

Romans 14

March 24, 2024

Well, today we are going to start Romans Chapter 14, the last two chapters in this great book. I hope by now you know my style of teaching or preaching the Bible is to have you understand each book by outline. I think that it is absolutely crucial for you to learn the Bible. The first thing you have to begin to do is understand how each book breaks itself down. Obviously, in the long run, you find that the whole Bible has its natural breakdown. You need to learn that. Then you need to learn each end of a book, how it breaks down, and then each chapter breaks down. You will notice when I teach you the Bible, I try to always put those things there because they are the things you have to get down.

But we talked about how the book of Romans is vital to you and to me as New Testament Christians. You hear me talk a lot about the three aspects that you have to have to really be effective in ministry.

1. You have to have perspective. What is perspective? Perspective is how you view things.
2. Then you have to have purpose. What is purpose? Purpose is why you do the things that you do.
3. Then you have to have passion. What is passion? Passion is the drive that helps you accomplish what God wants you to do with a purpose and keeps you focused on seeing things as they really are.

The devil's whole trick for you and for me is to get us off focus. You see it in every sports challenge. Right now, we are in the middle of basketball, heading into the Final Four. A lot of really good teams have been upset and beaten by teams that nobody thought would really beat them. I think it is probably really, well, I know it is, it is really, really hard to keep up that level of playing that you have to do to keep winning. It is really tough. We all know that every team out there that was in maybe first or second or third place are probably better teams than maybe the teams that beat them on any given night. But the real issue becomes the problem that you just cannot stay at the top of your game all the time. It only takes one bad night to lose your focus and you have lost the ball game.

The devil tries to do the same thing to us. I heard a message one time that Dr. Ruckman preached, and he drew when he preached it. It was called "The Game of Life." The picture that he drew was a baseball stadium and a pitcher up the bat, the people in the background, and the devil was doing the pitching. He laid the whole thing out, how that life has rules just like sports does. If you are playing basketball, you have a referee. If you are playing softball or baseball, you have an umpire. In just about any sport you are in, you have somebody who says what is right and what is wrong. In other words, you have a final authority. He went on and laid this thing out and talked about the fact that it does not really matter in a basketball game if you like the call of the ref or not. That ref is the final authority for that game. It does not matter if you agree with the umpire when he called you out when you thought it should have been a ball when it was really a strike. He is the final authority. He laid out the concept that in the game of life, it is the exact same way. The game of life has a final authority. The devil's job is to try to keep you and I off focus. He wants to throw you a curveball. He wants to throw you a fastball. He wants to

get your eye off the ball and look at something else so you miss when you swing. That is basically perspective. Perspective is an incredible thing that we have to have.

I. The Book of Romans: The Constitution of Christianity

The book of Romans is our book on perspective. I told you when we started this that it was basically like our Constitution of the United States of America. If you have ever tried to read the Constitution, you will realize that it is very hard to read, but it was without a doubt the single most important document along with the Declaration of Independence. Our Constitution is probably the single greatest document on which rests everything that we believe as a country. For you and for me in Christianity, the book of Romans is the same thing. It is the Constitution of Christianity. It is the absolutely most vital book that you as a New Testament Christian. In fact, I will go so far as to say this, and I believe this to be absolutely true: I do not think you will ever effectively understand what God wants you to do or understand your life as a Christian until you basically understand the book of Romans. Arguably, the book of Romans to me is probably the hardest book in the Bible. It probably took me four or five years to really get it down. It is one of those books because of the way it is written, like reading the Constitution, like reading a legal document. In essence, that is exactly what it is. It is God's legal binding document, His legal binding agreement with the church and you and me as Christians.

I have told you many, many times, and the price of learning is obviously repetition by now, the placement of Romans is no accident. You have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, which basically form the historical foundation for the church. Then you have the book of Acts, which really brings you through and gives birth to the church. But at this point in the book of Acts, we still do not know what the church is to believe. We see a lot of people doing a lot of things in the book of Acts, but we really do not know what has changed from the Old Testament to the New Testament. That is why Romans is the next book. Romans is the legal agreement between me and you and God, our church and God, of what really now has transpired and changed, and what God expects you and me to do as far as our perspective now, our purpose now, and even our passion.

That is why chapter by chapter, and you should all have this in your Bible now, and if you are somebody new that has just been coming for a couple of weeks, basically in review, I will go through it again because I think a context is always important.

- We saw in chapter one where God begins to tell us in Paul's writings how God now has looked at the Gentiles. Up to this point, the Gentiles were dealt with by God by their conscience. So in chapter one, he begins to show that. So we get an understanding of that in chapter two.
- Then he moves to the aspect that God dealt with the Gentiles through their conscience, but he dealt with the nation of Israel through the law, and he contrasts the two, and you get a better understanding that God dealt with the Gentiles one way and then God dealt with the nation of Israel another way.
- Then we go into chapter three and four, and in chapter three and four, we find out that in those particular chapters that neither the Gentile following his conscience nor the Jew following the law is going to work for God anymore. Why? Because God has changed the

way things now work. We went from the Old Testament now into the New Testament, and he basically says in chapter one, "Well, the Gentile did it this way, the Jews did it this way," and in chapter three and four, he says, "Right away is going to work because God has a new plan for both the Jew and the Gentile." We know that new plan is Christ's death on the cross. Little Logan had it right on the money. Little Logan had it right down. He had a solid piece of theology, and that solid piece of theology was in the Old Testament, they could not go to heaven because the blood was not shed, so they had to go to Abraham's bosom. Once Christ died, then he opened up the gates and he took them to heaven because everything changed, and this is what Romans is telling you.

- So you come to chapter five through chapter eight, and you will find these are the great doctrinal chapters. These are the chapters that chapter by chapter tell you and me what now has changed. It gives me my perspective of my salvation, my glorified body, how I relate to the law now in the New Testament. Every aspect of our New Testament Christian walk in relationship with Christ is now laid out based on the fact that since the cross of Calvary, the world has changed, and His death on the cross impacted planet Earth never to be the same again. Each chapter deals with it and lays it out in that particular way for you and for me.
- Now, remember chapter nine, ten, and eleven? Those were the great prophetic chapters, were they not? That is where God now shows us that He is not done with the nation of Israel. He goes through chapter nine and shows what happened to Israel. Chapter ten, how the Gentiles have now come in, but chapter eleven then says that God is going to bring the Jew back to that place.
- Chapter twelve, oh, what a great chapter, chapter twelve was. Remember chapter twelve? It showed us our relationship to the unsaved world.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

- We understand now what the government is, why God had that as one of the three institutions that He put into man on planet Earth. So we know that now.

Finally, we come to chapter fourteen and fifteen. Here he begins to show our relationship to other Christians on an individual basis. Chapter fourteen and fifteen deals with how basically, and all this is going to be an introduction today, I have to lay a very solid conceptual foundation so that when we get into chapter fourteen and fifteen, you really can grasp some of these principles. So you need to get an understanding of it. But chapter fourteen and fifteen deals with how stronger Christians, more mature Christians, should view younger Christians, how they should understand them, how we should relate to them, and how we should help them.

II. The Missionary Mandate

In dealing with people, we are going to come here once we finish Institute, and I just cannot wait to get into this part of it because most of the church for the most part is really ready for this. Once we finish our third year of Institute, we will be ready for our fourth year. We have come

through the Bible, Old Testament and New Testament. I have laid all of the Bible things out. Now, through that process, I want to bring you to the point where we take a group of people who are ready for this and we go into biblical counseling: how to take the Bible and Bible principles and apply them first to your own life and then to the other people that you may talk with and work with. Most of you do not know this yet. Some of you do. But most of you have not come to the reality that the fact is that you are a missionary. The mission field that you have is simply where you work, your neighborhood, or the people that you are associated with. You are going to find that you deal with people all day long who have issues and problems in their life who are looking for answers. God wants you to have the answer.

We talked about yesterday for a little bit with the men's perspective. I told them, "You know what, probably your perspective of what I do up here is different than my perspective." If I would ask you, "What is your perspective on me getting up here and teaching the Bible?" You would probably say, "Well, so I could learn the Bible." That would be true. But you see, my perspective does not stop there. My perspective is I stand up here to teach the Bible not only so you can learn the Bible, but so then you can teach somebody else the Bible. See the difference in our perspective? Mine is not as limited as yours. Yours says, "Well, I am here. My perspective is to learn the Bible." That is a great thing. But I want to take it one step further than that. If you are saved here today, and I do not care what level you are on, if you are saved here today, the bottom line is this: in time, God wants to use you to touch somebody else's life. It is just that simple. You need to understand that part of your natural spiritual growth is getting to that place.

