

Here in Romans 14 Paul addresses the strong and weak in the faith. In the faith, not in their faith.

Rom 14:1-4

1 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. 2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. 3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. 4 Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. 7 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. 8 For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. 9 For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. 10 But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written:

"As I live, says the Lord,  
Every knee shall bow to Me,  
And every tongue shall confess to God."

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. 13 Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.

In this section of scripture Paul is dealing with Christian liberty.

The two groups that Paul addressed here.

- strong and the weak.

The strong

- had a wide view of Christian liberty

While the weak

- were very legalistic in their approach,

Each party had their problems, but they did have something in common:

- they failed to love the other.

## 2

Those that were stronger in their faith were most likely the dominant of the two groups and

The weak in the faith were not Judaizers (those that replace Christ with the law)

They were a group that failed to realize that the Jewish rituals they observed

- such as laws,
- holy days,
- certain foods etc. were no longer in effect.
- All of this was now replaced by Christ.

Paul will address both parties:

- And encourages them not to pass judgement on the other

In acts chapter 17:11 the Bereans checked the scriptures to see if what Paul was saying was true.

One of the first disputes in the early church was in Acts 15 having to do with law and grace. A group got together and said, hey, unless you're a Jew and you've been circumcised you can't be saved.

So Paul and Barnabas went up to Jerusalem to settle the dispute among them.

Peter rose up and said: God knows the heart and acknowledged the Gentiles by giving them the Holy Spirit and made no distinction between them. So Peter asked, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we are able to bear?

1 Receive one who is weak in the faith

Paul opens the chapter with the word "receive" - proslambánō

- Lambánō means to take or receive something to yourself.
- To lay hold of and not let go

So Paul is saying, don't let them go!

But the Greek preposition "Pros" means

- to turn your face towards.

So when we speak of prayer, the Greek word is proseuchē (prōwsef-hà)

- means to turn your face towards God.

You need to receive by

- turning your face toward your brother or sister.

Aquila and Priscilla Acts 18:26.

- a great example of what the mature are supposed to do with the young in the Lord.
  - Encourage them
  - Teach them
  - Mentor them

This chapter of Romans starts with the word “receive” and it goes thru chapter 15 verse 7 and ends with the word “receive.” That’s all considered one section.

Rom 15:7

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

Paul is saying to turn your face towards one another just as Christ turned His face towards us!

Paul uses a definite article when speaking of “the faith”.

He’s talking about the complete body of teaching,

- the theology of the New Testament.

Paul was speaking to those that did not yet have a full understand of salvation as a free gift

Paul opened chapter 8 by telling the believers

- that there is now therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.

So, I believe he’s talking about “the faith” as a body of teaching.

Not all Christians have the same world view

When Paul speaks of someone that’s weak,

- He’s not talking about one with a weak will.

He’s talking about the liberty of your conscience.

If we’re not spending time with the Lord:

- Then we’ll be focused more in the world system

There are 4 different groups of people that may be identified here.

Ex idolaters because of 1 cor 8.

The aesthetics

- That was a branch of philosophy or in this case idolatry dealing with the nature of beauty.

Legalistic Christians

Jewish Christians

All of these groups were most likely in Rome.

Then Paul says: Rom 14:1b

but not to disputes over doubtful things

- dialogismós - dia lo ees mose; to judge two ways.
- It's like someone having to choose between a fork in the road without knowing which is the best road to take

2 For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables.

Some people walk around with a self-righteous attitude.

Paul says that some thought they could eat all things while others only ate veggies.

To some, meat wasn't a stumbling block.

Some followed the ordinances rather than the Lord.

Paul says,

- Receive the weak!

He's not talking about physical weakness, it's spiritual.

Some struggled when others ate meat and they chose to be vegetarians.

Paul faced a similar problem in Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 8

- Paul had to address things offered to idols,
- mainly meat that was offered to idols.

People were worried that animals were slaughtered

- as sacrifices in pagan temples,
- then served in the adjoining restaurants.

No such Jew would even consider eating such meat.

In verse 1,

- Paul is dealing with the doctrine of justification by faith.

- People needed to stop looking at the other persons “failure”
- or their “lack of faith.”

Paul said earlier in Romans 10.

Rom 10:9-13

9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the Scripture says, "Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. 13 For "whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

3 Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him.

Despise - (Exouthenēō - “ex” is the word “out” and “thenēō” is to “throw”)

We each have different convictions, but our convictions don’t determine our position in Christ.

Jesus said in Matt 15:11 it’s not what goes into a man that defiles him but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.

him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; (both the strong and the weak have to learn that they have to treat the other the way God does) for God has received him. (Paul is saying that these such matters are trivial, why would we even go there about such issues)

Both groups were guilty,

- one of pride
- the other was judgmental.

So Paul has to remind both groups

- that God received both alike.

We will always have differences in opinions among the brethren,

So who are we to judge. In fact, Paul says in chapter 2:1 whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

And we Christians that are stronger or more secure in our faith should never feel as though we have the liberty do anything and everything we want.

Paul said in:

1 Cor 6:12

12 All things are lawful for me, but all things are not helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

There are limitations to what a Christian can do.

The idea is of an athlete having the freedom to move along a path.

- All things may be lawful,
- but not all progress my Christian walk.

Paul described our life as a walk and

- at other times he said to run to obtain the prize.

Hebrews 12 says to run with faith.

The second half of 1 Cor 6:12 is really a play on words.

- It's saying that all things are under my power
- but I won't be under their power.

4 Who are you to judge (condemn) another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

Jesus said during His sermon on the Mount not to judge.

Greeks usually held trial at night in order to be fair.

Jesus said not to judge the Pharisees had their own standard of righteousness and were always quick to judge others.

Criticism is an easy thing to fall into.

- People often tell us that we are not to judge

What they really mean is

- that you're not to have an opinion

Some even say that the bible says not to judge!

- Oh no it doesn't.

Jesus said in John 7:24, Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment."

If we are a servant to God, and He is our Master

- We don't need to seek acceptance or approval from others

That's why Paul says:  
To his own master he stands or falls

- literally stands or fails,

5 One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced (fully assured, overflowing) in his own mind.

The Jews regarded the Sabbath as holy

Christians began celebrating Sunday as a day to meet in celebration of the risen Savior.

People become legalistic and hypocritical!

Gal 2:11-14

11 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; 12 for before certain men came from James (Jerusalem church), he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision (people that said this was required for salvation). 13 And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy.

14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

6 He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks.

The weak in faith considered one day more sacred than another while

- the strong didn't see any difference in the days.

They were divided over many things such as

- the Sabbath,
- Jewish festivals,
- days of fast and so on.

Paul attitude was that this was an open issue, the important thing was that each individual was faithful to the Lord.

Paul doesn't take sides in the matter,

- he simply wanted people to get along and
- respect one another.

Paul was speaking of the Sabbath and

- there were those that believed in the strict adherence
- to the sabbath and there were those that considered every day of the week
- as a day to worship the Lord.

Paul clearly aligned himself with those that

- would choose to serve the Lord daily.