



Unity

BELIEVERS PROMOTE UNITY BY ACCEPTING
AND EDIFYING ONE ANOTHER.

Scripture Passage: Romans 14:5-20 Memory Verse: Romans 14:19

On a trip to Greece, we planned to use the subway to travel to a different part of town. It was a national holiday, and everyone was off from work, so I assumed fewer people would be on the subway. I was wrong. A sea of humanity surrounded us as everyone focused on getting in the overcrowded train. When the door opened, a surge of people moved all around me.

I've seen Christian communities that are remarkably similar to that experience. People are focused on their own goals and agendas. Even in Christian communities, people can sometimes push and pull with no concern for the people around them.

Paul wrote Romans to a diverse group of Christians, and he wanted them to avoid the urge to ignore or fight one another. So, he encouraged them to settle their disagreements and focus on unity. As you dig into today's session from Romans 14, focus on whether you are part of the problem or part of the solution when it comes to nurturing unity in your congregation. Pray that God uses you and the adults in your group as agents of unity in your church and community.



Weekly Podcast: Group Leader Training

Scan here to gain insights about this week's study on Apple podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, or at goExploreTheBible.com/adults-training.



One day, a teacher invited her students to debate an issue that had surfaced in class. The students immediately began sharing their viewpoints, and the discussion quickly grew intense. As the debate escalated, the teacher noticed that while the students were passionate about their perspectives, their disagreements were becoming disrespectful. At that moment, she challenged them to disagree agreeably. Paul did the same—because of Christ. (PSG, p. 109)

When have you found yourself needing to disagree with someone in a respectful way? What made it challenging?



Understand the Context (Romans 14:1–15:13)

Paul had urged the Romans to offer themselves as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1). He commanded them not to be conformed to the ways of the world but to be transformed by renewing their minds through Christ (12:2). This was the foundation of all Christian living.

The apostle continued by encouraging his readers to build up the body in unity by using their spiritual gifts (12:3-8). He challenged them to fulfill their spiritual duties toward those in governing authority (13:1-7) and to love others (including the lost) by adopting the attitude of Christ (13:8-14). These practical matters led to a discussion of the law of liberty.

Recognizing that not everyone is at the same place spiritually, Paul urged stronger Christians to accept the ones who were weaker in faith by not arguing about disputed matters (14:1). One example he gave related to believers in conflict over what Christians should eat. Some were fine eating meat, while others were committed to a vegetarian life (14:2). Paul noted that God accepts both, so each believer should accept (and protect the conscience of) others. This approach avoided disagreement, while promoting unity and accountability within the body.

Christians in the early church came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some of the early Christians were devoted to Judaism prior to coming to Christ. Others were Gentiles who had participated in state religions or worship of the

emperor. Others had converted from mystery religions or various philosophies that predominated the Roman society. Still others came to Christ from a life devoted to ancient Greek gods or having little religious background at all. Melding the diverse origin stories into the unified body of Christ was not always an easy task.

Human nature tends to focus on the desires of an individual. We are selfish creatures at heart, wanting our own way. Even in the church, issues of potential division abound—and the early church was no exception. In a cosmopolitan city like Corinth (from where Paul wrote this letter), division arose over church leadership, handling of moral issues, eating meat offered to idols, and observing the Lord's Supper. Rome had similar issues because people came to Christ from different backgrounds.

The true gospel of Jesus Christ is the one thing that promotes a supernatural degree of unity in the church. It brings people together in a world focused on divisions. Paul turned his attention to the subject of pursuing unity among Christ followers in Romans 14.

Read Romans 14:5-20. Circle preferences and underline commands. How does confusing preferences with commands create strife? (PSG, p. 110)

ENGAGE



PREPARE: On a focal wall display **Pack Item 2** (Poster: *Outline of Romans*). Make copies of **Pack Item 14** (Handout: *Jewish and Gentile Believers in Rome*). Hang Agree and Disagree signs on opposite sides of the room.

READ:

Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 109 of the PSG. Lead the group to respond to the following statements by moving to the Agree or Disagree signs.