We all have circumstances in our lives, but let me just say this to you: the only thing that will ever keep you from getting to that point in your life, and I do not doubt that everybody wants to get there, I do not think we probably have anybody in our church that said, "Nah, you know what? I just want to be a bum." I do not necessarily think that. But I do know this: I do know that the only thing that will ever stop you from getting to that point in your life will be you. It will not be any circumstance in life. It will not be anything that happens. It will be you. Your whole life is based on you making choices that will help you or will not help you in your own spiritual growth. You have to be honest with yourself and realize that.

I am excited about taking a host of people, even some of the first, second-level people, because I see within you. This prayer group type thing has been the most eye-opening thing for me that I have ever done in all the years of my ministry. It has kind of given me a bird's eye view, an inside look, and I can actually, just after one round, I can actually see the development in people and their attitudes about things. It is going to be the thing that I look for because I do not really care, honestly. I do not really care what you do not know about the Bible or what you do know. I can teach you all that. What I have never found the ability to be able to do is to teach somebody to have the right attitude about learning. That has to come between you and God. That has to come because you are never satisfied with who you are. That has to come because you always want to be better tomorrow than you were today. You give me that kind of person, and I will build you into everything God ever wants you to be. But it starts with you and it starts with me. It starts with our desire.

You are going to find that when we begin to work with this and you begin to learn some things, you are going to find that all of my dealing with people, all of my counseling, whatever I do, whatever I am doing, it is all built around two sections. In each section, there are three basic fundamental concepts. Everything I do, everything you are going to do, is going to be built around these two sections with these basically three different concepts. It sounds so simple, but it really is. I have found over the years that most of the problems we have, and I know we can get into some really complicated things in our lives, but I have found this to be generally true, especially with you, because we do not have any action murderers here or anything like that, nothing I know of. But the bottom line is this: most of your problems could be solved very quickly. It is not going to take ten years to fix what is wrong with you. I have found that most problems that people have can be dealt with very quickly.

I had to laugh last Sunday night down at the City Union Mission. Steve Bracken preached. The guy got up afterwards, the guy that runs the place, and he basically, and I had never even thought this way, he had come to the place where he was basically getting on the guys because evidently after you guys go down and preach, some of those guys down there obviously do not want us to come back. You know why? Because you preach the truth. He stood up and said, "You know what, I do not care what you like. They are preaching the truth, and I agree with them." I thought to myself, "Let me." Now you guys are really doing a good job down there. I know that all of you are learning and growing. The bottom line is, and I am pleased as punch, and I love everything. We have got a bunch of new people going in and doing the devotion this time. I have seen great strides in your preaching ability, and I am happy. But let me tell you something. None of you guys have been, I thought you guys have been absolutely some of the nicest, kindest, sweetest messages you have ever preached in your life. God help them if I ever got up there and preached to them.

But let me give you an example to show you how simple it is. The last time I preached at the Mission was, I tried to think today, I think it was twenty years ago. I preached down there, and I preached a message down there. It just shows you how simple it is. The reason why they are upset with you preaching is because you are preaching the truth to them. Many of them have issues in their life. I mean, hello, you are in the City Union Mission. You think they can figure it out. But I preached down there the last time I preached. I preached John chapter 8, verse 44. I preached a simple, what I call a mission message.

John 8:44

Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

I just laid it on them. When I do a message like that, I work it. I work the crowd. I will get down in their face, and I am not telling you you should do this, but I am just saying what I did. I work the crowd. I would say, "You know what that Bible says? It says if you are not saved today, if you are not trusting Christ as your own personal Savior, your spiritual family is the devil. Your daddy spiritually is the devil." Boy, you should see them. I mean, and to save people, they were

with you. But you could tell just like that who the unsaved people were. Boy, they did not like that. Nobody likes to be told your spiritual father is the devil. Nobody likes to be told, "Ye are of your father the devil," and you are in the devil's family if you are unsaved. Nobody wants to hear that. But I am going to use that because I am going to make a point. Before I can make my point, I have to show how graphic their situation is to show them how easy the situation is. I go about twenty, twenty-five minutes. I just work them. "Ye are of your father the devil, the lusts of your father ye will do." "You know why you are drunkards? You know why you do dope? Because the lusts of your father ye will do. You know why you fornicate? You know why you do not? Because the lusts of your father ye will do." I just beat them up about nine ways from Sunday, except it was Saturday when I was preaching. Nine ways from Saturday. But I just let them have it. Let them have it. By the time that twenty, thirty minutes is done, they are just, I mean, smoke is coming out their ears. They are absolutely livid with me because I have made the point now over and over and over again, "Ye are of your father the devil." Then I come to my cutoff point. "Now, I am going to show you how simple it is." I said, "You do not like that, do you?" "Now, look at it." I know now who is mad. See, one of the things you guys need to learn to do in time, and I know you are still young, but you need to learn to make eye contact with who you are. Even when they do not like you, especially the ones that do not like you. I mean, they can beat you up later in the parking lot, but they cannot do anything in that crowd. So you have got your advantage. I look at them. I said, "You do not like that, do you?" I am looking at the ones who are steaming. I said, "You do not like that, do you? You do not like the fact that you are of your father the devil. You do not like the fact that the last twenty, thirty minutes I told you that your spiritual father is the devil and your spiritual family is the devil. You do not like that, do you?" Boy, I mean, now they are agreeing. "No, I do not like that. I do not like that. You are right. I do not like that." I say, "You know what? Now, here comes the turning point. Here shows you how simple it is." I said, "You know what? I did not like it either. One day a long time ago, somebody told me the same thing I just told you. You know what I did? I got just mad like you did. I smoked. I steamed. I cussed on the inside. But at the end of the message, you know what I did? I was so mad I changed families. Now, you are mad today because your spiritual name is devil. You are mad today because of the fact that you are of your father the devil. Easy solution. Just change families." See how simple that is? You do not have to pay anything. You do not have to buy anything. You do not have to go anywhere. If you are absolutely just livid because of the fact that your spiritual name is devil, change families. Now, that is easy, is it not? But none of them did it.

My point is simply this: most problems we have could be solved just that quickly. The problem is not, "Hey, I have got news for you." I am not a great Bible teacher. I do not know everything about the Bible, but I can say this with all the authority: I can basically solve every problem anybody has got in this room today if you want to. I mean, because you know what? Because it is not that hard. The problem is we do not want to. We try to make the burden on God like it is some hard thing I have got to do. A guy said, "Well, I do not want to get saved because I cannot live it." I have got news for you, pal. You cannot live it after you get saved. That is a dumb excuse. Somebody said, "Well, I cannot get saved. Do I stop some things in my life?" You do not have the power to stop things in your life until you get saved. That is a dumb excuse. I understand that some people take that position because they do not understand, and that is fine.

That is fine. But you take any Christian, male or female, any Christian, fundamentally, whatever problem they have, whatever issue they have, whatever takes place, whatever they have got to work through, it basically falls down into two sections, and each section has three basic fundamentals that they need to get down in their life.

I will tell you another example. How about Cain and Abel? Remember that story back in Genesis 4? Remember when Abel did the best he could, he brought his cantaloupes and his watermelons and his potatoes and all those vegetables in before the Lord, and Abel just went out and killed his sheep and brought it in. What does the Bible say? The Bible says that God had respect unto Abel's and no respect unto Cain. Then Cain got an attitude about it, like some of you do sometimes, like I do sometimes. Cain got an attitude because God did not accept what he brought, and he worked hard for it. That was after the fall. You just did not go around and pick the fruit up on top of the ground like before the fall. He had to dig it. He had to fertilize it. He had to hoe it. He had to keep the weeds out, and he did all of that work, and he brought it to God, and God said, "No way." And he got an attitude. What did God say? God said, "What are you mad about, Cain? If you go get the right sacrifice, I will accept it." But he did not. Life is just that simple. I do not care what problem you have got today, you can begin to solve it in fifteen seconds or less. The foundation of it is based on these three things, or these six things in each section.

III. Three Foundational Problems

Believe it or not, every issue you have, personally or somebody else or whoever or whatever, can be solved by you getting these three things in your life. It is simple. You are turning your page and getting out your pen like I am going to say, "Okay, the first thing is call lightning down from heaven." These are so stupidly basic, you probably do not even want to write them down. You know what the first one is for you and for me? I am going to tell you, it is just simply this:

4. Start seeing God for who He is. That is fundamentally the biggest problem that everybody, whether it is marital problems, personal problems, whatever the case, your number one foundation problem simply is this: you cannot see God for who He is. You think God is out to get you. You think God is out to hurt you. There is no understanding of why God even saved you. You cannot put two and two together because you realize that God saved you from hell so He could kill you. Is that what He did? "Well, God, you know, God is going to give me cancer because I have got problems with cigarettes or I have got problems with this." "Oh, I have got you. He saved you from hell to give you cancer." You have people who live their lives like that. They live their whole lives in fear like God. I look at God and I see a loving Father standing up there that gave me Jesus Christ. When they see God, they see a big foot. That is not God. You see God for who He is. When you understand who God is in your life, then you understand who Christ is and His function in your life. When you understand that, then you grasp the Holy Spirit of God and you find out what His function is. John chapter 14 and 16, two of the greatest chapters in all of the Bible on the Holy Spirit of God. John chapter 16 in particular tells you seven things the Holy Spirit of God does for you. I am

telling you, the number one problem we have is we do not see God for who He is. Our perspective of God is wrong.

