

VALUABLE ADVICE TO CHRISTIANS

BIBLE TEXT : Romans 13:1-14; 14:1-23; 15:1-33.

LESSON 388 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself" (Romans 14:7).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

Romans 13:1-14

¹ Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

³ For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

⁴ For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to *execute* wrath upon him that doeth evil.

⁵ Wherefore *ye* must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

⁶ For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

⁷ Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute *is due*; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

⁸ Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.

⁹ For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if *there be* any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

¹⁰ Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law.

¹¹ And that, knowing the time, that now *it is* high time to awake out of sleep: for now *is* our salvation nearer than when we believed.

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.

¹³ Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

A Christian

First of all, let us determine who is a Christian. The dictionary tells us it is one who believes . . . in Jesus Christ and the truth as taught by Him. Some African Countries are called Christian nations, but certainly everyone living there is not a Christian. A Christian is Christ-like and is expected to conduct himself in a manner becoming to a Christian. He resembles Christ in character, spirit, and actions.

The disciples were first called "Christians" at Antioch, after Christ had ascended to Heaven. In Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the champion was called "Christian," and we remember he was the man who found himself carrying a heavy burden; but when he inquired, "What shall I do to be saved?" he was directed by a man named "Evangelist" to follow a shining light far in the distance. He was told, "Keep that light in your eye," and he would surely reach a certain "wicket-gate." His family called after him as he left, but Christian "put his fingers in his ears, and ran on, crying, 'Life! life! Eternal life!'"

Eternal life is the goal of everyone who bears the name of Christian. That is why we must watch our life and conduct every day -- we do not want to miss our goal. That is why Paul wrote these chapters of detailed instructions to the people of his day, and also to us.

How to Become a Christian

A sinner is just the opposite of a Christian. When a sinner is convicted of his sin and knows that he is a guilty, lost soul before God, he must repent of his sins and confess them to God. God "is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

Paul's Advice

Now that we have learned who is a Christian and how to become one, let us study the instructions contained in our text. Obedience is one of the first duties of Christians -- children should obey their parents, their teachers, principals, and superintendents, unless it is contrary to the Word of God. Police officer should be obeyed by all and given proper respect. Traffic laws are for the protection of citizens and should be observed very carefully, especially by those claiming to be Christians.

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another" -- a debt that is always due. Love delights to please its subject; it even studies how to be helpful to others and make them happy. Wilfully injuring another is the spirit of the sinner, but not of the Christian. Envy, strife, bitter feelings toward another are the outgrowth of hatred, and not the result of love. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour." A boy or girl who envies another young person for his privileges in the Gospel, in the music or singing, should search his heart and seek God for forgiveness.

The Most Important

Some of the Jews, when Christ was upon earth, were very particular what they ate, and found fault with others who were

and envying.

¹⁴ But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.

Romans 14:1-23

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.

⁵ One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. 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.

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.

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, *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.

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.

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.

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.

¹⁶ Let not then your good be evil spoken of:

not so strict. And even today, there are religious beliefs that restrict people regarding the eating of meats or other foods. But Jesus taught us: "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man" (Matthew 15:11). "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man" (Mark 7:21-23). So we learn from this that the words we speak and the life we live are very important. Let us guard our heart "with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23).

Being Prepared

Paul tells the people of his day that the night of evil for this world is far spent; the day of victory is at hand. How much nearer it is for us today! "Cast off the works of darkness, and . . . put on the armour of light." The "armour" is described in Ephesians 6, and the pieces of that armour are given as Truth, Righteousness, Peace, Faith, Salvation, and the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." So we need not assume the office of judge over other people. One Christian may be weaker than another; perhaps his faith is not strong enough to raise him above small problems. Those who are strong in faith are told to "bear the infirmities of the weak," and not to please themselves. Christ died for all, even the poorest and the weakest brother, and the worth of his soul cannot be overestimated. "Even Christ pleased not himself" (Romans 15:3). So if there is a doubt in a person's mind about doing anything, which may cause another to take offence, he should give it up. He should ask himself, "How will it affect my brother's soul?" No one should say, as Cain said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Everyone should do all he possibly can to help his brother gain eternal life.

"Half-Christians"

There are many people in the world today who are zealous for the Lord. They may be active in church work, willing to deny themselves, and may live good, moral lives. But unless a person has the real love of God in his heart -- a love for God and a love for his brother -- he is falling short of a Christian's standard. Some may be more eager for honour and praise of men than for the souls of men. John Wesley called such people "half-Christians," but actually, one is either a Christian or a sinner.

Let us who bear the name of "Christian" always remember that a Christian is Christ-like. It should be our daily prayer and desire to be more like Christ in all that we do or say.

QUESTIONS

1. Give a definition of the word "Christian."
2. What kind of life does a Christian live?
3. What is Paul's advice to Christians regarding love?
4. How can the world tell a Christian from a sinner?
5. From whence come evil thoughts, pride, deceit, wickedness?
6. Why is it so important to read the Word and to pray?
7. What is meant by the "armour"?
8. What does Paul say about one person's judging another?
9. What is the goal of every Christian?

¹⁷ For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

¹⁸ For he that in these things serveth Christ *is* acceptable to God, and approved of men.

¹⁹ Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.

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.

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.

²² Hast thou faith? have *it* to thyself before God. Happy *is* he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.

²³ And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin.

Romans 15:1-33

¹ We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.

² Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification.

³ For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.

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

⁵ Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

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

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

⁸ Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises *made* unto the fathers:

⁹ And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name.

¹⁰ And again he saith, Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people.

¹¹ And again, Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.

¹² And again, Esaias saith, There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust.

¹³ Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.

¹⁴ And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God,

¹⁶ That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.

¹⁷ I have therefore whereof I may glory through Jesus Christ in those things which pertain to God.

¹⁸ For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed,

¹⁹ Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.

²⁰ Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

²¹ But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

²² For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

²³ But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

²⁴ Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

²⁵ But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints.

²⁶ For it hath pleased them of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor saints which are at Jerusalem.

²⁷ It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.

²⁸ When therefore I have performed this, and have sealed to them this fruit, I will come by you into Spain.

²⁹ And I am sure that, when I come unto you, I shall come in the fulness of the

blessing of the gospel of Christ.

³⁰ Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me;

³¹ That I may be delivered from them that do not believe in Judaea; and that my service which *I have* for Jerusalem may be accepted of the saints;

³² That I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed.

³³ Now the God of peace *be* with you all. Amen.