- *It is hard to agree to disagree.*
- *Disagreements have to become disrespectful.*
- *Opposing viewpoints are OK in the church.*

ASK:

When have you found yourself needing to disagree with someone in a respectful way? What made it challenging? (PSG, p. 109)

CONTEXT:

Affirm that disagreements and conflict over those disagreements can affect every area of our lives, including our relationships with other believers. Summarize this content from page 110 of the PSG to set the context for today's session:

“Believers in Rome found themselves divided over matters such as dietary rules and the observance of special days. Those from Jewish backgrounds often disagreed with their Gentile brothers and sisters about how to handle these issues. Paul reminded them of a crucial truth: they were not to appoint themselves as judges over fellow believers whose convictions differed on these secondary matters. Each believer served the Lord, and He alone held the authority to judge them. Rather than dwelling on their disagreements, Paul urged them to keep their focus on Jesus. Honoring Him was what mattered most.”

TRANSITION:

Paul knew the church in Rome had both Jews and Gentiles in it and that their diverse backgrounds could lead to conflict and tension. So, in Romans 14, he emphasized unity.



Group Activity Option

Music

Share the lyrics to “Unity Hymn” by Mike Donehey and Kanene Donehey Pipkin or “They’ll Know We Are Christians By Our Love” (*Baptist Hymnal* 2008, No. 385). Play a recording of the song and direct adults to listen for its primary focus. Ask: **How are you showing love when there are disagreements in the church?**

Disagreement (Rom. 14:5-8)

5 One person judges one day to be more important than another day. Someone else judges every day to be the same. Let each one be fully convinced in his own mind. **6** Whoever observes the day, observes it for the honor of the Lord. Whoever eats, eats for the Lord, since he gives thanks to God; and whoever does not eat, it is for the Lord that he does not eat it, and he gives thanks to God. **7** For none of us lives for himself, and no one dies for himself. **8** If we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord.

(v. 5) Conflict existed in the church at Rome based upon their eating habits (Rom. 14:1-4) and their observance of holy days. This emphasis of **one day** above **another day** could have centered around their celebration of the Sabbath or other special times related to Jewish feasts. Apparently some considered these days as sacred, set apart from “normal” days. Meanwhile, other believers (possibly Gentiles) believed that every day required them to honor the Lord. They held no distinction for one day over the next.

The key word in the text is **judges**. A human judgment was required to interpret how to observe these holy days. But human judgment is notoriously uneven, which makes God’s Word and God’s Spirit so vital in this discussion.

The Romans also needed to show grace toward others, especially those whose judgment differed from their own. They could not merely invent their own thoughts. Instead, their minds had to be **fully convinced**. This wording suggests filling up what is lacking. They needed absolute assurance that they were following the will of God (Col. 4:12).

(v. 6) Paul referred to the practice of fasting on holy days. The proper motivation for fasting (or not fasting) was the **honor of the Lord**. This wording in Greek refers to holding a high opinion of something. From Paul’s perspective, *the Lord* and His glory took priority over any practice or religious ritual. Proper observances focus on Him, not the desires of the worshiper.

Another motivation is giving **thanks to God**. This Greek word is associated with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. Like other practices, this must be done **for the Lord**.

(vv. 7-8) The greater question for the Romans was not what practices to observe, but for whom were they living. Paul succinctly stated that no Christian **lives for himself**. Life for a Christ follower

must be defined by the lordship of Christ. He died and rose to demonstrate that He is Lord of all.

Paul also stated that no person **dies for himself**. The Greek biographer Plutarch said, “It is a disgraceful thing to live and die for ourselves alone.”¹ But Paul emphasized that this was not a purely Greek concept. God had established the principle long ago. So, all Christians need to live with accountability to God. When we are accountable to God, we practice our faith in a way that pleases Him, while staying mindful of how we treat others (Rom. 14:5).

Paul told the Philippians that living with a focus on Christ and dying was gain (Phil. 1:21). In another letter, he said that in all circumstances we should live for Christ (1 Thess. 5:10). This is the same sentiment in verse 8. Those who are alive **live for the Lord**, surrendered to His lordship in all things.

Dying does not end the lordship of Christ. Those who die **belong to the Lord** just as they do while living. A person’s relationship with Christ is the key to all religious observances and the purpose of one’s life and death.

Bible Skill

Use another Bible passage to understand the focal passage.

Read Acts 10:9-16. Summarize the vision Peter had about clean and unclean foods. *How did God use the vision to help Peter understand that he should also take the gospel to Cornelius and the other Gentiles in Caesarea (see Acts 10:1-8)?* Compare that with Galatians 2, where issues of circumcision and eating with the Jews caused division in the church. *How did Paul respond to each of these issues?*

**OVERVIEW:**

APPLICATION POINT: Believers should allow other believers to express their love for God as God directs them.