5. I will tell you the second problem you have: you do not see yourself after you are saved as God sees you. Many of you were brought up in bad home situations. Many of you were told all your life, "You are stupid, you are ugly, you are dumb, you will never make anything else in life." Many of you were told by bad parents that maybe many of you never heard the word, "I love you" all the time you were growing up. Many of you came through life and you never had a warm, fuzzy home relationship where the Bible was taught. You grew up pretty much fendng for yourself, and maybe your dad all his life told you how stupid you were. Maybe your mother told you how she was disappointed in you. Maybe you heard all your life that you were never going to amount to anything in life. Of course, after what, ten, fifteen, twenty years of that, you are going to believe that. You know what, that may have been true. You may have been a bum, you may have not been well in school, you may have been a rebellious child, all of those things. But that all changed the day you got saved because the Bible says,

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Now you have got to see yourself not as your mom and dad saw you, not as your mom and dad had you look at yourself. Now we have got to change your thinking process, and you have got to see yourself from God's standpoint. Before you were saved, God looked at you as a sinner. After you get saved, God does not look at you as a sinner anymore. Now He looks at you as His son. There is a world of difference between the two. Before you were saved, He dealt with your sin one way. After you are saved, now He deals with your sin another way, and it is not the same. It forms your whole concept of who you are. That is why one of the greatest studies that I have people come through that I taught you a while back, and now many of you were teaching it, is basically as far as I am concerned, the greatest single piece of teaching we ever put out for young Christians is the seven things that changed about you the day you got saved. Because your second problem is you do not see who you are.

6. I will tell you the third problem: we do not see other Christians as God sees them. We look at them the way we look at everything else, and that is usually wrong. We forget that when we were young Christians, we have been saved five, ten, fifteen, twenty years, we forget how we struggled when we first got saved. Now self-righteousness has set in, and we think we are better than everybody else. We forget our own battles and our own issues. Now we have young Christians come in, and they have the same issues that we had, but we do not have any tolerance for them. We do not have any patience for them. There is no question in my mind that the key to successful ministry is one word in the Bible, and that is the word unity. The Bible has the unique ability to do through the Holy Spirit of God is take every Christian no matter where he is at or where she is at on whatever level, from the very new people saved to the people around twenty years, and because of the blood of Christ, the Spirit of God, the Word of God form it all into one solidarity union called the body of Christ. That is the key. That is the key. That is the key.

Nikki the other night, Halliburton, I think she is in the nursery today, I tell you, she is last two Thursday nights, she ended the Bible study with two spectacular questions that just have really set me up. One of them just really I had never even seen before, and it was not this Thursday night. It was last Thursday night. She asked the question about Nehemiah chapter 4, I think it was verse 17 or 27, someplace there where they are building the wall. She wanted to know why the Bible says that they are building the wall with one hand and then they have a weapon in the other hand. I will be honest, I have never saw that before. I have been through Nehemiah a hundred times, and I just never caught that. When she said that, I am kind of swallowing and trying to, I mean, I am trying to formulate an answer to give everybody, but at the same time, I am trying to figure this thing out on my own. I am looking at this thing, and it just knocked me off my socks. I mean, it knocked me out of my socks. In a split second, I grabbed the concept. In Ezra, they are building the temple, a picture of your body, but in Nehemiah, they are building a church, a picture of a wall with all the structures inside, and the wall protected the people inside. The Bible says that when they are building the wall, they are working with one hand and holding the weapon in the other hand. Now we know the weapon is a sword, and we know the sword is a picture of the Word of God. But how in the world do you build anything with one hand? The key was that you have got one person over here holding the sword in this hand, working with this one, and then you have got another person over here holding the sword in this hand, working with this one, and the two working together in a concentrated, coordinated effort get the job done with one hand each, but the other hand on the Bible. That is unity. That is what this church ought to be doing. It is doing. That is exactly what the success of any church is going to be. One body, one spirit, one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one mind. They are all different concepts for you and me to study in the Bible to understand what is going on.

You know what I tell young couples when they get married or when they are going to get married? I want you to pray for me this week. I forgot to say this on my list. I have got a couple coming over this week that I am so burdened for and love so much. I am going to have the opportunity. They have asked me to do their wedding, and I am going to do it. I am absolutely just ecstatic about getting a chance to sit down with them this week. These are the kind of scenarios that I can find out where they are at with the Lord. You pray for me this week because I am going to. It is a great opportunity. I have prayed for these kids, and many of you have, and many of you have worked with them and encouraged them. I am going to get a shot at them this week. I am just praying on my knees that God gives me everything that I need to do. We have the wisdom of Solomon to figure this thing out and to do it. So I am excited about that.

But you know what I tell people when they get married or if they are married and they have marital problems? Many of you have come into this church, and you had marital issues. Some of you are working through them right now. It is okay. Everybody comes in with their problems. But many of you have got through those problems, and you are some of the strongest people in this church that I would trust just about with anybody to work with. But here is what I always tell them. You know, in the book of Ephesians chapter 5, it talks about the marriage relationship. It is our favorite chapter when you are doing a wedding. But at the same time, you are also told in there that it is not just talking about the wedding aspect as far as a marriage, but it is a picture of Christ and the church. Here is what I tell people at some point in our dealing with them. I would

say, "You know what? When you got married," the first thing I tell them is that marriage is not something that man designed. Marriage is something that God designed. I tell them that trying to run a marriage another way that God designed for it to work will never work. I tell them, "Here is why. Here is why marriages fail." First of all, people do not understand, and this is why churches fail too, by the way, because you cannot separate them out. The first reason they fail is because they do not understand what marriage is. The Bible says you sit down there and you have a wedding here, and we are going to have our first wedding in the church here. You are going to have your wedding here, are you not? You have got it all set up, got it booked and everything. You turn in your check, it is ten thousand dollars to rent this place. An hour. I do long weddings. I am happy for you. I am happy for you. I am happy. You know what? It is a thing where when I sit down to talk with somebody, here is what I tell them. I say, "You know what? When you have a wedding, and you have all been to weddings, you have the bride, the bride comes down to the deal, and the guy usually comes out here, and you have all your attendants." The bride and the groom stand before the pastor, and he goes through the ceremony, and then he pronounces them husband and wife. When you look at it, you see a bride and a groom, they kiss hard on the mouth, and then they turn around and they go out, and the guy usually says, "I introduce you for the very first time, Mr. and Mrs. so and so." At that point, the two that came in had single, now they are married. So we see two people walk in, and we see two people walk out. But that is not how God sees it. Because real marriage is not a physical thing, it is a spiritual thing. So when God sees it, He sees the two people, husband and wife, the Bible says in the book of Ephesians, those two become one. Now if two people, let me just ask you here fundamentally, if two people become one, but it takes two people to make up a marriage, and these two people become one, who makes the other half of that marriage? The answer is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ, because you two become one. So you are not married, you are not one. So you have got to have a partner in your marriage to make it work because marriage is two people. The other part of that marriage would be the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now it is the same way in a church. We probably have got 160 people all together here today, somewhere around that. But you know what, if you are all saved, and I do not doubt that you are, but if you are all saved, we see 160 different people. But when God sees it, He just sees one body. It is all He sees. Now if you saw that, a couple of things would happen. If you understood that, a couple of things would happen. We would not take so long to say goodbye. You would just yell at the door, "Bye, one body!" and be gone. No, no, no, not us. No, no, we are the original Walton family. "Goodnight, grandpa." "Goodnight, big boy," or "young boy," or "young boy," or whoever you are. That is us, you see. I love that. But in reality, that is the way we look at it. The way God looks at it, He sees everybody here, and He sees us in one body. The way we are successful in what we do is recognizing that we as a church, who are going to be married to Christ, just like the husband and wife, that is why He says, "This is a great mystery." But I speak concerning Christ and the church, because we as one body need to be married to Christ, the person of Christ. Same concept. Same concept. That is what most people do not understand. That is where your unity is. The devil's job is to stop unity, tear up the oneness. This is why you see where he fundamentally starts is with all the new Bibles. You realize that any given Bible study across this city that you will go to, probably if it has got forty or fifty people in it, you will probably have an NIV, an ASV, a New King James, an RSV, a Good News, maybe who else

knows what, maybe a King James Bible thrown in there, and they sit around in a Bible study, and somebody reads a verse, and then it does not match up to anybody else's verse in the Bible. There is no unity in that. You see, the first thing that the devil had to do to destroy unity in the church, destroy unity in the Bible. So Bible studies are relegated to everybody sitting around with a different translation, and somebody reading a verse, and they say, "Now, what do you think it means?" "And what do you think it means?" "What do you think it means?" "What do you think it means?" Everybody has got a different version of the Bible, so everybody gives a different opinion. At the end of the day, who cares what you think it means? What does it mean from God's Word to you? The Bible says God is not the author of confusion. How can He not have confusion when He has got thirty people reading thirty different verses, and it all reads differently? That is confusion, right? But that is where he starts. That is exactly where he starts. In the world, we say, "Let us get on the same page." You cannot do that in the modern-day Bibles, because some pages do not have the same verses on them that other Bibles do, because they left so many verses out. I am not here to talk about manuscript evidence today, but let us begin today in reading this chapter, and laying down a foundation that you understand where we are coming from.

