

**Schedule of Meeting Times:**

WKAC 1080 AM Sunday 7:30 AM  
*Speaker, Robert Emerson*  
Study Sunday 10:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Morn 11:00 AM  
Worship Sunday Eve 5:00 PM  
*Singing every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday evening*  
Study Wednesday 7:00 PM

**Preacher / bulletin editor:**

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“Now the God of  
patience and of  
comfort grant you to be  
of the same mind one  
with another according  
to Christ Jesus,”

— Romans 15:5



**Servants during October:**

**Songleader:** Stanley (2), Larry (9), Peter (16), Stanley (23), Larry (30)

**Reading:** Mike B

**Announcements:** Stanley

**Table:** Larry, Marty, Mike M, Peter

**Wednesday Lesson:** Stanley (5), Kris (12), Larry (19), Stanley (26)

**Lawn Mowing (week starting):**

Kris (2), Marty (9), Stanley (16), Larry (23), Kris (30)

**Hays Mill church of Christ**

21705 Hays Mill Road  
Elkmont, AL 35620

# The Bible . Examiner

“Examine everything carefully...” —1 Thessalonians 5:21 NASB

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## When Christians Disagree

by Paul Earnhart

Without question, Paul urges the unity of the Lord’s disciples: “Now the God of patience and of comfort grant you to be of the same mind one with another according to Christ Jesus: that with one accord ye may with one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” Rom 15:5,6. But such unity is not automatic. It must be earnestly sought, not simply by teaching the great unifying facts of the gospel, but by manifesting the unifying spirit of patient, longsuffering love, Eph 4:1-6. And that spirit will be absolutely essential, because in spite of the disciples’ common commitment to the one Lord, and the one Spirit and to the one faith, one baptism, one body and one hope that arise from them, as Paul makes clear in Romans 14, that

unity will not exist in absolute uniformity of thought. There will always be “weak” brethren whose scruples the “strong” must bear with patiently; and the “weak” in turn must not judge the freedom of the “strong.”

But the fact that the strong are to “bear the infirmities of the weak” does not mean that unlearned or perverse men who are disposed to subvert the faith of others by their untoward and unbiblical ideas should be tolerated.

Paul warns in the same letter to the Romans that they are to “...mark them that are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned; and turn away from them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Christ, but their own belly; and

by their smooth and fair speech they beguile the hearts of the innocent," Rom 16:17,18. The spirit and attitude of the deeply conscientious "weak" brethren of Romans 14 are in stark contrast to those of Rom 16:17,18. It is the latter that bear a striking resemblance to those "false brethren... who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" and whose teaching put in jeopardy "the truth of the gospel," Gal 2:4,5.

And not only is there a difference in attitude on the part of those disciples whom Paul said the Romans were to receive and those from whom he urged them to turn away, but there is a difference of significance as well. The scruples of the "weak" in Rome were not "in the realm of opinion" because they had been clearly addressed by revelation, but the practices which such scruples elicited from the "weak" were a matter of indifference to God. There was no sin in eating or not eating meat. There was no transgression in working or abstaining from work on the Sabbath, Rom 14:6-10. The only sin possible in all this was the sin of doing what you doubted to be


pleasing to God, Rom 14:14.

And there is another difference in the matters being dealt with in Romans 14 and those which bring the strongest rebuke and rejection by the apostles. They do not involve matters which are at the very heart of the gospel, such as whether Jesus is the Christ or if there will be a judgment or whether there is to be a resurrection. The New Testament does not seem to give any quarter to those disciples who come to deny that Jesus is Lord, 2 Pet 2:1, or who reject the resurrection of the dead, 1 Cor 15:12-19, or the second coming of Christ and eternal judgment, 2 Pet 3:3,4.

The same might be said for other views, which are inimical to the very process by which one becomes and remains a Christian. It seems unlikely that Paul would urge the Romans to warmly receive such disciples, especially those who came to subvert the faith and godliness of other Christians, 1 Tim 6:3-5; 2 Tim 2:16-18. And further, there is no parallel between the occasions of dispute in Romans 14 and cases where immorality is not just entertained as a possibility but practiced. About

that Paul made himself very clear: "...I wrote unto you not to keep company, if any man that is named a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such a one no, not to eat," 1 Cor 5:9-11.

All this having been said, it needs to be added that every Christian who holds a false view on some Bible subject is not therefore a false teacher. To take such a position is to indict every "weak" brother in the kingdom. They all hold mistaken views or entertain doubts and uncertainties about matters concerning which the Bible has spoken. They need patient teaching, not accusations and

rejection. The same may be said of the "strong" who may not yet have perfect understanding of all that God has spoken in the gospel and hold views that are not in complete harmony with the Scriptures. When such views are held privately, Rom 14:22, or even taught, if they do not by nature threaten the faith and purity of others, they do not make a man a "false teacher." If it is otherwise, we will all have been brought under a judgment that is without hope. There must be some setting in which earnest brethren can discuss their differences and continue to study and learn without bitter recriminations against each other. 



## *Remember in Prayer*

Joyce is still struggling with cancer. Pam continues to deal with the pain of shingles; please pray for both her and Buddy. Continue to pray for Carolyn Dennis, the

Emerson's, and Dot Hice.

Please pray also for those in authority, especially for brethren that are serving on our behalf in governmental agencies. 