Using Understand the Context and **Pack Item 2** (Poster: Outline of Romans), set the background for Romans 14. Distribute copies of **Pack Item 14** (Handout: Jewish and Gentile Believers in Rome). Remind the group that the Jewish and Gentile believers in Rome had come to Christ from very different cultural backgrounds. Read Romans 12:18 and highlight Paul's command to pursue peace within the body of Christ.

READ:

Invite a volunteer to read Romans 14:5-8 as the group listens for the sources of conflict among the believers.

GUIDE:

Point out that verses 1-4 reveal a rift over food. Explain the conflict over special days in verses 5-8:

Most likely, Jews in the church at Rome were observing the Sabbath and other important feast days. Others in the church, likely Gentile believers, did not feel any obligation to a religious calendar. Paul urged each group to examine their convictions. While not all believers held the same convictions, every believer had the responsibility to honor the Lord. Those who chose to observe certain days or eat certain foods were to do so in ways that honored God. Likewise, those who chose not to eat those foods or observe those days were to abstain in ways that honored the Lord. (PSG, p. 111)

ASK:

What kind of spiritual practices might believers disagree over today? How can we implement Paul's instruction when we encounter disagreements like these? (PSG, p. 112)

SAY:

Even the strongest churches still have to deal with conflict today. It might not be about food or holy days, but it could be something just as divisive. Paul's focus here was on unity, not conformity. He wasn't saying everyone had to agree. But he did emphasize that Jesus needed to be the center of every discussion and every action as the Roman Christians worked through differences in a way that honored Christ. When we live for Him and die for Him, we maintain respect for others and protect the reputation of Jesus to the world.



Accountability (Rom. 14:9-12)

9 Christ died and returned to life for this: that he might be Lord over both the dead and the living. **10** But you, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. **11** For it is written, As I live, says the Lord, every knee will bow to me, and every tongue will give praise to God. **12** So then, each of us will give an account of himself to God.

(v. 9) Earlier in Romans, Paul had affirmed that Jesus died to justify and sanctify those who would come to Him in faith. However, he also knew that the Savior's death meant so much more. Jesus **died and returned to life** to validate His authority as **Lord** over those who are **dead** and those who are **living**.

Jesus's lordship was established by two great events: His sacrificial death on the cross and His resurrection as the firstfruits of those who would be resurrected with Him (1 Cor. 15:20-23). All Christians are either dead or alive, but His authority is universal over all those who follow Him—in death or in life.

(v. 10) Paul discouraged the Romans from taking two actions against fellow believers with whom they disagreed. First, he challenged their tendency to **judge your brother or sister**. God is the only true *judge*, not any human being. So, in matters that were not clearly spelled out in Scripture, believers needed to search their own convictions and be convinced in their own minds (Rom. 14:5) before calling out another Christian. They needed to make sure their motivations aligned with God because He is the ultimate Judge of what's right and what's wrong.

In addition, Paul said the Romans should not **despise** those who disagreed with them. This word would imply attitudes such as rejection or treating others with contempt. Differing opinions do not give believers the right to treat their Christian siblings with disdain or arrogance.

Some might wonder if refraining from judgment and contempt would work against accountability, but Paul did not believe that to be the case. He knew that one day **all** would **stand before the judgment seat of God**. People are ultimately accountable God, a more thorough and just Ruler than any human could ever be.

The Greek word for *stand* is a technical term that sometimes referred to an appearance before an earthly judge. However, Paul was talking about a God who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-seeing. He makes His judgments with complete and accurate knowledge, as all will see at the final judgment.

The *judgment seat of God* refers to what has been called the “bema” seat, after the Greek word used by Paul here and in other letters (see 1 Cor. 3:10-15; 2 Cor. 5:10). This judgment from God's throne will be based on the quality of believers' lives. While the lost will be judged in another context, this reckoning will focus on rewarding Christ followers for their works—and revealing where they fell short. It is where believers will give an account to God.

(v. 11) Paul's quotation of Isaiah 45:23 recognizes God as the Giver of all truth. His words are irrevocable, and He alone stands as the only source of righteousness and strength. The apostle reminded his readers that one day everyone would stand before God.

On that day of reckoning, every Christian will demonstrate their submission to Christ's lordship in two ways. They will **bow** before the Lord, and they will **give praise to** the Lord. The second word is the Greek word for confessing something is true, as used in Philippians 2:10-11.