Now, I want to read Chapter 14, the first four verses here, and here is what it says. We are going to tie all these three. I gave you three fundamental things that you need to have down, and then I am going to give you three more here in a minute, and this is going to be the basis from getting into Chapter 14 and 15. Let us pray.

Father, thank You for today. We pray You will give us wisdom and insight into all that we have to live through. We will look at today and help us lay a good, solid foundation for Chapter 14 and 15, which are probably two of the greatest chapters that we need to have as believers in this church to help other Christians. We will thank You and praise You in Jesus' name, for the sake we ask it. Amen.

IV. Understanding Weak Christians

You probably did not have to see very quickly past verse 1 of what the theme of this chapter is. The theme of this chapter is dealing with weak Christians, Christians who are weak in the faith. I think that it is important to define exactly what that means before we try to get into it, and what it means when the Bible talks about a weak Christian. A weak Christian can be a bad thing, or a weak Christian can be a good thing, but I want you to fully understand the difference. In a situation here, he is talking about a weak Christian as a good thing.

I have taught you many, many times, how that in the Bible there are seven basically stages of spiritual growth. It starts out with the babies and winds up as the aged. It runs through the gamut just like a little baby growing up and then coming to an adulthood where they take responsibility and accountability for everything in life. We talked about that many, many times, and I have laid it out many, many times. The other Thursday night, somebody asked a question, I cannot remember who it was, it might have been Nikki again. She asked a question about the six things that I had given a while back that by which you can measure your spiritual growth. I gave you all that simply because of the fact that when you come in as a young Christian, you are weak. Not in

a bad way, but you are weak. You do not understand everything. It does not mean that you do not want to learn everything, but there is no way that in a couple of weeks' time you can learn everything. So you have to depend on other things to help you figure it out until you get on your own feet spiritually.

Over the years of dealing with people and issues, you know what, they kind of fall into a couple of different basic categories. Now I know that everybody is different and everybody has different problems, but here is the bottom line that you are going to learn, and I will show you this when we get into biblical counseling. People may be different, problems may vary, but human nature is always the same. Learning the patterns of human nature is the key to dealing with people, and we all have the same basic fundamental flaws because we are all human. Most people, and I tell people this all the time, the best way to be the best biblical counselor you can be, and the best way to help other people's problems with things that they struggle with is to understand how it has worked in your own personal life and your own personal struggles. In other words, you have to apply the principles to yourself first. It never works in dealing with people when you want to have two sets of rules. You have got to apply the rules to you first, and then you can apply them to somebody else. Trying to do it without applying it to you, it will never work. It will just wind up being a self-righteous mess, and that is usually what happens. But you are going to find that by ease of understanding and complex problems, you are going to find that they basically fall into a couple of categories.

Now, this first category will be based on doctrinal differences, and I know that Chapter 14 is not dealing with that in any way, shape, or form, but I want you to understand the whole concept of it, so we will talk about this for just a few moments. You are going to find that we Christians have a tendency to get into heresy and bad teachings. The Bible talks about it in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 14, where it talks about that they are blown about by every wind of doctrine. What does that mean? Well, it is like a flag in a heavy wind. Wind in the Bible is a picture of the Holy Spirit of God, but it is also a picture of bad doctrine. What happens is, if somebody is weak in the faith, they do not have the ability to understand what is true teachings of the Bible and what is false teachings of the Bible.

We had a kid here a while back, and I really loved this kid, and it was one of those hard things for me because he was a nice kid, and I saw a lot of potential in him. But I had a couple of you guys working with him as we do, and we all talked about this, is the fact that we could just never get the kid to settle down on what he needed to study. His big problem was, as all young guys that are nineteen, twenty years old, he did not have a girlfriend, and true of girls nineteen, twenty years old and do not have a boyfriend, he wanted somebody else in his life. You know what, he was a nice kid, and he was a very nice kid, and I think about him a lot. But the bottom line was that he was so weak in the faith, and he would be in shape for a while, but nobody ever got into his world and tried to stabilize him to give him some foundational stuff. Because of that, he was weak. Because he was weak, he could not discern the real Bible in truth versus his emotion of wanting to be hooked up with a girl. I guarantee you, you could probably write the end of this story. The devil supplied what he wanted, and it was not the Bible. The devil brought a girl into his life, and the girl came to the place where it was a situation where that was the end of that.

This girl was in a church situation that was probably one of the worst situations for a Christian you could get into, a charismatic church. It was a situation where he just absolutely destroyed this kid. It was a situation where he did not have the strength to understand the Bible doctrine versus his emotions of wanting to be tied up with somebody else.

I look at this, and maybe you cannot see it this way, that is okay. This is what I get paid for looking at and seeing it this way. When I look at that, I see it very clearly. Here was a kid that probably had great potential. He probably would have done something great for the Lord. He would have had everything he wanted to do. But the bottom line, at the end of the day, he would not stabilize himself in a Word of God to make the right choices. Choices like that, you only have to make one bad one, and you are out. He is out. Probably will never get back. I have not talked to him for a long time, but I guarantee you, probably he is up through his eyebrows in that stuff over there. He never had a foundation in his life to be able to discern good doctrine from bad doctrine, so he is blown about by every wind of doctrine. I know of no better example than situations like that, because we see it all the time.

I told you before, the word charismatic itself means gifted. It is an organization that puts itself on some higher spiritual plane, much like for us studying church history, the Gnostics, back in the early church period. It is one of those things where they have no basis to it, and people get in it, do not understand it. It looks good. It is based on feeling, not based on Bible doctrine, so it goes anywhere. This is the part of the problem. In a charismatic world, and I am not bashing a charismatic church, or if you are charismatic here this morning, you know what, I am not, I have nothing against you personally, I am just stating the facts. I have been around for quite a while. I have dealt with them all my life. I know what they believe and I know how they operate. Because there is no hardline Bible doctrine in their life, you can have just about anything you want. On one hand over here, you have got the 700 Club, which is not a bad deal. I mean, he is not real goofy. He gets on there, he prays for people. I mean, I watch him every once in a while, and he is a decent guy. I believe he loves the Lord. But that is on this spectrum. Then you come over on the other end, and you have got the same organization, and they handle rattlesnakes, copperheads, cobras, black mambas, and handle the snake deal. In other words, there is no balance between the two. You can go on one end or the other end and everything in between.

When I lived in Ohio, I had a guy I worked with. He was a charismatic. You know what he did? Every person I won to Christ working at the Hoover Company, and I worked a day later or two days later, I would see that rascal pulling him off someplace telling him it did not have all that God wanted to have. It confused him. Bottom line is this, folks, when you got saved, you got everything that there is to have of God. You may not know how to use it, but you got it all. It would confuse the people that I would try to work with. I mean, that is the name of the game. That is simply the name of the game. You find it all the way down through there. I had a guy one time that came to the place where, where do you stop? When you have ever been to a situation like that, it is like, I want to talk with the last guy said. I mean, we had a place where they believe in healing. I believe that God heals. I just do not believe He heals in the apostolic way that they say He does. But the bottom line is, where do you stop that? I mean, I have got a guy over here that says, "Well, I believe I can heal sick people." Then there is another guy down here that I

knew that he has opened up what he called the full gospel gas station. His claim was that if your car burned oil, he could lay hands on the hood or on the engine and it could fix the engine rings. Now, where do you go with that? But that is what I am talking. If you do not have a final authority that sets limits where you go, where do you go? I read a story of testimony or heard it. I cannot remember where I did where a guy, a guy said that he could, he could raise dead people and he could heal people that were near death. Then somebody else said, told the story, heard this testimony verbatim where the lady got up and she said, "You know what? My cat got run over by a car and my daughter was crying, and I prayed to God and went over and I laid hands on the cat that came back to life." Where do you go with it? What do you stop with it? Your pet turtle? If there is not a fundamental foundational guideline for what we do or what we do not do, then we can do whatever we want. That is all I am saying. That is all I am saying. But that produces weak Christians.

