish believers.
- **Gentiles:** Non-Jewish people. Paul frequently addresses the relationship between Jewish and Gentile believers in Romans, advocating for unity and inclusion.
- **Holy Spirit:** The third person of the Trinity, empowering believers to live righteous lives and experience the fullness of God's presence. In Romans 14:17, the Holy Spirit is the source of righteousness, peace, and joy.
- **Kingdom of God:** The reign and authority of God, both present and future. In Romans 14:17, the Kingdom is characterized by righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.
- **Kosher:** Adhering to Jewish dietary laws, specifying which foods are permitted and how they must be prepared.
- **Krino:** The Greek word for "judge." Paul uses it in Romans 14 to emphasize the wrongness of judging fellow believers and God's role as the ultimate judge.
- **Sabbath:** The seventh day of the week, designated as a day of rest in the Old Testament. Its observance is debated in Romans 14, with some emphasizing its continued importance and others focusing on the principle of rest.
- **Stumbling block:** An action or practice that could lead another person to sin or compromise their faith. Paul urges believers to avoid becoming stumbling blocks for others, particularly regarding matters of personal conscience.
- **Unity:** The state of being united, particularly within the Christian community. Paul emphasizes unity despite differences in Romans 14-15, calling for acceptance and mutual respect among believers.

5. FAQs on Keener, Romans, Session 14, Romans 14:1-15:12, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Romans 14-15 FAQ

1. What is the main issue Paul addresses in Romans 14?

Paul addresses the issue of differing customs within the Roman church, particularly concerning Jewish dietary laws. He emphasizes that neither those who abstain from certain foods nor those who eat them should judge or despise one another, as God is the ultimate judge.

2. How does Paul relate the discussion of food customs to the concept of judgment?

Paul argues that judging others based on their food choices usurps God's role as the judge of all. He cites Isaiah 45:23, stating that everyone will ultimately bow before God. Therefore, believers should focus on building each other up rather than creating division over personal convictions.

3. What is Paul's stance on observing the Sabbath?

Paul's position on the Sabbath is less explicit. He acknowledges differing opinions about specific days of observance but stresses that the core principle is honoring God in everything we do, whether we choose to dedicate a particular day or every day to him.

4. What is the significance of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit" in Romans 14:17?

These qualities represent the true essence of the kingdom of God, which is not about external rules but about a transformed heart through the Holy Spirit. They emphasize living a life characterized by right actions, harmonious relationships, and genuine happiness rooted in God.

5. How does Paul use the example of Jesus in his discussion of unity and acceptance?

Paul highlights Jesus as the ultimate model of acceptance and service. He points out that Jesus served both Jews and Gentiles, demonstrating that believers should transcend ethnic and cultural barriers to welcome and love one another, just as Christ accepted them.

6. What is the meaning of the phrase "whatever is not from faith is sin" in Romans 14:23?

This verse underscores that actions without a foundation of faith and a clear conscience before God are considered sinful. It's not about becoming overly preoccupied with regulations but about ensuring our choices align with our relationship with God and don't lead others astray.

7. How does Paul link the themes of love for neighbor and the example of Jesus in Romans 15:1-3?

Paul calls believers to prioritize the well-being of others, just as Jesus did. He uses the example of Jesus, who did not please himself but served and gave his life for humanity, as a motivation for Christians to show the same selflessness and love towards their neighbors.

8. How does Paul support his argument for unity and acceptance of both Jews and Gentiles using scripture?

Paul cites various Old Testament passages, including Psalms, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah, that prophesied about Gentiles praising God and hoping in the Messiah. By weaving these scriptures together, he demonstrates that God's plan always included the inclusion of Gentiles, supporting his call for unity and acceptance within the church.