(v. 12) Since God is the ultimate Judge of His people, believers should relate to one another with grace when they differ. Paul noted that **each of us** will have our own appointment with God, the true Judge. Like the Romans, we will stand before Him and would **give an account** for our lives and our faith. We will answer for ourselves, so we each need to pursue the will of God as best as we can discern it, all while offering grace to others on their journey to find and obey God's plans.

**READ:**

APPLICATION POINT: Every person will be held accountable for their actions and choices.

Read aloud Romans 14:9-12 as the group listens for who will be held accountable before God.

ASK:

How should these verses shape our understanding of God and His desire for our lives? (PSG, p. 113)

LIST:

Direct the group to read Romans 14:9-12 again silently and to identify the words that relate to our own accountability before God. Record their responses on the board or a large sheet of paper. Lead a brief discussion on the significance of seeing God as the ultimate Judge for every person—and how our own accountability should affect the way we treat others.

SHARE:

Highlight this content from pages 112-113 of the PSG to provide additional insight into Paul's teaching:

We are not permitted to sit in judgment over those who hold different convictions, nor are we free to treat them with contempt. Both attitudes are out of place in the body of Christ. Paul . . . reminded his readers of a sobering truth: each one of us will one day stand before the judgment seat of God. This judgment will not determine salvation but will evaluate our faithfulness to the Lord. In light of this reality, believers should extend grace, not judgment, to one another.

ASK:

When you disagree with another believer, how does the gospel factor into your response and attitude? (PSG, p. 113)

Group Activity Option

Testimony

Enlist a lawyer who has argued a case before a judge to briefly share what that experience is like. Encourage the lawyer to talk about how he or she prepares for that event and to identify potential problems to be avoided. Affirm the important job a judge has during a trial, balancing fairness with a responsibility to hold guilty parties accountable for their actions. Encourage adults to share how this compares to what Paul described in Romans 14:9-12. Emphasize that God is the perfect Judge, so we have no right or authority to judge others. Remind adults that each of us will be held accountable for our own actions, which should help us avoid condemning others.

Love (Rom. 14:13-18)

13 Therefore, let us no longer judge one another. Instead decide never to put a stumbling block or pitfall in the way of your brother or sister. **14** I know and am persuaded in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself. Still, to someone who considers a thing to be unclean, to that one it is unclean. **15** For if your brother or sister is hurt by what you eat, you are no longer walking according to love. Do not destroy, by what you eat, someone for whom Christ died. **16** Therefore, do not let your good be slandered, **17** for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. **18** Whoever serves Christ in this way is acceptable to God and receives human approval.

(v. 13) *Therefore* serves as a bridge between what Paul had been saying and his next emphasis. Paul repeated that believers should **no longer judge one another**. Certainly, he was not talking about first-level theological issues, such as the divinity of Christ or the necessity of Christ's death for salvation. Rather, he was speaking about secondary religious rites and practices.

Through the years, Christians have taken hard stances on things like the frequency of the Lord's Supper, television viewing, or musical tastes. These are not primary issues, and judging one another over them creates a **stumbling block** or **pitfall** in the way of a fellow believer. The former word describes a misstep that trips one up, while the latter word defines a snare or trap.

(v. 14) Using **know** and **persuaded**, Paul confidently expressed his view that nothing is unclean in itself. Over time, the Pharisees had twisted the Mosaic law's lines between the clean and the unclean. But Paul recognized that Jesus had removed those lines completely (Mark 7:19).

Defilement is not determined by an object, such as food, but in one's mind. Some Jews still struggled with this, but Paul was determined to treat them with respect. He honored one who **considers a thing to be unclean**, so that a person's conscience would not become **unclean**. Paul refused to press his rights in a way that would have impeded the spiritual growth of others.

(v. 15) Paul did not want a **brother or sister** to be **hurt**. This Greek word did not relate to physical pain, but to grief. By ignoring the convictions of others, believers can cause trauma by not **walking according to love**. By its nature, *love* regards others, even those with a weaker conscience.

In the interest of love, Paul patiently laid aside his rights to support growth in others. If he ignored their consciences, he would **destroy** those who did not agree with him, people **for whom Christ died**. The cross nurtures unity and love because it destroys selfishness and builds up others. It is a reminder that everyone needs grace.

(vv. 16-17) Disregarding others would also allow **good** things accomplished for the gospel to be **slandered**. When strong people flaunt their freedom, it creates an unnecessary battleground. Christians should consider if asserting their freedom is worth earning a bad name in the eyes of other believers.