V. Faith, Fact, and Feeling

I have given you probably the greatest three little word concept that you could ever want. Most of you use it. I hear you came at people all the time. You know what it is: faith, fact, and feeling. If you do not get nothing else out of this sermon this morning, and I hope you do, get those three words: faith, fact, and feeling. The Bible says that we walk by faith, not by sight. Now, faith is what everybody claims to have. Charismatics claim to have faith. Jehovah Witnesses claim to have faith. Church of Christ claim to have faith. Everybody in the world has faith. Barack Obama has faith. Everybody has a faith. Reverend Wright has a faith. Billy Graham has a faith. T.T. Osborne had a faith. Catherine Coleman had a faith. Everybody has got a faith. But that is not the issue. Is your faith built on the facts? See? Faith, fact, feeling. In other words, I have faith. But my faith is based on the facts of that book. When my faith is based on the fact of that book, you know what it does? It produces the right feeling. It tells me what is real and what is not real. Because you can say what you want to say. We all have our worst problem is our emotions. All of us. Maybe not as much as others, but we all struggle with that. When to cry. When not to cry. When to care. When not to care. When to help somebody else. When not to help somebody else. Your emotions is the thing that drives everything that you do. Of course, when it is not based on fact. In other words, your facts should dictate what you feel. That little concept of faith, fact, and feeling is one of the greatest little pieces of theological doctrine you will ever get your hands on.

So the first type of weak Christian will be people, anybody who claim things about God but know really nothing about His Word. Faith is not built on Bible doctrine. Facts. So they have faith and feeling, but they have no facts. Some people have facts and faith, but they have no feeling. The true balance shall to God what you ought to be out of you had to have faith, but that faith is based on the facts of the Bible and the facts of the Bible dictate your feelings. That is how it has to work.

Now, the next type will be in three categories, and they are the types that we want to talk about today that they are making reference to in Romans chapter 14. But I had to give you the whole bottle of wax, and these are the good one. Well, these two of them are good ones, and other

examples of weak Christians will be people who just got saved. Or in many cases, people who have been saved for twenty years or more or a long period of time, and they just never been taught the Bible. Those are the two ones that you want to have. Most people that come into this church come in in one category to the other. Many of you come here unsaved, you get saved, and you begin to grow. Some of you have been in churches for many years of your life, but you have been, you have been, you know what it has been, it was not real to you. Nobody cared about you. You got no Bible. You just went through the hoops, so to speak. Then you come to the point where you finally get a place where you can get all that you want from the Bible, and you immediately gravitate to it, and you begin the process of spiritual growth.

Then you have the third element that you are going to have in any church, and we do not have a lot of it here, but it happens wherever you go. That is people who just are saved, but they refuse to grow, or they quit growing. This is what Paul is talking about in Chapter 14. It is proper spiritual growth. Every church, every church, every pastor who pastors any church should have a detailed program for each member to grow to be what God wants them to be. Last week we talked about in Ephesians chapter 4, verse 15, where it talks about growing into Him, Christ. Every pastor, every church ought to have a plan, a detailed plan that each member could grow to where God wants them to be and to fulfill those three areas that we talked about by learning who God is, who you are, and then how you look at others.

You know what? I look at it this way: most churches are like going into Walmart or Kmart, and I have nothing against Walmart or Kmart. But when you go in there, or maybe, maybe over to Dillard's or maybe over to any place where you just walk in and buy off the shelf stuff, and you say you want a suit. So you go over to Dillard's someplace or you go to Walmart or Kmart because they sell suits now too. You walk in there, and you buy a suit. You may be a forty regular or forty-two regular, and whoever made the suit, you know, you are going to put it on, and you may have to mix or match a few things to get it off. In other words, the bottom line is this: you do not get a really good suit if you really want a really good suit. Now, personally, I do not really care about having a really nice suit. But if you want a really nice suit, it is going to cost you four or five hundred dollars. If you just want an off-the-rack suit, you are going to probably get it for a hundred, two hundred dollars. If you are really lucky and the blue light is going around, you are probably going to buy one and get the other one half price. Really a good day. But the bottom line is, I am going to be honest with you, and I do not really care how I look in cases like that. I have one really nice suit, and I wear that for funerals, but the guy cannot see me anyhow. So what was the point in all of that? But anyway.

If you want a really good suit that fits you well, do not go to Walmart, Kmart, do not go to Dillard's, do go to a tailor shop where somebody will make a suit that will fit you hand-tailored to you. I may say that in your spiritual training, get the same thing. Do not be satisfied with the spiritual training off the rack. Some churches turn out Christians like they turn out Twinkies down in town on a conveyor belt. Most Bible colleges, that is what they do. Most Bible colleges are not really a college that teaches you the Bible, they are an assembly line. The little guy and the little gal comes in on the end, and when they start to come down the conveyor belt, they put all the little pieces on them. But by the time they get halfway through, somebody spray paints

them with a three-piece suit, and they put a nice plastic smile on their face, and they work them down, and then they walk off the thing and go out to the world. No, no, no, no, no. Let me just tell you something. The best spiritual training you can have, and you should demand by the way, is to get built individually. You have needs that the person sitting next to you does not have. It would be like, if all of us guys here in the first two rows going in and buying a suit, and I just said, "You know what, give everybody a thirty-eight regular." It is not going to fit. Some of you it might. You have to have a suit or your clothes tailored to you. You should have your Bible tailored to you. Every church should have a process or a program. Now maybe you do not want it. Maybe you are in the third category here that you do not want to grow. But I am telling you what, if you are in the first two and you are just a young Christian or somebody has been around for a while and you have a desire to really grow, then I am telling you every church should have a detailed program for each member to grow through it. It is like I said, you can get one off the rack or you can have one handmade from somebody who really knows how to fit you and not the next guy.

You know, it is the same thing in life. Most of you, some of you younger kids probably do not think about this. But, you know, some of you older guys, you have, do you not have financial planning in your life? Do you not have a 401k or you have something that you hopefully that when you retire, you can fall back on. It will be worth anything at that point. But I mean, you all have it. When you go into your financial planner, do you say and you see a guy walking out when you are taking his place? You go down with him and the guy says, "Well, what do you want to do?" And you say, "Oh, I do not know. Just give me what you gave the other guy." You have your own specific financial needs and the plans you want to plan for. When you got your health care, I mean, you had a choice. I mean, you had to look at it. You had maybe two or three different plans you could take, an EMO or PMO or PMS or whatever they are. But you had to look through and say, "Well, my doctor is on this one. My doctor is on that one." But you did not simply walk in and say, "Oh, I do not really care. Give me what what is the majority doing?" Well, I mean, that all changed. You are going to get it now. You are going to get a mama care. But come on, you buy a car. You have five kids. You walk in and say, "Give me a give me a give me a Honda sedan." We buy everything in our life based on what our needs are. Why would you settle for the most important, precious thing in your world that is going to determine your judgment seat of Christ by just saying, "Give me one off the rack?" You ought to demand. You ought to demand that you get hand tailored to what your needs are, your spiritual relationship with God. You are right. You are right. It is the job of every church and every pastor. Get a personal plan for you. Sit down. Talk it through. Get a plan. I mean, it is exactly what you need to do. This church will be only as strong as the maturity level spiritually that people rise to. Very frankly, that all that depends on the leadership of the church, because I am a firm believer that everything rises and falls on leadership. Everything from the Bible basics class to the seven things that changed about today. You got to save to build you up in the faith.

Honestly, and I have told you this before. God has called me to do one thing, and it is the only thing I really do well. That is building people. But I have got to tell you the truth that it has taken me probably twenty-some years to put together a biblical process for building people and teaching people the Bible. Well, that does not mean that everybody before that period of time got

the short end of the stick. But the bottom line is that everything in life is a process, including my own spiritual growth and seeing how to do things. I built it on I built it on Paul's example going through that thing in my own life. I compared what who did what with me. I compared what I saw what God was showing me my own personality, my abilities, my strengths, my weaknesses, how God gave me the vision for what to do. I personally think that God, you know, the only reason God ever called me to pastor is because that is the only way I can build people because that is what a pastor is supposed to do. I am not a very good, I am not a very good organizational person when it comes to some things. So I have people do it. I let everybody run everything else in this church from the finances right up to the to the to the who gets the insurance where it goes, who pays for this, what kind of color the doors are painted. I had nothing to do with that. My focus is to get all that out with people who do it better than me so I can do the one thing that I do better than anything else in this world. That is teach people the Bible. Let me tell you something. I cannot fix your car. You do not want me to paint your house. You do not want me to plant your garden. You do not want me to wire your house for electricity. I will tell you what, you will get shocked when you turn the water on. I guarantee you. I mean, you are going to flush the toilet and all the lights will come on. I promise you. I mean, it is a day you do not want me to build you a spare bedroom. You do not. You do not. You do not want me to build you a spare bedroom. That is not me. But if you want to know the Bible and learn the Bible and get everything that God wants for you to have in an infallible system that cannot fail. I have got the plan for you. It took me twenty-some years to put it together, but it works. It works. I can build you into the man or the woman or the wife or the husband or the father or the mother or the Christian that you need to be. But it has to be one on one. I cannot mass produce you. I would never try. You can come on Sunday morning. You can come on Thursday night, and I can get a lot of things done with you and give you a lot of things. But if you just look around you, the greatest, strongest people in this church who carry the load of this church are the people that came in and got involved one on one and got what they needed and got their suit tailored to them. I do not know what to tell you. You may not like that, but it is true. It is true. It is true.

