

GROWTH GROUP BRIEFING NOTES

Date: 30/7/17

Title: Relating to the Weak
Passage: Romans 14:1-15:13

Speaker: Jon Ogborn

Welcome to this week's GG Briefing Notes! Thanks for leading this discussion in your group. Do pray that God uses it to help everyone in your group become more like Jesus.

We have suggested below some things to aim for in your discussion. Please don't just read this sheet out to the group! Decide before you start how you'll work towards each aim. Which of our questions will you use (you may not need all of them) – or can you think of better ones? What kind of answers will you be hoping to get from each question?

1

Aim

The aim here is try and understand what the "issues" are that Paul is dealing with in this passage

Some Possible Questions

- Q 1. Can you recall the illustration that Jon started with?
Q 2. How do you think Eric Liddell might feel if he attended City Church and saw how we "observed" the Sabbath (Sunday) now? How would we feel?
Q 3. Read the whole passage and ask if folk understand what the disputes in Rome were about?

Hints

Commentators think that the disputes were about observance of the "Sabbath" and the food laws (e.g. eating kosher meat and wine). Some Jewish Christians felt that all followers of Christ should observe these to demonstrate they were part of God's family. However, Paul makes clear in the early part of Romans that both Gentiles and Jews who place their faith in Christ (expressed in obedience to HIM) are equally part of His family. You do not now need to be or live like a Jew to be in God's new family. Have a look at the notes on Romans Ch. 1-11 for more background.

2

Aim

The aim here is to understand two key points Paul makes about this issue.

Some Possible Questions

[Read Romans 15:5, 6 - Highlight the glory brought to Christ by unity among His people - remembering how much of a divide there was to bridge between Jew and Gentile.

- Q 1. Read 14:17, 18 - What is Paul seeking to convey about what is important in the Kingdom? |

Hints

[A critical point Paul is making is that some Jews (the weak in faith) are failing to grasp that the external observances so precious to them are not appropriate markers of spirituality. What matters is how we live - what comes out of us. You might like to look at what Jesus had to say about the matter in Matt. 7:18-23 |

3

Aim

[The aim here is to understand how to apply Paul's teaching today. |

Some Possible Questions

- Q 1. In what areas might we today fall into the trap of wrongly judging someone's spirituality based on external "observances"?
Q 2. What are the points Paul makes about how we are to behave towards the "weak in faith"?

Finally read Romans 15:2, 3 - remind folk of the example set by Christ who put others first and did not please himself. |

Hints

[Q 1 - Possible examples today could be the clothes we wear "in church", or the rituals (or lack of) accompanying our worship.
Q 2 - We are not to wrongly judge others based on their observation of non-essential external observances. God knows their motives and will judge them. We are to be sensitive to others - adjusting our behaviour to avoid giving offence and causing them to wrongly question our spirituality. Most importantly, not forcing them to break a principle dear to them. |