The **kingdom of God** is not about minor things like **eating and drinking**. Rather, it is about **righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit**. The Spirit offers the gift of **righteousness**, resulting in right living. Meanwhile, *joy* and *peace* are part of the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). Instead of secondary matters, Paul encouraged the Romans to pursue higher priorities, such as spiritual growth in God's Spirit.

(v. 18) By focusing one's freedom in a way that promotes spiritual growth in others, Paul believed that an individual **serves Christ**, as well as their fellow believers. This service is **acceptable to God**. The Greek wording is associated with how slaves satisfied their masters by doing what the master asked (Titus 2:9).

By limiting their freedom, Paul's readers also would receive **human approval**. The original Greek indicates testing to verify that something is worthy or adequate. This was a reminder that others watch us consistently, even if we don't realize it. As a result, our choices can break them or build them into stronger believers.

EXPLORE Romans 14:13-18



APPLICATION POINT: As members of the body of Christ, we're to spur on each other to spiritual growth.

READ:

Invite a volunteer to read Romans 14:13-18 while the group considers the role believers have in supporting the spiritual growth of others.

ASK:

Who has been instrumental in helping you grow spiritually? (PSG, p. 115)

DISCUSS:

Allow a few volunteers to share their responses to the question. Encourage adults to suggest key words from the verses that relate to helping or hindering others from growing spiritually. Record their responses on the board. Discuss why each of the terms is significant. Highlight words like *stumbling block*, *pitfall*, *hurt*, *love*, *destroy*, and *serves*.

STATE:

Explain why it's important for believers to consider the feelings and needs of other believers.

A stumbling block is an obstacle that causes one to fall. A pitfall refers to a snare or trap that causes people to be offended. . . . [Paul] explained that we must consider the brother or sister who thinks differently than us. If we selfishly ignore their convictions and press our freedom to eat what they call unclean, we will hurt those who think differently. Therefore, Paul encouraged that we act in love. Love has regard for others, even those who may have a weaker conscience. In the interest of love, we are to patiently lay aside our rights to await growth in others. (PSG, p. 114)

ASK:

What practical things can we do to spur on others and not be a stumbling block? (PSG, p. 115) Challenge adults to consider taking one step this week toward building other believers up instead of being a stumbling block or hindrance to them.

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson: Building Blocks

Stack six building blocks on top of each other and five or six more in a line in front of the stack. Explain that sometimes disagreements encourage us to build walls or draw lines in the sand. Say: *In Romans 14:13-18, Paul challenged believers to respond to others in love, even in the midst of conflict.* Lead a brief discussion on why this could be difficult, but also why it would be beneficial to all the parties involved.

Edification (Rom. 14:19-20)

19 So then, let us pursue what promotes peace and what builds up one another. **20** Do not tear down God's work because of food. Everything is clean, but it is wrong to make someone fall by what he eats.

(v. 19) Paul encouraged believers to curb their freedom to do certain things that offend other believers. His reasoning was simple: He wanted each person to consider how they could further the spiritual growth of others. Conflicts and disagreements can damage relationships and create hurt feelings. Instead of causing their brothers and sisters in Christ to stumble, Paul challenged both Jews and Gentiles in the congregation to build up one another and to pursue peace.

Paul summarized all he had said about spiritual freedom and responsibility in verses 19-20. As part of that summary, he encouraged believers to do two things. First, he urged them to **pursue what promotes peace**. This *peace* referred to a harmony between those who were strong and those who were weak in their beliefs.

Paul may have felt free to eat whatever he wanted, but he also desired to have peace between those who thought differently than he did. This could not happen if he selfishly pressed for his own rights without acknowledging that others thought differently. So, he humbly assented to putting his desires on hold for the sake of those who might suffer from his freedom. For Paul, spiritual freedom is only freedom if it benefits everyone in the body of Christ.

Second, Paul encouraged believers to seek **what builds up one another**. He used this argument extensively when he encouraged people to use their spiritual gifts responsibly (1 Cor. 14:5,12,26). The expression *one another* implies that Paul also could learn from those who were weaker in conscience. Spiritual support is not a one-way street. Rather, all Christ followers can build up one another in the faith.

The phrase *builds up* is an expression for building a house and spoke figuratively of the spiritual growth of an individual. The actions of believers should serve Christ and help other Christians grow in their faith.