Years ago, I started coming through this thing, and I looked at the simple little plan that Paul had, and I just worked it and followed it through all the way through. I got looking over there at the boys in the books that Paul wrote, the young men that he ministered to and trained, that would be First and Second Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The first thing I saw that Paul had to start with that he makes a reference to is over there in Second Timothy chapter 1, verse 7, where he says to Timothy, "You have got to have a sound mind."

2 Timothy 1:7

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

To me, that was the Bible. If I do not have an absolute truth to put you into that you can judge everything by that does not change on a daily basis or a weekly basis or a yearly basis, that is the same standard today that it was 1900 years ago, then we are wasting our time. That is why the Bible says over there in First Corinthians chapter 2, verse 16. He asks the question. He says,

1 Corinthians 2:16

For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.

He says in Philippians chapter 2, verse 5,

Philippians 2:5

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

You see, the first thing I have to start with, and you have to accept, is a sound mind. Not yours. Yours is not sound. Not mine. Mine is not sound. We have got to get a mind that is absolutely 100% correct every time, every place, everywhere, and make that the absolute standard for everything that we are going to do.

You know what? Once you get a sound mind, the next thing I would build, then I can, once you get a sound mind, we have something to work with. Then we can build sound doctrine. That will be First Timothy chapter 1, verse 10, and Titus chapter 1, verse 9, or Second Timothy chapter 4, verse 3. Building Bible doctrine in your life is the key to building Christian character leadership. The Bible says over there in First Corinthians chapter 3, verse 11, the day you got saved, you laid a foundation in your life. That foundation is your salvation. The day you trusted Christ as your own personal Savior. Then he tells you that,

1 Corinthians 3:10

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

The Bible says that we need to build as a master builder. You know, we build on that foundation. That foundation is the foundation of your temple. Remember the temple in the Old Testament? Well, you do not have a literal one, you have got a spiritual, but you build it the same way. Every building block, every building block that you put on that foundation is a Bible doctrine. You ever notice how you build a wall? We do not have any brick wall down here that you can see, but the next time you see a brick wall, you want to know how it is. They put one course down through here, and then they put the course. Do not line them up over the joints. They put them where they where they span the joints because that is where you tie the wall in. That is where it gets its strength. That is where it holds itself together. In other words, all the blocks, building blocks have to tie in together. If you just put the building blocks in a course with the seams here, and then you put more blocks on top of the seams matching up, the wall will fall over. You have to tie the wall seams in together on the blocks. That is exactly what you have got to do with Bible doctrine. Every block being a doctrine. You want to become strong, get a sound mind, and then get some sound doctrine. Build on that foundation. Build that wall. Build that thing up. Be a wise master builder, and sound doctrine then leads to the next thing, Second Timothy chapter 1, verse 15. And I see this happen in your life, the sound words.

Ever get my book back there, "How to Study the Bible?" There is a whole section. That whole book is built around key words in the Bible. Key words in the Bible. That day, the day, those

days, the evil day, like an ass. I will tell you what, Thursday night, Sunday morning in the Bible basics in church history and Institute class and one on one, I have all designed to give you one thing. That is the sound words in the Bible that give you the understanding of how that book works. So we start with a sound mind. That is my process. I get a sound mind in your life, and I will beat you, teach you sound doctrine. Yes, that was right. Beat you into sound doctrine. I was right the first time. Then you get sound doctrine, and then you get sound words, and then you get to the place where you know what the sound words turn into. They turn into Titus chapter 2, verse 8, sound speech. That is where we come in. Down to City Union Mission. You are teaching discipleship. You are working as a prayer group leader. You are taking what you learn now, and the sound mind has worked in the sound doctrine, has worked in the sound words, and now you are taking what you have got inwardly, and it is producing a sound speech. You are learning how to put messages together. You stand up there, and you take those boys down there at the mission, and you lay it out. Some of you younger ones get up and you give your testimony. That is the beginning. That is the beginning. That is the beginning of putting it all together. You come to the point where you are at, that is your ability to communicate truth. You have got to work through this process, and as you, it is a natural process. It is not Bob prodding you along. It is just me following the greatest simple basic little plan that God showed me through the process of dealing with people over a period of twenty years. That is absolutely infallible. Getting you a sound mind, getting you sound doctrine which produces sound words which in time produces sound speech. You know what those things finally produce, and this is where we want to go in it. Titus chapter 1, verse 13, Titus chapter 2, verse 2. The sound mind, then you get sound doctrine, then I teach you sound words, and then you get to the place where you know what the sound words turn into. They turn into Titus chapter 2, verse 8, sound speech. That is where we come in. Down to City Union Mission. You are teaching discipleship. You are working as a prayer group leader. You are taking what you learn now, and the sound mind has worked in the sound doctrine, has worked in the sound words, and now you are taking what you have got inwardly, and it is producing a sound speech. You are learning how to put messages together. You stand up there, and you take those boys down there at the mission, and you lay it out. Some of you younger ones get up and you give your testimony. That is the beginning. That is the beginning. That is the beginning of putting it all together. You come to the point where you are at, that is your ability to communicate truth. You have got to work through this process, and as you, it is a natural process. It is not Bob prodding you along. It is just me following the greatest simple basic little plan that God showed me through the process of dealing with people over a period of twenty years. That is absolutely infallible. Getting you a sound mind, getting you sound doctrine which produces sound words which in time produces sound speech. You know what those things finally produce, and this is where we want to go in it. Titus chapter 1, verse 13, Titus chapter 2, verse 2. The sound mind, then you get sound doctrine, then I teach you sound words, then I develop you into sound speech, and in time it produces a sound faith. That is the process. It is just that simple.

Now when you get a sound faith, you are strong. You are mature. You not only know what you believe, but you know why you believe it. You basically can sit down with any group of people. You can get in any scenario at work or any scenario in your neighborhood or your friends or your boyfriend or your girlfriend, and now you have the ability to communicate truth to them, and you will not be shaken. You can meet all the Charismatics in the world. You can meet all the Church

of Christ in the world. You can go out all the job. You can meet every scenario and circumstance in life now, and your faith will not be shaken because a biblical New Testament process based on the book of Romans started with the book of Romans. You get a sound mind working in the sound doctrine turn into sound words turn into sound speech and now produces a sound faith. The problem we have got in Romans chapter 14 is we have somebody who is weak in the faith. Once you get to the sound faith, you have the right perspective. You have the right purpose. You have the right passion, and you have got everything you need to have, and that is the way it has to work. This is what our prayer groups are designed to do. This is why I am so excited to see some of you new people step out and take it. This is why I am so excited to see people get involved, and you begin to take those things and develop each other and help each other. It is just another dimension of what we are trying to do. I from the very one I talked about my home is open an hour a week. Anybody wants to come over to help you get a plan and monitor the plan. Our job as a church is to always keep the young ones moving, and the younger ones will keep the older ones moving. Young Christians if they do not grow properly will get into issues. They will become self-righteous. They will become prideful. They will become envy. They will become strife. Knowing the Bible has to be balanced with the ability to use the Bible.

VI. Three Basic Needs

Every child of God. Now here comes your second thing I talked about. I gave you the first three. Now here is your second thing you need to get down and understand this. Every child of God has three basic needs that need to be met. Everybody in this room. It is the same way with your marriage. I will use this when I deal with marital couples, but it is also true of individuals. Every marriage in this room, if you are married, your wife has three basic needs, and you have three basic needs. If you do not understand not only what those three basic needs are but how to meet them from the Bible standpoint, you are out for your in. This is why marriages fail. This is also why Christians fail. They do not understand it fundamentally there are some basic needs that need to be met. If you do not meet those needs, everything else is academic. It means nothing. You will not make it. This is why the divorce rate in marriage is astronomical today. This is why the problems in churches are astronomical today. Because people do not understand the three basic needs that need to be met and balanced in the process of growth.

7. The first one is you have physical needs.
8. The second one is you have spiritual needs.
9. The third one is you have emotional needs.

Now we talked about faith, fact, and feeling a little while ago. Here we go. You have physical need. That is faith. You walk by faith, not by sight. You have spiritual need. That will be the facts. You have emotional need. That will be your feelings. See how it works. It is the same with the husband and wife. You see, guys, let me tell you a little secret in life. We get our satisfaction and the worth of what we do because of what we do. If you go out and bag a twenty-eight point buck, you feel good about yourself. If you get a raise at work or a pat on the back at work or somebody comes in after you worked on a project, they say, "Boy, you did a great job." You feel good about it. We want to, we want to, that is why you have such competition with guys in

sports. You hit a home run. I mean, you feel good about yourself. I mean, you may not, some guys will walk around and gloat about, other guys will just take it inside and say, "Wow, you know what, I just, I am happy with myself," because your self-worth, your goal, your what you do in life is dependent on what you do success-wise. Of course, you and me because of the fact that we are so idiosyncratic, we look at our wife and we think that she gets the same kind of deal. She gets her self-worth because of the fact that she is, you know, she has a job, she works all day long, and she got a raise or somebody patted her on the back or, or, you know, she has got the kids she has got to look for. I mean, that is what really makes her happy. No, no, no, no, no, this is the difference. A woman, a man gets his satisfaction because of what he does. A woman gets her satisfaction from the security that she gets from her husband, two different needs.

I have told you this before. I was at a football game one time years ago. I used to watch the kids go live right behind there. In a typical example, I am sitting down here, and there is a mom and dad who are sitting in front of me, and I know that the kid that is playing the game is their kid. So they both have got his jersey down with his number and a name on the back and signs and flare guns and everything else. The kid was playing quarterback, and it was a thing where it was a good kid, it was a good quarterback, and the ball got snapped to him, and whatever happened, he was both in a pretty broke up, so he is going to run the ball. Gutsy move, I love it. He is going to run the ball. So he comes around left the center, and boy, he tucked that ball under his arm, and he puts his head down, and he starts plowing through that thing, and about nine guys just creamed him. I am sitting right behind his mom and dad. Mom brought up, "She is all together, kill my boy!" And his dad jumped up and said, "That away, son, go get him again!" Two different viewpoints. That is actually the way it is. Now you as an individual Christian, let me tell you something, you have physical needs. You have spiritual needs. And you have emotional needs. My job, our job as mature Christians, is to help young Christians get those three areas fulfilled. This is what he is telling us in Chapter 14. Older Christians should understand some things and not become a stumbling block. The Bible, older Christians are always helping the younger Christians all the way through the New Testament and even back in the Old Testament. Of course, he says in verse 1,

Romans 14:1

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

Receive him, but not to cause problems to you older Christians.

VII. Principles for Helping Young Christians

There are a couple of things you need to understand as we go into this chapter in helping young Christians who have not maybe the spiritual wisdom that you and I may have. These are typical problems that they do not want to be turned into stumbling blocks. It is a learning process. I always tell people, as I teach them about the Bible and how to put it all together, I talk about five or six things that you need to always remember.

10. The first thing is simply this: when you teach somebody the Bible, you have to be very careful. One of the things you always have got to keep in your mind in the back of your mind

is you cannot teach somebody the Bible on a higher level than where they are at spiritually. Sometimes we think because we understand it, they understand it. That is not true. What happens is it winds up becoming a stumbling block for them.

11. I will tell you something else: you cannot teach the deep things of the Bible if you totally do not understand them yourself. A lot of Christians are like the Athenians over there in Acts chapter 17, verse 21, where Paul says all they wanted to do is hear and tell some new thing. You get a lot of God people like that. I do not know how many times, you know, I got a phone call sometime during the week by somebody that was a Thursday night Bible study or a Sunday morning, and I laid some out some whopping thing out there, you know, that shook the world, you know, when everybody saw before, and the first thing they try to do is go out and try to teach it to somebody else at work, and they look like an idiot. That is what they call me on the phone and say, "What do I do?" And I say, "Well, I get a big sign says, 'I am an idiot,' and wear it around the rest of the day." I do not want to tell you. You should never try to teach the Bible if you do not totally understand it yourself. What happens is you have young Christians who do not understand even what you understand, and you try to explain it to them, and you make an absolute mess out of it, become a stumbling block, and you lose your witness to be able to talk with you because they look at you as an idiot. You have got to never under, you have got to always understand that you have got to be aware of the crowd that is around you.
12. Third thing is know your limitations, having the wisdom and understanding to apply the truth that you do know, and this takes discernment and discretion.
13. Another thing that you always want to remember is never teach all the Bible that you know. I do not teach you all the Bible I know. I am very conscious. I could teach you some things Thursday night that would scare the fire out of half of you and send the rest of you out the door. I mean, you want to have some fun sometime, how about if I take you through the blood sucking vampires from Jupiter? Would you like that one? You have to have wisdom, discernment, discretion, always being aware of your crowd. You never teach all the Bible you know. You do not do it just because you want to show off of what you know. In other words, you are always guarded by information that you give because it has got to be relative to the young Christians that are there.
14. The fifth one, and this is probably times it is right back into fourteen here, learn to choose your battles. Some things are worth fighting over and some things are not. I know Christianity is a warfare in Ephesians chapter 6, but there are some things that are worth fighting over and other things that are not, and one of the marks of a mature Christian is to know when to let it go and not force the issue and choose your battle. That is probably the hardest thing for most Christians to do because that takes discernment and discretion and that takes spiritual wisdom.
15. The last one, and that is where we are at now, these last two, you need to learn the difference between a doctrinal issue and a conviction or a personal preference because their lives your decision to choose your battles. You are going to find as you work with people, and this is what chapter fourteen is all about, chapter fourteen starts out with the issue of vegetarian versus a meat eater. You are going to find out that many people they believe things in the Bible that are not really Bible based but rather their own personal preferences or conviction

because that is where they are at. As with young Christians, you do not fight over those things, you will be smart enough to let them grow out of it.

I will give you a couple of examples. I do not think you will mind me using this, I think I have even said it before. You all know Marion, Marion, my best buddy on the phone. You know, while we are back there. I am going to tell this story. It is okay, but I have beginnings. What in the mind about you cutting that guy up with that hatchet that time. I did not that one. Now when I met Marion, I have known his wife for four years. Lucy, right. I have known his wife for years. She is like my own daughter. I mean, her dad and me and mom are just like lifelong friends. Her dad and I got arrested one time together years ago. We went out to Long Vue Lake, not Long Vue Lake. It was not even that far, it was right out on Raytown Road there right past 87th Street. Back then it was all undeveloped. So he has got an AR. I have got an AR-15. He has got an M-14, and we want to go out and shoot. Little did we know that it was in still in the city limits. So we drove up my jeep up in the back there, but he is big round telephone pole. We put target up. We are banging away, man. We are just banging away. This conservation somebody called the cops, and this conservation guy comes up, and he did not even have a gun. I said, "I said, you know what, we better do what he says." And he says, "Why is that?" And I says, "Because we have got two guns, and he does not know gun, and he is still not afraid to tell us to prop our guns. So he has both planned to do something that we do not know." Well, that is how far we go back together. We are no big deal. We shot the guy, buried him. We shot the guy, buried him. They never found him to this day.

Anyway, the moment I met Marion, I knew that God was going to give him to me. Him and his wife. We talked some things, and I never forget the first time that he and I met together, and we talked through some things, and he was going to, I want him to come to church. In fact, from that first time, I do not think they have ever missed a church service other than maybe we are on a honeymoon. Marion told me this, he says, "You know what," he says, "Well," he says, "I am willing to come along." He said, "But I want you to know." He says, "I do not." I said, "I would like to have a drink every once in a while." And he said, "I said, I do not think anything is wrong with a beer every once in a while." Now at that particular point in time, see, I could have caused the problem. I could have pulled all Deuteronomy chapter 32. I could have went to nine thousand different places and laid the whole thing up. You know what I just said, "Fine. I thought what you want to do. No problem." Because I did not make an issue out of it, because I understood that is where he was. Even though I knew what the Bible said about it. It was not, I guarantee you, you could not get him to drink a beer now or anything else now if you if you tied him down and tied his hands behind his back. You know why? Because he grew through the process. I found this. It is a lot better when God in some cases, it is a lot better when God tells you what is wrong with what you are doing than somebody else pointing it out. You know this, I have not noticed that. You have got to, but that takes wisdom, that takes discernment to know when to do that. I mean, it just does. You are going to find that people have all kind of goofy things, and you have got to put up with it.

I had a lady one time, you know, work really casual in our church, and I had a lady one time a couple of years ago. A nice lady, but you know, one of those kinds, she comes up and she says,

she says, "You know what would really make me happy?" And I said, "No." She says, "If you would wear a suit and tie on Sunday." She says, "It just in my mind, you just, you just cannot, a pastor needs to look his best, and you need to wear a suit and tie." I looked at her and I said, "You know what, that is a great point." I say something back to you. She says, "Yes." I says, "You would look better if you lost twenty pounds." Oh, why would you get mad at that? I have got to wear a suit, but she can come on. Now I was not serious, but I was making my point. Do you think if I put a suit of tie on, I would be any holier than I am? You get a lump of coal for Christmas. It does not matter if they put it in a big box with bows and all kinds of stuff on it or they put it in a cardboard paper sack. It is still a lump of coal. Clothes do not make the man. Now I think you ought to look nice when you come to church, but you know what, I do not care. I have people a couple of asked me a couple weeks ago when I asked them if they would come to church, and they said, "Well, yeah, we would. Do we have to dress up?" And I said, "You look fine. Come the way you are." I mean, do not wear these clothes every day until you come here, but I mean, you are fine. You have got to be clear with people. But you find people with those kind of scenarios, you see. I mean, some churches they have dress codes. You know, and I have always thought that was stupid. But that is where people are at. You go to some churches that if the women wear slacks, you are, I mean, you are, you are of the devil. If you do not have a dress on, you know, it is that you are not spiritual because they that is not a Bible doctrine.