(v. 20) Every coin has two sides, and Paul expressed the opposite side of his teaching here. He said that to eat **food** that others saw as unclean may have had the unintended consequence of dismantling **God's work**. This word rendered **tear down** means to *destroy* or demolish a building. His *work* was the inward activity of grace in the lives of other believers. It was not about Paul getting to eat what he wanted, but about patience to allow God to continue sanctifying other believers.

Dividing the community of faith based only on trivial issues was not wise and helpful. It would damage relationships within the church and Jesus's reputation outside the church. While believers should build up one another, like a person building a home, they would tear that building apart by emphasizing their own desires and callously ignoring the consciences of others.

Paul affirmed that **everything is clean**. He had the right to eat shrimp and pork, which Jewish people strictly interpreting the Old Testament without the lens of Jesus thought was unclean. However, eating it in the company of certain believers might make **someone fall**. This word once described something that struck against another, but it came to describe the hard feelings people might have toward those who disagreed with them.

Paul gave his readers a choice: edifying others or eating foods others thought were unclean. For Paul, the choice was clear. He encouraged believers to build one another up in the faith—even if it meant delaying their own gratification.

Key Doctrine

The Church

Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. (See Ephesians 2:19-22; Colossians 1:18.)



READ:

APPLICATION POINT: Believers are to build up one another, pursuing peace in our relationships with other believers.

Guide the group to read Romans 14:19-20 silently, noting Paul's admonitions in these verses.

DISCUSS:

Write *peace* on the board or a large sheet of paper. Lead a brief discussion on what peace means in our culture. Allow a few volunteers to share words or images they associate with peace. Note that peace was Paul's concern for the church in Rome.

ASK:

Why is peace so significant in the body of Christ?
(PSG, p. 116)

LEAD:

Note that along with peace, Paul mentioned pursuing what builds up others in the faith. Point out how these two actions work together in the church—and the dangers of ignoring them:

Paul urged all believers to pursue what promotes peace and builds up one another. This is what should matter most as we serve the Lord together in the church. Our peace with God through Christ (Rom 5:1) extends to our relationships with other believers. We are to pursue what builds up other believers. . . . The opposite of building up is to tear down. Overlooking our responsibility to edify one another has a damaging effect on God's work. (PSG, p. 115)

SHARE:

Paul affirmed that all things are clean. That meant it was all right to eat certain foods, and it was all right to avoid them. The person's conviction before God is what mattered. And because it mattered to God, it needed to matter to the Roman Christians. The same is true for us today. We may have personal freedom in a particular area, but we also may need to temper that freedom for the sake of others. We don't want to be the cause of someone else's struggle with faith.

REFLECT:

What might we forfeit if strife or dissension are allowed to grow? (PSG, p. 116)

HIGHLIGHT:

Point out that Romans 14:19 serves as the memory verse for this session. Share that memorizing and recalling this verse during times of conflict will help us respond more like Jesus.

TRANSITION:

Above all else, the Lord wants us to love others, to refrain from being a stumbling block, and to focus on building up peace among our fellow believers.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE:

Review these points from Apply the Text on page 117 of the *Personal Study Guide*:

- *Believers should allow other believers to express their love for God as God directs them.*
- *Every person will be held accountable for their actions and choices.*
- *As members of the body of Christ, we're to spur on each other to spiritual growth.*
- *Believers are to build up one another, pursuing peace in our relationships with other believers.*

IDENTIFY:

Encourage adults to read the first set of questions on page 117 of the PSG. As they suggest issues today that resemble the disputes in Paul's time, record their responses on the board. Challenge them to come up with practical ways to work through conflict in a godly manner and to adopt at least one idea that they will put into practice to resolve a conflict this week.

MEMORIZE:

Direct the group to read and reflect on the second set of questions from page 117 of the PSG. Urge them to look for ways to walk in love this week. Remind them that Romans 14:19 is the memory verse. Lead them in reading it aloud at least twice and encourage them to finish memorizing it during the week ahead.

PRAY:

Close in prayer, asking God to help each person to see ways they build up others and seek peace each day.

1. Mounce, Robert H. *Romans*. Vol. 27. The New American Commentary. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995.

AFTER THE SESSION

Follow up this session by sending each adult an individual email or a text. Remind them that God wants His people to pursue peace with our fellow believers, even if it requires a measure of sacrifice. Challenge them to examine their lives for areas where they are not approaching others with love and to ask God to help them work through those issues in the days ahead.

LEADER BLOG



Discover helpful tips for using and getting the most from your Adult Explore the Bible resources at **goExploreTheBible.com/blog**.

EXPLORE  THE BIBLE.