I was in a place one time when Barb was there, and the guy was preaching to twenty-five hundred people, and he was so hot and rolling on this thing that he basically said that if you are a woman here today and you have slacks on, he said, "You are a dirty legged whore." I would never say that in any way, shape, or form or anything. That is stupid. Now that same guy about four years later, his wife left him. I wonder why. Crazy stuff, man. I have had pastors get up and say, and this is how stupid it is. I have had pastors get up and say, "You know what. Bible says that a woman should not wear that which pertaineth to a man because if you have got slacks on today and you are a woman, you are wearing a girl wearing a girl wear clothes pertaining to a man." How so? That verse is in the Old Testament, and in the Old Testament, every man back there wore a short skirt robe. So ladies, if you have a skirt on today, according to the Bible, you have on man's clothes. How stupid it is. Now I know I learned a long time ago, you cannot get a hold of people like that. If I put rules up here and I said, "Everybody has got to wear a dress." You know what happened? Some of you wear a dress so short that, I mean, you know what, and so then I have got to add to the sign. "You have got to have a dress, but it has got to be long." Then you know what happens? You wear one so thin the mosquito could fly through without breaking his wing. So then he has got to add another rule. "It has got to be aggressive. It has got to be long. It has got to be thick." I know what you do. You get one so tight that it looks like a skin diving suit. So here is my answer to the problem. I will just teach you that when you are dressed in the morning to go to church wherever you go. Dress to please the Lord. Whatever you have on will be right. See how simple that is? But you have got to deal with people like that. I have had people that have come to this church that the moment they walked in, they looked around and they saw the way the ladies were dressed, and they are out of here. I do not know what to tell you.

Back home in Ohio, we had a guy named Paul Stump. Paul Stump was an idiot. Went to Bible college. In fact, they went to Dr. Ruckman's School when he was one of the rejects from down there, and Paul Stump was an idiot. Absolutely an idiot. Paul Stump, you know, and we believe that King James Bible was the Word of God. I mean, I will tell you what, no question about it. But we have had people come to Thursday night Bible study with another Bible. Did you ever see me meet him at the door and tell him to leave? You ever see me walk up, some of you may have a different Bible here this morning. Do you see me walking over and doing, I have got three or four guys back there that the Bible patrol to make sure that the demonic Bibles and you bring them in and come in here? Absolutely not. Well, I, who me, Bible Alexander, Bible Bob, the guy to believe the King James Bible to be, I believe that is the Bible. I told people that that is what they understand right now, then keep on using it. It is okay. It is okay. But old Paul Stump, he would go over there and he would catch you at the door, and I watched him one time, and it was a goofiest thing I saw in my life, and he would go to show you. Paul would walk over there, and he had a real gruff war. He looked like this, you see. He saw a kid come into church one time, and he had another translation, and he says, he talked. He said, "Hey, whose Bible you have got there?" He looked up and said, "My Bible." He said, "No, that is not what I mean." He said, "Where did you get your Bible from, son?" The kid said, "My mom and dad gave it to me." He could not even understand where the kid was coming from. I have always found out it is better than if God shows some people some things and let them grow. You see, my job is not to tell you what to do. In a church, I have always found out it is better than if God shows some people some things and let them grow. You see, my job is not to tell you what to do. In a doctrinal sense, there is no question to it, but in your own preference and personal thing that you have got to grow through. The best thing you can do is just teach them the Bible and let God show them exactly where they are. Give them the grace, the patience. If they keep coming and grow through right, they will grow through it. As a pastor of a leader, you have to be able to discern what is a doctrinal issue and what is a personal preference.

Now, you know, water baptism for salvation, tongues, lose your salvation, Calvinism, you know, all those things, that is another issue. You have to deal with those. But when it comes to situations where people struggle with issues that are non-doctrinal issues. That is what Paul says in Romans, he says, "Receive that person, but not to doubtful disputation." Do not make a doctrinal issue out of something that is not a doctrinal issue. If everybody in this church, the majority of you understand the Bible and truth and are strong, then our job when somebody comes in like that. We do not have them come in very often at all. But you need to know sooner or later you are going to bump into somebody like this. You have got to learn to choose your battles. When to fight and when not to fight. That is the key.

Two great verses, and these are everything in here is a biblical principle for ministry this morning. But two great verses for me that I have always used are found in Proverbs chapter 26, verses 4 and 5. It simply says this, verse 4 says,

Proverbs 26:4

Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou also be like unto him.

Then verse 5 says almost the same thing. It says,

Proverbs 26:5

Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit.

Of course, the difference between those verses is the discretion and discernment that I am talking about. Verse 4 says, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Of course, in that particular situation, when somebody comes in and maybe on Thursday night Bible study or whatever the case, they have a question about the Bible, and they are screwed up in something in the Bible. I mean, this phrase for instance, somebody comes in and says, "Well, you know what, Bob says I like the Bible, and I read the Bible, but I just do not believe the Bible is really the Word of God. I mean, I just have a tough time, and I get this a lot. I do not understand how God could be perfect Bible if man wrote it." I understand that. I understand that. Of course, so you get two ways to question. One guy comes in, and he is looking for a fight, and he is making a statement that there is no way the Bible is going to be the Word of God. So in that particular case, you answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit. You nail him. He comes in on a Thursday night or sometime in here, and he tries to disrupt the thing, and he already has made up his mind, and he is going to throw something out. Then in that particular case, you answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceits. You do not let him get away with it.

Now you get the same. Another guy comes in who has the same question, but he does not know any difference. He wants to know, and he is just going by where he is at. He said, "Well, Bob, I just do not understand how the Bible can be absolutely perfect and pure if man wrote it." Well, in that case, verse 4, "Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest he be like unto him." In other words, understand one guy is looking for a fight, the other guy is looking for an answer. Do not deal with him the same way. The young guy who wants to learn and wants to know, that is where he is at. You do not give him the Paul Stump treatment. You take him where he is at. You receive him and then you work him, help him, give him the grace. Sit down and talk with him, work through whatever you have got to do. The other guy does not want an answer. See that is the difference between the two times of weak Christians. Now we have all been there. We all come through there. You know when it is a thing where, you know, you have all of those issues that you have got to deal with. So our job chapter 14 is to understand not everybody has had the light that you and I have had. You have been around here for three or four years. You have got a tremendous amount of truth. Now I do not know what you did with it. But if you are paying attention and you are doing what you are supposed to do, you come up the levels pretty quickly, and you get a handle on the Bible where you learn how to use it. Our job is to understand there are people that come in, people that you are going to work with who do not have the light that you and I have. You cannot cut them off and just whack them. You have got to understand that they are coming in, and we receive them but not to doubtful disputations. Do not cause a fight with them over something that is doctrinal. Give them the grace. Understand where they are at. Be able to allow them to grow. They have the same opportunity that everybody in this room had. That is the key. You receive them. Romans 14:1, you take him in but not to doubtful disputes. You do not give him problems over where he is at. It will be a stumbling block for him.

When we get into this chapter next week, we will start to look at this great chapter, and we are going to learn some great things that we need to operate by. I do not care if you are in level one, level two, or level three. You get to the point where you learn how to use what you know. When God brings people in that maybe you bring them in or they come in here and they have different ideas about things. I am even going to the point with doctrinal differences because I read the person of whether they are asking or they are a hard mainliner that I have got to deal with. But you learn to realize that people need grace. Because we have the truth does not mean that everybody understands it like we do. We have to have the tolerance. We have to have the patience. We need to have the compassion. The same things that was given to us when we first got saved. Of course, that is exactly what we need to do.

Now we are going to pray here in a moment. We will be dismissed. Ladies, do not forget next Saturday morning 9:30. I have got a special surprise for you. It is going to be a great time when we get our ladies groups all fired back up again. Guys, make sure you get all your groups covered and taken care of like we talked about yesterday. Do not forget the candy Thursday night and next Saturday morning, and then stick around to plan to help us stack it all together and get it ready for the kids next week at 9 o'clock. Let us have a word of prayer, and I will see you throughout the week and all the different things that we are involved in. God bless you. I love you. Thank you for being here, and I hope that it was a blessing to you. Father, we.